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OUR CUSTOMS CAN LEAD US TO GOD • NATURAL STUDIES TREFIL SCHOLARSHIP • THE AMAZING WIERCHOWSKI SISTERS
INTRODUCING "OUR POLISH SAINTS" • WROCLAW – MANY NAMES AND NATIONALITIES • SLAIN MISSIONARIES BEATIFIED
CELEBRATING PADEREWSKI AT PMA • POLONIA HERITAGE TRAIL GETS INITIAL FUNDING • "DO POLSKI JEDZIEMY"

Newsmark

KIDNAPPED SEAMEN FREED. Five Polish sailors who were kidnapped by Nigerian pirates have been freed, the Foreign Ministry has said.

"I thank all of those who contributed to the Polish sailors being able to eventually get back to Poland," Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło told a press conference.

Szydło spoke to the five members of the crew of the *Szafir* container ship over the phone.

"I am glad that you are safe and healthy," she told them.

The ship was attacked by pirates off the Nigerian coast at the end of November with 16 crew on board. The pirates abducted five sailors, but the rest managed to hide on the ship.

Many attacks by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea, off the Cameroonian and Nigerian coasts have taken place in recent years.



President Obama decorates Senator Mikulski.

MIKULSKI EXPRESSES GRATITUDE. "I want to thank President Obama for this tremendous honor. I want to thank the people of Maryland for this tremendous opportunity to serve. And I want to thank the United States of America who enable people like me to follow her dream."

These were the words of Maryland Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her work on health research, women's issues, science funding and making higher education more affordable.

Mikulski, the daughter of Polish American grocers from Baltimore's Fells Point neighborhood, is the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, and is the longest-serving woman in Congress, first elected to the Senate in 1986.

Other recipients included Yogi Berra, the former New York Yankee who died last year; Lee Hamilton, the former Indiana congressman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission; and composer Stephen Sondheim.

WINS MARSHALL SCHOLARSHIP. Sean Kaczmarek, the youngest person ever elected to the Cheektowaga-Sloan (N.Y.) Board of Education, has been chosen to receive a Marshall Scholarship, one of the most selective graduate fellowships available to American undergraduates, and an honor many consider the country's most prestigious scholarship.

A senior economics and political science major at the University at Buffalo, Kaczmarek, 21, won election to the suburban school board at age 19.

Although his actual placement has yet to be decided, he most likely will study at Oxford University.

POLES OUTNUMBER IRISH IN NORTHERN IRELAND. (Radio Poland) Poles are now the biggest group of non-British nationals living in Northern Ireland, a newspaper has reported.

After mass emigration from Poland following the country joining the EU in 2004, more Poles now live in Northern Ireland than people who were born in the neighboring Irish Republic to the south, according to *The Irish News*.

The paper cited official figures showing that 30,830 Polish residents live in Northern Ireland, accounting for 26 percent of the population who were born outside of Britain.

That figure is higher than the 29,620 people from the Irish Republic who live in Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, the paper pointed out.

Lithuania is third on the list of the top EU countries from which people have moved to live in Northern Ireland, followed by Portugal, Slovakia, Romania, Latvia and France.

Polish Baltic Orchestra on U.S. Tour

UNDER THE BATON of celebrated Polish conductor Bogusław Dawidów, the Symphony Orchestra of Polish Baltic Philharmonic will tour to the United States in the longest concert tour in its history with 48 concerts in concert halls in 19 states – Jan. 13 to March 20, 2016.

The repertoire will include Polish music: *Piano Concerto in F minor* by Frederic Chopin and the *Violin Concerto in D minor* by Henryk Wieniawski, along with the works of Wagner, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Rimski-Korsakov.

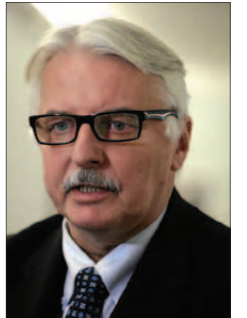
The Orchestra will be accompanied by Agata Szymczewska, winner of the 2006 XIII International Wieniawski Violin Competition, and violinist Jarosław Nadrzycki. Solo piano works will be performed by Marcin Koziak – the winner of three prizes in the 2010 XVI International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw.

For an initial itinerary, see page 4.



Foreign Minister Proposes Solution to Refugee Problem

WARSAW — Syrian refugees arriving in Europe should form an army which can be sent back to liberate their home country, instead of "drinking coffee in the cafes of Berlin" while western soldiers face ISIS, said Polish foreign minister Witold Waszczykowski.



Waszczykowski

The foreign minister made the suggestion the day after French president Francois Hollande said they would carry out a "merciless" war against ISIS in retaliation for the Paris massacres.

"Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have come to Europe recently. We can help them form an army," Waszczykowski said. "Tens of thousands of young men disembark from their rubber dinghies with iPad in hand and instead of asking for drink or food, they ask where they can charge their cellphones.

"They can go to fight to liberate their country with our help."

Waszczykowski said he was trying to avoid a situation where "we send our soldiers to fight in Syria while hundreds of thousands of Syrians drink their coffee in (Berlin's) Unter den Linden" boulevard or in other European cities.

During the recent campaign, the newly-elected right party vowed to close Poland's doors to refugees and migrants and instead lend financial support to EU efforts at tackling the crisis.

However, Prime Minister Beata Szydlo said Poland would honor

See "Military Training ..." page 3

2016 – A Good PolAm Year!

by Robert Strybel

America is a cultural mosaic comprising St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Italian tenors and espresso, Cajun cookery, Mexican Mariachi bands and piñatas, Afro-American jazz, blues, swing and Motown, Jewish Klezmer music and Kosher dill pickles, the French Mardi Gras, German Oktoberfest, Scottish bagpipers playing "Amazing Grace" at funerals, and much, much more.

Rather than sitting things out and passively watching the passing show, maybe 2016 is a good time to help enrich ourselves and the American landscape with a few of our own Polish cultural contributions. We begin this list of suggested activities with trips to Poland which require advance planning and should be considered in the early part of the year:

VISIT POLAND THIS YEAR. To those who have never been to Poland, that first visit is usually a powerful, eye-opening experience that topples many preconceived stereotypes and instills healthy ethnic pride. Observations have shown that most PolAms return home more interested and eager to become more involved in their heritage than ever before. This is something worth considering in the early part of the year to allow enough time to plan ahead.

If you are unaware of any organization, parish or travel bureau in your area organizing such a tour, contact one of America's most experienced Polonian travel bureaus: Polish-American Tours, 1285 Riverdale Street, West Springfield, MA 01089; tel: 1-800-388-0988; www.pattours.com.

See "A Good Pol-Am Year," page 3

St. John Paul II Day Celebrated at National Shrine

by Joseph Baniukiewicz

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Sat., Oct. 17, 2015 in Washington, U.S. Polonia for the first time celebrated St. John Paul II Day. Many people from various states attended this special day in the recently established National Shrine dedicated to St. John Paul II. In fact, the Polish parishes of the Diocese of Worcester had a bus of people who wanted to make a pilgrimage and pray to God through the intercession of St. John Paul II.

This special day was preceded by a ceremony which took place in the Polish Embassy in Washington, where the Supreme Knight, Carl A. Anderson received the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit, the highest distinction of the Republic of Poland, granted by the new President of Poland, Andrzej Duda. The ceremony was attended by leaders of many Polish national regional organizations of Polonia of the United States. It began with the national anthems of Poland and the United States performed by the renowned opera singer, Malgorzata Kellis from New York City. Msgr. An-



Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight, Carl A. Anderson received the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit, the highest distinction of the Republic of Poland.

thony Czarnecki, introducing Anderson, said: "John Paul II used to say that courage supported by prayer and wisdom can shake unmovable things." Anderson followed the Pope's words and added another one, "a vision," which guided his planning and determination to establish such an enormous and world-renowned museum in honor of St. John Paul II.

Pisarski, Charge D'Affaires, quoting the Polish Ambassador's message, said: "On behalf of the people of Poland and Polonia of the United States, I want to express my gratitude to you and the Knights of Columbus for establishing the state-of-the-art Museum and National Shrine dedicated to Saint John Paul II. [...] It is my wish and hope that the spirit of friendship and cooperation with the Knights of Columbus and Polonia of this country, will continue to inspire the people to visit this unique, holy site of faith and culture where values could be rediscovered and life transformed."

Anderson's acceptance speech was very personal and meaningful, indicating

See "John Paul II Day," page 6

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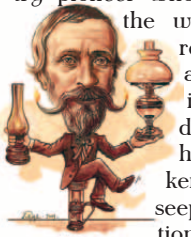
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January Styczeń

The old year is dead, and from its ashes blossoms bright New Phoenix, spreading wings o'er the heavens far and near; Full of hopes and wishes, earth salutes it with delight. What should I for myself desire on this glad New Year?

— Adam Mickiewicz,
"New Year's Wishes"

- 1 **NEW YEAR'S DAY**
Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!
Happy New Year!
- 3 1795. Third Partition of Poland.
- 5 1173. Death of Bolesław IV the Curly
- 6 **FEAST OF THREE KINGS**
On this day, K+M+B (the initials of Kaspar, Melchior and Baltaze the three kings who visited the Holy Infant) are inscribed above main entry of one's home. Often this is done by one's priest.
- 7 1882. Death of Ignacy Łukasiewicz, petroleum industry pioneer who in 1856 built the world's first oil refinery. His achievements included the discovery of how to distill kerosene from seep oil, the invention of the modern kerosene lamp (1853), the introduction of the first modern street lamp in Europe (1853), and the construction of the world's first modern oil well
- 9 1797. Jan Henryk Dąbrowski organizes his legion in Italy, and thus honored by having his name included in the Polish National Anthem.
- 11 1920. The League of Nations was established as the Treaty of Versailles went into effect. The Free City of Danzig (Gdansk) was constituted by the treaty.
- 14 1581. The city of Riga joined the Polish-Lithuanian union.
- 15 1920. The United States approved a \$150 million loan to Poland, Austria and Armenia to aid in their war with the Russian communists.
- 17 1732. Stanisław II August Poniatowski, last king of Poland (1764-95), born.
- 18 1385. A Lithuanian delegation arrived in Krakow to ask for the hand of Jadwiga on behalf of King Jagiello.
- 20 1320. Władysław I Łokietek (Ladislaus the Short) crowned King of Poland.
- 21 1268. Pope Clement IV gave permission to Poland's King Premisław II to take over Lithuania and establish Catholicism.
- 23 1793. Second Partition of Poland.
- 24 1734. In Krakow, the 2nd last king of Lithuania and Poland, August III, crowned.
- 25 1913. Birth of pianist and composer Witold Lutosławski.
- 26 1934. Germany signed a 10-year non-aggression pact with Poland, breaking the French alliance system. Germany violates with pact on Sept. 1, 1939 when it invades Poland.
- 27 1861. Birth of engineer Ralph Modjeski
- 30 1717. Surrounded by the Russian army the Lithuanian-Polish parliament reduced its army by half and acknowledged Russian protection.
- 31 1887. Death of Włodzimierz Bonawentura Krzyżanowski (b. July 8, 1824), Civil War general.



ON NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS / REV. CHARLES JAN DIMASCOLA

Our Customs Can Lead Us to God

The Catholic Church in Poland was brutally suppressed by the Nazis during the German Occupation of Poland (1939-1945). Teaching religion was forbidden, yet religion thrived.

Why?

Because it was a daily experience. It was a daily part of their lives, woven into every action and thought. The traditions and customs of Poland were woven into the daily fiber of life giving that life meaning and purpose. Those traditions and customs gave a foundation of faith and meaning to daily life.

There are so many beautiful Polish customs that lead us to God and remind us that we always walk with God.

For example:

- When we cut a new loaf of bread, it is the custom, before making the first cut, to take the knife and sign the loaf with a cross.
- When a piece of bread is dropped on the floor, it is reverently and kissed because bread is a gift from God, "to dar Boze."

- Holy water is always kept in the house and at a font at the door, and at the household shrine where the family gathers for prayer. The house is sprinkled with holy water in a time of sickness and storm and the bed is sprinkled before retiring.
- Family prayer is essential. Gathering together a family for evening prayer and offering grace before and after meals is a way of including God in our daily activities.
- Every home should have a "Holy Corner," that is, a family shrine that becomes the focus of daily devotions and a constant visual reminder of God's presence.
- The Easter custom of święconka and the Christmas vigil (wigilia) meal.
- Consecrating our homes with blessed chalk by writing the monograms of the Three kings — K+M+B — over the main entrance to our home.
- Name's Day — celebrating the saints' day as our own special

- feast day
- Decorating our homes and churches with greens for Pentecost Sunday.
- Eucharistic Processions with the traditional four altars for Corpus Christi
- Visiting the graves of our loved ones and lighting candles for All Souls Day.

These traditions, and many others are small in themselves, but like a few drops of water on a seed, they can help our faith to grow. And, little by little, deep roots are formed to drink from the rich heritage and Faith of the Polish people.

There are so many beautiful Polish customs in daily life to remind us and our families of our loving God and of the protective presence of God in our lives if we use them to sanctify our time and environment.

So to with us. We live in an environment that has become increasingly hostile to our Faith and increasingly intolerant of our Polish culture. True, the Holy Spirit sends His guidance via the Church and our

priests, but if we do not make use of the gifts of our heritage — and if God is not part of our everyday life as it was for our Grandparents — then the seed of faith can't grow and the stability of our families and nation are undermined!

What can we do?

We can begin to revive some of these old traditions, or even make new ones to simply remind ourselves daily of the existence of God in our lives. We need reminders that will be constant reminders of the love of God. Our Faith and our Culture are entwined; strengthening one strengthens the other. We need to constantly plant seeds that will grow strong roots.



Father Charles Jan DiMascola, the "Polish priest with the Italian name," is pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa parish in Turners Falls, Mass., a position he has held since 1986. He speaks Polish fluently, and shares Polish traditions and the true Catholic Faith with his congregation.

FORUM / Mark Kohan

A Time for Common Sense on Immigration Policy

Donald Trump has become the bogeyman of the political class: Democrats want to use him to scare voters into voting for Hillary, Republican leaders fear he'll lose them the White House, and many people think he's a loose cannon.

So how do you explain the man's ongoing popularity?

Maybe because, despite his outrageous way of putting things (and they are outrageous and sometimes even off the deep end) he's identified the root of things bothering many Americans. He touches a nerve.

Like on immigration.

There's no doubt we need immigration reform: the present system does not work. But we also do not need further dismantling of our borders: "amnesty now and border protection (maybe) later."

Pointing out that we are a "nation of immigrants" does not mean that we need to maintain the present, dysfunctional system. American Polonia benefitted from America being a "national of immigrants," but those Poles came here *legally, in accordance with the law*. They chose to make the United States their country and to become Polish Americans. They found the values they brought from Poland and the

ones they encountered in America consistent and complementary.

Trump's been bashed for his comments on Muslim immigration. His comments were extreme. But equally extremist is the "see no evil" approach of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, *et al.*, who would pretend that Islam has nothing to do with the Muslims who attacked down the World Trade Center (twice), who led multiple killing sprees last year in Paris, who shot up San Bernardino, who carried out the Boston Marathon massacre, etc. And when Americans see innocents being mowed down in the street, they grow impatient with an out-of-touch political correctness that ignores the potential threat posed by an immigration policy that essentially treats nationals of Pakistan and Poland or Syria and Slovakia alike. Some might call it "Islamophobia," but the last time we checked, it's been a while since a disgruntled fiancée from Bratislava decided that America's moral decadence required her to shoot up Scranton.

It's not about Islam or any other religion as a religion. But it is about recognizing that there are connections between a lot of people who profess Islam and commit terror-

ism. Common sense looks to stop terrorism where connections appear likely. Radical Muslims have a track record; radical Mennonites do not.

It's time for common sense on immigration and asylum policy. Immigrants are welcome, but they need to go through a truly rigorous vetting process. We also need to come to clarity about what we expect of them in terms of national integration. Right now, English proficiency is a nominal requirement for citizenship. Perhaps it ought to be a real, tested, requirement to be able to continue holding a green card (say, five years or you lose permanent residency). If any non-citizen (visa or green card holder) commits a firearms violation or is found in possession of explosive materials, he should be subject to immediate deportation and barred permanently from coming back. That process should be swift, with current interminable appeals banned. Perhaps we should also consider mandatory military service for males: once upon a time, the Army contributed positively to cementing national unity of purpose, patriotism, and solidarity. That is what we should be expecting from immigrants who want to be part of our body politic.

PolNet Purchases
Chicago Disney
Station

CHICAGO — Nearly a year after Radio Disney announced it was pulling the plug on its 24 stations nationwide, the company found a buyer for its former Chicago outlet.

Polnet Communications, Chicago-based owner of four ethnic and foreign language stations here, has agreed to buy WRDZ AM 1300 for \$3.45 million, according to an application filed with the Federal Communications Commission.

Polnet also owns Polish WNVR AM 1030, Mexican WPJX AM 1500, and brokered ethnic WKTA 1330 and WEEF AM 1430, all in the north suburbs, and outlets in New York and Florida. The company is in the process of selling WPVN-CD, its Class A TV station in Aurora, to WPVN Holdings, according to Radio Insight.

Radio Disney took over the former Spanish-language WTAQ in west suburban LaGrange under a local marketing agreement in 1998 and later acquired the station outright.

Andrzejewski Wins — In New Jersey's 1st District, incumbent Bob Andrzejewski and running mate Bruce Land defeated Republican incumbent Sam Fiochi and running mate Jim Sauro.

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VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

2016 – A Good PolAm Year!

continued from cover

SUMMER CAMP IN POLAND. That first trip to Poland makes the greatest impression on young people of formative age. They are still forming opinions about the world and are naturally more receptive to new sights and experiences than us older folk. Many PolAm teens will surely find the prospect of vacationing in Europe a far more exciting alternative than hanging around home or going to the same old summer cottage. In addition to all the typical camp activities – sports, games, campfires – campers also take part in Polish language lessons. Information is available at: www.polonica.edu.pl/polish_language_camp.html

WORLD YOUTH DAYS IN KRAKÓW. Inaugurated by St John Paul II, World Youth Day this year will be held in Kraków, Poland on July 25–31 2016. It's a unique opportunity to join Pope Francis, bishops, priests and young Catholics from around the globe in prayers, hymns, catechetical experiences and cultural events. There will be numerous sightseeing opportunities, and participants will be hosted by Polish families for a unique taste of daily life in present-day Poland. See if your parish is not organizing a WYD group and visit: <http://worldyouthday.com/krakow-2016>

ACADEMIC YEAR IN POLAND. Scholarships are available through New York's Kościuszko Foundation to study Polish language and culture for one academic year (October-June) at a Polish university. Rather than going right on to college after high school graduation, spending a year abroad can be a rewarding and eye-opening experience for many young Polish Americans. You can learn more about this unique opportunity at: <http://www.thekf.org/kf/scholarships/exchange-poland/year-abroad/>

Also available to PolAms are full five-year studies leading to a Master's degree in different fields. That includes medical schools where English is the language of instruction. Learn more about it at: www.studyinpoland.pl/en/

POLAM ACTIVITIES. Whether it is a social or sporting event sponsored by your local PolAm lodge, a pączki party, parish supper, a May 3rd celebration or whatever, make it a point to attend, preferably with a group of relatives, neighbors or friends. If you regularly attend such events, this year why not add a new one to your list. You will not only culturally enrich yourself but will provide the support needed to insure that such activities continue in the future.

ORGANIZE A POLAM EVENT. Ask relatives and friends what kind of still locally unknown PolAm event they think would go over well in your area. Then submit the suggestions at the next meeting of your PolAm lodge, parish committee or Polonian club. Bring along someone willing and able to second the motion. A suc-

cessful event will help promote our heritage while raising funds for some worthwhile cause. Events to consider include: a Polish-themed dinner-dance, Pączki Ball, pączki sale, Karnawał (Mardi Gras), Polish art, folkcrafts or photo exhibition, Lenten fish and pierogi supper, lecture, movie, Polish Easter bazaar & bake sale, Polish craft fair, Third of May celebration, essay contest, sporting event, etc. (Sample events follow.)

PĄCZKI, PĄCZKI, PĄCZKI! Pączki (singular pączek) have grown in popularity across America in recent years and offer numerous opportunities for socializing and fund raising. They are traditionally eaten on *Flusty Czwartek* (Fat Thursday), falling this year on February 4th, and *Shrove or Fat Tuesday* (*Ostatki*) – February 9th. That entire period could be billed as a six-day “Super Pączki Weekend”. Activities could include pączki sales, pączki parties and pączki balls as well as pączki-making and pączki-eating contests. More ideas at: http://detroit.about.com/od/peoplelifestyles/a/Paczki_Day_in_Hamtramck_and_Detroit.htm

POLISH MARDI GRAS BALL. A *Bal Karnawałowy* is basically a festive dinner-dance held before the start of Lent. An elegant banquet featuring traditional Polish delicacies (roast pork loin with prunes, steak roll-ups, chicken Polonaise, bigos and of course pączki and *chruściki/faworki*) usually precedes the ballroom festivities. The dancing is kicked off with the *Grade Polonaise*. Often a king and queen of the ball are elected. Entertainment can be provided by Polish folk dancers or costumed Mardi Gras revelers.



SLEIGHING PARTY. If there is a riding stable or farm that provides sleigh rides in your area you can re-create the Old Polish *kulig* in an American setting. Traditionally such parties included a sleighload of musicians but even a single accordionist or (at worst) recorded music will do. The torch-lit sleighs travel to a cabin in the woods or outdoor bonfire where *kielbasa* can be roasted and a pot of bigos heated and pączki should be in good supply. Hot tea flavored with lemon, fruit syrup and/or rum will help wash it down.

More ideas next month!

SCHOLARSHIPS

Kosciuszko Foundation Announces Natural Studies Trefil Scholarship

NEW YORK — The Kosciuszko Foundation announces a new scholarship for Polish American students who show exceptional promise in the natural sciences. Applications are currently being accepted for The Drs. James and Wanda Trefil Scholarship. The first scholarship in the amount of \$5,000 will be awarded towards the 2016/2017 academic year.

Eligible applicants are United States citizens of Polish descent and Polish citizens who have legal permanent residency status in the United States and who evidence exceptional talent in the natural sciences. Qualified applicants will have a minimum GPA of 3.5 or higher. The scholarship is offered towards undergraduate freshman, sophomore, junior or senior year of studies.

For more information on eligibility, selection criteria and a list of supporting materials please refer to www.thekf.org/kf/scholarships/tuition/. Candidates may apply online by clicking on the Drs. James and Wanda Trefil Scholarship. Applications are accepted through March 1st, 2016. Scholarship decisions will be made in late May. Kosciuszko Foundation scholarships are awarded for full-time studies only. All Kosciuszko Foundation schol-

arships and grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

The Kosciuszko Foundation is a 501 c (3) not-for-profit organization whose mission focuses on educational exchange between Poland and the United States. Each year the Foundation awards grants and fellowships to Polish citizens to conduct research in the United States and supports higher education of Americans of Polish descent via Tuition Scholarships at the graduate level studies in the United States. In addition, funds are available to non-heritage applicants who are majoring in Polish subject areas.

\$5K Pulaski Scholarship for Graduate Studies

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Pulaski Scholarships for Advanced Studies program, which was initially endowed by the Conrad R. Walas family is administered solely by the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC). Five \$5,000 Pulaski Scholarships for Advanced Studies are available for the year 2016.

Basic qualifications for these scholarships require that the applicant is a citizen of the United States and of Polish ancestry. Applicant must be a classified graduate student enrolled at an accredited university in the United States, and must have completed at least one year of studies at the graduate level.

Absolute filing deadline is March 15, 2016. Applicants are urged to get an early start in compiling the required documentation as documents received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Full details of the application requirements are listed in the ACPC website, www.polishcultureacpc.org (see “scholarships,” next select and click on “Pulaski Scholarship”).

Questions may be addressed to Mr. Marion V. Winters at mvwinters@charter.net or (508) 949-0160.

Military Training For Refugees is Nothing New

continued from cover

or the commitments made by the previous liberal government, which agreed to host more than 9,000 refugees in the framework of the EU's



Szydło

relocation plan. “We honor all commitments” Szydło said, while adding however that “the security of Poland and its citizens is paramount.” Her reassurance came after Konrad Szymanski, deputy minister for EU affairs, said Poland would not take in refugees under the hotly contested EU redistribution program in the wake of the Paris attacks.

SPEAK UP / Letters to the Editor

Gross' Books Belong in Fiction Section

Dear Editor:

During the Kaczynski brothers' administration in Poland, a law was passed criminalizing “slander against the Polish nation,” promising to punish anyone who “unjustly accuses the Polish nation of participation, organization, and responsibility for Communist or Nazi crimes.” Under this law, Polish prosecutors are now threatening to sue writer Jan Gross over an article in a German newspaper in which he was quoted as saying that Poles “did kill more Jews than Germans” during World War II.

The writings of Jan Gross have been received by many as a welcome indictment of Polish anti-Semitism but by others as biased, tendentious, and filled with historical inaccuracies. Mean and hurtful as Gross's accusations may be, librarians and others who believe in free speech cannot support the notion that the best way to expose a hate monger is to silence him. We must always remember that Adolf Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* while imprisoned.

Jan Gross relies heavily on the assumption that his facts in many cases cannot be disproven. In an October 15 Agence France-Presse news story, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Marcin Wojciechowski said that Gross's article was “historically untrue, harmful, and insulting to Poland,” but AFP also quoted Warsaw historian Andrzej Paczkowski saying that “there are no reliable figures regarding the number of Jews killed by Poles and the number of Germans killed by Poles.” We must also remember that Gross's book *Neighbors* prompted then Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski to apologize to Jews worldwide for the murders committed in Jedwabne.

If Gross's assertions about Poland are indeed false, then scholars, journalists, and the Polish government should be methodically checking every claim and exposing every error. Discrediting Gross's research and claims would enable librarians to move his books to the fiction shelves, where many say they belong.

Leonard Kniffel
Director
Polish American
Librarians Association

THE TRUTH IS IN THE DATA. The presidential race is in full swing, and candidates in both parties are making promises and taking positions on existential issues such as: Trans-Pacific Partnership trade bill, immigration, income, and wealth discrepancy in our society, gun con-

trol, climate change, the Keystone pipeline, and the size of the U.S. military budget, to name the salient ones. How is the concerned voter to decide on these complex issues?

Of course, some voters will make a decision on the basis of their ideology, which will further divide the body politic. Others will vote the party line. A few will permit their biases to govern their decision. I would suggest that voters look to the data for guidance. Scientific theories are accepted after they are confirmed with data derived through the “scientific method” because the truth is in the data. There is data available on all the aforementioned issues. Yes! Some of the data is disputed, in which case we should defer to data generated by the most knowledgeable persons on the subject. In other words, informed voters also need to be effective fact checkers.

I appreciate the argument that busy people do not have time to go to a comprehensive library to do the necessary research. However, the Internet now makes it possible to access the data from home.

It is axiomatic that good public policy is data-based rather than sponsored by vested interests. Thus!

For those who would like to see sound public policy, become informed with data and insist that political candidates make public policy that is consistent with the best available data.

Jan P. Muczyk
Englewood, Florida

DENDE LEGACY REMEMBERED.

Today (Oct. 30, 2015) would be my father's birthday. I look at your website as a reminder of the efforts of the Dende family, and know that in no small way their hard work and integrity have given me an advantage in my daily life and career.

I am so very grateful of your continued successful managing of the *Polish American Journal*, and of your remembrance of the paper's beginning. I can't help but look at the picture of my uncles and their staff that worked on the paper years ago. It reminded me of a simpler time, and I wanted to express these feelings in words below.

I wish you continued success and my sincere thank you for always honoring the history of the paper.

You continually do a great service to Polish people wherever the paper reaches. You and your staff should be very proud of your efforts.

Conrad Dende
Son of Edward Dende, and
grandson of John Dende, Polish
American Journal founder

PRECEDENT OR PREJUDGEMENT? Waszczykowski may have been drawing on the experience of Polish refugees during World War II, said U.K.'s *Independent*. Polish refugees formed the Polish Armed Forces in the West and Polish Armed Forces in the East to fight with the Allies and Soviet Union against Nazi Germany.

Those formations operated from the United Kingdom and included fighter plane squadrons in the Battle of Britain and shock troops, who fought in Italy.

But Ishaan Tharoor, foreign affairs writer for *The Washington*

Post, said Waszczykowski's idea was a “rather bewildering suggestion.”

“Given the climate of xenophobia in parts of Europe, perhaps we shouldn't be surprised,” said Tharoor, referring to anti-refugee protests in Germany, Finland, the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland. In Szymanski Paris, crowds of extreme right-wing protesters disturbed a pro-refugee march, following news that at least one of the terrorists responsible for the slaughters in Paris was a Syrian expatriate.



What Have You Done Since Diocesan Closings and Mergers?

*An Uplifting Option:
Sing Po Angielsku*

by Rev. Dr. Czesław M. Krysa
Part II

Intimate relationships. The PolAm hymnal sings in the second person, intimately, and directly to the Lord Jesus and Mama Mary. These songs neither talk around about God, nor put God's "I" voice on congregational lips to form a chorus of divine super-humans, pumped-up on eagle's wings. They are not ashamed, ill at ease, nor uncomfortable with publically singing their own personal trials and group sorrow, needs, hurts, even better sweat and tears. Why, because only Jesus, particularly through His Mother's care-filled solicitude, can heal. Singing of pain together, lightens the burden. That's why singing around God, and speaking God's "I" voice can be likened to a cat perpetually chasing its own tail, over-and-over again, falling exhausted, anxious, distraught, and confused.

Among hymns of spiritual intimacy are *Fairest of Maidens, Come*

under the Mantle, The Conversation with Mama Mary of the Bitter Laments, Weep, All You Angels, and the vibrant *Once an Angel*. Many English equivalents ooze with nostalgic emotion, assuming that the healing has already occurred, rather than singing before God of embarrassing weakness and pangs. Chanting denial and camouflaging wounds makes them fester. This is one reason some Anglo hymns ring flat and fleeting, as they veil real issues.

A Green Song Book. Rarely have I heard English vernaculars call God's plentiful creation so blessed, so fruitful, and even request songs from garlands, fountains, fire, crystal waters, rocks, and the autumn roses of the Holy Rosary. Every seasonal transition of breezes, stars, trees, boulders, and valleys participate in a calendrical chorus praising the inhabitants of heaven. Among them emerge doves, sparrows, fish, mountains, sun, moon, stars, a vineyard, honey, the entire year's cycle of flowers: lilies, roses, thorns, grasses, hay, gardens, thistles, blossoming branches, not overlooking the midnight and dawn.

The heaven of these hymns is encountered at the family table, built by her righteous and sturdy spouse in his carpenter's workshop. The *threshold of every home* is named a *Christian defense-castle* of virile faith and hope during the toughest challenges. Endless enduring love, that neither wanes during hard times of personal trauma, nor escapes in international conflict or wars of hatred and destruction. Our faith is not into blaming. Our hymn's *Lady of Valor* leads her sons smack into sacrifice. She strengthens her daughters with unparalleled Gospel resilience.

Experiencing the power, spiritual emotion, comfort and praise of the Polish hymn, inspired me to open up, with a great reception, these treasures for the English speaker and subsequent generations whose linguistic aptitude to the mother tongue, wains with generations.

Please note that this collection, *Polish American Hymn: Spirituality in Song and Ritual*, contains heirloom photos of the last four years of renewed, revitalized, traditional Polish American worship and devotion of Buffalo's reorganized "heav-

en and earth" church. This is a spirituality project of St Casimir's 125th Anniversary of founding. Family faith-centered intros precede each section. Ninety-one bilingual hymns and six devotional services are included. It may also serve for some as an inspirational resource for meditation and prayer, as well as celebrations of the Domestic Church.

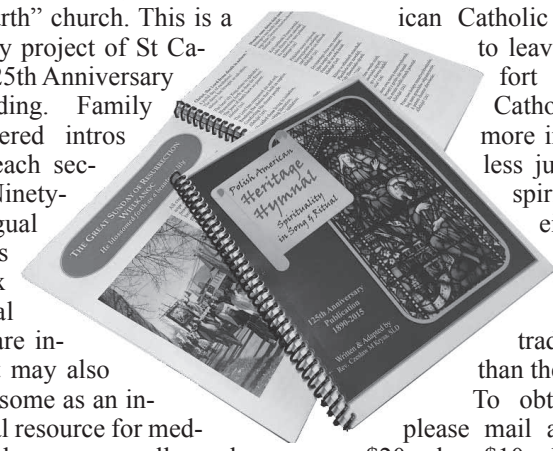
At last year's Polish American Priest's Convention, Rev. Thomas Machalski, Rector of the Polish Seminary at Orchard Lake encouraged merged, culturally diverse, communities to "share our faith heritage in restructured parishes." We have a right to this, no only when it is the PolAm church that was closed. Polonia's faith leaders, lay, religious and ordained, spiritually-sensitive music directors, organists, organizational heads, choirs, and polka bands, need to evangelize the Amer-

ican Catholic mainstream to leave their comfort zone. U.S. Catholicism is more inclusive and less judgmental of spiritualities foreign to some church leadership, or at least traditions other than their own.

To obtain a copy please mail a check, for \$20 plus \$10 shipping and handling payable to The Church of St Casimir, 160 Cable St., Buffalo, NY, 14206. Funds are used for ongoing structural restoration of the landmark church building.

❖ ❖ ❖
Rev. Dr. Czesław M. Krysa, Rector of the Church of St. Casimir, is director of the Buffalo Diocesan Office of Worship, and a visiting lecturer at Christ the King Seminary.

He has written numerous scholarly papers articles, and is the author of the book "A Polish Christmas Eve."



CULTURAL TELEGRAM / Kasia Romanowska

NieObcy — Polish writers for refugees

Just before Christmas, a book *NieObcy* (NoOther) hit the bookstores. Olga Tokarczuk, Hanna Krall, Joanna Bator, Pawel Huelle, Andrzej Stasiuk, Ignacy Karłowicz and several other writers, working for free, provided the texts that contributed to the volume of the book which tells the story of difficult confrontations with strangeness.

The organizers of the release of *NieObcy* say: "We need others no less than they need us, even if for the moment it seems that the opposite is true. Only by confronting them, we discover ourselves without illusions." Stories refer directly not only to events that have shaken up Europe in recent months, but also

to other places and eras, so that each of us was able to look at the problem from a broader perspective, search other and otherness in ourselves. Proceeds from the book will be donated to help victims of the war in Syria.

Wrocław — a 2016 European Capital of Culture

In June 2011, the title of "European Capital of Culture" for the year 2016 was awarded to the cities of Wrocław, Poland and San Sebastian, Spain. (To learn more about Wrocław, see page 10 of this month's paper).

Wrocław is the heart of the project and the center of the Lower Silesia region, Poland. The organiz-

ers wanted to create a platform for creative activities, as well as a meeting place for cultural practices from around the country. The city was also a stage for international cooperation between artists and creators of culture. The project is a debate about the future of cities and their citizens, and the year 2016 will be the time for summaries and drawing conclusions. It will redefine and highlight this city's unique role in the culture of Europe.

Among projects can be found:

- WuWA 2 — a model housing estate of Nowe Żerniki built in the area of the Municipal Stadium;
- Kino Nowe Horyzonty — Poland's largest multiplex cinema showing the artistic program which, in addition to film screenings, is also a place for numerous workshops and debates
- Night of Literature — a project showcasing the work of contemporary European writers
- World Music Days — currently one of the most prestigious music festivals in the world.

The main author of the winning application of ECC Wrocław is professor Adam Chmielewski, a philosopher of science and policy professor at the University of Wrocław.

Branford Marsalis in Poland

Warsaw audiences are already used to the fact that, for one December evening, the classical music temple — Teatr Wielki (Grand Theatre) — turns into a realm of jazz. In recent years, the audience gathered at the Grand Theatre as part of the BMW Jazz Club series of concerts and applauded, among others, Dianne Reeves and Tomasz Stanko. This year, they could listen to Branford Marsalis, the American sax player and composer. Together with distinguished Polish jazz musicians, he interpreted Polish classical, jazz, and folk music. On the occasion of the jubilee, artists known from previous editions appeared on stage, among them: Stanisław Soyka and Anna Maria Jopek who also ensured the artistic aspect of the project. The concerts took place at the Bielsko-Biala Culture Center Dec. 3, at Warsaw's Grand Theatre on the following day, and Dec. 7 at the Karłowicz Philharmonic in Szczecin.

KUTURA / Staś Kmiec

Fiddler on the Roof returns to Broadway

A new "revitalized" production of the beloved musical, *Fiddler on the Roof* starring Danny Burstein as Tevye, the shtetl milkman, and directed by Bartlett Sher opened on December at the Broadway Theater (1681 Broadway, Manhattan). The show features new dance and movement by the Israeli choreographer Hofesh Shechter.

The original 1964 production was directed and choreographed by the legendary Jerome Robbins. He was the perfect choice as the guiding creative force for a Broadway staging of the shtetl and gave the story a heart and soul. Like Tevye, Robbins' father Harry left his Polish shtetl to come to America. When Jerome, was not quite 6 years old, he was taken back to his father's hometown (Różanka/Rozhanka, near Warsaw) to visit his grandfather for the summer. The seeds were planted in his memory. The show presented a reverence and authenticity to the material... it was not just another Broadway song-and-dance show.

When *Fiddler on the Roof* premiered in Poland in 1985, the show's authors donated their royalties to preserving the country's Jewish monuments.

The indelible work has survived for 50 years and has enjoyed great theatrical success, as well as a 1971 film version. A new generation will now experience this classic tale of a village, a family, a culture and tradition! Info: (212) 239-6200; www.fiddlermusical.com.

Bal Maskowy in Milwaukee
Syrena Polish Folk Dance Ensemble will present "Bal Maskowy" (Masked Ball) in the elegant Grand Ballroom of the Wisconsin Club downtown on February 6, 2016.

This not-to-be-missed formal affair brings to Milwaukee the tradition and charm of "Old Warsaw" and the European elegance of "Old Vienna." A four course dinner is followed by the traditional Polonaise performed by Syrena in flamboyant costumes of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Dancing is to the music of the Anthony Kawalkowski Orchestra from Chicago. Orchestra breaks provide for other excitement, drawings, classical music and opera vignettes, waltz mixers, communal

folk dances, and more.

Polish dance groups should be encouraged to travel and attend this unique enactment of Poland's traditional balls and to reunite with past director and artistic advisor Ada Dzięwanowska.

Contact: nancy.monfre@airgas.com for invitation details.

"Generations: Poland" at Kennedy Center

Company E, nominee for the 2015 Outstanding Emerging Artist Award, brings to the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater stage an evening celebrating four generations of Polish contemporary choreography and classical music with "Generations: Poland," Jan. 22 and 23, 2016.

The Company, celebrated around the world for its repertory, introduces Lidia Wos and Robert Bondara in their U.S. choreographic debuts. The work of the great Pola Nirenska — a legend in the Washington dance scene who passed away in 1991 — will be remembered with the performance of "Dirge," part of her Holocaust Tetralogy.

Paul Gordon Emerson, a past Pola Nirenska Award winner and Company E co-artistic director, will premiere a work set to the Second Movement of Henryk Gorecki's "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs."

For details, visit www.kennedy-center.org/calendar.

Polish Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra U.S. Tour

See cover story

Founded in 1945 as the Gdańsk Symphony on the heels of postwar Polish independence, the Polish Baltic Philharmonic is the largest music institution in northern Poland. At presstime, among the tour dates are:

Jan. 24	The Peabody Daytona Beach, Daytona Beach, FL
Feb. 1	Vern Riffe Center for the Arts, Shawnee SU, Portsmouth, OH
Feb. 14	Concert Hall at Lehman College, Bronx, NY
Feb. 19	State Theatre, New Brunswick, NJ
Feb. 23	E.J. Thomas Hall - The University of Akron, Akron, OH
Feb. 25	Music Hall Center, Detroit, MI
Mar. 1	Stephens Auditorium, Ames, IA

"Sto Lat" Birthday and "Jak Się Masz?" Note Cards



CARD 402 — "Sto lat." ("Happy Birthday — May you live 100 years") 4¼"x5½" Full color design with poppy, "Sto lat" lyrics in Polish and English, and role of poppy in Polish culture. Inside left blank for personalization. Printed on 4-1/4 x 5-1/2 glossy stock.

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SYBIRACY / Stefania Borstowa

Field Work in Kazakstan

"Sibracy" (Poles exiled to Siberia during World War II) is written by Stefania Borstowa. Borstowa, her children and Marysia, a home servant, were deported from Lvov to Krutoyarka, a small village in Kazakstan. Soon after the Soviet Union invasion, her husband was sent to the labor camp in Eastern Siberia and died of dysentery, but she did not know about it until after World War II.

Excerpt from the letter written in Fall 1940, no exact date given.

The weather cooled down suddenly, mornings and evenings are really cold. No wonder, we live in a continental climate zone. Still I had to go to work every day to the kolkhoz. I walk six kilometers (3 3/4 miles) one way, with no shoes, wearing only a summer dress, but I walk with Danusia, a 15 year old Polish girl and we help each other. We pause during the walk and warm our bodies by crouching down, we also massage and warm our feet. We do farm work, preparing fields for winter crop's tillage. We did not get any breakfast; before we start working we eat cold cooked potatoes or a piece of lepyoshka which we bring with us. But since we work, they give us lunch, usually barley soup or fish soup with two crucians (small fish) inside. All of us are hungry almost all the time. When we have some time off after lunch, some of the younger people pick up some edible roots from lakes overgrown with reeds nearby. Then we eat these roots, which are sweetish. We also go to the forest for mushrooms, that are edible, but not really tasty. I dried some mushrooms for winter.

Farming in Kazakstan differed from farming in Poland, which I remember from times before WW II. In Kazakstan we used bulls or cows for tillage. We had to harness these poor and scrawny animals to the three-share plough. Young boys, 8-10 years old, worked as drovers, one at each plough. When the poor animals were unable to work anymore and they were collapsing from hunger and exhaustion, the drovers had to motivate them to get up and work. They were using wires to beat poor animals up, often they had to



The 19th century realism of Jozef Chelmonski's "Ploughing" (National Museum, Poznan) was still a reality mid-20th century for expatriated Poles in Kazakstan.

twist their tales, so that the tillage went on and the cattle had broken tails.

Farming fields were large, one ridge was 3-5 km (2-4 miles) long. We began work early in the morning, after lunch we have one hour rest and then we worked until the dusk. We worked with about twenty to thirty ploughs. There were also some tractors available, but since they were breaking easily, they were used only for spring work. The soil was wonderfully fertile. I was amazed at the quality of soil and the harvest for all the years we spend in Kazakstan.

Continuing with the subject of farming in Kazakstan and what I observed through the war years: in Spring, the tractors were doing tillage with 8-10 ploughshares, a seeder was just behind a plough, behind a seeder there was a harrow. In the beginning of June, women equipped with sickles worked at the fields cutting weeds, since the weeds grew faster than grain. Harvest took place at the end of June. I never saw such thick ears of wheat grain like there on the fields in Kazakstan! The grains were heavy with a multitude of seeds; we counted up to a hundred in one ear. We had such a joy to chew on fresh grains, it quenched the hunger and after long chewing it tasted like a chewing gum, we kept

it forever in our mouths. Harvesting was done very efficiently. After picking up grains, hay was put into haystacks and it served as animal feed for winter. We also used straw; it was collected on birch brands and carried by a horse or a bullock. Then we formed the straw-stacks, about 40 m long and 6-8 meters wide. There were separate people assigned for straw cart transport and others building straw-stacks, usually four per one. The jobs had to be well-coordinated between all teams, so that we could do the intended work in a proper time. Every evening, after work, a controller stopped by and measured the number and sizes of stacks. Only once per year we were paid and a payment was meager. This happened usually in November or during October Revolution celebrations, after all field work was over.

Reprinted courtesy of Baba Jaga Corner. Visit Jaga Polish Culture Website at: www.polishsite.us.

TRENDY WARSAW — Poland is quickly making a name for itself as fashion and design center. While France and Italy have long been associated with popular panache, young designers in Warsaw are tapping into tradition with a twist of trendy to create exciting creations.

ACADEMIA

The Amazing Wierchowski Sisters

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The Wierchowski sisters — Jill, Elizabeth, and Megan — have all earned the title "doctor" with the coveted "Ph.D." after their names.

All are graduates of Mount Mercy Academy. Jill (1988) earned her undergraduate degree in biology from Canisius College and her doctorate in Dental Surgery from the UB School of Dentistry Medicine, and now works as a dentist in Dunkirk, N.Y. Elizabeth (2001) also attended Canisius (Chemistry) and also the UB School of Dentistry. Megan (2006) is also a Canisius grad (biology and pre-med), and is now a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine at Sisters of Charity Hospital.

All three have volunteered on numerous health-related missions: Both Jill and Elizabeth have donated their services to the American Cancer Society and Habitat for Humanity on numerous trips to Africa. Megan spent time in New Orleans, donating her time and talent in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

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PAJF Polish American Journal Foundation

The PAJF is a non-profit 501c3 organization established to promote Polish and Polish American culture and traditions among members of the public and other Polish and Polish American groups. It does this by organizing and supporting special events, networking, and providing consultation to individuals and groups, which seek to learn more about the Polish community in the United States.

As a national newspaper serving Polish immigrants and their descendents since 1911, the Polish American Journal has a unique perspective on the shortfalls — primarily funding — that have prevented many great projects from getting off the ground. We also have grown increasingly frustrated to see students — future leaders, who are passionate about Polonia — seek other areas of study because they could not secure something as simple as airfare to study in Poland or abroad.

Likewise, we see so many talented academicians, scholars, artists, folk groups — the list goes on — whose special projects or areas of study have been dropped for lack of funds. In many cases, state or federal arts or cultural



Your tax-deductible donation to the Polish American Journal Foundation supports our efforts to keep the Polish American community strong for generations to come.

funding is available, but these groups cannot afford processing fees to meet application requirements. It is time to start helping our own.

MEMBERSHIP. Donations are accepted in any amount. All donations will be acknowledged and may be used as charitable contributions on your tax return. As a member, you can suggest any worthwhile cause: a donation to a local Polish American museum; veteran's group; scholarship fund; dance group, etc. Our board reviews these suggestions and creates a ballot of the most-requested causes/recipients, which will then be voted on by current members. (Membership is yearly, starting with the date of your most recent donation). All members reserve the right to abstain from being a voting member.

Since 1911, the Polish American Journal has been an advocate for Poles and their descendants in the United States. Help us utilize over 100 years of the Polish American experience to support those who share our core values of strong family, faith, and community.

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Complete and return to:

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P.O. BOX 198, BOWMANVILLE, NY 14026

RELIGION / Benjamin Fiore, S.J.

St. John Paul II Day Celebrated at National Shrine

Slain Missionaries Beatified

Michael Tomaszek, Zbigniew Strzalkowski and **Alessandro Dordi** were beatified as martyrs in Chimbote, in northern Peru, where they were slain in 1991 by the Marxist "Shining Path" guerrillas. The two Poles were shot in the head after a nighttime Mass and had placards reading "Imperialist Lackeys" hung around their necks. Dordi was shot a few weeks later, also on his return from saying Mass. The three are the first Catholic martyrs in Peru to be beatified. Abimael Guzmán, founder and leader of the guerrillas, confessed that he decided to kill the priests because their evangelization efforts were keeping people from joining the terrorists' armed struggle. Before the beatification, volunteers conducted a blood drive "in honor of those who shed all their blood." The blood was delivered to hospitals in Lima, Peru's capital, to benefit the poor people.

Holocaust Rescuer

Reunited with the Rescued

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous organized the meeting at New York's Kennedy Airport between Holocaust survivor **Michael Hochberg**, 77, from Haifa, Israel, and **Krystyna Jakubowska**, 86, of Warsaw, Poland.

A child in Warsaw, her mother knew Hochberg's parents and took Michael when his guardian left him at their home. Krystyna's father, a member of the Home Army, was killed in the Polish Uprising of August 1944 and her mother Rozalia died on Christmas Eve that same year, leaving Krystyna to care for Michael until they were liberated in 1945. Taken to a Jewish orphanage, he eventually moved to Israel. The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous which arranged the reunion, provided more than \$36 million in financial assistance to some 500 aged and needy Righteous Gentiles living in 20 countries, that helped Jewish people during the Holocaust.

The first U.S. soldier, and one of only five Americans, has been named Righteous Among the Nations posthumously. **Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds** of Knoxville, Tenn, was captured during the Battle of the Bulge and held in a Nazi POW camp in Germany, where he was the highest ranking soldier. When the Germans demanded that all Jewish POWs in the camp identify themselves, Edmonds ordered all the U.S. soldiers to step forward. "We are all Jews," he said to the fu-

rious German officer, as he went on to cite the Geneva conventions, and refused to identify any prisoners by religion. "If you shoot, you'll have to shoot us all." The German officer backed down.

Happy Anniversary to ...

Very Rev. Thaddeus Peplowski, on the 25th anniversary of his consecration as the seventh bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church ... **St. Stanislaus Kostka** parish in Rochester, N.Y. celebrating 125 years.

Church Windows Relocated

Stained glass windows from the closed and demolished St. Monica's Church in Buffalo, N.Y. were installed and blessed in the oratory of St. Pacificus in Humphrey, N.Y. **Fr. Ronald Mierzwa**, pastor of Holy Name of Mary Parish, which includes St. Pacificus, welcomed the bishop to the ceremony. "We are delighted that they match the simplicity of St. Pacificus so well, and yet add a more reverent atmosphere, more of a sacred space for worship, prayer and devotion," he said.

Sto lat to...

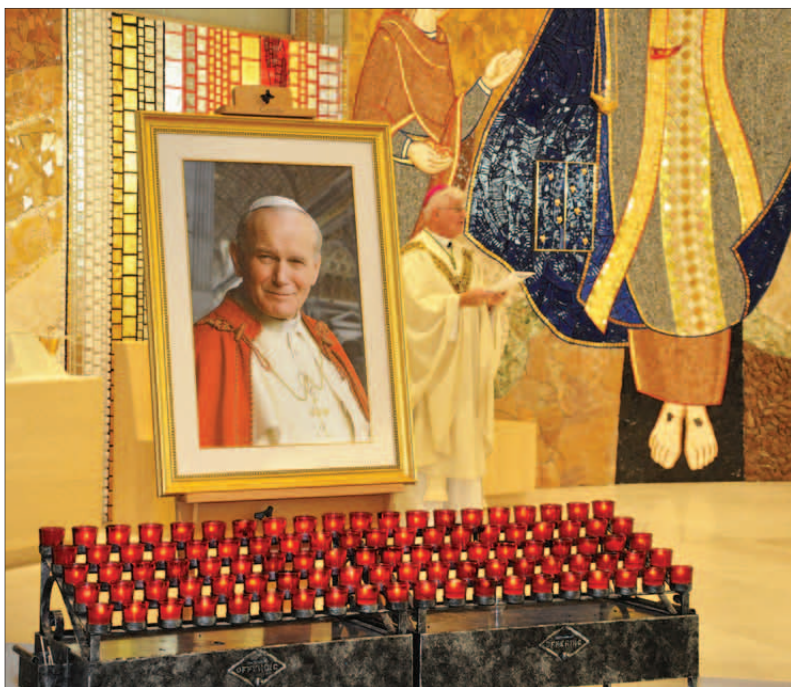
Fr. Steven Kieielek on his assignment as pastor of St. Christopher's Parish in Tonawanda, N.Y. ... **Samantha Jurek** and **Laura Karlinski** on receiving the Discipleship Award of the Diocese Buffalo, Youth Department. The award honors those who genuinely live their lives as young disciples and are actively involved in their parish communities. At the same ceremony **Michelle Kisluk** received the Companions on the Journey Award, presented to adults who are active and support their parish ministry.

Voting to Fund Abortions Abroad

Lisa Murkowski, Republican senator of Alaska, joined two other Republican women senators in backing the global funding for abortions as proposed by President Obama. Without their vote, the proposal would not have passed.

Wigilia on Stage

"A Polish Christmas in the Village" was performed at the Lancaster Opera House in Lancaster, N.Y. The staged Wigilia supper with carols and dancing was adapted from Fr. Czesław Krysa's book "A Polish Christmas Eve." The book can be purchased through the Polish American Journal bookstore.



BARELY VISIBLE in his yellow garments, Bishop Grosz (to right of photograph of St. John Paul II) addresses the audience at the chapel of the National Shrine of St. John Paul II.

continued from cover

ding a vast knowledge of Polish history. He said: "I am most grateful to Poland — that throughout a long and difficult history, Poland has remained true to herself.

I mean by this the Poland of Sobieski and Kościuszko; the Poland of Chopin and Sienkiewicz; of Mickiewicz and Górecki; of Anders and Sikorski. And, of course, the Poland of St. John Paul II and so many other Polish saints. Because Poland has remained Poland, the lives of all of us has been enriched."

After the official part of the ceremony it was time for a reception and camaraderie.

Saturday was a day dedicated to St. John Paul II. All the participants took part in the exhibit "A Gift Of Love: The Life Of Saint John Paul II." The superb museum part was the very first encounter dedicated to

the great Pope. The exposition depicted his life in a very realistic way on the background of history — the German invasion, the Soviet occupation, the Communist regime. The participant is caught up in the animated impression of the time which Karol Wojtyła lived, amplified by modern technology, panoramic pictures, moving images and the voice of St. John Paul II in various circumstances of his life. It makes a lasting impression on everyone regardless of his faith, cultural origin or religious denomination.

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

which purchased the former John Paul II Cultural Center, rebuilt the inside of the first floor and established a church with 570 seats, embellished by mosaics representing images of the Pope's life based on the Gospel. The altar was conse-

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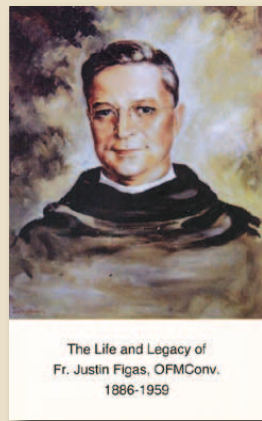
Fr. Justin's weekly message of spiritual guidance, encouragement and hope was an influence on generations of Polish immigrants, their children, and grandchildren. His broadcasts, begun in 1931, continues today as the longest continually running religious radio program in the world.

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crated in September 2015 by archbishop of Washington Donald Cardinal Wuerl and Stanislaw Cardinal Dziwisz, former secretary of John Paul II.

The entrance to the church is very traditional, original and innovative, with the mosaic inscription "Redemptor hominis" ("Redeemer of man"). Likewise the chapel of St. John Paul II with its magnificent art work which contains his relics is a place for devotion. The chapel was overcrowded with pilgrims on this day who participated in devotion by praying the Chaplet to Divine Mercy.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY

was the concelebrated mass with Bishop Edward Grosz from Buffalo, N.Y. as the main celebrant and homilist, with Bishop Janusz Stepnowski from Łomża, Poland and participating clergy. The music for the mass was arranged for vocal ensemble and trumpets by organist, Mira Cieślak who came to Washington with the group from St. Joseph Basilica in Webster. Very impressive was the prelude of the *Gaude Mater Polonia* in harmonization made by Teofil Klonowski. The 8th Gregorian Mass *De Angelis* was chosen for the *Ordinarium Missae*. Responsorial Psalm was sung by Patrycja Jarosz. Touching pieces, *Panis Agnelicus* by César Franck in arrangement for soprano solo and choir and *Ave Maria* by Franz Schubert were performed by Malgorzata Kellis.

This was the first celebration at the Shrine of St. John Paul II, sponsored by the St. John Paul II Foundation of New England. The purpose of the organization is to perpetuate the legacy of St. John Paul II; the Foundation is accepting new members. For more information, please contact the executive director, Barbara Pysk at (508) 459-0008.

Polish Christmas Carol Sing Along

NORTHAMPTON, Mass. — The Polish Heritage Committee in Northampton is sponsoring a Polish Christmas Carol Sing Along on Sunday, January 10, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Valentine Polish National Catholic Church, 127 King Street, Northampton.

All friends of Polonia are cordially invited to attend. The carols will be led by singers from area church choirs. An afternoon of music and fellowship is surely to be enjoyed by all. Refreshments will follow the event (in the parish hall of the church). If anyone has any questions, please call Chris Newman at (413) 584-4531 or Bob Gibowicz at (413) 586-1079.

MODLITWY

PUBLICATION OF PRAYERS. The Polish American Journal gladly accepts prayers ads for publication. They must be received by the 10th of each month, prior to the month of publication, and must be pre-paid at the cost of \$15.00 each, which can be paid by check or charge. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please call 1 (800) 422-1275 or (716) 312-8088.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. Holy Spirit, You who solve all problems, who light all roads so I can attain my goal. You who give me the Divine gift to forgive and to forget all evil against me and that in all instances of my life you are with me. I want this short prayer to thank you for all things and to confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you, even and in spite of all material illusion. I wish to be with you in eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. Thank you Holy Spirit. That person must say this prayer for 3 consecutive days. After 3 days, the favor requested will be granted, even if it may appear difficult. This prayer must be published immediately after the favor is granted, without mentioning the favor. Your initials should appear after the thank you. Thank You Holy Spirit. A.W.

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POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE (a non-profit corporation, State of New Jersey) begins its 30th year of helping children. An all volunteer non-profit organization receiving generous donations from Polonia and American supporters makes it possible for over 2000 Polish children to be treated annually by cardiac surgeons and physicians in hospitals in Poland. As requested, equipment critical to pediatric care is provided to six hospitals in Zabrze, Katowice, Lodz, Suwalki, Bialystok and Grajewo. Contributions may be made in memory of and/or honor of family and friends. Each donation is tax exempt and acknowledged. We thank you for your support and ask for your continued support for much help is still needed. "If we don't help our Polish children, who will?" —Doreen Patras Cramer, President

For information call (732) 680-0680 or write **POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE, INC., 177 BROADWAY, CLARK, NJ 07066**. e-mail: childshart@aol.com website: PolishChildrensHeartline.org

HAPPENINGS: CHICAGO STYLE / Geraldine Balut Coleman

Celebrating Paderewski at PMA

PHOTO: GERALDINE BALUT COLEMAN



Sveltana Belsky

CHICAGO — On November 21, Chicago experienced its first major snowstorm. Many chose to stay home and not venture out, but those who did make the trip to The Polish Museum of America (PMA) were in for a very special treat. In conjunction with the Second Annual Ignacy Jan Paderewski International Festival, the PMA hosted an early evening event that included a tour of the newly renovated, state-of-the-art Ignacy Paderewski Room and an outstanding musical performance by **Sveltana Belsky**, an accomplished chamber pianist and recitalist. Her enthusiasm and love of Paderewski's music made the trip to the PMA a delight. She created a remarkable rapport with the audience and her sensitive versatility animated each piece she played.

Belsky played Paderewski's *Humoresques de Concert, Opus 14, Sarabande, and Menuet*, along with Chopin's *Etudes Opus 25, Nos. 1 and 2; Prelude, Opus 28, No. 7 in A Major; Prelude, Opus 28, No. 6 in B Minor; Nocturne in C Sharp Minor; Opus Posthumously; and Nocturne in C Sharp Minor, Opus 27, No. 1*. Those in attendance applauded enthusiastically for her outstanding performance and interpretation of Paderewski's and Chopin's compositions. She, in turn, was thrilled that she was able to play on the same Steinway piano used by Paderewski donated to the PMA by the Polish Women's Alliance of America.

After the concert, the audience was treated a screening of the film, "Paderewski: The Man of Action, Success, and Fame," directed by Wiesław Dąbrowski. A Polish celebration would not be complete without special appetizers prepared by Kasia's Deli. The event was generously sponsored by the I.J. Roman Family Foundation.

Belsky emigrated from the Soviet Union and earned her Bachelor of Music degree, *summa cum laude*, and her Master's degree from the Peabody Conservatory of Music. She later went on to receive her Doctorate in Performance from the Manhattan School of Music. Presently, she is the Coordinator of Piano Studies at the University of Chicago where her studio is filled with many students from around the world. She has played performances in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and throughout the United States. Additionally, she has received many awards in international piano competitions.



Tadeusz "Ted" Martin

CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE AND AWARDING MEDALS. On November 12, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago held a ceremony on the occasion of Poland's Independence Day. Every year, the November gathering at the Consulate is also an opportunity to award honors to deserving representatives from the Polish and Polish American community.

Approximately 200 guests represented Polish and Polish American organizations, clergy, academia, business, and the arts. The celebration was also

graced by a delegation from the Chicago Institute of National Remembrance and the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw.

A solemn and touching portion of the evening saw the awarding of Poland's distinguished medals. The Silver Cross of Merit was awarded to **Bolesław Kulach** and **Andrew Mach**, and the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit was presented to **Stephen Kusmierczak**. The **Lira Ensemble**, artist-in-residence at Loyola University Chicago, was awarded the Medal of Honor of Merit for Polish Culture in recognition of its artistic excellence. Finally, the Cross of Merit with Swords of the Order of the Cross of Independence, *Orderu Krzyża Niepodległości*, one of Poland's highest awards, was presented to **Tadeusz "Ted" Martin**, a veteran of World War II, a Polish Army soldier, and a participant in the Warsaw Uprising. "My mother received the same honor from President Moscicki for the fight against the tsarist regime," said Martin. His award demonstrated that freedom and independence are valued by every Pole and that Polish patriotism is alive and well within Chicago's Polish community. Consul General Paulina Kapuścińska reminded the audience of Poland's difficult road to independence.

The guests were treated to a heartwarming concert of patriotic songs from Emilia Topór who sang both Polish and American selections. Additionally, Miroslawa Sojka-Topór, well-known Polish American soprano, renowned for combining classical with Highlander music, and Bartholomew Ciężobka, at the piano, delighted the guests.

POLISH CHRISTMAS TREE AT MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY. Since 1954, the Polish-themed Christmas tree has been a crowd pleaser at the "Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Lights" exhibit at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry (MOSAI). That same year, the late Elizabeth Link created the Polish Christmas ornaments each year and did so until her death in July, 2015.

In 2002, Elizabeth retired as chair of the Polish Christmas Tree Exhibit and her daughter, Miroslawa, accepted the leadership role.

Mira explains that, once a tree has been exhibited, she begins planning for next year's tree by researching Polish art, regional costumes, and dances in order to create authentic Polish-style ornaments, garland, and a topper star and skirt. Ornament-making starts in June and continues until the 12-foot tree has its



Siblings Link at Polish Christmas Tree at MOSAI.

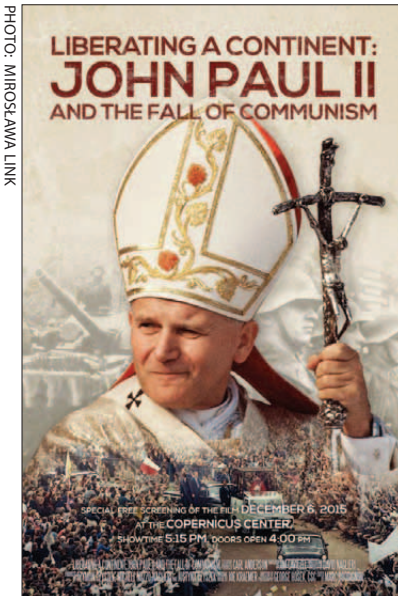
350-450 handmade ornaments. This year, Miroslawa's brother, **Jerzy Link**, joined her in continuing the Link family tradition.

Miroslawa Link, a native Chicagoan, is a graduate of Resurrection High School. She received her Bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Illinois Medical Center and her Master's in nursing from Northern Illinois University. When Mira is not creating ornaments, she is a nephrology (acute hemodialysis)/urogynecology nurse.

Her brother, Jerzy, is a graduate of Chicago's Lane Technical High School. He received his Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Illinois Chicago and his MBA from DePaul University. When not coordinating the Christmas Tree Exhibit, he is the IT director of a Chicago-based firm.

JOHN PAUL II DOCUMENTARY PREMIERED IN CHICAGO. The global premiere of the documentary film, *Liberating a Continent: John Paul II and the Fall of Communism*, took place on December 6 at the Copernicus Center on Chicago's Northwest Side. It was followed by a television viewing on Monday, December 7, on WTTW-11 (PBS).

Narrated by actor Jim Caviezel and with a very intensive musical score by renowned composer Joe Kraemer (*Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation* and *Jack Reacher*), the film traces John Paul's crucial role in the liberation of Central and Eastern Europe, which for decades had been under Soviet rule. It features archival footage, exclusive interviews with heads-of-state, including Lech Walesa, eyewitness testimonies of many of John Paul II's closest associates, and commentaries by renowned professors. It presents an in-depth effort to capture John Paul II's persuasion, both



John Paul II documentary poster. morally and spiritually, throughout Central and Eastern Europe, which led to the fall of communism in 1989. For information about this documentary contact: Vanessa Santilli at Vanessa@torchiacom.com or 416.341.9929, Ext. 228.



Dr. Robert and Alicia Dutka

POLISH ARTS CLUB JOINS IN THE YULETIDE SPIRIT. The Polish Arts Club of Chicago (PACC) kicked off the holiday season by holding its Christmas Luncheon on December 6 at the White Eagle in Niles. **Alicia Dutka**, president, welcomed guests and mentioned that the PACC will hold its 80th Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture from April 10-24, 2016, at The Polish Museum of America. She also announced that the PACC's 90th Annual Installation Luncheon will be held on June 12, 2016, at Café La Cave in Des Plaines, Illinois. Seventy guests enjoyed listening as **Edward Kunzman**, a PACC board member, played three Chopin preludes and three Chopin nocturnes. After the piano selections, everyone shared *oplatek*, followed by lunch. **Robert Dutka** added to the yuletide spirit by playing both Polish and English Christmas favorites on the piano, while guests sang along.

Smolensk Memorial Outside Presidential Palace

WARSAW — A memorial to the late President Lech Kaczyński and 95 other Poles who died in the 2010 air disaster in Smolensk, Russia will be built in front of the Presidential Palace. Such plans had been hotly opposed by the former government led by the Civic Platform party, which had wanted it erected in some out-of-the-way corner. Former Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński said it will be dedicated to his brother and all who died in the crash.



Become a member today

Polish American Historical Association

The Polish American Historical Association was established in December 1942 as a special commission of the The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America to collect, compile and publish information about Polish Americans. In October 1944, it was reorganized as a national American society to promote study and research in the history and social background of Americans of Polish descent. The Association, which was incorporated under the laws of Illinois in 1972, strives to assist and cooperate with all individuals and organizations interested in Polish American life and history. Contributions in support of the work of the Association are tax-exempt.

Regular one-year membership to the Association is \$40.00. (\$25.00 for students) made payable to the Polish American Historical Association.

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www.polishamericanstudies.org

SPOTLIGHT ON LONG ISLAND / Barbara Szydłowski

Feast of Three Kings, January 6

This holiday is called "Feast of the Three Kings" because it celebrates the coming of the Magi to Bethlehem, where the young child lay just twelve days after His birth. Each had been told in a vision that they were to meet one another in a certain place in the desert, where they were to follow a bright star onward to the East. They rode untiringly over the sands on their camels, until they reached the town of Bethlehem.

According to legend, they were: Melchior (also Melichior), a Persian scholar; A Hindu scholar named Kaspar (Gaspar, Jaspas, Jaspas, Gathaspa), and; Balthazar (also Balthasar, Balthasar, and Bithisarea), a Babylonian scholar. Upon seeing the heavenly infant, they knelt at His scared feet with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. It is said the gold represented the wealth of the East, frankincense was a symbol of purification, and myrrh, an ingredient of oil used for holy ointment, was a perfume.

Museum Corner

The Polish American Museum recently hosted A Christmas concert featuring traditional Polish Koledy sung by the Oginski Male Choir and English Christmas carols and holiday music as performed by Bill Wisniewski. For the holidays, the museum features both a traditional Christmas tree and a Polish Christmas tree decorated with imported straw ornaments from Poland. During the winter months, the museum will be on Wednesday and Thursday. For additional information call (516) 883-6542.

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending "The Imagination of the Folk," as performed by pianist Matthew Harrison and Vlada Yaneva at our library. Their program included music from the *Hungarian Dances* by Johannes Brahms; *Mazurkas Op. 50* by Karol Szymanowski; and music from *Slavonic Dances Op. 72* by Antonin Dvorak. Also, there was

time to visit the Long Island Air and Space Museum with many life size exhibits, which I finally got to visit after many years. Nassau County Fine Arts Museum also held a Maxfield Parrish Art Exhibit which I was able to view.

What Happened?

Since there are so few polka dances on the Island, will I forget how to dance?

January is National Polka Month, and the polka music is here, but where are the dancers? There are many musicians still playing your favorite polka music but are you showing your support by attending dances at the various clubs at where they appear? Will you be the reason that polka music fades into the sunset? Support polka music and the radio stations that play your favorite music week after week.

"Auld Lang Syne"

The custom of singing "Auld Lang Syne" at midnight on New Year's Eve is the reminder of a custom of ending all parties with the song, often with the participants joining hands in a circle. This custom originated in the British Isles around the turn of the century. It was popular in Scotland, because of the plaintive lyrics of the songs were written in 1788 by Scotland's national folk poet, Robert Burns. The Burns version was first printed in "Scots Musical Museum" published in 1796, a year after his death.

Father Time

The old man with a long beard, scythe and hourglass who turns up every New Year's Eve is the descendant of Saturn, who represented Father Time, as we know him. He carries the scythe to show he can destroy anything at will, and the hourglass is a sign of the unstoppable flow of time.



POLONIA OF THE EASTERN GREAT LAKES / Michael Pietruszka

Polonia Heritage Trail Gets Initial Funding

BUFFALO, N.Y. — On December 1st, the **Professional and Businessmen's Association** held its Christmas Party, Elections and Man-of-the-Year Presentation at Shea's Performing Art Center in Downtown Buffalo. Frank Orlikowski, John Pawlak and Mark Gacek were elected to the group's board at the event ... The **Chopin Singing Society** hosted its "Wigilia: Traditional Polish Christmas Celebration" at the Millennium Hotel on December 5th. The event was a great success, attracting hundreds of WNY Polonians ... Also on the 5th, **St. John Kanty Parish** on Buffalo's East Side held annual Homemade Christmas Cookie and Placek Sale ... The **Pulaski Police Association of Buffalo and WNY** held its Annual Christmas Party and Installation Dinner at the Polish Falcons Hall in Depew on December 5th ... The **Polka Variety Social Club** held its Christmas Party with the Buffalo Concertina All Stars, and the **Syracuse Polish Home** hosted its "Mikolajki" party for children, on December 5th ... **Dr. Richard Merritt** of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario has written a new book, "Training for Armageddon: Niagara Camp in the Great War, 1914-1919," which details the story of Polish-American and -Canadian volunteers in Haller's Blue Army during World War I.

District IX of the **Polish Singers Alliance of America** presented its "35th Annual Festival of Polish Christmas Carols" at St. Stanislaus Church in Buffalo's Historic Polonia District on December 6th. The Chopin Singing Society, Chopin Men's Choir, Kalina Women's Chorus and Symfonia Singing Society participated in the event ... **Ascension Parish** in Batavia hosted a "Wigilia" Dinner in Slomba Hall on December 6th ... The **General Pulaski Association** held its Christmas Party at Grapevine Banquets in Depew on December 7th. Members brought stuffed animals for donation to the Child Advocacy Center. The new Countess Pulaski, Olivia Nasternak, and Princess Pulaski, Kiera Pasinski, participated in the event ... On December 9th, the **Polish Arts Club of Buffalo** held its annual meeting at the Harlem Road Community Center in Amherst. Mary Jane Masiulionis gave a program on Polish Christmas traditions at the meeting ... On December 10th, the **Buffalo-Rzeszow Sister Cities Committee** held its "Krupnik Salute to 2015" at the St. Stanislaus' Pitass Center ... Special Delivery provided the music for the **Buffalo Polka Boosters** Christmas Party on the 12th ... The Polish Heritage Society of Rochester hosted its traditional "Wigilia" Dinner in the Cleary Auditorium on the St. John Fisher College Campus on December 12th ... The **Polish Arts Club of**



TRAIL BLAZERS. Polish American Congress Western New York Division directors Andrew Kucharski (left) and James Ławicki (second from left) and, along with Polish Legacy Project founder Andrew Gołębiowski (right), accepted a \$10,000 check from Erie County Comptroller Stefan Mychajliw, in support for the establishment of a Polonia Heritage Trail in Western New York.

The funds were allocated and unanimously approved by the Erie County Legislature.

The Polonia Heritage Trail is a project dedicated to showcasing historic sites throughout WNY having significance to the Polish American community. Once complete, the Trail itself will allow individuals to physically or virtually explore architecture, clubs, meeting houses, residences, churches, cemeteries, and other sites that have figured prominently within the area's Polonia.

The project is a collaboration between the Polish American Congress and The Polish Legacy Project.

Buffalo celebrated its Annual "Wigilia" and 70th Anniversary Dinner at the Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga, the State University of New York at Buffalo **Polish Student Association** hosted its "43rd Annual Wigilia" at the Newman Center in Amherst, the **Niagara Polish Cultural and Historical Society** held its "Wigilia" at Koban's Restaurant in Niagara Falls, and the **Kalina Singing Society** held its "Wigilia" at the Millennium Hotel on December 13th ... The WNY Division of the **Polish American Congress** enjoyed Babcia's Pierogi at its December 17th general membership meeting in the Msgr. Pitass Center at Buffalo's St. Stanislaus Parish ... On the 19th, the **Polish Cadets of Buffalo** hosted its Holiday Dinner Party at its Grant Street clubrooms ... **DjRed** and "Aaron the Golumpki King" appeared at the **Adam Mickiewicz Library and Dramatic Circle's** Christmas Party on December 19th ... The **Msgr. Adamski Polish Saturday School** performed their "Jaselka" at St. Stanislaus Church in Buffalo on December 20th.

Buffalo **Bishop Richard Malone** celebrated Mass and enjoyed a pastoral visit to Corpus Christi Parish on the 20th. After Mass, the bishop blessed hay for the participants' Wigilia observances ... The **John Paul II Polish Cultural Centre** in Mississauga hosted a "Traditional Polish Wigilia," and Toronto's **SPK Post 20** held its "Wigilia" at its Beverley Street clubrooms, on December 24th ... On December 27th, the **Polish Heritage Dancers of WNY** and soprano **Brittany Mruczek** performed "A Polish Christmas in the Village" at the Lancaster Opera House ... "Sylwester" was celebrat-

ed by Polonians at various locations in Western New York and Southern Ontario.

UPCOMING. On January 10th, Buffalo Mass Mob XIV will take place at **St. Luke's Mission of Mercy** on Sycamore Street ... The **Polish Arts Club of Buffalo** announced the following upcoming events: Mary Jane Masiulionis' presentation on St. John Paul II's play, "The Jeweler's Shop" at the Harlem Road Community Center on January 20th; Annual Installation Luncheon at Gregor's Garden Grove in West Seneca on January 31st; and Joe Macielag's lecture on "Polka - The Polish American Cultural Anthem?" at the Harlem Road Community Center on February 17th.

WNYer **Michael Marszalkowski's** new play, "The Trial of Juan Diego," which depicts a trial between believers in freedom of religion and freedom from religion in public schools, will be staged during 2016 ... The WNY Division of the Polish American Congress will host its "**Kulig Winter Festival 2016**" at the Chestnut Ridge Park Casino in Orchard Park on February 7th ... **Rev. Matt Nycz** will be leading a Catholic "Saints of Mercy" Pilgrimage to Poland in mid-May, 2016 ... The Buffalo Bisons baseball team announced that its **Polish Festival Night** will be held on Tuesday, August 9, 2016 at Coca-Cola Field in Downtown Buffalo.

If you have an item for this column, please send the information by the 6th day of the month preceding publication month (i.e. January 6 for the February issue) to pietruszka@verizon.net.

POLISH NIGHT
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SATURDAY January 16, 2016

EVENTS

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6:15 pm Polka lesson
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THE PONDERING POLE / Ed Poniewaz

In Praise of Young People

We all hear the horror stories about kids that are out of control and have gone down the wrong road in life. It is the start of 2016 and let's throw some collective water on our faces, regroup on the attitudes that need to be corrected, and give many thanks for all of the children that are out there engaged and even making a difference. Here are two Polish gals that seem to have their stuff together.

I am blessed to be the father of two beautiful and intelligent daughters, the youngest of which was married November 14, 2015. Brigette Aniela Poniewaz and Alexander Richter Schubert made a life commitment to each other and I am so happy for these two capable, smart, and gentle souls. May God bless them and keep them safe.

"Brig" lives in California but was married in an old, beautiful church in Mascoutah, Illinois, twenty five miles east of St. Louis. My admiration for her is immense for all of the planning, organizing, and decision-making she did for her wedding, long distance, on time, and (as far as I know) within budget. It is wonderful to see a woman on a mission



Brigette Aniela Poniewaz and Alexander Richter Schubert

even down to the task of creating her bouquets and boutonnières and assembling them the night before — mostly by herself. Oh and there is more, she picked a great guy to marry.

Young woman number two is someone my associate, Jack, directed me to in a piece on the Smithsonian website about an inventor named **Lilianna Zyszkowski**. Lilianna is fifteen years old now, but when she

was 11 she invented a "life-saving device to help people track their medication."

Her best known (invention) is the PillMinder, a device that tracks medication intake. Zyszkowski came up with the idea in the sixth grade, after her grandfather accidentally overdosed on his blood thinners and ended up in the hospital. "It was pretty scary," she says.

If you read the article (just Google her), you will be struck by the maturity in the voice of this girl. Anyone who says things like "I like people with big ideas" probably has a few of her own. Big ideas for inventing things or creating bouquets, it is the kind of thing that keeps the rest of going as well.

POLISH OR NOT? The show *Strange Inheritance* featured a taxidermy business in transition begun by a man named Steve Kulash. Now deceased, Steve Kulash was well-known in Hollywood and elsewhere for the beautiful and realistic work he and his sons produced. Check out episode 25 "Masters of Taxidermy" and the "legendary Vancouver taxidermy shop." Polish or not?

In the April 2013 issue of the *Polish American Journal*, the Pondering Pole asked if Chris Botti, the super smooth jazz trumpet player and friend of Poland was Polish because of his classical piano playing mother. In a recent EthniCelebs post, Chris is Italian on his father's side and mom comes in as English, Scottish, and German. The blond hair was another clue, but not a Polish blond.

A guest on Fox's *Stossel*, the show created and hosted by television personality and author John Stossel was **Paul Zak**, a professor at Claremont Graduate University. Paul has the following very impressive credentials (from Wikipedia):

Paul J. Zak (born 9 February 1962) is an American neuroeconomist known as a proponent of neuroeconomics. His current work applies neuroscience to build high performance organizations and to understand and guide consumer decisions.

Zak graduated with degrees in mathematics and economics from San Diego State University before acquiring a PhD in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania. He

is a professor at Claremont Graduate University in Southern California. He has studied brain imaging, and was the first to identify the role of oxytocin in mediating trusting behaviors between unacquainted humans.

There is more about him in Wikipedia or find his staff bio on the Claremont Graduate University website. My tip and Christmas present for the ladies, check out Paul Zak as he is definitely easy on the eyes. Professor Zak, is he Polish or not?

Say a prayer for Brig and Alex as they search for the truth and find happiness throughout their life together. Dzienkuje bardzo to Jack Jackowski for finding our new Polish genius, Lili Zyszkowski. If you have a thought about this month's topic, have a question, or have interesting facts to share, contact me at: Edward Poniewaz, 6432 Marmaduke Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63139; email alinabrig@yahoo.com.

N.B. If you send email, reference the Polish American Journal or the Pondering Pole in the subject line. I will not open an email if I do not recognize the subject or the sender.

OUR POLISH SAINTS / Martin Nowak

The Canonization Process

In 966 Prince Mieszko, the ruler of Poland, accepted Latin rite Christianity, and ever since then the Roman Catholic Church has played an important role in the lives of most Poles and Polish Americans. One popular aspect of Catholicism throughout the centuries, for those of Polish descent as well as others, has been the veneration of saints.



Mieszko I

WHAT IS A SAINT? A saint is a person who lived an extraordinary holy life of heroic virtue. Such persons are deemed worthy of veneration by the faithful as examples to be followed in their own lives.

The church makes clear that saints are not to be worshiped, but venerated, that is, honored. Saints may be asked to intercede with God on behalf of someone, because God had an obvious presence in these saints' lives.

More than 10,000 Catholic saints are recognized. At first, the appellation "saint" was applied to Apostles and early Christians who were universally accepted as having led exemplary holy lives. As time went by, other saints were declared locally and they had to have been martyrs for the faith. By the year 400 A.D. non-martyrs began to be accepted if approved by the local bishop.

In 804 Pope Leo III was the first pope to canonize a saint, and in 1153 the last canonization by a local bishop occurred. In 1173 Pope Alexander III declared the right of canonization exclusively for the Holy Father. Beginning in the 1600s a formal process for sainthood was instituted by the Vatican: the person must have been a martyr, that is, having died for the faith, or have performed four posthumous miracles. Over the years, this process has been liberalized, most notably by Pope John Paul II, who was criticized for "saint inflation," having named more than 400 saints during

his papacy.

Currently, a recognized saint must have been a martyr or have two posthumous miracles attributed to him or her. But these rules are routinely waived through a process called cultus confirmation, whereby the pope recognizes the local veneration of a person as saintly, thereby confirming formal recognition of that person as a saint churchwide.

THE USUAL STEPS on the Vatican's road to sainthood are as follows:

1. The local bishop is petitioned by the faithful on behalf of a candidate.
2. The bishop is convinced of possible sainthood and sends the case to the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints. An investigation is begun and the Congregation sends its findings to the pope.
3. Veneration. The pope agrees that the person led a virtuous life and is worthy of veneration. He or she is then called a Servant of God.
4. Beatification. Martyrdom is accepted by the pope or a miracle is declared by the Congregation attributable to the candidate. The pope declares the person "blessed," a feast date is established and masses may be said locally in the blessed's honor.

5. Canonization. A second miracle is determined. The pope can declare sainthood. In the case of martyrs, no miracles are necessary. The pope may recognize such a person to be a saint after prayer and reflection.

This process cannot normally begin until five years after the death of the candidate for recognition of his or her sainthood, but this requirement can be waived, as it was in the case of St. John Paul II. In some cases saints are recognized only after several centuries have passed and in others it happens quickly.

It is incorrect to say that the church makes a saint. It only recognizes the saintliness that God had instilled in that person. Also, a common misconception about the Catholic holy day of All Saints is that it is to honor only all the saints that the church has canonized. But All Saints Day honors all saints, those known to man and those known only to God, for it is possible that He has not revealed to us all those who have been martyrs or who have performed miracles or heroic deeds.

ABOUT FIFTY POLES or persons with a connection to Poland have been recognized as saints and there are many Polish blessed. In the coming months we shall take a brief look at the lives of these holy people and see why they are so worthy of veneration by the faithful.



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"There is no train," say Scientists

WALBRZYCH, Poland (The Guardian) — Scientists have quashed a claim by two amateur treasure hunters that they had discovered a legendary gold train hidden by the Nazis in a southern Polish railway embankment.

"There is no train," Prof Janusz Madej of the Polish mining academy told a press conference in the city of Wałbrzych. The conference was attended by dozens of journalists and television crews who began following the gold train story after the treasure hunters made their claim in August 2015. "The geomagnetic model anomalies would be far greater if there was a train," he said.

Madej spoke after a team of scientists spent a month surveying a site at the 22-mile mark on the Wrocław-Wałbrzych railway line identified as the train's resting place.

After the Polish army cleared

the railway embankment, the scientists from the mining academy used magnetic field detectors, thermal imaging cameras and radars to scan the spot where the enthusiasts claimed they had found a train hidden in a tunnel and sealed by exploded rocks.

But the treasure hunters, Piotr Koper and Andreas Richter, attempted to keep speculation alive, telling the press conference they had found further evidence of the train's existence.

DID YOU KNOW? Poland is home to the world's largest white stork population, which spends winters in Africa and comes to nest in Poland, where they are a sign of spring. It is considered good luck if storks build their nest on your roof or on a nearby tree or telephone pole.

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TRAVELOGUE Five Days in Poland / Staś Kmieć

Wrocław – Many Names and Nationalities

Part XVIII

Passing the imposing municipal stadium, *Stadion Miejski*, my sights are set on the new Polish city I am about to discover – Wrocław. Going through city sites, the *Mazowsze* buses arrive at the Park Hotel Diament, a modern, business hotel located 10 minutes from the historic Old Town. Krzysiek informs me that I will be taking the room that was reserved by the concert presenters for *Mazowsze's* Director, as he was unable to attend. To avoid any confusion when checking in, I was to assume this persona and sign in as the Director – a position I would actually love to hold.

My room is comfortable and very large, actually a handicap room with lots of space to navigate a wheelchair, and an easy-access floor level shower with pull-away curtain. I have a half hour to settle and change into a suit to accompany the troupe to the *Rynek* Square for general rehearsal and sound check in preparation for the evening's outdoor performance.

Lower Silesia's historic capital, Wrocław, is the fourth largest city in Poland and has an exhilarating big-city feel to it, yet behind this animated appearance lies an extraordinary story of emergence from the verge of ruin. The city's location, close to the borders of both Germany and the Czech Republic is one reason why the city frequently changed nationalities during its long history.

The city's special nature comes from the fact that it contains the soul of two great cities. One, the city that has long stood on this spot – Slavic by origin, but for centuries dominated by Germans. The other is Lwów (now Lviv), capital of Polish Ukraine. The city was annexed by the Soviets in 1939 and retained by them in 1945. After the war, its displaced population was forcibly relocated and encouraged to take over the severely depopulated Wrocław, which had been confiscated from Germany and was now being offered as a "ready-made home."

Wrocław dates from the 9th century with the earliest settlements established on small islands within the River Odra by a Slavonic tribe called the *Ślężanie*. Absorbed into Czech Bohemia, the expanding fortress was first recorded in the 10th century under the name "Wratislavia," thought to be derived from the name of the Bohemian duke Wratislav I. In 990, the Piast duke Mieszko I conquered the region and by 1000 AD the city had expanded to 1,000 inhabitants, prompting Polish king Bolesław I to establish Silesia's first bishopric.

Over the next century, religious and political conflict saw the region pass back forth between Poland and Bohemia, before finding stability under the Silesian Piast dynasty which ruled the area when Poland was divided into principalities.

A MONGOL SIEGE in 1241 devastated the city, but it was rebuilt with city planners expanding it to incorporate many of the outlying settlements, shifting the city center to

the other side of the river, building a moat and defensive walls around it, and laying out the market square. The city grew and flourished, attracting Germans, Poles, Jews and Czechs. German immigration grew to such heights that they became the dominant demographic – outnumbering the city's Slavic population. They gained power in the city council and renamed the town *Breslau*.

The Piast line petered out in 1335 when Duke Henryk VI died without an heir and earlier treaties dictated the transfer of the region to Bohemian rule once again. Under the Luxembourg dynasty the city generally prospered, but the dominance of the merchant class, which controlled the Town Council, led to strife with the church and lower classes resulting in revolt in 1418, when guildsmen stormed the Town Hall and beheaded the mayor.

Printing with movable type began in 1475, with many variations of the city's name appearing including *Wretslav*, *Wratislav*, *Prez-*

toll, cutting the population in half.

During the Counter-reformation, many Catholic orders were encouraged by the emperor to settle in Silesia's capital, including the Jesuits, who founded the Wrocław Jesuit Academy in 1702, which would later grow into today's Wrocław University.

During the War of Austrian Succession, the Kingdom of Prussia laid claim to much of Silesia, and in 1741, Prussian troops entered what was then known as "Breslau" without a conflict. Protestants could express their faith freely in the new kingdom and Prussian authorities allowed for the establishment of a Jewish community. Over the course of the century the popula-

tion increased 8-fold (including the third largest Jewish population in Germany) and Breslau grew into the second largest city in Prussia. When the German Empire was consolidated in 1871, Breslau entered as the third largest city after Berlin and Hamburg.

By being behind the frontlines of World War I, Breslau avoided damage and was even able to recover quickly from the economic impoverishment that came with the end of the conflict. In 1930 it was chosen to host the *Deutsche Kampfspiele* – a showcase of German athletics after Germany was banned from the Olympic Games. The Nazi Party developed one of its largest support bases in Breslau, which played a large role in voting it to power in 1933.

In 1938 state-organized persecution against the city's minorities began in earnest. The city's Polish and Jewish communities were intimidated, suppressed, and ultimately liquidated. Most of Breslau's remaining Jews were sent to perish in the concentration camps, while all traces of Polish culture in the city were destroyed or removed through Germanization.

Breslau was largely spared of Allied bombing and far from the battle lines. By early 1945, the Soviet Red Army had encircled the city for a siege. Declaring Breslau as a fortress city, Hitler ordered it to be defended at all costs. The last major city in the Third Reich to surrender to the Allies, Breslau capitulated on May 6, 1945 – the war in Europe officially ended only two days after Breslau's defeat. Fifty percent of

TIMELINE OF WROCLAW'S HISTORICAL AFFILIATIONS

- Duchy of Bohemia early 900s-990
- Kingdom of Poland 990-1038
- Duchy of Bohemia 1038-1054
- Kingdom of Poland 1054-1202
- Duchy of Silesia 1202-1335
- Kingdom of Bohemia 1335-1469
- Kingdom of Hungary 1469-1490
- Kingdom of Bohemia 1490-1526
- Habsburg Monarchy 1526-1742
- Kingdom of Prussia 1742-1871
- German Empire 1871-1918
- Weimar Germany 1918-1933
- Nazi Germany 1933-1945
- People's Republic of Poland 1945-1989
- Republic of Poland 1989-present



Wrocław's Old Town Hall stands at the center of the city's Market Square. The Gothic building is one of the main landmarks of the city.

zla, Presslay, Bressla, and Bresslau. By 1526, when Bohemian King Louis Jagiellon's death ended prolonged fighting over Bohemian succession and transferred the city to the Austrian Habsburg dynasty, the Reformation had reached the Silesian capital and Protestantism had become the dominant religion. During the Thirty Years War (1618-48), the city fought to maintain its Protestantism. Plague and war took their

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Wrocław (German: Breslau) became part of Poland in 1945, as a result of the border changes after the Second World War. Today it is the largest city in western Poland and the capital of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship.

the Old Town was in ruin and the western and southern suburbs were almost completely obliterated.

IN THE WAR'S AFTERMATH, Breslau was annexed by Poland and renamed to its former Polish name, "Wrocław." The city's German majority was subsequently expelled, replaced by Poles who had been previously expelled from areas of eastern Poland now annexed by the Soviet Union. A long period of reconstruction followed, characterized equally by Polonisation and de-Germanisation; all German monuments and inscriptions were removed and Wrocław's non-Jewish cemeteries were destroyed.

At the same time Sovietization was beginning: businesses were nationalized, Polish political and religious leaders were imprisoned and the full Communist takeover of Poland was complete by 1948. The authorities took full credit for restoring Lower Silesia and boasted of their success rebuilding the city and incorporating it into the Soviet

system.

By the late 1950s, Wrocław returned to its former population level and established itself as one of Poland's main urban, economic, cultural and academic centers. In August 1980, Wrocław's workers joined the general strike called by Gdańsk's Solidarity Trade Union. In 1990, Wrocław's first post-Communist city council restored the city's historical coat of arms, symbolizing the city's acceptance of its entire history, even during German domination.

On the bus riding over the many bridges on route to the Old Town, my eyes are fixed on every aspect of this historic city and its succession of influences. The competing styles are seemingly in the midst of an identity crisis, where decorative centuries-old architecture share urban space with concrete utilitarian buildings. The elegance, Baroque splendor and colorful facades of the Market Square come into view and my adventure awaits.

to be continued

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POLISH CHEF / Robert Strybel

More Meaty Post-Wigilia Specialties

continued from last month

Except for Christmas Eve supper, which is traditionally meatless, roast poultry and other meat dishes including bigos reign supreme during the long post-Wigilia holiday season which in Polish tradition runs beyond New Year's, even all the way to Candlemas (Feb. 2nd). Here are some old Polish favorites of the season.

ROAST TURKEY POLONAISE (indyk po polsku). Wash and pat dry 8-12 lb turkey. Rub inside and out with salt and let stand covered at room temp 2 hr. Crumble up 12 - 15 slices stale French bread (or equivalent amount of charka, kaiser rolls, buns, etc.) into bowl and drench with 2 c milk. Mix and let soak. When soggy, grind with raw turkey liver and 5 raw chicken livers. Add: 4 egg yolks, beaten until creamy with 4 T soft butter, and 1 T sugar; 1 c drained, presoaked raisins; 1 c ground blanched almonds; and 3 - 4 T chopped parsley. Season with salt & pepper, 1/4 t grated nutmeg and 2 pinches or so ground cloves. Mix well. Gently fold in 4 beaten egg whites

and toss very gently. Mixture should be moist and soggy, as it firms up during roasting. If it is very wet, add 1/4 - 1/2 c bread crumbs. Fill cavity loosely and sew bird up. (Note: This quantity is about right for a 10-lb turkey, so adjust the amount to the size of your bird.) Tuck ends of drumsticks under skin flaps and place in roaster. Rub all over with butter and place thin wide strips of pork fatback (slonina) on breast and drumsticks. Roast uncovered in 450° oven 20 min to sear, then reduce heat to 350°. Drench turkey with 2 c boiling water and baste frequently with pan drippings. Roast about 20-25 min per lb.

ROAST STUFFED CHICKEN (kurczę pieczone nadziewane). Wash and pat dry a 3-4 lb broiler or roaster (chicken). Rub insides and out with salt & pepper and let stand covered at room temp 1 hr. Coarsely dice 8 - 12 oz fresh, washed, drained mushrooms (the white button type or Portobello, or some of each) and sauté in 2-3 T butter with 1 chopped onion until cooked, stirring frequently until pan liquid evaporates. Mix with 3-4 c cooked, slightly

underdone rice. Stir in 1 small whole egg, add 1-2 T chopped parsley and/or dill and salt & pepper to taste. Stuff bird with mixture, sew up, tying legs together. Rub chicken all over with a little oil, sprinkle with pepper and paprika and rub in. Bake in preheated 375° oven about 75 - 90 min. Baste occasionally with pan drippings.

ROAST DUCK WITH APPLES (kaczka pieczona z jabłkami). Wash a 4-5 lb duck and pat dry. Rub inside and out with salt, pepper, marjoram and (optional) 1 bud crushed garlic. Let stand in covered roasting pan at room temp 2 hrs. Stuff tightly with unpeeled, cored quarters of tart cooking apples. Cut off protruding fat at neck end and sew up neck and tail openings. Place duck on rack in roasting pan and roast in preheated 450°-500° oven 10-15 min, turning over to sear on all sides. Reduce to 350°-375°, sprinkle with 2 T water, prick with fork to release fat and roast 90 - 120 min or until fork tender. Baste with pan drippings frequently. Since the apple stuffing shrinks considerably, prepare additional ap-

ples on the side. Place 2 - 3 additional, peeled apple quarters in pan, drench with several T duck pan drippings, sprinkle with marjoram and bake in same oven the last 45 min.

NOTE: Roast goose can also be stuffed with just apples.

BAKED APPLES & CRANBERRIES (jabka pieczone z żurawiną). Remove core from as many medium-sized apples as you have dinner guests, but leave bottom intact. Fill opening with cranberry jam (preferably imported Łowicz brand Żurawina). Place in pan in water 1-1/2" deep and bake in 350° oven 30-40 min or until done. Serve on the side with roast poultry, especially if you have not stuffed them with fruit. Other poultry go-togethers include: 1) cranberry sauce (imported Łowicz brand Żurawina is about the best); 2) tangy cranberry sauce: fork-blend 1 c Łowicz brand Żurawina with a heaping t prepared horseradish; 3) Lingonberry sauce (Łowicz also markets Borówka which is similar to cranberry sauce); 4) spiced plums (śliwki w occie); 5) spiced pears (gruszki w occie).

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 Casey Barber is a freelance food writer, photographer, and editor of the critically acclaimed website Good Food. Stories.

recipes perfectly using exact American measurements.
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recipes facilitate the preparation of the dishes and their incorporation in the Polish American mainstream culture.
Polish Holiday Cookery covers holidays such as Christmas and Easter, as well as celebrations year-round. Ideas for banquets, picnics, dinners, and family favorites abound throughout, ensuring that cooks have a selection of dishes for any occasion.
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both Polish and English. From mazurkas and babas to pastries and beverages, these recipes are designed for the modern kitchen but retain their traditional roots. Each of the forty-five desserts are tested to perfection and paired with mouthwatering photographs and notes on Polish history and customs.
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PAJ Bookstore Price: \$15.95
 Ethnic / Polish
 384 pp.
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 Reissued by Pelican Publ., *The Art of Polish Cooking*, contains 500 authentic recipes, complete with recipes for hors d'oeuvres, soups, entrees, vegetables, pastries, desserts, and beverages. Special holiday menus are also presented, along with charming descriptions of traditional Polish feasts and celebrations. Author Alina Zeranska provides easy-to-follow recipes for favorites like Cabbage Rolls, Chicken in Dill Sauce, Meat Pierogis, and Fruit Mazurka. Zeranska has translated these Polish

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POLISH CLASSIC RECIPES
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 by Laura and Peter Zeranski
 2011, 96 pp., h.c., index, 100 color photographs by Matthew Aron Roth
 Designed for the modern kitchen yet retaining traditional roots, each heritage recipe in *Polish Classic Recipes* has been tested to perfection. Accompanied by notes on Polish holiday customs, history, and menu pairing suggestions, these dishes offer a flavorful sample of the Polish dining experience, as passed down from generation to generation.
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BOOKS IN BRIEF/ Mary Lanham

Polish Spitfire Aces and Poor Your Soul

POLISH SPITFIRE ACES

by Wojtek Matusiak

Illustrated by Robert Grudzień

Osprey Publishing, 2015, 96 pps.

PO Box 3985

New York, NY 10185-3985

ospreypublishing.com

In response to the invasion and occupation of Poland in September of 1939 by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the Polish government-in-exile was created. First based in France, the government-in-exile soon moved to London. As a result of Great Britain's need for friendly troops, the Polish Armed Forces were allowed to be based on British soil with the Polish Air Force fighting alongside the Royal Air Force. The Polish Air Force formed over a dozen fighter squadrons most notably using the British made Spitfire aircraft. *Polish Spitfire Aces* relays the histories and first-hand accounts of the accomplished Polish pilots that flew the Spitfires, detailed information about the various types of Spitfires themselves, and the operations in which the PAF squadrons fought.

In the tradition of all Osprey publications, *Polish Spitfire Aces* in the "Aircraft of

the Aces" series not only presents its text in a clear and concise manner it also contains many historical photographs and intricate color illustrations. Among the various photographs of Spitfires and their pilots is a 1941 image of Henryk Szczęsny, the first Polish Spitfire Ace. Other interesting photographs include the front view of Pilot Officer Michał Cwynar as he looks through the reflector gun-sight of a Spitfire as well as one that depicts Captain Francis Gabreski hugging a plane's propeller. In addition to dozens of archival photographs, 36 individual Spitfires are painstakingly recreated in extraordinary detail by Robert Grudzień.

This book also contains an index, bibliography, color plate details, and six appendices which include lists of official victories by individual Polish Aces and non-Polish Aces who flew Spitfires with Polish units.

Polish Spitfire Aces is an essential addition to any World War II library and is now available on OspreyPublishing.com and Amazon.com.

About the author. Wojtek Matusiak is an accomplished researcher and writer on the Polish Air Force during World War II and Spitfires. He has previously written a volume for Osprey's Aircraft of the Aces series. Matusiak is co-editor of Poland's monthly aviation

journal, *Skrzydłata Polska*.

About the illustrator. Robert Grudzień has illustrated almost all of Wojtek Matusiak's publications about World War II aviation. Grudzień is an expert on Polish military aviation and did most of the research relating to the artwork in this Osprey volume.

POOR YOUR SOUL

by Mira Ptacin

Soho Press Inc, 2016, 309 pps.

853 Broadway

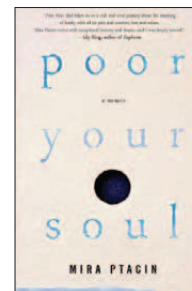
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When Mira Ptacin unexpectedly becomes pregnant, she is afraid, but hopeful for the future. She quickly becomes engaged and starts planning for her baby's arrival. Five months into the pregnancy, Mira's world turns upside down when her baby is diagnosed with multiple birth defects and she faces an agonizing decision. In her memoir, *Poor Your Soul*, Ptacin leads us on a journey that is painful, heartfelt, humorous at times, and very real.

Smoothly transitioning from the present to her childhood in Battle Creek, Michigan, Ptacin relates to us not only her own personal story but that of her mother, a Polish immigrant. Growing up in Poland, Mira's mother, Maria, had a difficult life, at times going



without food. After suffering the loss of someone very close to her, Maria emigrated to the U.S., where she met and married Mira's father. Many years later, Maria suffered another tragic loss, the death of her teenage son, Julian. Ptacin skillfully interweaves these two stories

about mother and daughter, giving us an honest view of tragedy and the strength born from grief.

Poor Your Soul by Mira Ptacin is out this month and is available on Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, and IndieBound.org.

About the author. Born and raised in Battle Creek, Michigan Mira Ptacin later moved to New York to attend Sarah Lawrence College where she earned her MFA in Nonfiction Writing. Previously a writing instructor of a writing program in Portland, Maine, Mira now teaches memoir writing to women at the Maine Correctional Facility. Ptacin has written for *Guernica*, *Slice Literary Magazine*, and *Poets & Writers Magazine* among many others. She currently lives in Peaks Island, Maine with her husband, children, and two dogs.

POLONIA PLACES
GREGORY L. WITUL

Polish Falcons Nest 307

33 Knowles Avenue
Southington, Connecticut
Status: Open



Nest 307 as it appeared in the 1940s.

If the Polish American Congress is the vanguard of Polonia, than the Polish Falcons must be her paladins. This Polish-American athletic association, which at one point had over 800 Nests spread across the continent, has been one of the backbones of Polonia for over 100



The building at 33 Knowles Avenue today.

years. Today, 41 of these nests still have buildings of their own and one of them is Nest 307 in Southington, Connecticut.

At the dawn of the twentieth century a fair number of Poles had settled on the west side of Southington along the banks of the Quinnipiac River. In short order the community began to form its own clubs and societies. On June 11, 1911, sixteen men gathered in the home of Martin Folcik and chartered a Polish Falcons Nest for Southington. The same day they elected Frank Zygmunt president, Joseph Folick vice-president, Frank Zajac financial secretary and Blazej Zim recording secretary.

The Nest quickly grew and meeting in members' homes was no lon-

ger feasible. In 1913, a lot at the corner of Summer Street and Knowles Avenue was purchased and in short order Nest 307 built itself a home. With a building and a large plot of land to work with, the Nest soon excelled in many of the Falcons' athletic activities. Inside there was room to practice gymnastics and bowling, while outside a baseball team could be fielded. In time the building would be expanded to include air conditioning and a modern kitchen. By 1916, the Nest was large enough and influential enough to host the Falcons state convention. In 1919, the women of Nest 307 organized the Lady Falcons to handle the social functions and general welfare of the Nest.

The 1930s were a good decade

for 307. In 1935 the Nest got to host the District Convention of the Falcons and in 1936 they celebrated their Silver Jubilee. The weekend event started off on June 13 with a dance where WIXBS' famous Warsaw Radio Orchestra provided the music. Then next morning, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church held a special Mass for the Falcons that was followed by a luncheon. At the meal, local politicians, district Nests and members of the National Polish Falcons of America all recognized 307 for the work they had done not only for the organization, but the community as a whole.

As good as the 1930s were, the '40s would be tougher on the Nest. Over the course of the Second World War, 41 Falcons of 307 signed up to serve, with Roger Jurglewicz, John Ziemba, and Stanley Putala making the ultimate sacrifice. On the home front, the Nest sponsored a number of Bond Rallies, raising \$150,000 for the war effort, with \$7,000 coming from their own coffers.

From the end of the War to today Nest 307 has worked hard to and maintained its importance to not only the Polish Falcons of America but to Southington as well. Even now Nest 307 is still very active. In the past year they have hosted a dinner to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project, their Nest family picnic, and a very well attended Memorial Day picnic.

Students Enjoy Christmas at Consulate



Agatha Paleczny leads children in the singing of Christmas carols.

CHICAGO — The Consulate General of Poland arranged a meeting between young students and Santa Claus, on Dec. 5.

On the program was a performance of the children's band "Little Stars," led by Agatha Paleczny, who conducted a sing-along, the meet-

ing with Santa and the distribution of gifts. This year, the presents were donated by PNC Bank. Food and refreshments were courtesy of Krakus ham and Oak Mill Bakery.

Over 120 children from several Polish community schools attended the event.

Actress Stefanie Powers Pays Visit



Stefanie Powers takes questions from the audience.

CHICAGO — American singer and actress Stefanie Powers paid a visit to the Consulate General of Poland in Chicago, Dec. 7, 2015.

The Polish American actress was nominated twice for an Emmy Award and five Golden Globe for her role in the TV series *Hart to Hart*.

During the meeting with the Pol-

ish Consulate, Powers answered questions about her career, charity work, and links to Poland. Long known for her commitment to Poland, she was an active supporter of Solidarity activists during martial law.

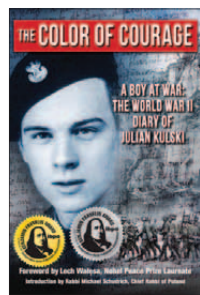
Powers is starring in a Broadway musical "Gotta Dance," which opened in Chicago in December.

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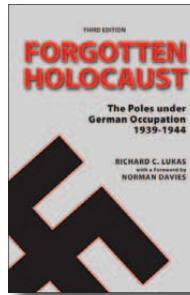
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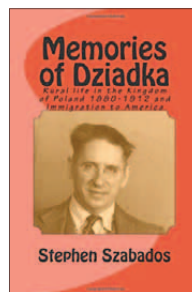
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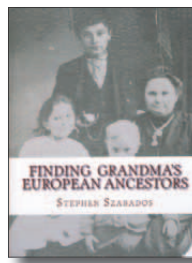
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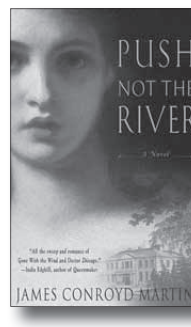
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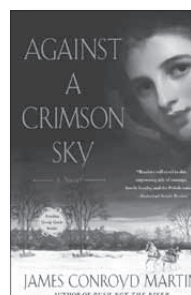
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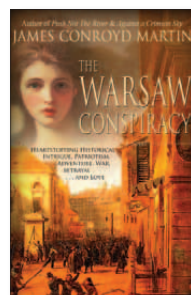
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GENEALOGY / Stephen M. Szabados

Availability of Passenger Records for our Immigrant Ancestors

Finding the passenger list for your ancestor can add important information to your family history. Their departure from Europe and arrival in America is a significant event in your family history and it is vital that we include the details from their passenger list in their immigration story. Early records listed only dates and ports of departure and arrival. Later records after 1900 contain more information such as occupation, last residence in Europe, their destination in America, who they left behind, and their birthplace.

The passenger records were generated for officials at both the departure port and the arrival port. The format of the lists differed for each port and access to these records vary drastically. Ancestry.com is the main source for copies of passenger lists offering digital copies of the records for most of the U.S. ports of entry and some European ports. The majority of these records are cataloged by port of arrival but the records also list the port of departure. Besides the arrival records for the major ports in the United States, Ancestry.com also has the departure records from Bremen (1904-1914), Hamburg (1850-1934) and UK (1890-1960). More ports are being added as they are found.

There are only a few records that exist for the departures from other European ports and these are difficult to access. Records exist for short periods for the departures from:

- Bremen (1921-1939) at the Handelskammer Archiv in Bremen
- Bremen (1904-1914) at the Ancestry.com, these are images of index cards that were created from the original and may have spelling errors
- Le Harve (1750-1886) from Family History Library films
- Rotterdam (1900-1938) from

- Family History Library films
- Antwerp - only the records for 1855 have survived
- Danzig/Gdynia - none are available

Bremen was an departure port for many European emigrants, but the Bremen records from 1832 to 1909 were destroyed by the city archivists to make room for more records. Also the records from 1910 to 1920 were destroyed during Allied bombing raids on Bremen during World War II. Also note that passenger lists may indicate that emigrants left the English ports of Liverpool or South Hampton, but in these cases, the emigrants left a port on the European continent and then changed ships in England for their voyage to America.

KNOWING THE PORT of departure can help add more information to your family narrative. Once you know their birthplace and their port of departure, trace the path your ancestor took from their village to the port. Do more historical research and try to determine the methods that your ancestors may have traveled to the port and the conditions of the times. This may allow you gain more insights about their character. These thoughts may only be speculation but it may also relate to something else that you know about them. This method should give you a new picture of your ancestor because it will probably show you some of the reasons behind their character.

Just remember that it is important to use all avenues of research to put more life into your vision of your ancestors.

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Stephen M. Szabados is a prominent genealogist, and the author of four books, "Finding Grandma's European Ancestors," "Find Your Family History," "Polish Genealogy," and "Memories of Dziadka."

PGSGC Re-Elects Officers for 2016

CLEVELAND — At the December meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland (PGSGC), members re-elected John F. Szuch to return as president for his 24th term, and to retain his slate of officers which is made up of Ron Kraine (vice pres.), Sonia Chapnick (sec.), and Ben Kman (treas.).

Members also voted to make some monthly meeting changes. Starting in January, 2016, they will now meet eight times per year (March, April, May, June, September, October, November and December). They will have a winter break in January and February and a summer break in July and August.

During those months when they are scheduled to meet, meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of the month, with the meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. or shortly thereafter. A short social time with coffee and refreshments starts around 7:00 p.m. As before, meetings will be held at St. Mary's PNC Church located at 1901 Wexford Ave. (Corner of Broadview Rd), Parma.

Dues are \$24 a year and are due January 1. New members are



Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland officers for 2016 are (l. to r.): Ben Kman (treas.); Sonia Chapnick (sec.); John F. Szuch (pres.); and Ron Kraine (v.p.).

charged \$2 per month times the number of months left in the year when they join. Members receive four quarterly issues of "Our Polish Ancestors," either via the internet in color, or in black & white by mail.

Interested readers can request a free copy by emailing President

Szuch at: pulaskipro@aol.com, or from V.P. Kraine at: ronkraine@aol.com. Please mention that you read it in the PAJ.

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For more information, visit: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohpgsgc/

GENEALOGY NOTEBOOK

New Museum Charts Course of Millions Who Emigrated

GDYNIA, Poland (Reuters) — In 1938, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who would later be the U.S. National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter, travelled with his parents on an ocean liner from Gdynia, Poland to Canada.

He trod the black-and-white tiles in the main hall of the old marine station, as did Witold Gombrowicz, an avant-garde writer who left for Argentina in 1939, just before outbreak of the World War II, on the liner Chrobry.

They were just a few of the millions who set off from this northern Polish Baltic Sea port to seek a better life in a faraway land.

"Whenever we say that there are more than 20 million people of Polish origin worldwide, that we are the sixth diaspora in the world if it

comes to the dispersion of the nation beyond the borders of a country, these numbers are always surprising," Joanna Wojdyło, the press officer of the Emigration Museum in Gdynia, told Reuters.

The museum, which opened May 16, is the first in Poland devoted solely to migration. However, the terms migration and emigration are understood broadly by the creators of the museum.

"The museum tells the story of emigration from the Polish lands from the beginning of the 19th century to modern times. So, firstly, there was not always a Polish state on the map, therefore we talk

about the Polish lands. Secondly, of course we focus on Poles, and this is the main trend in this narrative," Wojdyło said.

"But we also talk about the migration of people not necessarily of Polish ethnicity," she added.

The Emigration Museum is located in Gdynia's old marine station, commissioned in 1933 and one of the pearls of the architectural modernism style.

The permanent exhibition in the former transit zone covers three main topics: the journey and preparation for it, the history of the marine station in Gdynia and the life of emigrants abroad.

POLISH CAN BE FUN / Robert Strybel

"Do Polski jedziemy" (Poland bound)

Although these days you can easily make yourself understood at Polish airports, hotels, restaurants, retail outlets and fast-food chains in major cities, where English is widely used, visiting relatives in remote rural areas or even small towns is a different story. Anyone contemplating a trip to Poland in the foreseeable future would do well to brush up on the basics. Here are some questions and situations likely to be encountered in the course of the journey.

AT AIRPORTS, TRAIN STATIONS AND ELSEWHERE IN PUBLIC

Jestem z ameryki, a pan/pani/ ty? — I'm from America, what about you?

1. You could also say *ze stanów zjednoczonych* (from the Untied States), but if that's too much of a mouthful, then try *z USA* (pronounced: *zoo ess ah*).

2. The "you" in "what about you?" depends on who you're speaking to. If it's a male stranger or someone older than you or that you want to show respect to, then say: "a pan?" If it's a female of similar status, then it's "a pani?" And if it's a familiar peer or child or friend then choose "a ty?"

Ja jestem z anglii, kanady, niemiec, francji, wloch, meksyku, szwecji. — I'm from England, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Mexico, Sweden.

Co pan/pani będzie robić w polsce? — What will you be doing in Poland?

Chcę odwiedzić krewnych (or rodzinę) pod białymstokiem, zwiedzać kraj i kupić różne książki i pamiątki. — I want to visit relatives (family) near Białystok, go sightseeing around the country and buy various books and souvenirs.

Czy pan pierwszy raz jest w polsce? — Is this the

first time you're in Poland?

Tak, pierwszy raz. — Yes, first time.

Jak się pani polska podoba? — How do you like Poland?

Bardzo. (Very much.) *Tak soibie.* (So so.)

Nie, byłem już dziesięć lat temu. (No, I was here 10 years ago.)

ASKING DIRECTIONS

Gdzie tu jest w pobliżu (apteka, hotel, dobra restauracja, poczta, postój taksówek, przystanek autobusowy, kawiarnia, sklep spożywczy, dobra restauracja; sklep z bateriami, fryzjer, pogotowie, komisariat?) Where in the vicinity is a (pharmacy, hotel., good restaurant, post office, taxi stand, bus stop, café, grocery, good restaurant, shop that sells batteries, barber/hairdresser, emergency room, police station?)

Którędy można dojść do (morza, kościoła świętej trójcy, ulicy piłsudskiego, placu kościuszki, szkoły podstawowej numer trzy, mostu, rzeki, dworca?) — How can I get to the (sea, Holy Trinity Church, Piłsudski Street, Kościuszko Square, Grade School No. 3, the bridge, the river, the train station?)

Trzeba iść prosto do ulicy mickiewicza, skrócić w lewo i tam po prawej będzie ... — You have to go straight to Mickiewicz Street, turn left and there on the right you'll find. ...

WORDS OF WISDOM

Dzieci i ryby głosu nie mają.

Do milego! - Till next time!

Please send all questions and comments to: strybel@interia or airmail them to: Robert Strybel, ul. Kaniowska 24, 01-529 Warsaw, Poland.

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SPORTS / Tom Tarapacki

Gostkowski and Janikowski Among the NFL's Best



Janikowski



Gostkowski

One is known for his phenomenal accuracy and the other is renowned for his legendary power, but **Stephen Gostkowski** of New England and **Sebastian Janikowski** of Oakland are clearly two of the best kickers in the NFL.

Gostkowski is one of the most accurate kickers in NFL history and the most accurate in Patriots history. This year he had a streak of 32 consecutive field goals, only to miss on a 54-yard effort against Buffalo. However, he came right back against Denver, booting a clutch 47-yarder in the snow to force overtime.

The 31-year-old native of Louisiana grew up in Mississippi. He played both college football and baseball for the University of Memphis. The 6-foot, 210-lb. "Ghost" was drafted in the fourth round in 2006 by New England with the 118th pick. Patriot kicker Adam Vinatieri left as a free agent, so Gostkowski competed for the job with veteran kicker Martin Gramatica. Gostkowski won the job and performed well. As a rookie in the playoffs that year, Gostkowski made all eight of his field goal attempts. Since that time, other than missing part of the 2010 season due to a thigh injury, he has been one of the game's most reliable kickers. He's known for his accuracy, but Gostkowski has made some long ones, including a 57-yarder. In 2014, the three-time Pro Bowler became the Patriots' all-time leading scorer, surpassing Vinatieri.

Raiders' kicker Sebastian Janikowski is known for being one of the most powerful kickers in the game. Over his career the 6-2, 260-lb. kicker booted field goals of over 60 yards (63, 61). "The Polish Cannon" also holds NFL records for longest field goal in overtime (57 yards) and most field goals in one quarter (four). This season he broke the Raiders team record for most games played, which had been 240. He's also the Raiders' all-time leading scorer.

Sebastian Janikowski was born in 1978 in Walbrzych, Poland, the son of a professional soccer player. As a teenager, Sebastian began to excel at soccer himself and at age 15 earned a spot on the Polish under-17 team. He parents divorced and his father moved to the U.S., and Janikowski eventually joined him. Sebastian became an outstanding high school kicker, and went on to kick at Florida State. He had a great career at Florida State, but the Raiders surprised many by taking a specialist in the first round in 2000. He got through some early-career off-field problems and some instability of the Raiders franchise, but seems as strong as ever. He's kicked a 56-yarder this season, and he's making about 80% of his attempts. At 37, he hopes to keep kicking into his mid-40s.

Playing for a perennial contender, Gostkowski gets a lot more attention than Janikowski does in Oak-

land. However, in 2014 their paths crossed in a unique game. Oakland played at New England in Week 3, and both kickers made three field goals. The only touchdown in the game was scored by Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski for a 16-9 New England win. The names of all of the players who scored end in "ski."

WHAT A HIKE! Scott Jurek recently broke the supported Appalachian Trail speed record, completing the 2,189-mile journey from Georgia to Maine in 46 days, 8 hours, and 7 minutes. That's traveling about 50 miles a day over some very rugged terrain. It broke the previous record by over three hours. The 41-year-old had hoped to finish in 42 days, but he was slowed by a sore knee and rainy weather.

Soon afterwards he was named one of ten "Adventurers of the Year" by *National Geographic*. Online voting will determine an overall winner. Last year's winner was Aleksander Doba of Poland, who kayaked across the Atlantic at age 67. You can vote for Scott through the end of January by going to adventure.nationalgeographic.com.

Upon finishing his feat, Jurek celebrated atop Mount Katahdin with his wife, crew and fans while members of the media observed. However, Scott's triumph was marred later when officials from Baxter State Park in Maine issued Jurek three summons: for drinking alcohol, littering, and hiking with an oversized group. The real issue apparently wasn't so much with Jurek, but with the number and behavior of Appalachian Trail hikers over the last few years.

Jurek is usually pretty easy going but he was indignant about the charges, especially littering. "I did not litter, not for over 2,189 miles, not at the top of Mount Katahdin," he blogged. He also insisted that he kept his group within the maximum size of 12. Scott did acknowledge that he had taken some celebratory sips of champagne at the top of the mountain. After some legal wrangling, Jurek agreed to pay a \$500 fine for the champagne and the other charges were dropped.

The son of Lynn (Swapinski) and Gordon Jurek, Scott grew up in Proctor, Minnesota. He is a record-setting ultramarathoner, public speaker, and New York Times best-selling author of *Eat & Run*.

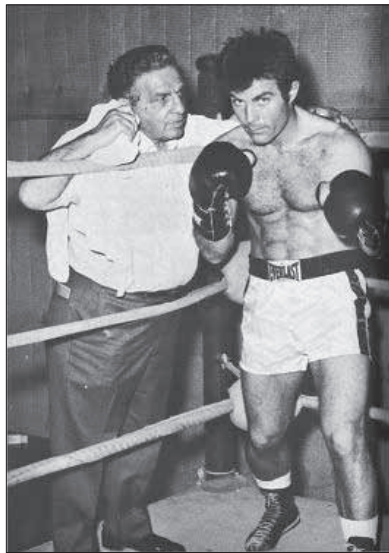
FROM FOOTBALL TO ARCHITECTURE. You may remember him as a record-breaking quarterback at Carnegie-Mellon University in the 1960s, but today **Thomas Hubka** is an acclaimed architectural historian and author. He was recently intimately involved in the reconstruction of the synagogue in the small Polish town of Gwozdziec that was destroyed by German troops during World War II. Dedicated in 2014, the synagogue now stands again as

a permanent installation at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews (POLIN) in Warsaw.

Hubka, whose family is Polish-Catholic, admitted that it's unusual for a non-Jewish scholar to work on a subject like this. "The history of Judaism embodies a scholarship of incredible depth and sophistication," he said. "It was thrilling to think that I contributed a small part."

While an architecture major at Carnegie-Mellon University, Hubka was signed as a free agent quarterback by the Atlanta Falcons. That accomplishment was all the more impressive considering that he was in the fourth year of his five-year architectural coursework at the time.

Hubka's father, Gene, played tailback at Bucknell and for the Pittsburgh Steelers and is, at age 91, one of the oldest living pro football players.



WILD, WILD FALKOWSKI. Actor **Robert Conrad** frequently played tough guys on TV, but he also was one in real life. The star of the original *Wild, Wild West* was an outstanding athlete and an accomplished boxer before he gained show business fame.

He was born Conrad Robert Falk on March 1, 1935 in Chicago. His father, born Leonard Henry Falkowski, had shortened the name. Leonard, who was a construction worker, was just 16 at the time of his son's birth. His father introduced him to sports at a young age, and Conrad grew to a muscular 5'8", 160-lbs. He starred in baseball and basketball in high school. He also boxed, first as an amateur and later as a pro, posting a 4-0-1 record. However, he gave that up to pursue acting.

In Hollywood Conrad Falk became Robert Conrad. He got help getting acting roles from friend Nick Adams, who was born Nicholas Adamshock to a Ukrainian father and a Polish mother. Adams, who starred in the old *Rebel* TV series, was also a standout athlete who passed up a chance to play minor league baseball to get into movies.

Conrad was signed by Warner Bros. as an actor, but also sang on several records released by Warner's recording division. He got a break-

though acting role in the *Hawaiian Eye* TV series in 1959. Later, he became a star when he appeared in *Wild, Wild West* from 1965 to 1969. Conrad played post-Civil War secret agent James West, and his athletic ability was prominently featured in his many fight scenes — he did most of his own stunts. His co-star was Ross Martin, who played master of disguises Artemus Gordon. Martin was born Martin Rosenblatt in Gródek, Poland, and came to the U.S. as an infant.

Conrad's father, Leonard Falk, who strongly resembled his son, guest starred on an episode of *Wild, Wild West*. He played a deaf mute in *The Night of the Murderous Spring*.

Conrad went on to star in numerous other TV shows and movies. He also capitalized on his macho image in commercials, starring in a memorable late-1970s spot for Eveready batteries in which he put a battery on his shoulder and defied viewers to challenge its long-lasting power, with the catch-phrase: "Come on, I dare ya."

Throughout his acting career he worked out to stay fit. In 1989, Conrad, then 55, took on fellow actor Tony Danza in a celebrity boxing match. Even though Danza had been a much more accomplished boxer and was much younger at 38, Conrad won the fight. Now 80, Conrad still maintains the vitality of a much younger man.

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR? Poland's **Anita Włodarczyk** is one of three finalists for the 2015 World Athlete of the Year award presented by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). Ethiopia's Genzebe Dibaba and Holland's Dafne Schippers are the others.

A hammer thrower, the 30-year-old Włodarczyk won all 11 of her competitions, including the world title in China. She also became the first woman to throw beyond 80 me-

ters, setting a world record of 81.08 meters in Cetniewo in August.

PERKOSKI'S NOTEBOOK. At UFC 193 MMA superstar **Ronda Rousey** suffered a big upset loss, but **Joanna Jedrzejczyk** of Poland defended her strawweight title with a five-round unanimous decision ... The Indianapolis Colts promoted **Rob Chudzinski**, who had been an assistant head coach, to offensive coordinator ... **Jerzy Karasiński**, a Polish goalkeeper who starred for Lech Poznań, died at 73 ... Marquette product **Ron Drzewiecki**, a running back who was a first round pick of the Chicago Bears in 1955, died at 82 in his native Milwaukee ... **Jerzy Sadek**, a Polish striker who played for the national teams in the 1960s and 1970s, died at 73 ... **Tom Dublinski**, who played QB for the Detroit Lions in the 1950s and later in the CFL, died at 85 on Thanksgiving Day.

❖ ❖ ❖
"Robert gave this team a glow, but all were prominent, every cell functioned."

— *Polish soccer coach Adam Nawalka, after Robert Lewandowski's record-equaling 13th goal in a 2-1 Group D win over Ireland ensured Poland's qualification for Euro 2016.*

❖ ❖ ❖
"I respect every immigrant, that's what this country is made up of. Don't try to be like 'Oh I'm 100 percent American.' No one in America is 100 percent American, we all came from somewhere."

— *Jakub Lewandowski of Pace University's men's swimming team.*

❖ ❖ ❖
"I'm half Venezuelan, a quarter English, a quarter Polish, and 100% American."

— *UFC superstar Ronda Rousey, when asked about her heritage. Her paternal grandmother was Polish (Jean Zifka).*

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Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia Holds Polonaise Bal

by Jean Joka

PHILADELPHIA — The Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia celebrated its 50th Anniversary at the Associated Polish Home in Philadelphia, Sat., Nov. 7, 2015.

Many accomplishments contributed by the Polish Heritage Society since its founding in 1965 were recalled, including: Kopernik Monument located on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in the center of Philadelphia; other historical markers, such as those honoring Ralph Modjeski, Engineer for the Benjamin Franklin Bridge; Dr. Walter Golaski, the inventor of the Dacron blood replacement; and Frank Piasecki, the helicopter guru; just to name a few. The society was also responsible for the placement of the statue of General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a gift from the people of Poland, at 18th Street and the Parkway, joining other celebrated American Revolutionary War Heroes displayed throughout the city.

"I can remember that I was a young graduate from school in the '60s and at that time was not associated with the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia, even though I was raised in the Polish traditions and culture," said Jean Joka, the Society's communications director. "It was not until the late '80s that I was introduced to the organization, and I have been a part of it since then."

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY jubilee celebration began with cocktails and accordion music. Marie Hejnosz, president of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia, then welcomed everyone, and the festivities began. Father Marcin Makulski, Sub-Prior of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, gave the invocation. A gourmet Polish dinner was served, followed by dancing to the music of the Dennis Ostapowicz Orchestra.

"The guests were entertained during the course of the evening by the performances of the PKM Dancers and the soprano voice of Marika Szczypek," said Joka. Attired in traditional Polish costumes, the PKM group danced the Krakowiak and Kujawiak, in addition to leading the audience in the traditional Polonaise.

Special guest Vice-Consul Joanna Byszewska-Zapletal, from the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York, congratulated the organization on its accomplishments and endeavors during its 50 years of service to Polonia and the Polish American community of Philadelphia. The vice-consul also presented personal greetings, good wishes and many more years of existence on behalf of Urszula Gacek, consul general.

According to Joka, she had the honor of presenting Awards Certificates to the organization's past presidents for contribution to Polonia. "Many past presidents were able to join us for this special event, including Regina Wunukowski, whose husband Joe was one of the co-founders," said Joka. "Also honored were Joseph Zazyczny, Irene Musman, Deborah M. Majka, Teresa Wojcik and, of course, our own Marie Hejnosz. As this is Marie's last term as president, she was presented a bouquet of flowers for her endless support and dedication to Polonia." A Certificate of Award was given to Andrew Pustelniak, Marie's husband, for his support of the society's events.

The organization is proud of its cultural contributions to Philadelphia, and expresses thanks to its executive board, members and business associates who have supported it throughout the years. Proceeds from this year's Polonaise Ball raised more than \$3,000.00 towards the Society's Scholarship Fund.

TOLEDO POLONIA / Margaret Zatkiewicz-Dramczyk

Ohio Theatre Inaugural Folk Festival a Success

The Ohio Theatre filled quickly Sat., Nov. 14, as folk festival enthusiasts from all over northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan found seats for the first of its kind Ohio Theatre Folk Festival. As it has been several years since I've attend a folk festival, I was one of the crowd flowing into the theater to check out the music. Folk music has certainly evolved since the early days of the folk music revival, and the slate of entertainment at the Ohio Theatre attested to that fact.

To provide a bit of background information: The Ohio Theatre Board members had been in discussions for some time about bringing in a variety of events, several of which have been reported on in this column. Board members, recognizing that the location of the theatre possess a challenge for some potential patrons, decided that the 600-plus seat theatre was the right size for a festival of this type. A couple of board members had talked about starting something new, and the Folk Festival was the result of those early meetings.

The addition of a liquor license plus the upgrades to the lighting and sound systems combined with the 4 act line-up set the stage for an evening of laid-back, intimate entertainment.

Jeff Stewart opened the night with a 20-minute set of acoustic songs. Jeff is a local Toledo musician who draws on cover tunes as well as his own material from his first 2 CD collections. As Jeff concluded his set, he became the announcer for the remainder of the evening.

The second act Toledo area band, The Anti Villains, took the stage next. The AntiVillains is comprised of four members, and the utilized three guitars and a drummer, and have a decidedly country twang to their style.

The third act, the RagBirds, was one of two headliners for the show. Ragbirds, out of Ann Arbor, Michigan, are fronted my multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Erin

Zindler. Ms. Zindler sang and played viola, mandolin, and accordion. Ragbirds played music with a world music flare, and there were songs that sounded Celtic and songs that sounded like the hard driving rock of Carlos Santana during their set. A crowd favorite was an African gospel tune called "I'll Fly Away."

Finally, it was time for the headlining act to take the stage. The Birds of Chicago, who have played several times in Toledo in smaller venues, is fronted by husband and wife team Allison Russell and Jeremy Lindsay, who is originally from Toledo. For the evening, the Birds of Chicago expanded to a larger version of their usual three piece band with the addition of Lindsay's brother Drew Lindsay on keyboards, and Mike August on drums, with Dan Abu-Absi on guitar.

Ms. Russell's crystal-clear ethereal vocals combined with the instrumentation created a solid rock-soul sound that filled the theatre for the growing, enthusiastic crowd. As their set came to a close, the nearly full house came to its feet to give them a standing ovation. Their upcoming album is being produced by Joe Henry, who was worked with Elvis Costello and Bonnie Raitt, and it was clear from the applause that Ragbirds will be welcome to return to Toledo.

As the evening concluded, I chatted with a few musicians and Board members, who were clearly pleased with the enthusiasm and the excitement generated by the music, and most of all by the way the Ohio Theatre was filled with music fans on a Saturday night.

As 2016 unfolds, it will be great to watch for innovative future events as the Inaugural Folk Festival in a unique place like the Ohio Theatre.

OBITUARIES

Sister Mary Emily Mentell of the Little Servant Sisters

CHERRY HILL, N.J. — Sister Mary Emily Mentell died Oct. 28, 2015. She was 80.

A member of the Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Cherry Hill, she was born in Poland. As a teacher, Sister Emily entered the Motherhouse – Novitiate of the Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Stara Wies, vicinity Brzozow, Poland in 1958.

Her first profession of vows was proclaimed there in 1961, and her final profession was in 1966 at St. Joseph Convent in Woodbridge, N.J. following her arrival in the United States in 1963.

A devoted principal, teacher in the United States for 41 years in the Diocese of Camden (St. Matthew Regional School, West Deptford) Diocese of Metuchen (Our Lady of Lourdes School, Milltown and St. Stanislaus Kostka School in Sayreville), Archdiocese of Newark (St. Hedwig School, Elizabeth), and at the beginning in the Diocese of Buffalo (Visitation School), Sister Emily also served in community administration including as superior provincial.

Her final five years were spent in prayer ministry, knitting for the needy, along with redemptive suffering at the provincialate, Cherry Hill.

"Her community gives thanks for the witness of her consecrated life. Sister Emily had a bright intellect, reflected inwardly and shared in company with discernment and a quiet sense of humor," the Little Servant

Sisters said when announcing her death.

"She loved her Marian congregation and was faithful to her religious and professional duties. She was demanding of self and was always conscientious, ready to help her community with projects and individuals in their needs. It was evident that she drew strength from her relationship with God, hours of Eucharistic adoration, praying with Scripture and devotion to the Blessed Mother."

Donations in her memory may be made to the Little Servant Sisters, 1000 Cropwell Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003.

Paul P. Wagner, Merchant Marine

Paul P. Wagner, a veteran who served in Merchant Marines during World War II, died Nov. 19, 2015. He was 99.

A native of Camden, N.J., Wagner was a retired welder at the Philadelphia Shipyard. He was an active member of the Polish American Citizen's Club of Camden Co., where he enjoyed playing pinochle. Wagner belonged to the J&R Young at Hearts Club of Runnemede and American Merchant Marine Veterans, Dennis A. Rowland Chapter. His other interest included fishing, gardening and cooking. Wagner was a Phillies Fan who attended many games and looked forward to celebrating his birthdays at the stadium.

Memorial contributions in his memory can be made to St. Joseph's Restoration Fund, 1010 Liberty Street, Camden, NJ 08104.

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Polka MAGAZINE

POLISH AMERICAN JOURNAL

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION AND CONTINUANCE OF POLISH AMERICAN MUSIC

POLKA INSIDER / Steve Litwin

“Let’s Polka” to Feature New Phaze

Tony Blazonczyk & New Phaze brought their polka machine to the WSKG television studios in Vestal, N.Y., to record three “Let’s Polka” programs. Featuring polka standards, songs from their CDs, and other vocals and instrumentals, Tony and the musicians kept the audience dancing and singing along, especially when he “covered” songs made famous by his Father, Eddie.

New Phaze is pure Chicago, and they know how to entertain the crowd. They know how to get the audience involved. They enjoy themselves along with the crowd. If you have the opportunity to see and hear Tony Blazonczyk and the band, don’t miss it. They will make it a polka celebration.

The studio at WSKG is not just a recording room, it is a large area where the band and those in the audience can feel comfortable. Offering a cafe feeling, the room allows various seating venues along with decor that brightens the area and makes everyone feel at home.

WSKG Broadcasting in the



TONY BLAZONCZYK & NEW PHAZE (l. to r.): Dan “Vudu” Leudanski, Ray “Melvin” Rzeszutko, CJ Lackowski, Tony Blazonczyk, John “Foo” Furmaniak, and Tim “TJ” Jagodzinski.

Southern Tier of New York State provides a wide variety of programming throughout the region and “Let’s Polka” has become a favorite on Saturday evenings. Let’s Polka” is also featured, via the internet, on YouTube by searching WSKG.

A special thanks to all the staff at WSKG, with a special “Tip of the Hat” to CEO Brian Sickora, Chris DiRienzo and Bill Flynn for their continuous help in promoting “Let’s Polka.”

Discover “Where The Boys Are”

BALTIMORE — The Boys have announced the release of their brand new CD, *Where The Boys Are*.

The 15 tracks on this album include a new, original composition, eight innovative arrangements, and six classic polka selections that exemplify the high-energy, signature sound of The Boys.

Polka Hall-of-Famer Frank Liszka composed and sings his original “Mary Jane,” a catchy, exuberant polka that instantly grabs the listener. He also rearranged and sings the powerful classics of “Blue Ohio Dreamer,” “Uphill Climb,” “I’m Gonna Live It Up,” “Love Of A Lifetime,” and “Stop The World and Let Me Off.”

Frank’s duet with Stacey Morris, the USPA’s Female Vocalist of the Year, on “Love Makes the World Go Around” is really something special, says the band.

The Boys’ renditions of the “My Girl/Modern Girls” medley, “Where Did The Boys Go?” overek, “Mr. Pan Polka” (featuring reed work by guest artist Eddie Siwiec), “Mom and Dad Know Best” waltz, and “Flirting Polka” would have made Eddie Blazonczyk Sr., Li’l Wally, and Frank Wojnarowski mutually proud!

Al Puwalski is featured on his arrangement of “I Don’t Believe I’ll Fall In Love Today”; while Mike Matousek sings his arrangement of “I’ll Never Find Another

You.”

Last but not least, Dave Morris is featured on the fun and lively: “I Wish I Was A Millionaire” polka.

Throughout the album you’ll hear harmonies sung by Frank, Al, Mike Evan, and Mike Matousek.

DJs and IJs interested in receiving a promotional copy of *Where The Boys Are* should send an email request to mike@TheBoysBand.com that provides their polka show name, call letters/Internet network, and mailing address.

Polka fans can order the CD by sending an \$18 check, payable to Mike Matousek, and mail to 8372 Williamstowne Dr., Millersville, MD 21108. At last, you can discover *Where The Boys Are!*

Come Together

by Larry Trojak

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Despite occasional incidents of event conflicts, minor backbiting, and a nagging sense of apathy, there is one thread that seems to bind polka people together: their charitable nature and overall sense of wanting to help. We’ve seen that in the past with the highly successful, decade-long, annual Lisa Biskup memorial fundraisers; with an incredible outpouring of love and support at a benefit for Scrubby, and we are seeing it now in the support shown for Jeff Mleczo as he fights to recover from a devastating stroke. Well, polka fans will have yet another opportunity to show their altruistic side at an event dubbed *Lovin’ On Lynda*, to be held Sat., March 5 in Grand Rapids.

For those not fortunate enough to know the honoree of this special night, suffice it to say that she is one of the most beautiful, positive, funny, upbeat people you could ever meet; she is a loving Mom to a son, Ben and daughter, Marlee; she is the caring and supportive wife of polka legend Dave “Nigel” Kurdziel, and, oh yes, she is battling Stage IV Metastatic Breast Cancer. This last point is mentioned as an afterthought because, to look at Lynda Kurdziel, is to see someone who belies the typical image of the cancer “victim.” Rather, she exudes life and defies anyone to tell her she should look or feel any other way.

But all the optimism and strong outward appearances in the world cannot negate the fact that she is undergoing regular treatment to keep the progress of this deadly disease at bay, and the costs associated with those — and other — treatments can seem as debilitating as the disease itself. And that’s where those who want to show their love for this incredible gal come in. On Saturday, March, 5th, the West Catholic High School in Grand Rapids will be the focal point for a massive event whose purpose is not just to raise funds to help offset those costs, but also to show Lynda that she has an army of supporters who love her, care for her and want to help her in any way they can.

As of press time, entertainment for *LOL* includes: Grand Rapids’ own Hip Pocket (R&B, funk, soul) and the Signal Point Band (pop, rock, blues, country) as well as area polka mainstays Gerry Kaminski’s Polka Network and Diddle Styx. Polka groups traveling in to show their support include: The Knewz and Phocus Polkas (from Buffalo/



Lynda Kurdziel

Niagara Canada); a reunion of the Michigan Connection; The Dynabass (from Detroit); and The Dynatonnes.

The West Catholic High School is located at 1802 Bristol Ave. N.W. in Grand Rapids. Doors open at 12:30 p.m.; music will start at 1:00 p.m. and go until midnight. There will be a cash bar, silent auctions, food will be available and there is NO BYOB. Tickets are \$20.00 in advance (\$30 day of event, if available) and can be purchased by calling: Mona Kaminski (616) 485-4241; Kathy Weglicki (517) 281-8800; or Amy Puhalski (616) 822-3678.

To accommodate out-of-towners, a discounted block of hotel rooms for Friday (3/4) and/or Saturday (3/5) is being held at the Baymont Inn (less than three miles from the hall) until Jan. 20, 2016 under the group name “*Lovin’ On Lynda*.” Hotel info: Baymont Inn (Walker), 2151 Holton Court, Walker, MI 49544; (616) 735-9595. Prices include a standard king room for \$80/night + tax; or two queen beds for \$85/night + tax.

There are also a number of other options available for friends and fans of Lynda to get additional info or participate, even if a trip to Grand Rapids for the event is not in the cards. For those on Facebook, there is a Event page that can be pulled up by simply typing in *LOL-Lovin on Lynda*. Detailed information can also be obtained by emailing: KathyWeglicki@Yahoo.com. And last (but certainly not least), to make a direct donation, a GoFundMe page has been set up at www.gofundme.com/lovin-onlynda.

Lovin’ On Lynda promises to be epic. Make your plans soon to be a part of a very special event for a truly special person.

Fr. Bogusz Celebrates 25th Anniversary on the Air

by John Sacco

Greensburg Catholic Accent

McKEESPORT, Pa. — Answering the call to the priesthood was paramount for him. Becoming involved in radio was something he desired to extend his ministry.

Two and a half decades later, Fr. Dennis A. Bogusz, chaplain of St. Anne Home, Greensburg, Pennsylvania has the best of two worlds.

Fr. Bogusz is celebrating 25 years on WEDO 810 in McKeesport, where he continues his weekly show “Echoes of Poland.” He plays polka music, a Polish hymn, discusses Polish culture and traditions, and delivers a homily.

“Radio was always something in the back of my mind” Fr. Bogusz said. “I was fortunate to find a way to become involved. I also attribute my radio work to the intercession of my mother who knew I had an interest in radio. I know she is pulling for me in heaven.”

I knew I wanted to be a priest. I also really liked radio and thought about getting into it.

Fr. Bogusz began his studies for the priesthood at St. Mary’s College, Orchard Lake, Mich. While a student at St. Mary’s they had an in-house radio station where he had a polka program. Fr. Bogusz completed his studies for the priesthood at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pa. He was introduced to radio while attending Holy Name High School in Cleveland, Ohio where he listened to two stations dedicated to ethnic music.



Fr. Dennis Bogusz offers a unique mix of faith, Polish culture, and polka music on his weekly radio program.

While serving as pastor of the former St. Hyacinth parish in Monessen, Pa. in 1990, Fr. Bogusz was given the opportunity to become involved with WEDO. The parish hosted a polka dance and the now retired WEDO station manager, John James, asked Fr. Bogusz how he could help him promote Polish culture and music and the Catholic faith.

“That triggered a light” Fr. Bogusz said, “that allowed me

to be on radio.”

Twenty-five years later, his show is still going strong. It can be heard weekly from 3:00-4:00 p.m. on Sunday and is replayed on Saturday 5:00-6:00 p.m., February through October. “Echoes of Poland” can be heard 24/7 on the worldwide web by going to www.frdennis.wedo810.com.

You can hear the program live online by going to www.WEDO810.com and press the listen live button.

Fr. Bogusz loves polka music as well.

He said he has one of the largest Polish American musical collections in the world with about 3000 albums and “just about every Polish polka CD ever made, which is between 400 and 500.”

He started collecting them when he was 11 years old.

It takes him about two hours preparation to produce an hour show.

Fr. Bogusz pays for his air time through sponsors and donations from listeners. “I am so grateful to my sponsors,” he said. “I know the listeners enjoy the music and the show. I have made many friends because of it.”

And Fr. Bogusz has made a difference. He was named “Polonian of the Year” by the Central Council of Polish Organizations of Pittsburgh in 2008 and is a central figure at Polish Day at Kennywood Amusement Park.

“I do want to continue the radio show,” he said. “I always relate polka music to happiness. You can’t be sad when listening to a polka.”

POLKA CALENDAR / John Ziobrowski

JANUARY 1, 2016

- Dennis Polisky/Eddie Forman. PACC. Ludlow. Ma. 2-6. (413) 567-1961

JANUARY 3

- John Stevens. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504
- Outside Da Box. Polish American Club, St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. (727) 463-5845

JANUARY 9

- New Direction Band. Potts Banquet Hall. Cheektowaga NY. 7-11. (716) 675-6588

JANUARY 10

- Jasiu's Polka All Stars. Polish American Club. St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. (727) 463-5845
- Stanky Coalminers. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504

JANUARY 16

- John Stevens. Pulaski Club. Holiday Fla. 5-9. (727) 934-0900
- The Special Delivery Band. St. John The Baptist. Alden NY. Polka Mass followed by dance. (716) 937-6959
- John Gora. White Eagle Banquet Center. Hamilton On. (905) 304-9181
- New Direction Band. Broadway Mkt. Buffalo NY. 12-3. (716) 893-0705

JANUARY 17

- Jimmy Sturr. Cracovia Manor. Wallington NJ. 2-6. (973) 473-8527

- Nu Soundz. Polish American Club. St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. (727) 463-5845
- Polka Partners. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504
- Phocus. Anchor Inn. Cheektowaga NY. 5:35-9:30. (716) 896-9762

JANUARY 19

- John Stevens. St. Marks Evangelist Hall. Summerfield Fla. 6-10. (352) 347-9317

JANUARY 23

- IPA Buffalo Festival of Bands. Potts Banquet Hall, Cheektowaga. With Phocus, New Direction, Rare Vintage, Concertina All Stars, Buffalo Touch, Special Delivery, Krew Brothers Reunion, and The Knewz.

JANUARY 24

- Special Delivery. Clinton Bar & Grill. West Seneca NY. 4:30-7:30. (716) 768-3246
- Dennis Polisky. Ludlow PACC. Ludlow Ma. 2-6. (413) 567-1961
- Florida Honky Polka Band. Polish American Club. St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. (727) 463-5845
- The Shoreliners. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504

JANUARY 30

- Special Delivery. Polish Villa II. Cheektowaga NY. 12-3 p.m. (716) 824-9589
- Special Delivery.. Polish Nite. Dom

- Polski. North Tonawanda NY. 8-11. (716) 692-8327
- John Gora. Polish Hall. Burlington Ont. (905) 639-3236

JANUARY 31

- New Direction. The Nook. Niagara Falls NY. 3-7. (716) 282-6712
- Eddie Forman. Ludlow PACC. Ludlow Ma. 2-6. (413) 567-1961
- Northern Sounds. Polish American Club. St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. (727) 463-5845
- Pa Villagers. Elks. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504
- Squeeze Box. Pulaski Club. Holiday Fl. 2-6. (352) 428-8340

FEBRUARY 6

- Eddie Forman. Elks. Englewood Fla. 5-9. (941) 474-1404
- John Gora. Polish Hall. Cambridge On. Evening. (519) 277-9989

FEBRUARY 7

- Eddie Forman. Pulaski Club. Holiday Fla. 3-7. (727) 848-7826
- Jasiu's Polka All Stars. Polish American Club. St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. (727) 463-5845
- Golden Tones. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504
- Special Delivery Band. Paczki Day. Holy Mother of Rosary Cathedral. Lancaster NY. 2-6. (716) 685-5766

FEBRUARY 8

- Eddie Forman. Recreation Center. The Villages Fla. 6-9. (352) 754-2270

FEBRUARY 13

- Special Delivery. Clinton Bar & Grill. West Seneca NY. 4:30-7:30. (716) 768-3246
- Dennis Polisky. St. Joe Polish Society. Colchester Ct. 6:30-10:30. (860) 537-2550

FEBRUARY 14

- Nu Soundz. Polish American Club. St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. & (727) 463-5845
- Eddie Derwin. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504
- Dennis Polisky. German Club. Pawtucket RI. 2-6. (401) 723-3549

FEBRUARY 20

- The Knewz. Ludlow PACC. Ludlow Ma. 2-6. (413) 567-1961

FEBRUARY 21

- Dennis Polisky/Eddie Forman/Lenny Gomulka. Ludlow PACC. Ludlow Ma. 2-7. (413) 567-1961
- Northern Sounds. Polish American Club. St. Petersburg Fl. 3-6. (727) 463-5845
- Joe Stanky Cadets. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504

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FEB. 20-21 DANCE to DYVERSICO - 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

LENNY GOMULKA & THE CHICAGO PUSH
APRIL 8 (FRI) MEET AND GREET with DJ Nickel City Dave, 6:00 p.m. til ?
APRIL 9-10 DANCE to the CHICAGO PUSH - 2:00-6:00 p.m.

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DANCE TIME / Jen Pijanowski

IPA to Host "Buffalo" Festival of Bands, January 23

BUFFALO, N.Y. — I cannot get my mind wrapped around the fact that it is 2016. As I reflect on my childhood, the holiday season seemed like an eternity. We, like all of our fellow friends, spent school breaks bouncing from house to house visiting family and friends to celebrate Christmas. I remember watching my parents relaxing and enjoying time alongside friends without any urgency to get to the next event. Now, it seems that the time between Thanksgiving and

call New York IPA Director, Lori Urbanczyk at (716) 675-6588. IPA Memberships are \$15.00 and by joining, your admission is only \$10.00. The public is welcome so come early and enjoy a full evening of Buffalo's best polka sounds.

TURKEY TIME. The Buffalo Concertina All Stars hosted their 3rd Annual Turkey Trot dance in conjunction with Potts Banquet Hall. Music filled the air as those in attendance took the opportunity to



Jennifer and Chris Sikorski.



Michael Gartler and Stephy Putt.

New Year's is gone in the blink of an eye. As the New Year begins, I wish for all of us the wonder of love, relaxation and more time to spend with those we cherish. I am hopeful that each of you holds a morsel of the spirit of the holiday season with you as we embark upon another year. All of our schedules will start to fill up as we begin another year of polka dances and festivals.

exchange wishes for an upcoming Happy Thanksgiving and holiday season. Thanks to Danny Potts, as part of the admission price, we were all treated to delicious turkey sandwiches and salads. All Star members Greg, Ray, and Art worked their vocal chords a little harder than normal in the absence of fellow bandmate Bob Zielinski. The crowd, though not large, was enthusiastic and supportive. Part of the charm of Concertina All Stars is that their members don't take themselves too seriously yet they always perform crowd favorites to keep crowds dancing and singing. In addition to the wonderful music, my husband and I, along with a few others, were lucky enough to win one of the four turkeys that were raffled off as door prizes during the dance. What a nice added bonus to kick off the holiday season.



Eric and Rayanne Bakowski.

BUFFALO POLKA BOOSTERS members were entertained by the sounds of Rare Vintage at their November meeting. This assembly of seasoned musicians plays the meetings once a year and I am always pleasantly surprised at their delightful sound: more Eastern style than

HELP THE INTERNATIONAL POLKA ASSOCIATION celebrate January as "National Polka Month" at the 1st Annual "Buffalo" Festival of Bands – Warm-Up Dance, Sat., Jan. 23, 2016 from 6:30 p.m.–12:30 a.m. at Potts Banquet Hall, Clinton & Rossler Plaza, 41 S. Rossler Street, in Cheektowaga.

Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Music will be provided by the following Eight Buffalo Polka Bands: Phocus, New Direction, Rare Vintage, Concertina All-Stars, Buffalo Touch, Special Delivery, "Original" Krew Brothers, and The Knewz.

There will also be special guest appearances by local IPA Hall of Famers (subject to availability) Dave "Scrubby" Seweryniak, Fred Bulinski, Stephanie Pietrzak, John Gora, Eddie Guca, Johnny Karas, Michael Nowakowski, and Mark Trzepacz.

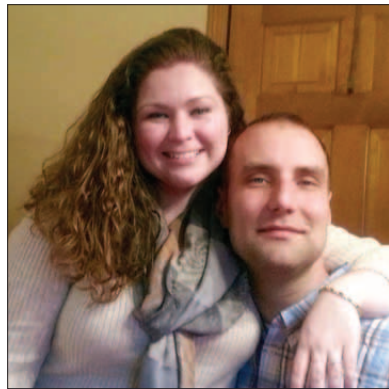
This is a similar event sponsored by the IPA that has run in Chicago for the past 47 years featuring their local talent and Hall of Famers.

The IPA will also be making a special "Tribute to Danny Potts" for his 25 years of Polka promotions in Buffalo. Besides supporting the local bands by opening his banquet hall for practice, he has also hosted many local polka events and has hosted dances for out-of-town polka bands traveling through Buffalo.

Admission is \$10.00 for IPA members and \$15.00 for non-members. For table reservations,

most Buffalo polka bands. Booster Club members quickly finished their plates filled with a turkey sandwich, chips, and pumpkin bread to head out for a whirl around the floor. During the evening, Rare Vintage showcased a mix of not only traditional Polish polkas but a few Slovenian tunes as well. These faster-paced Slovenian numbers were a welcome treat to seasoned dancers who were quick to jam the dance floor. We are fortunate enough to have two local active polka clubs in the Buffalo area. Buffalo Polka Boosters and Polka Variety are always looking for new club members. These clubs meet once a month and offer a snack, beer, soda, and coffee with their admission. Buffalo Polka Boosters meets on the third Thursday of every month at Polish Falcons 445 Columbia Ave Depew. For information about Buffalo Polka Boosters, contact Chris (716) 771-1076. Polka Variety meets on the last Wednesday of the month at Pvt. Leonard Post 2450 Walden Ave Cheektowaga. For information about Polka Variety contact Bob (716) 681-2797. Both of these clubs work hard to promote polka music especially the multitude of talented musicians and bands that we are lucky enough to have in Western New York.

ROCK 'N POLKAS. New Direction found a sure-fire way to pack fans into Potts Banquet Hall for a Saturday night dance, gaining a standing room only crowd at their recent Rock n' Polka party. Ron Urbanczyk merged forces with local rock 'n roll band Crash Cadillac to broaden each bands' potential fan base at this inaugural event. Arriving about an hour into the dance, we were with astonished at the turnout as we pulled into the parking lot. When we walked in, New Direction was playing polkas and the dance floor was packed with people dancing the polka. Though I'd never seen any of these dancers before, it was obvious they were embracing the music and bursting with excitement. This was my first time hearing Crash Cadillac, even though they are a staple on the Western New York music scene. This innovative band sings everything from the '50s to current day music. I was delighted as the band



Colleen Mulvaney and John Killian celebrating their engagement.



Wendy and Corky from Polish Cadets.

showcased a different decade during each set, building their way through my favorite music of the '70s and '80s. As I talked to several fans of the band, I found out that they were very impressed by the polka music — one couple even admitted it was not the stereotypical music they expected. This union of different genres was a smart move for New Direction and may be a model for other bands to follow. With a dwindling number of fans at local polka dances, this merge brought new energy and exposed polkas to new music enthusiasts. By the end

KEEP IN MIND that January is National Polka Month and there are plenty of opportunities to support a polka band. Buffalo is home to so many polka musicians and proud people of Polish decent. Please take advantage of the fact that can enjoy this music so close to home.

I just recently read an article talking about the history of polka music and discovered that the music was introduced to the United States in the 1844. It, along with other popular ballroom dances, remained popular until the late 19th century when these dances were replaced



Linda Kazmierczak and Christine Potts

with more rhythmic ones like two steps. Lucky for us, the polka made a resurgence after World War II when refugees from Poland moved to the United States and declared this their own cultural dance.

Of all the music and dances introduced in the 1800s, polka is the only form of

of the evening, there was already buzz from both Crash Cadillac and New Direction to get another date to repeat this successful partnership. Keep an eye on the polka schedule to mark your calendar for their second event.

dance that is still widely performed today. It is our responsibility to be advocates for our beloved music and bands locally. Support at local dances is imperative so that Buffalo can remain an epicenter for polka music.

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A Mix of Politics, Polonia, and Poland Emphasized at APAC Annual Conference

by Richard Poremski

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Polish Advisory Council (APAC) held its annual conference Oct. 10, 2015 at the Atlantic Council. APAC President Edward Rowny (U.S. Army Lieutenant General and Ambassador, both retired), Executive Director Darek Barcikowski, and Political Director Agnes Marczak organized the event.

“Polish Americans and their institutions must speak with a strong voice” was one of the conclave’s main focal points — as expounded upon in detail by Directors Barcikowski and Marczak — at the politically nonpartisan conference attended by over 80 people.

The all-day event featured guest speakers, discussion panels, politicians, experts on international business and politics, a cross-section of Washington think tank fellows, diplomats from the Embassy of Poland, and an official delegation visiting from Rzeszow, Poland, led by the Honorable Bogdan Romaniuk, chairman of the Provincial Parliament.

Topics addressed during the conference

included: “The 2016 Presidential Elections and the Ethnic Vote,” “The Economic and Energy Security Impact of a Belligerent Russia,” “The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: Trade, Jobs and Energy Independence,” and “Polish American Affairs in 2015.”

The agenda provided much information, insight, and opinion, much to the benefit of the attendees. Questions from the audience added a lively and challenging dimension to the academic atmosphere.

Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland was the guest speaker.

“I’m encouraged by the young people here, particularly the Polish Americans who want to get involved in U.S. politics,” he said after surveying the audience. “Use your most positive young energy and please don’t forget about those generations of Polish Americans that built up the Polish American presence here in the U.S. They did great things in the most difficult years when we needed the Polish American community here.

“I want to confirm that relations between Poland and America are better than ever,” continued the ambassador. “Last week Poland’s President Duda met here with your President Obama on matters of importance to both countries. The commitment of the U.S. presence in Europe was reconfirmed. In light of the dire situation in Ukraine, the defensive NATO alliance is more important than ever. Washington and Warsaw are outspoken and active in keeping the Trans-Atlantic Community united against the aggression in Ukraine. NATO will not hesitate to protect against



Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel expressing a salient point.

any aggression to its allied member countries. It will take up any new challenges as they arise, especially during the ongoing immigration crisis to Europe, and acting in unison against the so-called Islamic State and terrorism in the Middle East.”

Poland’s inclusion in the U.S. Visa Waiver program is of extreme importance stated Ambassador Schnepf. He lauded APAC for its extensive lobby efforts in the U.S. Congress for Poland’s inclusion, and encouraged all present to be politically active on Poland’s behalf during this congressional session in Washington. “Thank you all for your work, dedication and perseverance in joint efforts to promote our heritage,” he said in closing his remarks.

“U.S. on the Front Lines: Poland, NATO and Emerging Challenges to Global Security,” was the topic addressed by the Honorable Chuck Hagel, former U.S. Secretary of Defense under President Obama. His speech began with a memory of a visit to his maternal grandmother’s village in the vicinity Poznan, Poland.

“I was in the church where my grandmother and family members married and where

their children were baptized ... it was a very sentimental journey.”

Hagel devoted the majority of his remarks to the current challenges to world security.

“After 9/11 the world is entering a new era, changes in every dimension ... in terms of technology, economy, demographics and new forces to contend with. The Middle East has never in history been so unstable. It’s a difficult time to be a world power; everything in the world has become more complicated. It’s not true that America is no longer a strong country. There is no other country in the world that is able to work with its allied

partners like America is.”

Responding to the question of “How safe are we in the United States?” Hagel said the United States is more secure than it was five or ten years ago. “The actions of the intelligence agencies are at the highest level, adapted to the current threats,” he said.

Questioned about Poland’s role in issues between Russia and the Western powers, Hagel said “Of all the countries behind the Iron Curtain, Poland shone in economic leadership. Poland has played, and continues to play, a huge role. Its geopolitical location is important, as well as the fact that Poland has a long history of cooperation with the U.S. — being one of the few NATO countries that has such a bond. We will make sure that, if necessary, NATO will fulfill its obligations in relation to members of the organization.”

The audience demonstrated an appreciation of Hagel’s expertise as a person who possesses a unique ‘been there-done that’ status.

A post-conference reception was held at the Washington Plaza Hotel featuring Polish Fusion cuisine, libations, and conversation.



Poland’s Ambassador to the U.S. Ryszard Schnepf addressing the conference.

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