

# POLISH AMERICAN JOURNAL

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A BUTTER LAMB REFRESHER  
PAGE 2PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT BOSTON, NEW YORK  
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**EXTREMISM AND HISTORICAL WRITING • SUPER POLES IN THE KELCE BOWL • RIGHTEOUS POLES BOOK TOUR**  
**WORLD WAR II HEROINES REMEMBERED • GENEALOGISTS TO TOUR US • NEW SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED**  
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## NEWSMARK

**DUDA AND ZELENSKY MEET IN SOUTHEASTERN POLAND.** Polish President Andrzej Duda met with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky to discuss further support to war-torn Ukraine, among other topics. The two leaders held two-hour talks in the southeastern Polish city of Rzeszów.

The meeting came as Zelensky returned from trips to London, Paris, and Brussels, where he met Europe's leaders and made an address to the European Parliament.

During his European tour, the Ukrainian president gave thanks for the support for his country and urged further military assistance to help Ukraine repel the Russian invasion.

Zelensky also held a bilateral meeting in Brussels with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

The Polish head of state's top foreign-policy aide Marcin Przydacz told the PAP news agency that during the meeting with President Duda, "President Zelensky reported on his latest diplomatic activity and the series of meetings in Brussels and other European capitals."

The talks also concerned "the planned diplomatic efforts of President Duda and the preparation of the agenda for the upcoming NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania," the aide said.

**CLOSES BORDER CROSSING WITH BELARUS.** Poland's interior minister said the country closed a border crossing with Belarus until further notice, following the imprisonment by a Belarusian court of a journalist of Polish origin in what was widely regarded as a politically motivated trial.

Interior Minister Mariusz Kamiński said in a tweet: "Due to the important interest of state security, I decided to suspend until further notice from 1200 on Feb. 10 this year traffic at the Polish-Belarusian border crossing in Bobrowniki."

Bobrowniki, northeast of Warsaw, is one of the main crossing points between Poland and Belarus.

**COMPENSATION AWARDED TO SON OF WARTIME LEGEND.** The Regional Court in Warsaw has awarded 1.5 million zlotys (about \$335K USD) compensation to the son of Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki.

Andrzej Pilecki asked the court to award 26 million Polish zlotys compensation for the execution of his father, a legendary Polish war hero who infiltrated Auschwitz leading to the "Witold Report" — to inform the world about the Holocaust.

After the war, following orders issued by General Anders, Pilecki gathered information about communist operations in Poland for the Polish government-in-exile. He was caught, tortured and then executed in 1948. He was posthumously awarded Poland's highest decoration, the Order of the White Eagle, in 2006.

**RESCUERS BATTLE TO SAVE SURVIVORS.** Poland joined the list of nations aiding of victims of the earthquake that to date has taken over 46,000 lives in Turkey and Syria. The Polish HUSAR rescue team, consisting of 76 firefighters and eight rescue dogs, arrived in Turkey the day after the quake, and was immediately sent to the town of Besni northeast of Gaziantep, the epicenter of the earthquake. It rescued nine people from under the rubble in Turkey during their first day of participation. Among those rescued by Polish firefighters was a family of four (parents and two children) and a 13-year-old girl.

Additional support for Turkey followed the HUSAR team with the arrival of medical personnel from the Military Field Hospital in Wrocław. A total of 52 people, including doctors, nurses and paramedics, and a mobile aid station with equipment was flown to Turkey.

**FIRST ALL-ELECTRIC JEEP MODELS TO BE BUILT IN POLAND.** Orders are already being placed for the first-ever Jeep model to use a fully electric drive (BEV), and it is being built at a Polish plant in the southern town of Tychy. International auto giant Stellantis "is seeking to achieve a position as the world leader in the zero-emissions SUV segment," according to the manufacturer's statement. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles merged with France's PSA Group (Peugeot, Citroën), to create Stellantis which now also includes Germany's Opel and Britain's Vauxhall makes, acquired from General Motors. The Tychy plant will be responsible for producing a range of hybrid and electric vehicles for the Jeep, Fiat, and Alfa Romeo brands.

*Biden tells Poland, Ukraine, America, Russia, and the world:*

## "Our support for Ukraine will not waver"



A U.S. delegation led by President Joe Biden (left) met with Poland's President Andrzej Duda and officials Feb. 21, 2023, in Warsaw. (AP PHOTO/ EVAN VUCCI)

by Robert Strybel

WARSAW — U.S. President Joe Biden was cheerful and upbeat when he greeted the crowd crammed into the walled-off gardens of Warsaw's Royal Castle with "Hello, Poles!" and evoked an enthusiastic response from the some 20,000 in attendance. But he soon took on a serious demeanor in a hard-hitting address on Putin's terrorist aggression against Ukraine.

Having paid a secretly prepared, surprise visit to the Ukrainian capital the previous day, Biden told his

Warsaw audience: "The message I bring from Kyiv is freedom. Kyiv stands strong, proud, tall and — above all — free." He promised Ukraine would never be a victory for Russia. "When Russia invaded, it wasn't just Ukraine being tested. The whole world faced a test for the ages."

"There should be no doubt," he said. "Our support for Ukraine will not waver. NATO will not be divided. And we will not tire."

Accusing Russia of committing "crimes against humanity, without shame or compunction," he con-

tinued by saying "They've targeted civilians with death and destruction; used rape as a weapon of war. They've stolen Ukrainian children in an attempt to steal Ukraine's future; bombed train stations, maternity hospitals, schools, and orphanages. No-one can turn away their eyes from the atrocities Russia is committing against the Ukrainian people."

Biden's address came just hours after Putin had given a speech of his own in Moscow, repeating the

see "Biden in Poland," page 4



Lady Blanka Rosenstiel proudly displays the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, presented to her by Minister Andrzej Dera on behalf of the president of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda.

## Sophisticated Elegance

*The American Institute of Polish Culture's Polonaise Ball*

by Staś Kmiec

Lady Blanka Rosenstiel has been a guest at the White House and danced with presidents on many occasions. On February 11, she once again led the ceremonial *Polonez* at this year's **International Polonaise Ball Golden Jubilee** in Miami Beach, Florida. The Gala Dinner Dance was held at the iconic Eden Roc Hotel. The theme was *The Heartfelt Hospitality of Poland* — reflecting on Poland's history of being a haven for outsiders; a tradition the nation continues to cultivate in contemporary times.

From the young girl who grew up in Poland with a spark and passion for the arts, Lady Blanka's life's journey brought her to the United States where she founded the **American Institute of Polish Culture (AIPC)** — realized a dream and established a legacy.

**BECOMING LADY BLANKA ROSENSTIEL.** Blanka Aldona Wdowiak was born into a Catholic family in

see "Polonaise Ball ..." page 8



## ALMANAC

March  Marzec

*Ruszaj w marcu w pole,  
by po trochu  
rzucic w ziemię owsa, grochu.  
March is the time to return to the  
field, to sow oat and peas,  
for this year's yield.*

- 1 **1634.** Polish King Władysław IV beats the Russians in the Smolensk War, a two-year conflict fought between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russia.
- 2 **1333.** Death of Władysław I the Elbow-high.
- 1864.** Abolition of serfdom in Poland.
- 3 **1996.** Death of Cardinal John Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, first Polish American Cardinal.
- 4 **ST. CASIMIR**
- 1484.** Death of St. Casimir, Patron of Poland. (b. Oct 3, 1458, Krakow).
- 1846.** Kraków Uprising ends.
- 5 **1940.** Joseph Stalin — among others — signs orders for what would become known as the Katyń Forest Massacre.
- 1813.** Birth of Kazimierz Gzowski, Polish engineer and bridge builder who emigrated to Canada.
- 6 **1745.** Birth, in Mazowia, Poland, of Casimir Pułaski, American Revolutionary War hero, general, and father of the American Cavalry.
- 7 **966.** Mieszko I, Duke of Poland, accepts Christianity.
- 8 **1822.** Birth of Ignacy Łukasiewicz, Polish inventor and businessman, invented the Kerosene lamp (d. 1882).
- 9 **1734.** Russians capture Gdańsk.
- 11 **1920.** Bolsheviks opened a major offensive on the Polish front.
- 12 **1999.** Accession of Poland to NATO.
- 1388.** Pope Urban VI authorized Poznań's Bishop Dobrogost to establish a Vilnius archdiocese.
- 13 **1995.** Death of Franciszek Gajowniczek, Auschwitz prisoner saved from death by sacrifice of St. Maximilian Kolbe.
- 14 **1882.** Birth of Waclaw Sierpinski, mathematician.
- 15 **1869.** Birth of Stanislaw Wojciechowski, politician and scientist.
- 16 **1964.** Birth of Gore Verbinski, American film director and writer
- 17 **ST. PATRICK**
- 1956.** Death of Irene Joliet-Curie, daughter of Pierre and Madame Curie, and Nobel Prize in Chemistry recipient. (b. 1897)
- 18 **1921.** Signing of the Peace of Riga concludes the Polish-Soviet War.
- 19 **ST. JOSEPH**
- 1238.** Death of Henryk I the Bearded.
- 20 **1842.** First Polish immigrant society formed in New York City, Towarzystwo Polaków w Ameryce, Association of Poles in America.
- 21 **1900.** Birth of Paul Kletzki, Polish violinist, composer, conductor.
- 1939.** Nazi Germany demands Gdańsk (Danzig) from Poland.
- 22 **1659.** The Warsaw parliament issues metal currency, shillings, for Lithuania and Poland.
- 23 **1891.** Death of Fr. Leopold Moczygomba, founder of Ss. Cyril & Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake.
- 24 National Day for the Remembrance of Poles Rescuing Jews under Nazi German Occupation.
- 25 **FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION**
- 26 **1942.** Germans began sending Jews to the Auschwitz concentration camp.
- 27 **1981.** The Solidarity movement in Poland stages a warning strike, in which at least 12 million Poles walk off their jobs for four hours.
- 31 **1939.** British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain tells the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government would lend the Polish Government all support in their power should Hitler attack.

## MAILING DATES

This paper mailed on or before  
**March 3, 2023.** The April 2023  
edition will be mailed on or before  
**March 30, 2023.**

## An Easter Lamb Refresher

*There's More to this  
Celebrated Holiday Icon  
than what Meets the Eye*

By Mark Kohan

If you are Polish and Catholic or know anyone who fits that description, you have had an Easter lamb (*Baranek wielkanocny*) in your basket for blessing or on your święconka table.

**BIBLICAL ROOTS.** A symbol of Christ both suffering and triumphant, the lamb dates to the biblical time of Passover and the exodus of the Jews from slavery under Pharaoh (incidentally, believed to be Ramses II). God instructs Moses: "Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, 'Let my son go, so he may worship me.' But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'" (Exod 4:22-23). God instructs Moses to order Israelite families to sacrifice a lamb and smear the blood on the door of their houses. In this way, the Angel of Death would know to "pass over" the houses of the Israelites.

Almost 1500 years after Moses, the title "Lamb of God" for Jesus appears in the Gospel of John, who recorded John the Baptist's proclamation: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). The title is reaffirmed the next day in John 1:36, when it is repeated in the presence of the Andrew and his brother Peter, the first two disciples.

**DINNER IS SERVED.** Accounts of royal Easter feasts from the 13th Century call for — among copious amounts of food banned during Lent — roasted lamb. In time, and in poorer homes, the lamb appeared in other forms, most often made of dough, sugar, or sculpted from butter, which was usually given up during Lent. Rather than wasting 40 days of cream, it was churned into butter and stored for święconka. Poles were not the only ones to do this. The tradition is also embedded in Ukrainian, Russian, and Slovenian Catholic culture. Decorative non-edible lambs were pared from wood, molded in plaster or wax, or stitched from cloth.

The lambs, of course, followed their sculptors across the Atlantic, where American ingenuity and marketing developed basket-ready lambs.

**BUTTER WHAT?** Unfortunately, the butter lamb — like many ethnic foods — was almost placed on the endangered list. Mixed marriages and assimilation meant foods we grew up with (when

**SPIRITUAL RESPITE.** For the next few months, paid subscribers to the *Polish American Journal* will be able to get Sophie Hodorowicz-Knab's latest book, "Spirit of Place: The Roadside Shrines of Poland," at \$3.00 off the cover price of \$24.95.

One of Polonia's most respected and well-read authors, her latest work is a study of Poland's tens of thousands of roadside chapels, crosses, and shrines "that dot both its cities and countryside." Hodorowicz-Knab found out during her trips to Poland, "It is impossible not to notice the religious statues and little chapels that seem to be everywhere. Enter a courtyard in Warsaw or Kraków and discover a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary mounted on a pedestal with fresh flowers at her feet. Drive through a small town, and you'll spy a niche under the eaves of a home containing a figure of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or a little wooden box on a tree holding a small image of Our Lady of Częstochowa. All of them seem to blend harmoniously with the environment and beautify it."

What are these objects? What do they mean? How did they come to be in this particular place? Why are they important? Order her latest to find out.

**SPEAKING OF THE PAJ BOOKSTORE,** we have received several letters from folks asking us for newer and different inventory. We are the first to admit there haven't been many changes in the bookstore over the past year, but that is mat-

was the last time you had *smalec, golonka, flaki, or galarecie?*) were being replaced by more standard American fare. *Zsiadle mleko* did not stand a chance against Yoo-Hoo in either taste or pronunciation. As folks left traditional urban neighborhoods, they joined parishes that did not practice traditions like basket blessing. The butter lamb became collateral damage.

Most of you reading this column would not consider it Easter without a butter lamb. But (and I hate to admit it) I have been at this job long enough to remember when historians outside of Polonia surged to document the last of Polish basket weavers, folk musicians, and craftspeople, especially those who decorated elaborate Easter eggs, wove palms into crosses, or sculpted butter lambs, at that time traditions in danger of being lost. It is hard to believe today, but in the late 1970s, there were less than a dozen Polish bakeries left in the United States that made and sold authentic *paćzki*. Pierogi were either made at home, or specialties of Polish restaurants or caterers.

Thankfully, things are different today. I am happy to document that pierogi makers fight for shelf space in many Northeast and Midwest supermarkets. I've eaten kielbasa (not "Polish-style sausage") at B.B. King's Blues Club in Nashville. This week I learned Wal-Mart sells butter lamb molds. As early as February, dairy cases in Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, and are lined up with Danish Maid, Kowalski, or Malczewski butter lambs. While I do not have the exact statistics on each area's share, it would be safe to say almost 75 percent of Western New York's coveted butter lamb market is dominated by those from Malczewski.

**BUILDING A BETTER BARANEK.** Dorothy Malczewski (1924-2013) started making butter lambs in the kitchen of her East Side home in the early 1960s using the wooden mold her father brought with him from Poland. She would eventually sell her butter lambs in seven sizes from her chicken stand in the Broadway Market, introducing them to generations of families as an Easter-time tradition

In a 2006 interview in *The Buffalo News*, Malczewski said her inspiration was to make a butter

lamb that was larger and prettier than the ones sold by the Buffalo Butter & Egg Co., which sold its line in hundreds of delis and supermarkets across Western New York. "I thought there must be a different way to make prettier ones, not only for our Polish people, but to let all of us enjoy a lamb on the table at Easter," she said.

A turning point for the butter lambs was the addition of "curls," said her son, Jim Malczewski. "A friend suggested doing curly lambs," he said. "We took a two-ounce lamb, whipped some butter and used a



pastry bag to decorate it. The business just kept growing and growing. Our lambs grew from four ounces to six ounces to a 10-ounce lamb."

**ALLELUJA OR ALLELUIA?** Malczewski's lambs are decorated with a trademarked plastic red "Alleluia" flag signifying victory over death, and a red ribbon around its neck representing the Blood of Christ. Variations abound in the flags used by other manufacturers or in homemade lambs. Some use either a flag or ribbon alone; some use both. Flags have been witnessed all red, red with a white cross, white with a red cross, or any combination of red, white, and gold. Some say "Alleluia" (the English spelling); others say "Alleluja" (the Polish spelling). Some people add greenery to the lamb. What seems to be non-negotiable, however, is the use of dried peppercorns or cloves for the lamb's eyes. (The use of googly eyes is, however, strongly discouraged).

Regardless of your choice of flag or ribbon, butter or dough, or decoration of wood or plaster, a lamb should be the center of your Easter table. It is a connection to centuries of ancestors who kept the tradition alive. More importantly, it acknowledges the graces and mercy granted to us by the Lamb of God.

## JUST BETWEEN US

ter of economics, not choice. Years ago, it was hard to find Polish-subject works from smaller publishing houses, vanity presses, and academic issuers. Those days are long gone because of the internet. And, because we cannot offer the profit margins given by larger sellers like Amazon or Barnes & Noble, it is just not profitable to take on new titles. To be honest, for most titles — after shipping, receiving, accounting, etc. — we break even, and there are a few that we take losses on. We will continue to stock books and items that are of a more general interest, as these have been, and continue to be, good sellers.

**HATS OFF** to the PAJ's Richard Poremski, whose letter to *The Washington Post* has caught the attention of anti-defamation groups in Poland. The newspaper's obituary for Nazi Hunter Allan A. Ryan, written by Michael S. Rosenthal, incorrectly identified the Nazi German extermination camp Treblinka in Occupied Poland as "Poland's." Calling the death camps "Polish," or "Poland's" is misleading, especially to those who do not know the country's history, and the pain inflicted upon by Nazi Germany and the USSR.

**ONCE AGAIN,** the United States Postal Service has raised its rates, and again, it is costing us more to mail the PAJ: the newspaper, subscription renewals, Bookstore orders, gift cards, billing, etc. At this point, we are going to monitor our balance sheets until the dust settles on the

USPS increase. We have taken quite a few hits from these frequent price hikes, which are underscored by exponential attrition rate on renewals, fewer Polish businesses, organizations, and events to advertise, and increases in printing costs. Apart from winning a Mega Millions drawing, your editor plans to man his post "until the last dog is hung," as they used to say. And while some of my professors may say it is not good business practice to sound a pre-emptive alarm, I find it not in my — but Polonia's — best interest to keep our readers informed of all aspects of running Polonia's last independent newspaper.

**A GREAT WAY** anyone can support the newspaper is by advertising. Our sales representatives Michelle Kisluk (skisluk@rochester.rr.com) and Steve Kroczyński (KroHawk1@aol.com) have updated our rate sheet and advertising literature. You can contact them via email or leave a message for either at our toll-free number, (800) 422-1275.

Our new rate sheet has been published on our website. PDF copies can be downloaded at: [www.polamjournal.com/advertise.html](http://www.polamjournal.com/advertise.html).

Next month is our annual Easter Edition. If you would like to support the paper by placing a patron ad in that paper, please see the form on the back cover. It is a great way to send greetings to fellow Polish Americans, family members, and friends across the country.

— Mark Kohan, Editor



# Secretary of State Mularczyk Visits Baltimore

by Richard P. Poremski

BALTIMORE, Md. – The Secretary of State of the Republic of Poland, Arkadiusz Mularczyk, visited here on January 30, 2023. (Secretary Mularczyk's title is also referred to as Deputy Foreign Minister.) He was accompanied by his Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegation, which included: Counsellor Przemysław Nowakowski – Department of the Americas, Professor Konrad Wnęk – director of the Institute of War Losses, and Assistant Julia Belicka – assistant to the Secretary of State. Representing the Embassy of the Republic of Poland were Ambassador Marek Magierowski and Chief of Protocol Monika Kaniewska.

Mularczyk and his entourage began their visit by laying a wreath at the National Katyń Memorial. They were warmly received by National Katyń Memorial Foundation officers and members, led by Chairman Richard P. Poremski. A narrated detailed tour of the Memorial followed.

A meeting with the Baltimore area Polonia in the large assembly room of Holy Rosary Church, requested by Mularczyk, followed dinner.

Both Mularczyk and Professor Wnęk addressed the audience. The main topic centered on Poland's past and present detailed demands for World War II reparations from Germany in compensation for the damages and atrocities suffered by Poland and its people at the hands of the invading and occupying Nazi-Germans.

During the reception's social hour, the Polonia mingled with the diplomats, asking ques-



The Honorable Arkadiusz Mularczyk (center), Republic of Poland's Secretary of State, at the National Katyń Memorial in Baltimore. He is flanked by NKMF officers Chairman Richard P. Poremski and Director Malgorzata Z. Bondyra.

PHOTO: MICHAEL CARNAHAN

tions and having personal/group conversations, and posing for photographs with the diplomats.

The following day, the delegation was set to visit members of the U.S. Congress on Capitol

Hill, and the U.S. Department of State, to lobby for their support backing Poland's demands for World War II reparations from Germany. An itemized bill totaling €1.3 trillion (approx. \$1.4 trillion USD) was sent to Berlin last September for the devastation and conduct upon Poland and its people. Germany has rejected the Warsaw's diplomatic overtures, saying that the matter of reparations has been settled and is non-negotiable, and adamantly refuses to enter into any discussions or negotiations.

The German government argues Poland waived its rights to war reparations in 1953, as part of an agreement in which East Germany ceded territories beyond the Oder-Neisse Line to Poland and Russia. At the time, both Poland and East Germany were communist captive-satellites of the USSR, being isolated behind Josef Stalin's Iron Curtain that divided Eastern and Western Europe.

The current Polish government argues that the "so-called-waiver" was agreed to under cover of socialist solidarity, as exerted by the USSR. Now a democracy, after being liberated from Russian domination, Poland absolutely rejects the aforementioned USSR-imposed waiver over which it had little or no control.

After departing Washington, the delegation visited the United Nations in New York City, where Mularczyk delivered a report on war reparations to the U.N. leadership and used the opportunity request support for Poland's related efforts with Germany. Lastly, the delegation traveled on to Chicago to meet with its Polonia and Polish media.

## FORUM

### Extremism and Historical Writing

by Dr. Richard C. Lukas

While surfing on the internet recently, I came across a lengthy polemic entitled, "Wikipedia's Intentional Distortion of the History of the Holocaust," by Jan Grabowski and Shira Klein. It was posted on February 9, 2023, and published in what purports to be an historical journal. I urge everyone to read this article to see how prevalent extremism is among some Jewish

historians in their interpretation of sensitive and controversial subjects involving Poles and Jews during World War II.

*"One of [Grabowski's] comments, reported in the press, was that Poles killed more Jews than Germans did during World War II."*

I recognized Jan Grabowski's name because of the outrageously false statements he had made in the past about Poles. One of his comments, reported in the press, was that Poles killed more Jews than the Germans did during World War II. The other allegation amplified the first one—namely, the Poles murdered tens of thousands of Jews. There is no evidence for these falsehoods.

The Grabowski/Klein article is a lengthy, disgusting diatribe which begins with an attack on the current editors of *Wikipedia* who monitor topics regarding Poles and Jews during World War II. Virtually every editor is attacked by Grabowski and Klein. The reason is quite clear. These editors have the critically important responsibility of insuring that what appears in *Wikipedia*, a major on-line encyclopedia, is as accurate and fair as possible. In my opinion, they have done a very competent job. But Grabowski/Klein want an entirely different group of editors who will echo their Polonophobic interpretation of every topic involving Poland, Poles, and Jews during World War II.

The second target of Grabowski/Klein are a number of authors, including me, who have written more nuanced characterizations of Polish-Jewish relations and Polish history during World War II. Grabowski/Klein obviously resent the fact that these authors are often cited on *Wikipedia* by the editors. What we have written is considered by Grabowski/Klein to be false,

absurd and one of their words, "fantastical." Only the Grabowski/Klein interpretation of these topics is acceptable to them. In other

words, they possess a monopoly on historical truth.

The Grabowski/Klein interpretation reduces itself to the crude familiar stereotype that Poles were inveterate anti-Semites, collaborators of the Germans, and killers of Jews. Even facts that reveal substantial Polish aid to the Jews during World War II are dismissed as gross exaggerations because that evidence conflicts with the Grabowski/Klein thesis.

Sickening rants by people who purport to be scholars are obviously detrimental in our continuing search for truth. What is sorely needed is more legitimate scholarship on these sensitive and controversial subjects, not *ex cathedra* pronouncements by extremists.

The sober observations of British historian, Timothy Garton Ash, are appropriate to recall here:

"The automatic equation of Poland with Catholicism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism—and thence a slide to guilt by association with the Holocaust—is still widespread. This collective stereotyping does no justice to the historical record."

♦ ♦ ♦

*Richard Lukas (born 1937) is an American historian and author of books and articles on military, diplomatic, Polish, and Polish-American history. He specializes in the history of Poland during World War II. Lukas is best known for The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation, 1939–1944 (1986), a study of the wartime experiences of the Polish people.*

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## Biden in Poland



In a fiery speech in Warsaw, President Joe Biden vowed to continue supporting Ukraine as it enters a second year of war, repeatedly denouncing Russian President Vladimir Putin and promising the United States would not waver even as the conflict enters a new, more uncertain phase. It was his second major address in less than a year from the same Polish castle.

### continued from cover

familiar Kremlin propaganda, which has not changed since his invasion a year ago. Putin said it was a neo-Nazi Kyiv regime that started the war, and Russia only tried to help the persecuted Russian-speaking people of the Donbas (eastern Ukraine).

Putin also claimed the West was waging war on Russia, and insisted the sanctions against Russia had no effect on the country's economy.

In response, Biden said the millions of Russian citizens only want to live in peace with their neigh-

bors. "War was never a necessity. It's a tragedy," said Biden. "President Putin chose this war. Every day the war continues is his choice."

Earlier in the day, the presidents of the United States and Poland held talks at the Presidential Palace, during which Biden thanked Duda for the way Poland has been helping Ukrainian, and praising the Poles for what he called "their extraordinary effort." He added a U.S. Army Command Center would be set up in Poland.

Biden's last official event of his Warsaw sojourn was a summit of the Bucharest Nine, an organization

of east European countries set up in response to Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea.

Having experienced decades of Soviet-style communism, they warned against Russia's resurgent imperialism at a time when the West was mainly concerned about lucrative business deals with Moscow.

Putin's full-scale invasion last year has enhanced the role of Poland and other eastern-flank nations. Some observers even believe the continent's political epicenter has been gradually shifting in an easterly direction.

## Upper-House Speaker Discusses aid with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State

WARSAW — Poland's Senate Speaker Tomasz Grodzki and the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Karen Donfried, met in Warsaw, Feb. 2, 2023.

Grodzki and Donfried also discussed Polish American relations and "compliance with fundamental values" in Poland when they met. Also present was the U.S. ambassador to Poland, Mark Brzezinski,

according to officials.

Grodzki, who is speaker of the Polish Senate, told reporters afterwards that Donfried "knows Poland well" as a former longtime head of the U.S. think tank the German Marshall Fund.

Grodzki said the meeting focused on "several topics," including "the war in Ukraine and the role of Poland and the U.S." in supporting the war-torn country. "But we also

discussed the rule of law, minority rights and predictions regarding parliamentary elections, which are due to take place in the autumn," he added.

Grodzki said he and Donfried had agreed that "close cooperation with our main ally, the U.S., as well as within NATO and the European Union, is the best way to ensure a victorious ending to the war in Ukraine."

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### The Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland and Polonia

In the last five years, The Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland and Polonia has awarded nearly \$350,000 in scholarships to college students of Polonia who are active in their parish and in the Polish community. The St. John Paul the Great scholarships are awarded in the Chicago area, and Western New York has also benefited. This past fall, four college students in parishes of the Diocese of Buffalo received scholarships totaling \$17,500.

The purpose of the scholarship is to provide future leaders for the Catholic Church and Polonia. Recipients are required to engage in regular faith formation meetings and can be considered for awards for multiple years with the goal of ensuring that our young people will have the best education and formation during their college years.

Created in 1943, the Catholic League has historically been helping the Church in Poland, and now is also reaching out to communities across the United States where Po-

lonia is present. Along with scholarships, monies raised are used for the continuing formation of priests from Poland who are studying in Rome.

The mission of the Catholic League proclaims: "Keeping in mind the future of our Polish American heritage, we cultivate the gift of unity with the Roman Catholic Church and we promote a transformed Polonia – informed, united, involved and active."

In the Diocese of Buffalo, the official collection, combined with that of Eastern Europe, is held in parishes in the month of February, but donations are accepted all year. You may request that your donation be entirely for the Catholic League by noting that on your envelope. Fr. Walter Grabowski, pastor of St. Gabriel Church in Elma, serves as the head of the Western New York committee. Other committee members are Edward Reska, Fr. Cole Webster, Mary Lou Wyrobek, and Michael Zachowicz.

The Most Rev. Andrew P. Wypych D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, is the National Executive Director. Donations may also be

mailed directly to 2330 West 118th Street, Chicago, IL 60643.

Any donation to the main office may include a notation for scholarships in your region, which can be found at <https://catholicleaguepolonia.org/our-regions/>. Those in the Diocese of Buffalo who have any questions may contact Mary Lou Wyrobek at [wyrbokml@gmail.com](mailto:wyrbokml@gmail.com).

### Polish American Arts Association

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Polish American Arts Association of Washington invites Polish American students to apply by March 31, 2023, for a scholarship grant. To qualify, applicants must be of Polish or Polish American descent and be full-time college students currently enrolled at an accredited college or university in the United States. Applicants must also be residents of Washington, D.C., Maryland, or Virginia or study at an institution in one these jurisdictions.

Application packages must be received in their entirety no later than March 31, 2023. There is no application fee required, and all are

### Pulaski Day To Be Observed Virtually

CHICAGO — Chicago will celebrate Pulaski Day virtually with the Polish Museum of America (PMA) on Mon., March 6, 2023. Top officials from national, state, county, and city governments and leaders of Polonian organizations and institutions will observe the State of Illinois annual recognition of the Polish American community by honoring the Revolutionary War hero Casimir Pulaski.

The program will feature guest speakers, live artistic performances, along with filmed presentations, and conclude with the traditional wreath-laying ceremony at Stanislaw Batowski's painting of Pulaski at Savannah.

The program begins promptly at 10:00 a.m. and will be streamed live on the PMA website: [www.Polish-MuseumOfAmerica.org](http://www.Polish-MuseumOfAmerica.org).

### Oldest Warsaw Uprising survivor turns 109

WARSAW — Col. Kazimierz Klimaczak, the oldest living freedom-fighter of the Warsaw Uprising, recently celebrated his 109th birthday. Appearing on TV in his Polish uniform, he received flowers and congratulations from Polish officials, fellow veterans and ordinary Poles alike. Seriously wounded in the World War II battle of the River Bzura River, he was evacuated to Warsaw and worked in a tobacco factory. He joined Poland's underground Home Army, and after the fall of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, managed to escape while being transported to a German POW camp. Klimaczak was promoted to colonel in 1917.

### Five Vie for UK Conducting Competition

LONDON — Five up-and-coming Polish conductors have been selected by a panel of judges to compete in the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition, which will take place in London on March 21-23.

## NEWSWIRE

The Polish contingent, which includes three women (Zofia Kiniorska, Aleksandra Melaniuk, and Agata Zając) and two men (Jakub Montewka and Jakub Przybycień), is the largest in a pool of 20 contestants.

Also represented are France with four participants, Germany with three and the UK with two, while the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Latvia, the Netherlands, Greece and Switzerland each have one contestant.

In the competition, each of the conductors will direct the London Symphony Orchestra, which has a collective vote as part of the judging panel.

Past winners of the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition include Poland's Michał Dworzyński, who received First Prize in 2006.

### Poland Proposes Dissidents could Compete

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — A group of 35 nations is expected to demand the International Olympic Committee (IOC) ban Russian and Belarusian athletes from the Paris 2024 Olympics, but Poland's sports minister suggested a refugee team of dissidents could compete as a "compromise."

Participants have stopped short of committing to a boycott of the Games should Russia and Belarus take part. "We are going in the direction that we would not need a boycott because all countries are unanimous," said Lithuania's Jurgita Šiugždinienė.

Polish Sports Minister Kamil Bortniczuk suggested it is "not time to talk about a boycott yet," but outlined a possible solution.

A formal statement is set to follow, which was hosted by newly appointed United Kingdom Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer and featured an opening address from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, a notable critic of the IOC's move to "explore a pathway" for the return of Russian and Belarusian athletes under a neutral banner in international sport.

journalism and/or mass media communications.

**2. Summer Study Scholarship.** \$2,000 Award. Deadline: April 15, 2023. For American students of Polish descent to participate in a Summer Study program at any one of Poland's fine universities or other institutions that offer such programs.

**3. Leonard Skowronski Polish Studies Scholarship.** \$3,000 Award (2). Deadline: April 5, 2023. For students pursuing some Polish studies (major may be in other fields) at universities in the United States, who have completed at least two years of college or university work at an accredited institution.

**4. Pulaski Scholarship for Advanced Studies.** \$5,000 Award. Deadline March 16, 2023. For graduate students of Polish descent enrolled at an accredited university in the United States, who have completed at least one year of studies at the graduate level.

For an application and complete information visit [www.Polishcultureacpc.org](http://www.Polishcultureacpc.org).

### American Council for Polish Culture

The American Council for Polish Culture is a National organization uniting like-minded groups and individuals in cities across the United States in promoting Polish culture, heritage, history, and intercultural understanding.

Scholarships are offered to deserving young people of Polish Heritage in the following areas of interest:

**1. The Eye of the Eagle.** \$5,000 Award. Deadline: June 30, 2023. Wladyslaw Zachariasiewicz Memorial Scholarship for American students of Polish descent, and those interested in Poland, pursuing a career in



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**POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE** (a non-profit corporation, State of New Jersey) begins its 38th 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 seven hospitals in Zabrze, Katowice, Lodz, Suwalki, Bialystok, Grajewo, and Ostroleka. 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

Make checks payable to The Polish Children's Heartline, and mail c/o Doreen Patras Cramer, 87 Deerfield Dr., Manahawkin, NJ 08050  
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## Righteous Poles Subject of Book Tour



Students from The Park School in Buffalo listen to author Sharon Cameron talk about Stefania and Helena Podgorska, who saved Jews during World War II.

BUFFALO, N.Y. — *New York Times* best-selling author Sharon Cameron was in Buffalo for three presentations on her book, *The Light in Hidden Places*, an historical novel describing the harrowing experiences of Righteous Among the Nations Stefania Podgorska, a Polish-Catholic teenager who chose bravery and humanity by hiding thirteen Jews in her attic during World War II with the help of her younger sister, Helena Podgorska.

The author presented to students at The Park School in Amherst and Canisius High School, as well as a public presentation and live-stream at Canisius College.

Cameron's riveting story told of how she began writing and how her life changed when she heard an interview with Stefania Podgorska on television in the 1990s. Eventually she was able to contact the son of Stefania, Ed Burzminski, in California with the goal of writing about her heroes, Stefania and Helena, in what would become her fifth book. While she was able to meet with Stefania, dementia had set in and she could not be interviewed. However, Cameron was able to access the unpublished memoirs of Stefania, view her various interviews and eventually meet some of the survivors. She travelled to Poland with Stefania's son to retrace the steps of the main characters in places in Przemysl and the surrounding area where the events occurred.

Her visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau shifted the focus of her writing to attempt to portray the emotions experienced by the characters, along with recounting the incredible series of events.

They were able to visit with Helena Podgorska, who had remained in Poland to become a doctor and who had spoken little of her World War II experiences in the succeeding years. Under Communist rule,

Helena was unable to personally receive her award from the Yad Vashem Museum in Israel as a Righteous Among the Nations. Similar to her sister, Helena proclaimed that her altruistic deeds were driven by God to do the right thing.

After their visit in Helena's home, a zoom meeting of survivors and Helena Podgorska was arranged, so she could finally be thanked for the heroic deeds she and her sister performed and see the outcome of her efforts in the faces of the survivors, their children, and succeeding generations with whom she zoomed.

The presentations were warmly received by the audiences and resulted in numerous questions, as well as requests to read the book. Sponsors of the events held January 26-27 in honor of UN Holocaust Remembrance Day were the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College, the Jewish Federation, and The Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo. Books were available for purchase at the college event and are currently available through Talking Leaves Bookstore, 951 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo NY 14222, [talkingleaveselmwood@gmail.com](mailto:talkingleaveselmwood@gmail.com), (716) 884-9524.

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### MODLITWY

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**PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.** (Never Known To Fail). Oh, most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my Mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart and succor me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (three times). Holy Mary, I place this cause in your hands (three times). Say this prayer for three consecutive days and then you must publish and it will be granted to you. R.J.K.

## World War II Heroines Remembered

by Benjamin Fiore, S.J.

In addition to Sharon Cameron's visit to Western New York (see story, left), the film *In the Name of Their Mothers, the True Story* was screened by the Polish Arts Club. The film details the efforts of **Irena Sendler**, who smuggled hundreds of Jewish children to freedom out of the Warsaw Ghetto and settled them with Polish families and religious houses.

Sendler was able to use her job as a social worker to gain entry to the Ghetto and sneak the children out. Arrested and tortured by the Nazi Germans, she revealed no details about her rescue work and survived the war, living in Poland into her 90s. She was nominated for the Noble Peace Prize but was passed over in favor of climate change proponent Al Gore. Her story was also remembered in the play *Life in a Jar*, focusing on the fact that she kept the names of all the children she rescued in a jar hidden in her garden, which she used after the war to reunite those children she could with their parents and to identify those many others whose parents had been killed.

### Sto Lat to....

**Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph** at the end of their celebration of 125th jubilee of service in Western New York. Memories of their work at Holy Trinity Church and parish school in Niagara Falls, N.Y. were recorded by **Fr. Czesław Krysa**, rector and administrator of St. Casimir and St. Bernard churches in Buffalo, N.Y., and published in Buffalo's *Am-Pol Eagle*.

**Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church** in Lorain, Ohio, celebrating 125 years. The anniversary was celebrated at a Mass presided over by Cleveland's **Archbishop Edward C. Malesic**. Bishop Malesic also installed the church's new pastor **Fr. Craig M. Hovanec** who succeeds the current pastor **Fr. Robert J. Glepko**, who has served the parish since 1997. Fr. Hovanec also serves St. Peter parish several miles away in this merged parish arrangement as a result of the priest shortage. The current church building dates back to 1915, which replaced a 1900 wooden church built for the growing Polish immigrant community that initially worshipped at the Irish St. Mary's Church. A series of anniversary events is planned for the coming year until the closing Mass in January 2024.

### Youth Pilgrimage to Buffalo

**Fr. Aron Maghsoudi**, Slovak-American pastor of eight merged/closed parishes in Centerville, Pa., brought a group of 65 teens and their parents to visit St. Casimir's Church in Buffalo, N.Y. There, they

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### RELIGION

admired the artistic and architectural features of the church building and also became acquainted with Catholic traditional practices at Easter (smoking sausage, grinding horseradish, and preparing the Easter basket). See YouTube for **Fr. Czesław Krysa's** videotaped segments on Polish traditional practices such as palm weaving and other traditions.

### Candle Fundraiser in Poland

**Mieczysław Lysiak**, family director of his Knights of Columbus Council in Skorzeszyce, Poland, supervised the sale of votive candles as a fundraiser for the Mother Teresa Hospice in Kielce. The equivalent of \$3,000 was raised.

### Sister Thwarts Burglars

While at morning prayer and hearing a noise outside her convent/social outreach center (called Response to Love Center in Buffalo, N.Y.), **Sr. Mary Johnice Rzakiewicz** went outside to see what the commotion was. She found a ladder against the building and heard noises on the roof. When saw burglars, and yelled out to them that this was "all God's property and everything in the building was for God's mission." She then kicked the ladder away from the roof, temporarily stranding the burglars. They ran off empty-handed. She said later, "They could have come here

for food or clothing. They could have come for a kind word, some guidance, but they chose a different route. That is not of God, that is evil. I just wish I could meet them." She added, "Every day I've been praying for these two thugs."

### Teaming up to Do the FBI's Work

CompassCare, a pro-Life pregnancy center in Amherst, N.Y., was fire-bombed over a half-year ago in the aftermath of the abortion supporters' fury that *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned. With minimal action by the local police and not much from the FBI — despite their having confiscated video-taped record of the assault — the center has teamed up with the St. Thomas More Society to launch their own investigation.

**Tom Brejcha** a lawyer for the Thomas More Society, is currently overjoyed over the fact that **Mark Houck**, whom the Department of Justice arrested and put on trial for violating a federal law against blocking entrances to abortion mills, was acquitted of all charges.

Thomas More Society shares Compass Care's concern that federal law enforcement is not interested in pursuing the over 77 domestic terror attacks against pro-Life pregnancy centers and Catholic churches and have produced no arrests in any case for over six months.

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# Copernicus: Renaissance Man Revelations

by Marek Kępa

Culture.pl

Part II of II

In 1495, Copernicus left Kraków to study law at the University of Bologna, where he enrolled in 1496. Although Copernicus had a limited interest in this field and studied it mostly in order to become a well-paid official of the Diocese of Warmia, this part of his education is said to have perfected his logical thinking abilities, a skill crucial to the later development of his heliocentric theory. The effort of going to law school paid off soon, as in 1497, Copernicus was nominated as a canon of the Diocese of Warmia. The lucrative position had a more administrative than religious nature (holding substantial political power, the diocese wasn't a purely religious entity) and secured a lifetime's livelihood – Copernicus had the money needed to develop his intellect.

He stayed in Italy until 1503 and in that time, he visited Rome, studied medicine in Padua, and got a doctorate in law at the university in Ferrara.

Apart from gaining a formal education, in Italy Copernicus's horizons were expanded in an informal way. Meeting the people and getting a feel of the creative atmosphere of the Italian Renaissance impacted the smart Copernicus. He eventually became a Renaissance man or a man of many talents. Apart from pursuing medicine and law, practical fields, Copernicus also took the time to develop his humanistic interests, for example by studying philology in Padua.

It is most probably there that he started to translate *Letters* from Greek into Latin – a group of fictitious, humorous writings on love and morals by the prominent 1st century Byzantine courtier Theophylact Simocatta. What might seem quite surprising is *Letters* is the only book we're certain Copernicus saw published during his lifetime (in Kraków in 1509).

The reason Copernicus was reluctant to print his writings is explained through his character. Karol Górski writes that Copernicus was “a shy person, full of doubts whether he'll be able to communicate his views to others.”

Another sign of Copernicus's appreciation for antique culture, aside from his translation, was his ring seal which bore an image of Apollo. Jeremi Wasiutyński in his 2003 book *The Solar Mystery* suggests that Copernicus might've even been involved with secret humanistic societies, functioning in a way similar to that of the freemasons, but there is no proof of that. Another unverified theorem is that Copernicus practiced painting. Here's a quote from *The Life of Copernicus* by Pierre Gassendi, a French mathematician and philosopher living in the 17th century:

“It is said, he perfectly made his portrait, using a mirror. Furthermore, he was advised to represent everything he had in mind. When he was travelling, especially in Italy, he thought that he would express, whatever was worthy to observe not only by sketching it out, but as much as he could by paintings.”

**INVESTIGATING HIS ARTISTIC TALENTS.** The self-portrait called on by Pierre Gassendi was alleg-

edly made by Copernicus after he had returned to Poland in 1503. The astronomer would live in Warmia for the rest of his days. If he did paint it, it would have been in the years 1503 to 1509, when he was staying with his uncle whose primary seat was at the Castle of the Bishop of Warmia in Lidzbark. Popular thought is that it did exist but is now lost. We know how it looked thanks to a 16th-century copy by Tobias Stimmer that embellishes the clock at the Strasbourg Cathedral. It depicts Copernicus holding a lily of the valley – a motif linked with physicians – with his other hand resting on an inscription saying this is a copy based on an “autographon” or self-portrait.

But nowadays, most Copernicologists believe that “autographon” means that the astronomer only confirmed that the original portrait was a faithful representation of his looks, rather than that he had made it himself. There are no other supposed paintings by Copernicus, and he didn't mention practicing painting in his writings, notes, etc. So there's no real proof of him having been a painter.

Still, that didn't stop the hearsay from expanding. Even the valued Polish writer Stefan Żeromski was tempted to attribute extra skills to the already broad arsenal at Copernicus's actual disposal:

“...He wrote the Latin poem *Sep-tem Sidera* (*Seven Stars*), practiced painting, drawing, experimented with music and sculpture.”

Unfortunately, none of that transpires from credible historical sources and the quote just goes to show how rich the tradition of enhancing Copernicus's output is. Curious, especially given that his proven accomplishments situate him in a position of genius, requiring no improvement.

One kind of “artwork” is on record: Copernicus created maps of Prussia and Warmia during his stay with his uncle. Scholars claim that he had shared his expertise on the regions' geography with his friend Bernard Wapowski, creator of the first-ever map of Poland. Unfortunately, all three of these maps have gone missing. Nevertheless, this shows that Copernicus's factual involvement in the field of graphics was cartographic rather than artistic. That this involvement was meaningful is evidenced by the fact that his maps were used by 16th-century historians. Importantly, also in Lidzbark, Copernicus completed the translation of the *Letters*, proof of his gift for the written art of translation.

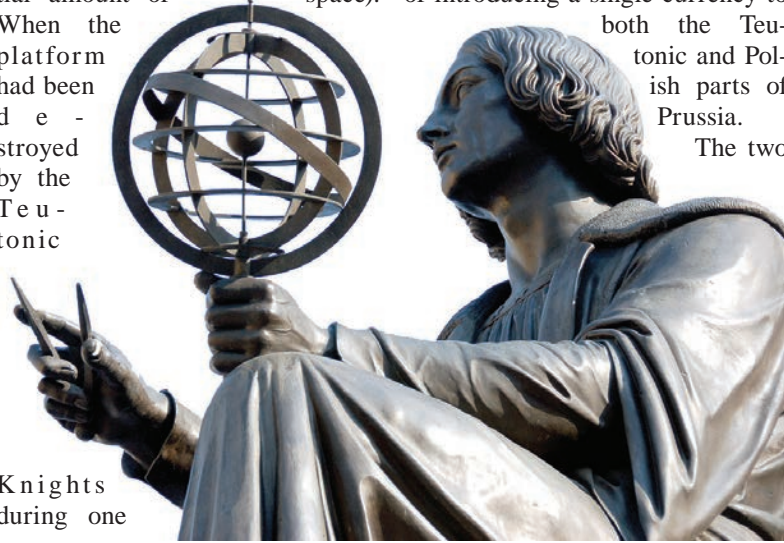
**A ROOM WITH A VIEW.** Copernicus's influential uncle quite probably saw the astronomer as his successor. Copernicus on the other hand wasn't interested in the bishop's office, preferring intellectual activities over religious and political ones. This conflict of interest was possibly the reason behind Copernicus leaving Lidzbark, where conditions weren't favorable for astronomical work – there were no good observation points and the bishop kept engaging him in the diocese's businesses. Copernicus moved to the town of Frombork. There, he lived within the cathedral complex, situated on a hill and centered around a 14th-century gothic basilica. Karol Górski writes:

“At the foot of the hill there was a small town, and beyond were the grey waters of the Vistula Lagoon

lined to the north by the narrow black strip of the pine forest on the spit. Further ahead, the Baltic Sea glittered. This view Copernicus had before his eyes for many years.”

In Frombork, the astronomer had a modest house and a special observation platform in a garden outside the complex's walls where his astronomical instruments could be set up properly (these required a substantial amount of space).

When the platform had been destroyed by the Teutonic



Knights during one

The Nicolaus Copernicus Monument in Warsaw was unveiled in 1830 and has seen its fair share of adventure. During World War II, the Nazis placed a bronze plaque insinuating that the great man was a German. In 1942, a boy scout called Alek Dawidowski ducked the guards and removed the plaque. Boiling with fury, the Nazis removed the statue, hid it in Silesia and dynamited a few other surrounding monuments for good measure. The statue was recovered in the years following the war, while Dawidowski entered Polish folklore as a result of his bravery.

of their raids, Copernicus is said to have moved his observation spot to the campanile.

Interestingly, the tower within the complex which he had purchased for himself, nowadays called Copernicus's Tower, has been proven to have been too small to serve as his observatory. So, shown at the top of this article, the famous 1873 painting *Astronom Copernicus* (Copernicus the Astronomer) by the eminent historical painter Jan Matejko showing him there surrounded by astronomical instruments isn't entirely accurate.

**RATHER DEATH THAN TEUTONIC RULE.** The Teutonic threat disrupted life in Warmia. The knights were not respecting the terms of the 1466 peace treaty, and it eventually led to the outbreak of a war with Poland in the year 1519. By then, Copernicus had already been acting for three years as a diocese high administrative official, seated at the castle in the town of Olsztyn. He was nominated for the position because he was seen as a man skilled enough to play a leading role in the uneasy times that were unfolding. Unfortunately, his new responsibilities, which he performed according to his nature with due diligence, left him with little time to conduct astronomical research.

At Olsztyn, apart from proving himself a thorough organizer, Copernicus also proved to be a valiant and loyal subject of the King of Poland. When the Teutonic Order tried to capture the castle, Copernicus refused to surrender and assembled a successful defense. It was during this war that he wrote the already quoted letter to King Zygmunt I, asking for military assistance. The letter also includes the following words:

“We want to do what suits noble and honest men (...) even if that entails paying the highest price.”

In other words, Copernicus would have preferred death to giving the castle away to the Teutonic Knights.

The Polish crew that had reinforced the stronghold earlier strongly influenced the final, victorious outcome. The war ended with a truce in 1521 and a peace treaty favorable to Poland in 1525.

Toward the end of 1521, Copernicus moved back to Frombork. He stayed there until his death on May 24, 1543. In the years following the war, he was involved in the issue of introducing a single currency to both the Teutonic and Polish parts of Prussia.

The two

Górski, Bishop Maurycy Ferber even put the following memory in writing:

“With God's help and under the attentive care of the medics (namely Doctor Mikołaj Kopernicus, a canon at my church, and Doctor Waryniewicz Wille, the physician of his highness the Duke of Prussia) the illness has receded enough for me to be now getting better.”

After Copernicus's ambitious currency reform had been limited, he withdrew to Frombork. His fellow canons didn't share his impractical interest in astronomy. He was valued, but as a medic. Having basically no one who would understand his greatest passion within the hermetic society of the cathedral complex, in his final years Copernicus chose to lead a rather solitary life. He devoted his time to astronomy and *De Revolutionibus*, his treatise explaining the heliocentric theory which he had first outlined in a 1512 writing called *Commentariolus*. But even though the theory was his life's work, he seemed reluctant to finalize and publicize it.

Scholars point to several reasons behind this: his natural shyness, wanting to avoid misunderstood again as in the case of the monetary reform, and not wanting to confront the official geocentric doctrine of the church which he represented as a canon. Fortunately, the elderly Copernicus was inspired to complete his ground-breaking work by a young math professor from Wittenberg named Rheticus, who came to Frombork in 1539 after hearing the theory and becoming curious.

**ALL THAT'S BEAUTIFUL.** Thanks to Rheticus's encouragement, Copernicus finished *De Revolutionibus*. It was printed in March 1543 in Nürnberg and a copy is said to have arrived in Frombork on the exact day Copernicus passed away. Whether he had seen the ready book with his own eyes remains an open question.

Copernicus, a true Renaissance man was not only a genial astronomer, but also a valued medic, a cartographer, visionary economist, and a literary translator. With his final work he shifted the center of the universe from the Earth to the Sun, deeply impacting the very way in which people thought. As a result, many scientific, philosophical, and humanistic questions were raised in what came to be known as the Copernican Revolution. When you read *De Revolutionibus* you can find the very source of that whole commotion. Let Copernicus have the last word:

“From the many different arts and sciences that we love and that give food for thought, one ought to – in my opinion – devote and apply oneself with the greatest commitment to those that revolve around the things that are the most beautiful and most worth learning (...). And is there anything more beautiful than the sky that after all encompasses all that's beautiful?”

◆ ◆ ◆

*Marek Kępa is a journalist and musician from Warsaw, and involved with Culture.pl for many years, first as a translator, later as an author. His voracious appetite for all things Polish has led him to write about painting, folk art, customs, history, literature, and music. Kępa is also a blues guitarist and singer, performing under the stage name Mr. Marulin.*

**ONLY VALUED AS A DOCTOR.** To us, Copernicus is first an astronomer. But to his contemporaries he was better known as a physician. He was considered a skilled practitioner of medicine, which, at a time when there were very few doctors, was enough to make you famous. That is why in the Strasbourg portrait he's presented with a lily.

Unlike the fields of economy or astronomy in which he displayed extraordinary vision, in medicine he settled for simply doing what needed to be done – he is said to have followed the guidelines presented in the numerous books on medicine in his possession. Due to his renown, powerful locals asked for his services. According to Karol



# Rare First Edition of Copernicus Masterwork Displayed

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Over fifty people gathered in the Ring of Knowledge at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library for a reception related to the display of Nicolaus Copernicus' famous book, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*), the first of a series of events in celebration of the 550th birthday of Nicolaus Copernicus. The Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College joined with the library to host a program about Copernicus and how Buffalo came to have this rare first edition. After a welcome and introduction by Mistress of Ceremonies Mary Lou Wyrobek, John Spears, director of the library system, spoke of landing at the Nicolaus Copernicus airport in Wrocław, Poland. He acknowledged Copernicus as a man who spoke the truth, regardless of the consequences, a timeless message for today's caustic social environment.

Spears then introduced Amy Pickard, curator for rare books, who offered a presentation of how the Library came to obtain the book which is part of the Milestones of Science Collection originally housed at the Buffalo Museum of Science. Procured by the Science Museum in the 1930s, the collection was in danger of leaving the area due to financial concerns and the inability of the Science Museum to display the collection. To keep this treasure in Buffalo, arrangements were made for a trade between the Library and the Science Museum. The Library received the collection in exchange for a partial set of the Audobon Prints, one of two sets owned by the Library. The partial set was later auctioned by the Science Museum in an effort to secure its financial situation.

Finally, Wyrobek offered a presentation illuminating the true "Re-

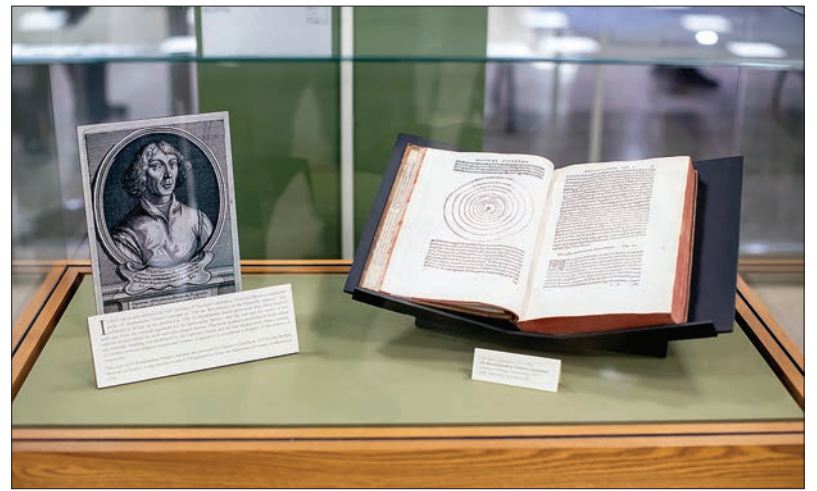


(l. to r.): John Spears, director of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library; Amy Pickard, curator for the system's rare book collection; and mistress of ceremonies, Mary Lou Wyrobek.

naissance Man" character of Copernicus who was a mathematician, astronomer, economist, physician, lawyer, cartographer, defender of the Olsztyn castle against the Teutonic Knights, and possibly, artist, all while also acting as a canon of the Catholic church, administering a cathedral. She noted that Copernicus saw no conflict between faith and reason. He wrote: "To know the mighty works of God, to comprehend His wisdom and majesty and power; to appreciate, in degree, the wonderful workings of His laws, surely all this must be a pleasing and acceptable mode of worship to the Most High, to whom ignorance cannot be more grateful than knowledge." In dedicating his book to Pope Paul III, he noted that it was a Cardinal and a Bishop who urged him to publish his book on the Heliocentric Theory. Historically, Martin Luther was one of the more vociferous critics of Copernicus and his theory, arguing that it refuted scripture. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, took 70 years to ban the book. (Unfortu-

nately, it also took until 1758 for the ban to be removed by which time, the theory was widely accepted.) She concluded with a somewhat "tongue in cheek" explanation of why we know Copernicus was Polish and not German, including a quote where Copernicus essentially says that it was better to die, then turn over the Olsztyn Castle to the Teutonic Knights who were German.

Events held in honor of Copernicus included a display on the main floor in the Grosvenor Room of the Downtown Library of 1543 first edition of Copernicus' masterwork



A rare first edition of Nicolaus Copernicus' famous book, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, highlighted the first of a series of events celebrating the mathematician's 550th birthday. The Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College joined with the library to host a program explaining how Buffalo came to have its copy.

throughout February. On Feb. 26 the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College, the Chopin Singing Society, and Polish Arts Club of Buffalo presented a multimedia program of music, images, and memorabilia, "Chopin and Copernicus: The Art of the Heavens."

The program at the Canisius College Montante Cultural Center featured the Chopin Singing Society in a short program of Renaissance music, and a Buffalo premiere of Jerzy Kolaczowski's "De Revolutionibus" in an arrangement by Dr. Thomas Witakowski of the Buffalo State College Music Department.

The piece featured a narration related to Copernicus rendered by radio personality Andrew Golebiowski, pianists Maria Chomicka and Melanie Bebak in music of Chopin, a display of images from the Webb and Hubble telescopes, and images and quotes of Copernicus by Paul Krupinski of the Strasenburgh Planetarium in Rochester.

The final event in the Fall of 2023 will feature, Br. Guy Consolmagno, Director of the Vatican Observatory, in a lecture on Copernicus and modern-day questions of faith and reason.

## PHILATELICS

### Copernicus on stamps and money



ACCORDING TO THE POLONUS POLISH PHILATELIC SOCIETY, Poland has just issued a 3.90 zł. stamp honoring Copernicus on the 550th anniversary of his birthday. Previous stamps include a 1953 issue featuring Jan Matejko's famous painting of Copernicus, "Watching the Heavens." In 1971, Poland's National Bank (Narodowy Bank Polski) issued a 500 zł. banknote depicting Copernicus, and in 1982, a 1000 zł. note (pictured above) was issued.

The Polonus Polish Philatelic Society offers informational stamp history, news on new stamps, plus study groups on Aero-philately, master engraver, Czeslaw Slania, and POW camps.

The Society will be participating in the forthcoming Stamp Expo WESTPEX in San Francisco in April. To learn more, visit [www.polonus.org](http://www.polonus.org) for information.

— Barbara Szydłowska

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## Lady Blanka: “... an inspiration, the embodiment of creativity, and a trailblazer for Polonia”

continued from cover

Warsaw to Irena (Karaszewka) and Waclaw Wdowiak. Her childhood abruptly ended on September 1, 1939, when Hitler attacked Poland, initiating World War II. In 1942 her father was taken to Magdeburg concentration camp; her brother Włodzimierz was later sent to another German concentration camp.

During the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, the Gestapo gave residents one hour to leave to be transferred to a transit camp in Pruszków, and then Germany. Along with her mother and brother Waldemar, Blanka was exiled to a labor camp – enacting various menial duties, including laying bricks at the Frankfort railroad station. Through the struggle and hardship, Blanka kept an inner light shining in her heart and soul of music, beauty, and art.

The Wdowiak trio were liberated by the Allied Powers in 1945. Waclaw died in Magdeburg; an aunt died in Auschwitz; Włodzimierz returned home.

As the country was under Soviet control, the three did not return to Poland. They lived in Germany before going to Luxembourg. Moving to Brussels, Belgium, Blanka's vocal talents were showcased as a singer at the Café Métropole and on radio. She studied the Fine Arts of music, painting, and sculpture.

Blanka continued performing as a vocalist throughout Europe, appearing on television and backed by an orchestra at exclusive dining establishments in major European cities. She later lived in Spain, continuing her notable, yet brief career.

In 1956, she moved to the United



Lady Blanka had a successful, yet brief singing career in Europe, she continues to impress at social gatherings.

PHOTO: AIPC

her primary passion became to advocate for Polish culture in the United States.

Rosenstiel founded the American Institute of Polish Culture (AIPC) in 1972. Inspired by her interest in the arts, she was dedicated to helping young artists and scholars succeed, and her desire to pro-

motivate, communication, or public relations to talented students of Polish origin. The Chair was transferred to the Institute of World Politics in Washington, D.C in 2008.

In 1998, she was awarded the title of Honorary Consul for the Polish government in Florida.

Lady Blanka currently resides in Miami Beach during the winter and in Charlottesville, Virginia during the summer. She focuses her attention on her organizations, projects, meetings, and daily schedule.

She was awarded *Doctor honoris causa* from the International Fine Arts College in Miami (1976), *Dr. humane letters* from Alliance College in Cambridge Spring, Pennsylvania (1978) and a *Doctorate of Law honoris causa* from The Institute of World Politics in 2021.

Lady Blanka has an affinity for language – in addition to Polish and English, she speaks French, German, and Spanish. Her hobbies include sculpting, painting and swimming.

Lady Blanka has received recognition through multiple awards, honors, decorations, titles, and distinctions, most notably: the *Ellis Island Medal of Honor* (1995), *Cavalier's Cross of Polonia Restituta Order* (1996), and *Polish Commander Cross of the Order of Merit* (2004). One additional honor was bestowed at the Ball.

**THE POLONAISE BALL.** I have attended many debutante balls and Polonia Gala events – this was my inaugural visit to the *Polonaise Ball*.

The dress code was “White and Black tie / Regalia.” I chose the most formal attire, channeling my inner “Downton Abbey.” Entering the Promenade Ballroom for the cocktail hour, I experienced an air of sophisticated elegance in the room. Many chose to dress in Florida-fabulous – Miami chic with its nostalgic glamor of Old Hollywood.

*Hors d'oeuvre* selections included smoked-salmon *blini* with horseradish crème-fraîche; tomato-burrata bruschetta; crab cakes; and chicken-lemongrass dumplings Champagne and a signature red cocktail were served, as guests were reunited, and others became acquainted. I encountered writer and film director Mariusz Kotowski, who I had met in Manhattan, when he was promoting his film on silent film star Pola Negri.

I quickly spotted Lady Blanka seated and receiving guests. She was shimmering in a gold sequin and bead embroidered overlay, worn over a cream satin-silk gown, and accessorized with ruby and diamond jewelry.

We had met years ago at Alliance College for an American Council for Polish Culture symposium, where I had choreographed for *Kujawiaki*, in what would be their final year.

I approached with a white metal rose tied in a white satin ribbon in hand – a translation of this Grande lady's name. We exchanged brief conversation, and I presented her with the memento. She was gracious, approachable, and genuine; the conversation was connected and meaningful.

The 360 guests in attendance were guided to the Pompeii Ballroom and seated. Each chair had a large gift bag donated by Conrad and Ivona Lowell featuring a treasure trove of chocolates. On the table was a towering bouquet of silk

flowers, and an ice trough containing wine, spirits, and a 17½ inch /1.75-liter bottle of *Polana Vodka*. The impressive glass container featured the names of Polish cities celebrated in the geographical shape of the nation.

I was seated at Table 25 with a lively group of insurance brokers, real estate agents, specialized moving, and development professionals. It was an entrepreneurial “think tank.” Polish was spoken – it was a jovial atmosphere, with no pretense. Barbara and Eugeniusz Rogoza, Agnieszka and Przemek Chomicz, Marta and Walter Wesołowski, Iwona Przydział, Paweł Szostak, and Klaudia Chilcoat were engaging, fun and paved the way for new friendships. I was reminded once again of the welcoming and hospitable nature of Poles.

Douglas Evans, the Master of Ceremonies presided over the evening with eloquence and efficiency. “It is amazing that for the past five decades, the Institute and the tradition of the Ball is still going strong and spans many generations,” said Evans. “What an amazing legacy to Lady Blanka's homeland and her mother.”

Distinguished guests and members of the Ball committee were invited for *Le Grande Polonaise* led by Lady Blanka and Andrzej Dera, Secretary of the State of Poland to the stirring composition by Wojciech Kilar from the film *Pan Tadeusz*.

In attendance were: Grzegorz Piechowiak, Minister for Foreign Investments, Ambassador Marek Magierowski – Embassy of Poland, in Washington, D.C., and Consul General Adrian Kubicki of New York.

The menu, prepared by Eden Roc's Chef Oneil Blake, featured: “Majestic Entrée” – grilled filet, with potatoes *au gratin*, and a bouquet of asparagus; and “Royal Dessert” – chocolate ganache dome, filled with *Grand Marnier* mousse, served with berries topped with edible flakes of gold.

The evening's honorees included:

**Krzysztof Wodiczko** – Artist, Harvard Professor (*Gold Medal*)

**Dariusz Adamczyk** – Chairman, CEO, *Honeywell* (*Gold Medal*)

**Brenda Bruce Fountain** – Concert Pianist, Co-founder – Paderewski Festival of Raleigh, N.C. (*Amicus Poloniae*)

**Zbigniew Ingłot, PhD** – President, CEO, *Ingłot* – achievements in the cosmetics industry (*Entrepreneurial Excellence Award*)

**Krzysztof Gojdz, M.D., PhD.** – Founder, CEO, *Revive Clinic* – accomplishments in aesthetic medicine (*Entrepreneurial Excellence Award*)

**Emilio Estefan** – Musician, Producer (*Humanitarian Award*)

**Heidi Hutter Kotowski**, Insurance Executive (*Special Recognition*)

**Janine Lennox**, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist (*Special Recognition*)

**Ambassador Aldona Wos**, President – Institute of World Politics (*Polonia Spirit Award*)

Minister Dera awarded Lady Blanka with the *Krzyżem Wielkim Orderu Zasługi Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (The Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland) on behalf of the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda – in acknowledgment of out-

standing services for the development of Polish American cooperation, for disseminating knowledge about Poland in the United States.

“Lady Blanka is an inspiration, the embodiment of creativity, and a trailblazer for Polonia,” said Beata Paszyc, AIPC Executive Director. “She understands that through unity we can achieve great things.”

Miami's **New Century Dance Company** performed an interpretive *Minuet* to the *Mazur* from the Opera *Halka* by Stanisław Moniuszko. Later, the dancers enacted a symbolic tribute to the Ukrainian spirit.

**The Polish American Folk Dance Company** of New York performed the *Polonez* and *Mazur* to Chopin's *Polonaise Militaire* Opus 40 and Moniuszko's *Straszny Dwór*. The four couples were dressed in the historic 17th century *kontusik* and *kontusze*.

Rafal Brzozowski, a singer/TV host from Poland performed Frank Sinatra's “I did it my Way.” Mu-



PAJ's Staś Kmiec meets Lady Blanka.

sic was provided by Cuban-Miami Flair.

The following morning, there was a networking and farewell brunch. There, I met Andy Gołębowski from Polish American Radio Program (*PolishProgram.com*) and many others of interest. Lady Blanka remarked to me “it was exhilarating seeing so many handsome men, beautiful women, and young people, and interacting with so many of them has been quite overwhelming.”

Through her life Lady Blanka Rosenstiel has brought people together – she does it with good taste, grace, elegance, class, charm, with a twinkle in her eye ... and with a passion and love for her homeland Poland.

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*The American Institute of Polish Culture, 1440 79th Street Causeway, Suite 117, Miami, FL 33141; (305) 864-2349; info@ampolnstitute.org, www.ampolnstitute.org.*



Entertainment included the Polish American Folk Dance Company of New York performing the Mazur from Moniuszko's opera *Straszny Dwór*.

PHOTO: S. KMIEC

States. In 1962, she met her future husband Lewis S. Rosenstiel, the Founder and Chairman of *Schenley Industries*, who shared his time and wealth with numerous charities and philanthropic institutions. Rosenstiel was smitten by not only Blanka's beauty, but her tenacity and bold, independent spirit. They were married from 1967 until his death in 1976.

Following the death of her husband, Blanka gained control of the Rosenstiel Foundation, which funds her altruistic endeavors. With all this involvement, her mother said to her: “Obudź się! (Open your eyes). You help so many American organizations; perhaps you should do something for Poland.” These words touched Blanka deeply and

mote both Polish history, heritage, and Polish-American culture. She serves as the President.

In collaboration with the University of Miami's School of Music, she presented the first National Chopin Piano Competition of the United States in 1975. The success inspired her to establish the **Chopin Foundation of the United States** in 1977, where she serves as President.

Upon receiving the *Lady of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem* by the Knights of Malta in 1984, she acquired the title of “Lady.”

Rosenstiel established the permanent **Kościuszko Chair of Polish Studies** at the University of Virginia in 1998. Each year the Institute awards scholarships in jour-



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The Prawdzic coat of arms was shared by the szlachta (gentry) lines of over 500 variously surnamed Polish families

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## Anna Poray's "Those Who Risked Their Lives" gains much-needed Index

*Editor's note: In the January 2023 edition, Fr. Fiore discussed "Those Who Risked Their Lives," by Anna Poray, which documents information about the Righteous Poles whose heroism saved Jews during the Holocaust. The book has been updated and now includes an accompanying index, available from the Michigan Division of the Polish American Congress.*

HAMTRAMCK, Mich. — In the cynical age in which we live, accounts of altruistic behavior by individuals who risked their lives for others during World War II should be especially welcome to readers. In wartime Poland, unlike in other German occupied countries, Gentiles who extended any form of assistance to Jews risked execution by Nazis. Despite cultural, religious, and linguistic differences between Polish Jews and Polish Christians, most Poles were sympathetic to the plight of the Jewish people. Hundreds of thousands of Poles sheltered, fed, clothed, provided forged documents and looked after the medical needs of Jews on a regular basis. There were additionally hundreds of thousands of Poles whose assistance, though occasional and indirect, was no less dangerous.

"Those Who Risked Their Lives," compiled, edited and annotated by Anna (Wybranowska) Poray, offers a glimpse of some of the thousands of Poles who rescued Jews. The book records the names and experiences of many of these remarkable individuals.

Recently, an Index to accompany the book was created by members of the Polish American Congress Michigan Division Henrietta Nowakowski, Barbara Gronet, Wladyslaw Bankowski, Richard Lapham, and Greg Biestek.

"It was an enormous project, but

the Index was much needed as an aid in identifying the rescued Jews and their Polish Christian rescuers as well as the locations where these acts of mercy occurred," said PAC Michigan President Ann Bankowski.

In the introduction to the Index, its authors write: "This work pertains only to what the editor documented. It neither exhausts the topic nor covers all known cases. As such, it should be treated as a companion resource to other similar works."

The Talmud says that he who saves one life, saves the world. Thousands of Jews can bear witness to the Poles who saved the world.

"Those Who Risked Their Lives" was produced by the Heralds of Truth, a Michigan-based organization, and published by IRIS Publishing Services. In 2017 Heralds of Truth officially transferred promotion of this book to come under the auspices of the Michigan Division of PAC.

This important book has already found its place on the shelves of such far-away places as the Polish Library in Montreal, Canada, and in Perth, Australia (the book was ordered by author and columnist, Joseph Poprzeczny). Thanks to the press release posted on the PAC-MI website and Facebook page, we are receiving a great interest in the book from all over the world.

The book with the accompanied Index is available (\$20.00 + \$5.00 shipping & handling) from the Polish American Congress Michigan Division office, 11333 Joseph Campau, Hamtramck, MI 48212. Write or call at (313) 365-9400; email [www.pacmi.org](http://www.pacmi.org) to order your copy.

The PAC strongly suggests purchasing a copy and donating it to a local library or school as well.

— Ann Bankowski

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

## Another Gem from Sophie Hodorowicz Knab

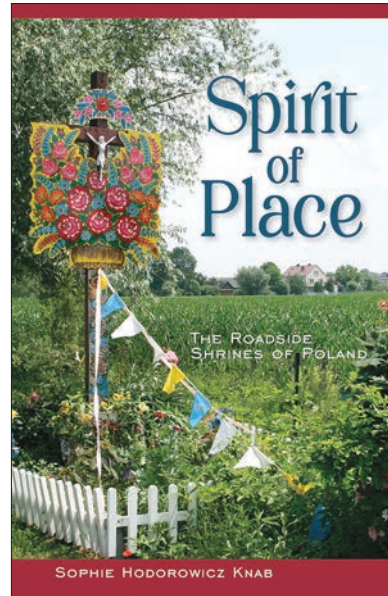
**SPIRIT OF PLACE:**  
*The Roadside Shrines of Poland*  
by Sophie Hodorowicz Knab  
Hippocrene Books, Inc.

reviewed by David Trawinski

So often we read about keeping alive the "Culture of Poland," but what does that really mean? Culture is defined as "the arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and other products of human work and thought considered as a unit, especially with regard to a particular time or social group." In other words, to keep the culture alive is to keep the knowledge of those arts and traditions foremost in our thoughts. It is only fitting that the first name of our author in this review is Sophie, derived from the Greek meaning "knowledge," or more specifically "wisdom."

I can think of no other writer in all of Polonia than Sophie Hodorowicz Knab who has done more to keep alive the customs, traditions, cooking, and even memories of the travails of the Polish peoples. Her latest endeavor, "Spirit of Place" takes on the task of describing the very soul of our beloved homeland, and while no nation or group's spirit can ever be fully rendered in mere words, Hodorowicz Knab's effort comes hauntingly close, and most beautifully so.

"Spirit of Place" is intended as a detailed description of the roadside shrines of Poland. Those who have been lucky enough to have visited Poland have seen them, everything from the enormous monuments in the public squares of cities, so prominently displayed in places such as Poznań, to the small chapels and crosses erected in the scattered forests, towns and villages of the countryside. The author takes us on



a delightful tour of these spiritual blossomings in the book's 180 or so pages, so charmingly enhanced by the selection of color photographs included within its covers.

But the real triumph of this book is its ability to transcend the mere aesthetics of the art to what truly describes the spirit of these places. The author skillfully interweaves the history of Poland and its influences from the countries of Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy among others. She describes the significance of the Sorrowing Christ, or Our Lady of Częstochowa, and all the other religious images that reside within these capellas, or "kapliczki." She speaks to the impetus that drove the Poles to so zealously revere and rebuild these shrines over the centuries. She cross-stitches in the legends and lore of the Polish people from various regions of the country. Even the foods associated with the festivals celebrated around these country shrines are discussed. No detail is left untouched, right down to the materials of the shrines and the selection of the colors that

decorate them.

With chapters dedicated to the origins of the shrines, to the religious figures elevated upon them, to the known artists who created them, Hodorowicz Knab takes the reader on a journey from the country's conversion of Catholicism in 966 AD to the present day. She even leads us across an ocean, a journey that members of our own families made not so long ago, by reserving the last chapter for "Roadside Shrines in Polish-American Communities."

The first book of Sophie Hodorowicz Knab that I read was "Wearing the Letter P" about her mother, amongst so many other Polish women and girls being forced into Nazi labor on farms and in factories during World War II. It moved me as an aspiring author, so much so that I reached out to her, and she warmly received me and answered my inquiries. I know from my networking that she has done this for so many of Polonia's authors. Her "Polish Country Kitchen Cookbooks" and her books on "Polish Customs and Traditions," as well as "Polish Herbs, Flowers and Folk Medicine" are classics. "Spirit of Place" is certainly their equal. Taken all together, they do a most thorough job of encapsulating the true soul and spirit of Poland.

I also want to commend Hippocrene Books for their alluring embellishments in publishing this work, as in so many others of value in keeping the culture of Poland alive. Not long ago we reviewed their volume "Footprints of Polonia," whose beauty in production standards is equaled in this offering. These books are truly of keepsake quality, and things of value to be enjoyed and passed down among your family's generations.

## NEW BOOKS

### Insight into the Human Side of a Warrior Fighting in Exile

**FROM SADDLE TO PARACHUTE**  
*Glimpses into the military service of Capt. Jerzy Z. Fijalkowski-Bereda (Bereday) from 1938 to 1949.*  
By Colonel Gerald Kochan (Ret.)

The military service of Captain Jerzy Z. Fijalkowski-Bereda (Bereday) spanned the first shots of World War II until the disbanding of Polish Forces in the West in 1949. Starting the war as a cavalry cadet officer assigned to the Warsaw Mechanized Brigade, he ended

his service as one of the most highly decorated soldiers of the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Bde. For his action in Operation Market-Garden, immortalized in book and film as a "Bridge Too Far," he earned his nation's highest award, the Virtuti-Militari Medal.

This book presents, through the personal photos of Capt. Bereday, a series of glimpses into the man for whom official records can never do justice. It presents the human side of a warrior fighting in exile for a homeland that would never again be his.

Among those praising Kochan's work was U.S. Army Col. Richard G. Jung (ret.), who said the author "has proven that there was a worthwhile story behind the photos ... most of them from the Captain's personal albums.

"It is unfortunate that Captain Bereda is not well known, as his story is one to make Polish American's proud," said Jung. "The book will be a real boon to readers of military history who like to experience crucial campaigns such as the Arnhem-Driel portion of 'Operation Market Garden' from the participants' perspectives. It is a very personal approach to an officer's

experiences at war and the reader benefits from it and the chance to let the verbal images and visual images place them among the scenes themselves."

High praise also came from Boguslaw Winid, Poland's former deputy minister of defense, Ambassador of Poland to NATO, Ambassador to the U.N. and cabinet member of President Duda.

"The book ... is a remarkable story of a young cadet officer for whom the war begins in September 1939 and ends almost ten years later with no place to return. Communist Poland did not welcome those who fought on the Western Front."

The book includes a collection of photos from prewar Poland, the September 1939 campaign, France 1940, Scotland, and most-important Operation Market-Garden in Holland, 1944.

"Arnhem was the most important and most horrific battle for young Polish soldiers," said Winid. "For his bravery in action, he was awarded Virtuti Militari Cross, the highest Polish military medal."

The book is available from the Polish American Museum – Center for Military Studies, <http://polishamericanmuseum.com/>

AN EPIC HISTORICAL SAGA

THE POLAND TRILOGY

Based on the Diary of a Countess

"Push Not the River" paints a vivid picture of the Third of May Constitution years and the metamorphosis of a nation—and of Anna.

"Against a Crimson Sky" continues the family saga as Napoleon comes calling and promises independence if the Polish lancers follow him into Russia.

"The Warsaw Conspiracy" depicts the November Rising, Poland's daring challenge to the Russian Empire ignited by Polish cadets.

Available in hardcover, paperback, or e-book online at Barnes & Noble or Amazon. For information about ordering signed copies, contact the author at [JConMartin@gmail.com](mailto:JConMartin@gmail.com)

Martin is a recipient of Gold Medals from the Independent Publishers Book Awards and the American Institute of Polish Culture.

THE BOOKS OF DAVID TRAWINSKI

THE WILLOW'S BEND

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THE TWINS OF NARVIK

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## GENEALOGY

## Review a Basic Method

by Stephen M Szabados

Let's briefly review a six-step process I recommend for Polish research that may help you jumpstart your efforts for 2023.

1. Identify the ancestor's original Polish name
2. Find their approximate birth year
3. Find town names for clues
4. Find possible Polish locations on maps
5. Find the Polish records
6. Translate the Polish records

**1 Find their Polish Name.** What is your ancestor's name? The answer may not be simple because American documents may record different spellings. However, knowing what name to use will help you find the correct Polish documents. Learn the Polish equivalent of your ancestor's given name. Also, be flexible because they may have used their middle name or nickname in American records.

**2 When were they born?** Double-check the documents to confirm the year of their birth. Consider looking at Polish records from a few years before and after the year stated in the American records. For example, I once found an eight-year variation in the stated years in American documents for an ancestor and discovered her Polish baptismal record by looking across all eight years.

**3 Look for town names in the document that may be their birthplace.** This step requires collecting town names from Ameri-

can documents that indicate where immigrants left. Collect as many place names as possible, even if they seem dubious. Family stories can be a source but be careful because the town's spelling may be phonetic or refer to a general area. We need to use more than one place name because multiple locations in Poland may have the same town name, and multiple names from your list will help confirm the correct location. Looking in the wrong place is a common problem when you cannot find the Polish documents.

**4 Find their birthplace on a map.** Use the history of Polish border changes and gazetteers for clues on what general area they left. Then, try to envision a map of the area around your ancestor's birthplace. Each place name is a jigsaw puzzle piece representing a portion of a map. Once you fit all of the clues together, you will be able to recognize where to look for your Polish records.

The following are the gazetteers I use:

- JewishGen Gazetteer (Townfinder) at <https://www.jewishgen.org>
- Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego or The Geographic Dictionary of the Former Kingdom of Poland, at [http://dir.icm.edu.pl/pl/Sownik\\_geograficzny/](http://dir.icm.edu.pl/pl/Sownik_geograficzny/)
- Meyer's Orts (Meyer's Orts and Verkehrs Lexicon des Deutschen Reiches) at <https://www.meyers-gaz.org> is usually used in German genealogy, but you can use it for current Polish towns previously part of Germany.
- Kartenmeister is another valuable online gazetteer at [www.kartenmeister.com](http://www.kartenmeister.com).

Your best chance of finding your ancestral villages is using maps created when your immigrant ancestors lived there. The maps should also have a level of detail that includes small villages. The following are three online sources of older maps:

- G. D. Reymann's Special-Karte, 1832-1870 - Historical Maps of Central Europe at <https://mki.wisc.edu/genealogy/mki-resources-for-genealogists/historical-maps-of-central-europe-g-d-reymanns-special-karte-1832-1870/>
- 1910 Austrian Military Maps at <http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/3felmeres.htm>
- The Map Library of the Federation of East European Family History also has some older detailed Polish maps

**5 Finding the Polish Records.** After finding where your ancestor lived, the next step is finding the church's location or civil registry that created the record. This step is easier today because of the growth of online Polish databases.

Here are the websites I use:

- Geneteka at [geneteka.genealodzy.pl](http://geneteka.genealodzy.pl). This site has indexed records from the Polish archives and offers some digital copies.
- Metryki at <https://metryki.genealodzy.pl/>. Unfortunately, Metryki's records are not indexed, so you must browse for the town name of the parish and the year and type of document.
- FamilySearch.org has a massive Polish records collection. FamilySearch has indexed some Polish records, which you can search in the Records section, but many

more can be accessed through their film catalog by place name searches.

- Polish National Archives at [Szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl](http://Szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl) is a recent addition to the list of tools for Polish records. Although its initial website was difficult to use, its latest revision is more user-friendly and promises to be the primary resource for Polish records.
- Poznan Project at: <https://poznan-project.psn.com/> indexed the marriage records within Poznan Province.

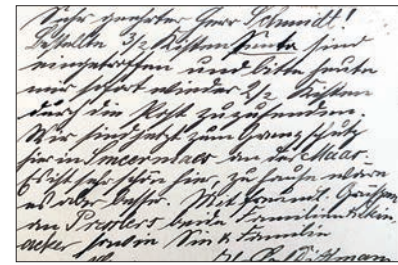
Be flexible and use multiple databases because no database has all the documents.

**6 Translate the Records.** After finding your Polish records, you now face new challenges. The records are in German, Polish, Latin, or Russian and are also hard to read because they are handwritten using German Script, which is very different from the cursive style you learned in school.

Don't be discouraged. Be patient! Here are ways to overcome these problems.

**READING OLD SCRIPT.** The information in the Polish records will be handwritten using Old German gothic handwriting (also called German Script or Kurrentschrift. See next column). Therefore, I use a chart comparing Roman Type, Old German Type, and Old German Script letters to decipher the documents' letters.

The records in the narrative format are difficult to decipher. However, the person recording the information used a basic template and



reported the details in a specific order. Still, after seeing the translation for one document, it will be easier to decipher the next one.

Records in the columnar format are easier to translate because the printed headings are easier to read and translate with genealogical word lists. This reduces the handwritten words. In addition, the handwritten names and dates are easily identified. Concentrate on extra words that may indicate status or occupation. Also, translate all words in the comment column, giving you additional family information.

**LANGUAGE.** Understanding your documents is not impossible. My translating toolbox includes the following:

- Genealogical Word Lists for keywords
- Online translator apps for words not in word lists
- Professional Translators for complex documents

**ONE LAST POINT:** Be organized in your research because this will save you time but will also point the way for more research. I use summaries to organize my facts and focus my search efforts. Summaries are also a great way to share what I find with my family.

Remember to have fun!

## Genealogists from Poland to Tour United States this Spring

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — After several years of working with clients over ZOOM, professional Polish genealogists Aleksandra Kacprzak and Lucjan Cichocki will be in the United States meeting with clients in person, part of the Polish American Foundation of Connecticut's 2023 Polish Genealogist Tour.

Kacprzak is a frequent visitor to Connecticut and Massachusetts, serving as a guest speaker at numerous Polish genealogy events. Her last visit to the area was in 2014. She was scheduled to come in 2020, but the COVID pandemic forced her to cancel the trip.

"I am grateful the Polish American Foundation of Connecticut arranged this trip for us. It is great to go back to the United States to see old friends and hopefully make new ones," said Kacprzak.

This is Cichocki's first trip to the United States; he is looking forward to the trip and the chance to meet Americans looking for their Polish roots.

"I always dreamed of coming to the United States and I thank Dorena Wasik from the Polish American Foundation for making it a reality. When I met her in 2021 for the Polish American Foundation's

ZOOM lecture series, I never imagined it would result in this journey," he said.

The duo will be at four locations during their month-long visit, in a variety of events including hands on workshops, genealogy conference lectures, and private consultations. Their first stop is Connecticut, the location of the Polish American Foundation.

On April 22, they will be holding "Polish Genealogy School," for hands-on workshops to help amateur genealogists navigate some of the Polish genealogy websites. The complete schedule is available on the Polish American Foundation website: [www.paf-welcomehome.org](http://www.paf-welcomehome.org). The classes will take place in Rocky Hill, Conn. There is a fee for these workshops and seating is limited to twelve per session, so you must register in advance. You will also need to bring a laptop with you for the sessions.

Also, on April 22, from 3:00-5:00 p.m., there will be a free coffee hour with both Kacprzak and Cichocki. It is a great opportunity to meet



Kacprzak



Cichocki

them in an informal setting and also meet others interested in Polish genealogy. Who knows? Maybe you will meet a distant cousin there.

From April 23- 28, the duo will be available to meet with clients. To schedule an appointment, please contact Dorena Wasik at [dorenaw@paf-ct.org](mailto:dorenaw@paf-ct.org).

On April 29, Kacprzak and Cichocki will each give a presentation for the PGS of Massachusetts genealogy conference. The conference will take place at Elms College in Chicopee, Mass. They will be joined by two other presenters: Julie Szczepankiewicz and Dorena Wasik. The event is free but you

must register in advance. Kacprzak and Cichocki will also be available for 15-minute private consultations during that day. For more information and to register for the event, go to [www.pgsma.org](http://www.pgsma.org).

Kacprzak and Cichocki will also be at the New England Regional Genealogy Conference (NERGC), May 4-6, 2023. The conference takes place at the MassMutual Center in Springfield,

Mass. They will be participating in the Road Show and the Thursday night Special Interest Group. Additionally, they will be at the Polish American Foundation of Connecticut's booth in the exhibit hall where they will be available to answer questions and give 15-minute private consultations. You must be registered for the conference to attend the Road Show and Special Interest Group, but the Exhibit Hall is free to the public. For more information about the conference go to [www.nergc.org](http://www.nergc.org).

To arrange a consultation time, please contact Dorena Wasik at the Polish American Founda-

tion of Connecticut. Her email is: [dorenaw@paf-ct.org](mailto:dorenaw@paf-ct.org).

Kacprzak and Cichocki will be finishing up their tour at the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State's monthly meeting at the BO-CES building in West Seneca, N.Y. At the meeting, they will give a presentation and will be available for a Q&A session. The event is free and open to the public. It will also be broadcast on ZOOM for PGSNYS members. For more information, please go to [www.pgsnys.org](http://www.pgsnys.org).

Kacprzak and Cichocki are also planning to do a few tourist activities while they are here. They have plans to see Niagara Falls, N.Y.; Boston; Mount Washington, N.H.; and of course the world famous Pepe's Pizza in New Haven!

### Celebrates Ash Wednesday

While in Poland last month, President Biden celebrated Ash Wednesday with Father Wiesław Dawidowski in a specially-organized Mass to mark the beginning of Lent. Biden mentioned on Twitter he was consciously taking the opportunity to "join Christians worldwide" in "recommitting ourselves to God and to one another."



## POLISH CHEF

## Święcone – the Poles' most popular Easter custom

by Robert Strybel

The Polish Holy Saturday food-blessing custom is one of the Polish people's two most popular traditions holiday, the other being the sharing of opłatek on Christmas Eve. Despite the catastrophes, tragedies and changes Poland has experienced over the past two centuries, at present both these customs are still practiced by some 95 percent of all Polish families. But perhaps "despite" is the wrong word. Maybe it was precisely all the historical turbulence that has made those two customs so unchangeably comforting, something to come home to, rally round and find consensus with brother-Poles.

Needless to say, the food-blessing custom known as święcenie pokarmów has been taken by Polish émigrés to the far corners of the globe. Since it is both symbolic, colorful and generally appealing, it has also caught on with people non-Polish background who have been exposed to it.

Easter fare is usually brought to church in a wicker basket. In rural areas, larger baskets are common. In cities, smaller baskets with only a small sampling of the food are more typical. The święconka (as the Easter food basket is known) is lined with a linen napkin whose ends should extend beyond the basket's rim, so the Easter food can be covered while the basket is being carried to and from church. Here is what a typical święconka contains:

**EASTER LAMB (baranek wielkanocny):** Usually made of butter or sugar (rock candy), but also of dough, wood, plaster, fleece or even plastic, the lamb with a usually red banner of Resurrection emblazoned with a gold cross (although other colors are also encountered) should go into the basket last, because in

effect it watches over the remaining contents. ingredients. The baranek symbolizes the sacrificial Paschal lamb, in other words Jesus himself, whose banner proclaims the victory of life over death.

**EGGS, COLORED OR PLAIN (jaja, pisanki):** Plain or colored eggs of one type or another are an absolute "must". The egg symbolizes new life. Just as a chick breaks open its shell, so too Christ emerged from his entombment to bring us the promise of eternal life.

**BREAD (chleb):** This is "our daily bread", the staff of life, as well as "the bread of life", a metaphor for the saving grace Christ has bestowed on mankind. Small round loaves of bread are specially baked to fit Easter baskets. They are usually marked at the top with a cross., meat & sausage (mięso, wędliny): It is customary to include a piece or coil of kiełbasa and a slice of ham or other Easter meats. All meats are symbolic of the Paschal lamb or Christ resurrected, His victory over death and His promise of eternal life.

**HORSERADISH (chrzan):** Both plain, grated, prepared horseradish as well as the well-known beet-horseradish condiment ćwikła may be included. Horseradish is one of the bitter herbs of the Passover which foretold the suffering of Christ on the Cross. It is also symbolic of life in which one must accept the bitter with the sweet.

**VINEGAR (ocet):** A small cruet of vinegar is often included in the święconka. It symbolizes the sour wine (from the French vin aigre = sour wine) which Jesus was given on a sponge to drink while hanging on the cross.

**SALT (sól):** A salt-cellar, salt-shaker

## The Easter-food Blessing

Panie Jezu Chryste, Ty w dzień przed męką i śmiercią kazałeś uczniom przygotować paschalną wieczerzę, prosimy Cię, daj nam z wiarą przeżywać Twoją obecność między nami podczas świątecznego posiłku, abyś mogli się radować z udziału w Twoim Zmartwychwstaniu.

Chlebie Żywy, pobłogosław ten chleb i wszelkie świąteczne pieczywo na pamiątkę chleba, którym nakarmiłeś lud na pustkowiu. Baranku Boży, pobłogosław to mięso, wędliny i wszelkie pokarmy, które spożywać będziemy na pamiątkę Baranka Paschalnego. Pobłogosław także naszą sól, aby chroniła nas od zepsucia.

Chryste, Życie i Zmartwychwstanie nasze, pobłogosław te jajka, znak nowego życia, abyśmy doszli do wiecznej uczy Twojej tam, gdzie Ty żyjesz i królujesz na wieki wieków. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, who the day before your passion and death, told your disciples to prepare the paschal supper, we implore You to let us in faith experience your presence amongst us during the festive repast that we might rejoice at taking part in Your Resurrection.

Living Bread, bless this bread and all holiday baked goods in memory of the bread with which You fed the people in the desert. Lamb of God, bless this meat and all the food we shall consume in memory of the Paschal Lamb. Bless also our salt that it may protect us from corruption.

Lord Jesus Christ, our life and Resurrection, bless these eggs, the sign of new life, so that we may attain Your eternal feast there, where you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.)

The priest now sprinkles the food with holy water, while the faithful make the Sign of the Cross when their baskets get sprinkled. The ceremony ends with the priest extending cordial Easter wishes to his parishioners.



Jozef Chelmonski (1849-1914). Święcone. Ink on paper

or a small paper cone containing a symbolic portion of salt is among the traditional contents of the Easter basket. Salt retards the spoilage of and adds flavor to food, hence it can be seen as symbolizing that which preserves us from corruption and adds zest to daily life. Some also include pepper whose preservative and flavor-enhancing role in food preparation is similar to that of salt.

**EASTER CAKES (babka, mazurek, placek, sernik):** Portions of babka and other Easter cakes are also traditional. Following the 40-day period of Lenten self-denial cakes and confections—symbolizing the sweetness of eternal life—can now be freely enjoyed in celebration Christ's Resurrection.

**WINE AND OTHER SPIRITS (wino i inne trunki):** Some but not all Poles (nowadays probably a mi-

nority) include a small decanter of wine or other spirits in their Easter basket. Its moderate use was sanctioned by Jesus at the Wedding Feast at Cana, and wine was raised to the altar at the Last Supper where Christ originated the Eucharistic sacrifice of the mass.

**BOX TWIGS (gałązki bukszpanu):** Boxwood, an evergreen shrub with tiny green leaves instead of needles, is used to decorate the basket.

## Dziennik Digitization Nears Completion

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Under the auspices of the Polish Genealogical Society of Western N.Y. and with significant support from the Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius

College in Buffalo, N.Y., the digitization of the newspaper *Dziennik dla Wszystkich* is nearing completion.

Several missing numbers of the popular Buffalo Polonia paper were located at the Polish Museum of America in Chicago. Agreement with the museum has allowed photographing and digitizing the fragile copies of the paper to go forward.

Estimated cost for the remainder of the project is \$50,000. Canisius College's Polish Chair fund has pledged partial support, but more is needed. Currently digitized numbers of the paper from 1907 to 1957 are now housed at Potsdam University in Potsdam, N.Y. for the New York Historic Society website.

The digitized paper is now available free of charge for genealogical research, historical data, family research, and general interest.

## Explorer considers Friday the 13th his lucky day

WARSAW — Mateusz Waligóra, professional explorer, journalist, and photographer, recently returned from a solo trek to the southernmost tip of our planet. He covered the 775-mile walk in 58 days and shed nearly 40 pounds in the process. When he realized Friday the 13th was approaching, he picked up the pace to reach the South Pole on what he would call his lucky day. Whereas other explorers are accompanied by a back-up team, the 37-year-old Pole is known for his unassisted, solo treks. They have included following the River Vistula on foot from Poland's southern mountains to the Baltic up north as well as a one-man expedition across Mongolia's desolate Gobi Desert. A planned over 2,000-mile trek across Australia had to be called off at the height of the Covid pandemic.

## Skolimowski's EO up for Oscar this Year

LOS ANGELES — *EO*, a movie directed by veteran Polish filmmaker Jerzy Skolimowski, is one of 15 feature films shortlisted for the best international feature film Oscar at this year's Academy Awards. *EO* (in Polish: *IO*), the title of this rather unusual movie, is the onomatopoeic

spelling of a donkey's braying — the equivalent of English hee-haw.

The plot takes the viewer through the joy and contentment as well as the stress and pain experienced through its lifetime by a little gray donkey. He first entertains children in a circus and is loved and tenderly cared for by his young handler. But animal-rights activists opposed to using animals in circus acts change the donkey's life by 180 degrees. He ends up in a stable, changes owners several times and experiences many of life's merciless vicissitudes.

*EO* had its world premiere at last year's Cannes Film Festival where it was awarded the Jury Prize.

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## MINNESOTA VOICE

## Kashubian Museum hires Colorado Researcher to Lead New Era

by Mark Dillon

**J**EFF TURKOWSKI'S interest in Kashubian history began when he learned the story of what happened to his great grandparents' family heirlooms from the Prussian partition of Poland one night in Detroit in 1911.

Joseph and Barbara, who had been active in the Polish National Alliance since the 1890s, watched in horror as employees of the Sociological Department from Henry Ford's Piquette Avenue auto plant, the home of the Model T, destroyed what the couple had built. The family had emigrated from Żytowo and Stezyca, Kashubia to Quebec in 1884 and then to Michigan later that year.

"They took all of their belongings and threw them outside into a fire. Ford wanted his employees fully assimilated as Americans," said Turkowski. Knowledge of Ford's cultural violence as well as Poles' overall struggle to maintain identity in Michigan sparked his career as a historian.

**ON JANUARY 3** Turkowski took the helm as the new 39-year-old director of the Polish Cultural Institute and Museum (PCIM) in Winona, Minnesota

Turkowski, a former lance corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, has ambitious plans to expand the 44-year-old museum. He wants to bring a greater understanding of the immigration heritage of Kashubian Poles to a new generation of American and global audiences.

A first major event will be March 19 participation in Kashubian Unity Day, or *Dzen Jednote Kaszobow*, celebrated annually in Poland.

"I want to put the immigration story out front," he said. "I would also like to promote Polish multiculturalism" – celebrating the distinctiveness and uniqueness of different regions in Poland including Krakowiaks, Lubuszanie, Kashubians, Silesians and others. He adds: "All of these people are Slavic people who don't speak regular Polish, that have dialect of Slavic language with its surrounding influences (from Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, Belarus, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Latvia and Lithuania).

"Originally they are these West Slavic tribes that still exist with their folklore and their stories and their different belief systems. If we teach about those, we can get all Polish people to recognize that they have this multiculturalism, that there isn't just this Polish nation but that it is more complicated."



**CHANGING OF THE GUARD.** Jeff Turkowski, right, is the new director of the Polish Cultural Institute and Museum in Winona, Minn. With him is museum founder and board chair Fr. Paul Breza.

Winona's exhibit and storytelling approach to Kashubia focuses on the day-to-day lives of families, and parallels that of the Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria, Texas, which showcases the Silesian Polish immigration experience.

In his prior job as a history department researcher at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Turkowski penned a paper documenting how, beginning around 1850, the Prussian Consulate in St. Louis, Mo. worked in hand-in-hand with U.S. railroads to bring immigrant Kashubians and other Poles from Europe to work here.

The three-story Winona museum building was built in 1890 as the headquarters of the Laird-Norton Lumber Co. and transformed into a museum in the 1980s by Rev. Paul Breza. The idea was to create more awareness of Kashubian Poles' central role in the Minnesota lumber industry's workforce and various blue-collar occupations, and as pioneers in the settlement of Minnesota beginning around the time of statehood (1858).

Turkowski aims to take the labor immigration history theme to a new level, with a deeper analytical perspective of how many Kashubians came to the United States as contract laborers and faced harsh working conditions and violations of their civil rights in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Turkowski is also looking to create more exhibits about immigration from other regions of Poland and add to the museum's collection of 10,000 artifacts, books, military uniforms and family items, which range from wedding dresses and prayer books to washtubs to farm

tools. Adam Pingot, who had been the institute's day-to-day manager, is taking on a new role of curator to manage collection intake and preservation.

**AMBITIOUS FUND RAISING GOAL.** "I want to raise \$3 million in five years" Turkowski said, beginning with a new elevator to improve access, and a previously announced connector building between the museum and the Institute's Morrison Annex gathering hall. (See September 2002 Journal story about the Contoski's family donation).

With a paid membership base of more than 400 households, that is more than twice the size of other Polish groups in Minnesota, PCIM is well-positioned to build on a legacy of stewardship of founder Fr. Breza, now the institute's board chairman.

Turkowski is originally from Newcastle, Wyoming, and as of mid-February, in the process of finalizing a move from Colorado Springs with his wife Kristy, who stages home showings for realtors, and their three children, Hanna, 17, Devin, 15 and Chelsea, 6.

An avid hunter and fisherman, the Mississippi watershed and land of 10,000 lakes is a natural fit for Turkowski.

"My father is an outdoorsman and taught me everything I needed to know about surviving in the outdoors. So, hunting and fishing is a part of everyday life, my friends and I used to hunt for farmers and ranchers that needed conservation efforts to be done on their property. This began my love for the outdoors," Turkowski said in a 2021 interview on New View Hunting Co.'s

website.

While attending Gillette College in Wyoming after completing military service in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Turkowski earned a reputation for both service and leadership. He was a regional vice president for the Wyoming chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa service fraternity and earned a Coca-Cola Military Leaders of Promise Scholar award. His work included a gratitude letter writing initiative from children to veterans and managing a Christmas giving tree project for senior citizens.

"Jeffery exhibits exceptional leadership ability," said Loren Grove, Gillette College's veterans advisor, at the time, to a Wyoming publication.

**TRACING 600 YEARS OF CONNECTIONS.** Turkowski's ancestors were among the railroad workers of late 19th century, who then became the first generation of Detroit auto workers with the introduction of assembly line production just before World War I. His great grandparents were married in a railroad town outside Poznan just before they left Europe.

As Prussia evolved into the German Empire under Chancellor Bismarck beginning in 1871, the Ministry of Public Works facilitated the transport of thousands of Kashubian and Polish farmers to the United States for companies controlled by tycoons such as Vanderbilt, Morgan and Carnegie, Turkowski said.

"Prussia and Austria were selling their country folk, their (former) serfs through this system. They would pay for the ship, the commodities to get them across

the ocean, and then contract these people for one to two years," he explained.

"Ford started employing these workers who had previously worked for the railroad. By utilizing Eastern Europeans, specifically the Polish and Kashubian people, Ford was able to take their work experience and transform it into the new automobile industry."

Although he has not yet been to Poland, Turkowski has traced his surname back to Torun in 1466 and the aftermath of the Battle of Grunwald (1410). Part of Poland's victory celebration was a royal decree to create 160 new surnames for area families, Turkowski, named for a turn in the Vistula Riverbed in the area, was one of them, he said.

Further research has shown that Turkowski's family migrated from the 1750s through 1874 to several Kashubian towns and held a variety of occupations, including a musketeer, Catholic forester, farmer, and perhaps distillery and rail workers. Records from that period for are fragmentary, even more so in the U.S. than in Europe.

"I can't find this kind of documentation, evidence of a Kashubian-American population in the United States. So, the (museum) collection is deeply dear to me in a personal sense. I relate to this population (Winona) and its history as the only evidence," Turkowski explained, noting that Kashubian populations and related buildings in Jones Island, Wisconsin and Michigan have largely disappeared.

In the past, Turkowski has worked with Polish American scholars such as John Radzilowski, now director of the Polish Institute of Culture and Research in Michigan, to document Polish American migration and labor history, something he anticipates he will do more of in the coming months.

**785TH ANNIVERSARY OF KASHUBIA.** For Kashubian Unity weekend in Winona, museum plans include a celebratory dinner March 18 honoring Fr. Breza and several symposium-like presentations on March 19.

"We are going to be teaching our volunteers, our members, and the public the story of who the Kashubians, and where they are from, why we have different embroidery patterns that resemble Swedish patterns, to why we have a different language. We are going to clear up those blurred lines in Polish history," Turkowski said.

In northern Poland, there is an annual festival to commemorate the first historical written mention of Kashubians, in Pope Gregory IX's Papal Bull of 1238. In the document, the Pope referred to Prince Bogislaw I of Pomerania as *duce Cassubie* (duke of Kashubia).

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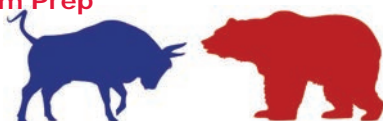
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## HAPPENINGS: CHICAGO STYLE

## NEW YORK

## Chicago Society Holds Special Gala

by Geraldine Balut Coleman

CHICAGO — The Chicago Society (CS), Lodge 1450, of the Polish National Alliance (PNA) held its “Evening of Elegance” gala and installation of officers on January 28 at the Park Ridge Country Club in Park Ridge, Illinois. Approximately 150 guests enjoyed an evening hosted by **Adam Konopka**, chairman of the event.

**John Wasilewski**, retired Circuit Court Judge, officially installed the CS officers: **Christopher Grzadzziel**, president; **Zenon Kurdziel**, first vice president; **Andrew Hasztrakiewicz**, second vice president; **Jan Plachta**, financial secretary; **Ray Golenia**, treasurer; and **Adam Konopka**, senior director.

This year, for the first time, the CS presented what will be an annual honor, the **Romuald Matuszczak Award**, to a member of the CS who exemplifies the time and effort that Matuszczak contributed with his unprecedented commitment and dedication to the CS. The award will be given annually to the CS member who embodies Matuszczak’s service and dedication. The first recipient, **Richard Ciesla**, was given the Matuszczak Award in recognition of his many years of committed service to the Chicago Society as well as his service to the Polonian Community and Poland. Because Richard and Maria Ciesla were unable to attend the gala for personal reasons, the award was presented to the Ciesla children by Romuald’s wife Chris (Harriet) and the Matuszczak children.

The traditional CS Annual 2023 Award was presented to the **Legion of Young Polish Women** by CS’s **Chris Grzadzziel** to the Legion’s president, **Kathy Lesny-Evans**. The special award plaque reads “Honoring the Legion of Young Polish Women in recognition of generations of service and dedication to Polonia.”

The evening continued with **Olivia Glód**, soloist from the **Polonia Song and Dance Ensemble**, accompanied by **Mieczysław Dziś**, multi-instrumentalist, singing “Białe Róże” (White Roses) and “Kukułeczka.” A group of dancers from the **Lechici Dance Troupe** performed folk dances, followed by guests dancing the Polonaise. The evening ended with guests socializing and dancing to the **Anthony**



Ciesla Children accepting the Matuszczak Award from the Matuszczak family.

PHOTO: ANDRZEJ BARANIAK

## Kawalkowski Orchestra.

**ZAKRZEWSKA HONORED BY CPL.** **Maria Zakrzewska** was honored by the Chicago Public Library (CPL) on the occasion of the CPL’s 150th anniversary for being “a tire-

less advocate, a champion of entrepreneurship in creating initiatives connecting the Polish community in Chicago with the public library (CPL)."

Accordingly, in 1995, Maria ap-



Zakrzewska

PHOTO: JOANNA TRZOS

plied for and received a grant from the State of Illinois to expand the CPL’s Polish language materials.

Through her efforts she received numerous awards, among them the “Zasłużony dla Kultury Polskiej,” “Meritorious for Polish Culture” medallion, which she received in 1998 from the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Poland. She was awarded the “Outstanding Public Service Award” in 2000 by Judy Baar Topinka, the late Illinois State Treasurer. In 2011, she was honored by the Polish American Congress, Illinois Division, with its “Soldier of Freedom Award.”

In 2014, Maria was honored by the Kościuszko Foundation, Chicago Chapter, for promoting Polish culture and for her extensive involvement in Chicago Polonia and beyond.

In 2019, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of St. Maximilian Kolbe Polish Language School, she received a special diploma of recognition “for her educational activities, perseverance, heart, and devotion to students of the Polish school.”

In her years as a CPL librarian, Maria organized events and meetings with many Polish authors and guests from Poland, which over 12,000 people attended.

In 1993, Maria earned her Master of Library Science Degree from Rosary College (now Dominican University) in River Forest, Illinois. A few months later she accepted a position as a reference librarian in

the Foreign Language Department at CPL’s Main Library, the Harold Washington Library. For 20 years, she remained at the Main Library until her retirement, championing all initiatives that expanded the CPL’s Polish language resources.



Tre Voci

PHOTO: ARTUR PARTYKA

## TRE VOCI PERFORMS WITH

**PASO.** The 15th anniversary of the **Paderewski Symphony Orchestra** (PaSO) hosted by **Barbara Bilsztan-Niewrzol**, co-founder and executive director of PaSO, was held on January 28 at the **Copernicus Center** on Chicago’s Northwest Side. Tre Voci, the sensational Polish tenors, entertained over 1,000 guests, filling the Copernicus Center to capacity. The **Tre Voci** tenors — **Voytek Soko Sokolnicki**, **Milosz Galaj**, and **Mikolaj Adamczak** — presented a two-hour concert with works from their classical repertoire of operettas, opera arias, and popular songs. Not only do they have outstanding tenor voices but their sense of humor charmed the audience. Performing with them was **Mirosława Sojka-Topor**, Chicago’s well-known soprano, the **WICI Dancers** under the direction of **Magdalena Solarz**, and the **PaSO Chorus** under the baton of **Wojciech Niewrzol**.

The tenors delighted the audience with performances of “Bésame Mucho,” “Nella Fantasia,” and the rock group Queen’s, “Show Must

## Tribute to Poet Adam Zagajewski to Live Stream March 6

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — On Feb. 27 DACAMERA, a leading presenter and producer of chamber music, jazz and interdisciplinary work, and Inprint, a nonprofit literary organization, joined forces at The Menil Collection in Houston to host an evening of poetry and music honoring the life and work of Adam Zagajewski (1945-2021), internationally renowned Polish poet and visiting member of the Houston community for nearly two decades.

The event will be available as a free live stream starting Mon., March 6. The link will be posted that morning on DACAMERA’s website, [www.dacamera.com](http://www.dacamera.com), along with the organization’s Instagram feed, YouTube channel, Facebook page, and Twitter account, and will be available through Sunday, March 19.

The program features a selection of readings from Zagajewski’s work, interwoven with the music of Bach, Chopin, Shostakovich, Schubert, and Mahler that inspired him, performed by pianist Sarah Rothenberg (DACAMERA’s Artistic Director) and French cellist Sonia Wieder-Atherton.

Participating readers include Rothenberg, celebrated writer/Guggeheim Foundation President Edward Hirsch, Inprint Executive Director Rich Levy, and Houston philanthropist Lillie Robertson, who had been among Zagajewski’s closest friends.

Adam Zagajewski was one of Poland’s most famous contemporary poets, and was a prominent member of the Polish New Wave. He published eight poetry collections in English, including *Asymmetry*, *Eternal Enemies*, *Without End*, and *Mysticism for Beginners*. Translated around the world, Zagajewski received many of literature’s most prestigious international awards, such as the 2004 Neustadt International Prize for Literature, the 2010 European Poetry Prize, and the 2013 Zhongkun International Poetry Prize.

## MINNESOTA

## Lenten Meals Return to Holy Cross

MINNEAPOLIS — Fish fries will be available during Lent (March 3, 17, 24, 31) from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in Kolbe Hall at Holy Cross School, 17th Ave. and Fourth St. Adults (12+) \$12.00; Kids (3-11) \$2.00; Kids (under 3) Free. Menu includes fish, French fries, baked potato, mac & cheese, coleslaw, dessert, beverages.

Proceeds benefit the Don Bosco Youth Fund. Handicapped entrance at the back of the building in the courtyard.

Kolbe Hall will also be the site for Lenten Soup Suppers, sponsored by the Council of Catholic Women, beginning Wednesday, March 1. Soup, dessert, and a beverage will be served from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Proceeds go to local area charities. March soup schedule: 1st — chili; 8th — chicken noodle; 15th — vegetable beef barley; 22nd — tomato basil; and 29th — potato ham.

While there, you can participate in Stations of the Cross at 5:00 p.m. in English and 6:15 p.m. in Polish.

— Judith Blanchard

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## SPORTS

## Super Poles in the Kelce Bowl

by Tom Tarapacki

Travis turned out to be the victorious Kelce brother in Super Bowl LVII as his Kansas City Chiefs defeated his brother Jason and the Philadelphia Eagles, 38-35. The game marked the first time that brothers played for the NFL championship. But they're not only brothers, they're also among the best to every play their respective positions.

Tight end Travis, 33, finished with six catches for 81 yards and a TD. Center Jason, 35, who won a Super Bowl with the Eagles in 2018, had a great game in the losing effort. They were both athletes at Cleveland Heights High School in Ohio, and both played football at the University of Cincinnati. Their father, Ed Kelce, recalled that the highly competitive siblings were "Cohorts in any kind of trouble they could get into."

According to ethnicebs.com, the All-Pro brothers are Polish, English and Scottish.

**FLY SMOLENSKI, FLY.** The Philadelphia Eagles didn't win the Super Bowl, but a lot of credit for the success of the franchise in recent years has to go to team president Don Smolenski. Now in his 25th season with the organization, the former team chief financial officer was named team president in 2012 after originally joining the team in 1998 as chief financial officer.

During his time as the team's president Smolenski and the Eagles achieved their first Super Bowl victory in franchise history after defeating the New England Patriots, 41-33, in Super Bowl LII.

**GRONK GOT HIS KICKS.** The four-time Super Bowl winning tight end turned FOX broadcaster failed on his attempt to kick a 25-yard field goal live during the Super Bowl as part of a FanDuel promotion. The commercial spot, which was titled, "Rob Gronkowski's Kick of Destiny," aired during the third quarter of the game. The kick did not occur at State Farm Stadium, where the Eagles and Chiefs were facing off, and instead was held at an undisclosed location in the Phoenix area.

Gronkowski had joked that if he made the kick, he would end his retirement and return to the NFL as a



Travis Kelce of the Kansas City Chiefs (left) and brother Jason of the Philadelphia Eagles.

kicker. Up to that point Gronkowski said that he was a perfect 1 for 1 on field goals in his football career, making a 28-yarder as a sophomore in high school.

**IT'S ABOUT TIME!** New York Jets great Joe Klecko has been named a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame Class of '23 for induction into Canton this summer, 35 years after he retired as a player.

"I don't think it's hit me yet, as far as total acceptance," he said shortly after the awards show ended. "After 30 years, you get the call and you're grateful. But it's still sinking in."

Klecko is one of only three players to have been voted to the Pro Bowl at three different positions — defensive end for the '81 Pro Bowl, defensive-tackle for the '83 and '84 games, and nose tackle in 1985. He was also named NFL Defensive Player of the Year in 1981 by the Pro Football Writers.

Joe was known for his strength and toughness. He was also a team player, willing to do whatever it took to win. He even played on special teams, specifically the kick-block unit. He had five blocked kicks (one punt, two FGs, two extra points) over the years, equaling the franchise record.

The son of Joseph and Helen (Kolinski) Klecko grew up in Chester Pa., was a parishioner of St. Hedwig's, and attended the now-closed St. James High School. He didn't play football until he was a senior, and immediately attained All-State honors. He then played at Temple, and was a seventh round pick of the Jets in 1977.

I met Joe at his 1999 induction into the Polish American Sports Hall of Fame, and he expressed great pride at being "100 percent Polish." You may recall that he appeared in the Burt Reynolds movie "Smokey and the Bandit II," in which he played an angry truck driver who, with his bare hand, crushes the badge of the sheriff played by Jackie Gleason. Klecko is listed in the credits as "Polish truck driver."

**POLISH NIGHT WITH GORTAT!**

On March 24, the ninth edition of the Polish Night

event organized by former NBA star Marcin Gortat will take place in Washington D.C. That night, the Washington Wizards will face the San Antonio Spurs, who have a promising rookie with Polish roots, Jeremy Sochan.

As always, the event will help familiarize American citizens with Polish culture, history, language, and customs. In addition to the basketball game, there will also be a meeting with Gortat and Sochan for anyone who purchases tickets through Marcin's Instagram will receive a t-shirt. The t-shirt will automatically be a pass to stay after the game for the meet-and-greet.

Gortat, the NBA's most accomplished Polish-born player, has assisted the Wizards this season coaching the team's big men.



**RECORD-BREAKER.** Swimmer Eric Znachowski recently won a gold medal and broke the Polish National Record for the 50M breaststroke at the European Masters Aquatic Championship in Rome, Italy.

Eric started swimming at just seven years old through a swim program at his school in his native Poland. He fell in love with the sport, and continued swimming when he came to the United States/ Eventually his preparation and hard work paid off with a full scholarship at a Division 1 college, which Eric says is his proudest moment as a swimmer.

Today Eric also shares his passion for the sport as Manager of Goldfish Swim School in Farmingdale, N.Y. on Long Island, a national franchise of leading learn-to-swim facilities with 135 schools in North America.

It was a challenge for Eric to prepare for the meet in Rome while continuing to fulfill the duties of his job at Goldfish "It definitely was not easy. I trained every day, occasionally twice a day," he said. "I had to train early in the morning or late in the evening to be able to manage the swim school and to get my work done." On top of putting in the hard work in his training as well as at Goldfish, Eric was also attending swim team practices and meets for his three kiddos - talk about lots of time around water! Thankfully I had all the support from my wife and children, otherwise I would not

be able to achieve my goal."

**TENNIS NEWS.** Tadeusz Krzyszkowski, the oldest tennis player in Poland, marked his 100th birthday by playing tennis. The resident of Gdynia celebrated 100 years by playing a short game with his son, Tomasz. Both of Tadeusz' sons had successful careers as tennis players, and then became coaches like their father. Two years ago, Tadeusz Krzyszkowski celebrated his 98th birthday playing a match against Poland's international tennis star, the former World No. 2 Agnieszka Radwańska.

Polish tennis star Magda Linette achieved her best personal performance in a Grand Slam tournament, reaching the semi-finals of the Australian Open. She lost to Aryna Sabalenka, who went on to win the tournament.

Poland's Jan Zieliński and Hugo Nys of Monaco lost in straight sets to home favorites Rinky Hijikata and Jason Kubler in the final of the Australian Open men's doubles. Zieliński has two doubles titles to his name, both earned at the Metz Open, with fellow Pole Hubert Hurkacz in 2021 and with Nys last year.

**GROUND-BREAKING STADIUM DESIGNER PASSES.** Ron Labinski, the man who changed the way that sports venues are designed, recently passed away at age 86. The savvy, creative architect had the vision to launch a practice focused exclusively on the development of arenas and stadiums throughout the world, which ultimately became a multibillion-dollar industry. Today



Znachowski

he is considered the "godfather" of sports venue design.

Labinski was born on Dec. 7, 1937, in Buffalo. His father, Raymond, was a wholesale food salesman; his mother, Bertha Labinski, was a homemaker. Ron was artistic from a young age, drawing houses, barns, and windmills — and in one instance Ebbets Field, the home of the Brooklyn Dodgers, showing a baseball leaving that beloved little bandbox.

"I guess you could say that was a sign," he told The Kansas City Star in 2000.

He attended St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute, but moved with his family after his sophomore year. Labinski later went to the University of Illinois, where he earned a bachelor of architecture degree. After serving as an engineer in the Army at Kansas' Fort Riley, he took a job with a Kansas City architectural firm where he worked on the Truman Sports Complex in Kansas

City which opened in 1972-73. That job got him thinking about opportunities to design NFL facilities in other markets.

With that in mind, in 1983 Labinski co-founded HOK Sport (now Populous) in Kansas City. The firm went on to dominate the design of athletic facilities across the globe, and has had a far-reaching influence on how sports venues are designed.

HOK/Populous went on to design numerous sports facilities across the world, including the first major league retro-classic stadium, Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore. Others included Giants Stadium in New Jersey, Arrowhead in Kansas City, and State Farm Stadium in Glendale Arizona, where the Super Bowl was played. The company has designed facilities around the world, like Wembley Stadium in London, England and Queensland Tennis Centre in Brisbane, Australia.

Labinski retired from Populous back in 2000 but remained active in the world of sports business. In retirement, he built a two-story addition to his house, a pagoda-like design studio for a neighbor, a playhouse for his granddaughter, and a bed designed like a Ferrari for his grandson.

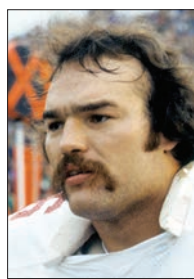
**CONRAD DOBLER PASSES.** Conrad Dobler, one of the NFL's top offensive linemen and fiercest players in the 1970s, has died at the age of



Labinski

72. Dobler was an unheralded 5th round pick out of Wyoming when he came to the NFL in 1972. By the time he retired from the league in 1981 Dobler had gained a reputation as one of the best — and most feared — offensive linemen in the NFL.

The 2018 inductee into the Polish American



Dobler

can Sports Hall of Fame was born October 1, 1950 in Chicago to John and Clara (Broniecki) Dobler. His father had German and Irish ancestry. His mother, was the eighth of 12 children born to Polish immigrants Ignatius and Victoria Broniecki.

In his autobiography, "Pride and Perseverance", Dobler recalled his mother's strength. "Actually, to say that my mom was tough would be an understatement. My mother was physically very, very strong. She drove a milk truck while she was pregnant, for Pete's sake!"

Dobler himself was very tough and strong, and was dubbed "pro football's dirtiest player," a reputation he reveled in.



Pro Football Hall-of-Famer Joe Klecko



## IN MEMORIAM

## Physician, Educator, and Philanthropist, Jadwiga Roguska-Kyts

CHICAGO — Jadwiga Roguska-Kyts MD, 90, was a third-generation physician, philanthropist, researcher, educator, internist, nephrologist and distinguished faculty member at Northwestern University in Chicago. For over 56 years, she led a dedicated practice including participation in Northwestern Medical School Committees including, curriculum, admission, student advisory, resident evaluation, medical-legal and professional standards.

A former attending physician at Cook County Hospital and with the VA in Chicago, her other credentials included: Fellow of the American College of Physicians; recipient of the Northwestern Distinguished Physician Award; and a Nathan Smith Davis Distinguished Fellow and Life Member.

After the death of her husband Robert B. Kyts, Dr. Roguska devoted her life to other forms of philan-



Dr. Roguska-Kyts at the Alzheimer Disease center in Poznan, Poland named in honor of her late father, Jan Rogouski, a physician and Dean of the Poznan Academy of Medicine.

PHOTO: WYBORCZA.PL

thropy – arising out special needs and helping Poland with projects in the area of a mental health care,

hospice care, and a rehabilitation. Through The Robert and Jadwiga Kyts Charitable Foundation, she

built an Alzheimer Disease center in Poznan, Poland named in honor of her late father, Jan Rogouski, a physician and Dean of the Poznan Academy of Medicine.

Most recently, Dr. Roguska endowed the Dr. Jadwiga Roguska-Kyts, M.D. Concert Hall for the Academy of Music of the Paderewski Symphony Orchestra. She was also a staunch supporter of the Lajkonik Dancers from Holy Trinity Catholic School. The Foundation has upgraded schools in Poland and supported the pursuit of a variety of academic degrees including medical degrees, engineering degrees, law degrees, music degrees, and art degrees.

Dr. Roguska was laid to rest at Saint Adalbert Catholic Cemetery, Niles, following a Mass of Christian Burial at Holy Trinity Polish Catholic Church, Chicago. Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of your choice.

## Ken Wilczak, Rock Guitar Legend

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Ken Wilczak, whose stinging solos and powerful presence made him a legend among the area's rock guitarists, died Feb. 3 after a period of declining health. He was 73.

"There was no disputing his dominance on the instrument when he emerged in the mid-1970s with the group Jambo," said his obituary in *The Buffalo News*. Then with his own band, Fat Brat, in the early 1980s, he was chosen as best rock guitarist in the first two Buffalo Music Awards. He was part of the second class to be inducted into the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame in 1984.

Born Kenneth P. Wilczak in Buffalo, the oldest of three boys, he began taking accordion lessons at the age of five at Edwin's Music Store. He then taught himself to play "just about anything else that was lying around the school band room," he said in his Hall of Fame biography.

He settled on drums and while attending Depew High School and played professionally in a local band, the Chosen Few. Unable to take his drums with him when he started Concordia College in Bronxville, he bought his first electric guitar – a used Fender Esquire.

Intending to become a Lutheran minister, he went on to Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, Ind. Along with completing his bachelor's degree, he was guitarist in a band that toured clubs in Indiana and neighboring states.

Returning to Buffalo in the summer of 1972, he was playing bars with a pickup band when he answered a newspaper ad and found the group which made him a local guitar hero – Jambo. At its peak, Jambo was voted top local band by listeners of WGRQ-FM, released a single and was considered for a recording contract by A&M Records. The group opened for many national acts, including Triumph, Mountain, and Johnny Winters.

Wilczak played with a commercial Top 40 band, Sky, after Jambo broke up, then put together the first version of Fat Brat, an allusion to his size and temperament. At the time, he stood 6-foot-4 and weighed 350 pounds. He dissolved Fat Brat in 1984 after suffering chest pains during a show and was hospitalized, diagnosed with stress. He stopped performing and got a job fabricating plastic in a machine shop to support his family.

After the Shakin' Smith Blues Band brought him back to the clubs in 1985, a friend told him about management trainee positions with a Wall Street firm, First Investors. His first day on the job coincided with the stock market crash in 1987, but within two years, Wilczak had his own office and was a million-dollar-a-year producer. He left First Investors in 2008, then joined New York Life, where he was an adviser and trainer. He retired in 2015.

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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.

**Polish American Historical Association**  
Central Connecticut State University  
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www.polishamericanstudies.org

## Edward Holda, Vocational Teacher, Veteran

WILLIMATIC, Conn. — Edward Paul Holda, 84, was a vocational teacher in the Connecticut Technical School System for 30 years before retiring in 2001. A co-owner of Windham Sheet Metal, Holda served in the U.S. Coast Guard reserves as a Damage Controlman 2nd class and as a Coxswain at USCG Station New London, Conn. He was a member of the Windham/Willimantic volunteer police force, member of the Fish and Game Club in Windham Center, on the board of directors of the Polish American Citizens Club and a member of the K of C Council 14.

## Chester Pluta, Army Veteran Known for Restoration Work

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Chester R. "Chet" Pluta, 80, was the owner and operator of Chet's Furniture Repair in South Bend, Indiana for 45 years. He was a skilled craftsman in woodworking, repairs, and restoration of furniture and office equipment. Over the years, he helped to design and set up workstations and offices for various businesses in the area.

Pluta served in the United

Born in Putnam, Connecticut on July 27, 1938, he graduated from Putnam High, Class of 1956 and received his JEMA apprenticeship at Pratt Whitney in 1959. He attended Manchester Community College in 1983 and completed a vocation teaching program at Central Connecticut State College.

Donations in his memory may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or Corpus Christi Catholic Parish Local Charities.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years Dolores; two children; four grandchildren; a brother and sister; and many nephews and nieces.

## John J. Janocha, Oakland A's Catcher, Veteran

LOWELL, Mass. — John J. Janocha, 91, of Tewksbury, Mass. was a son of the late Joseph and the late Karolina (Lelkiewicz) Janocha, and was raised and educated in the Centralville section of the city, graduating from Lowell High School where he was a standout athlete and star baseball player.

After High School, he played baseball professionally for the Oakland Athletics organization as a catcher from 1955 until 1957. He then served his country with the United States Army. While in the Army, his commanding officer, a general, learned of his baseball ability and assigned Janocha to play baseball for the Army during the rest of his military service. After his honorable discharge, he attained a Business Degree from Suffolk University.

Janocha retired from Lucent Technologies in the late 1990s, enjoying a career that spanned over 20 years. He was a member of the

States Army in West Virginia and Paris, France where he performed maintenance and repairs on heavy equipment. He was a member of the American Legion Pulaski Post #357, M.R. Falcons, the Polish Falcons of America, and the Teamsters Union.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association or American Diabetes Association.

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## THE PONDERING POLE

# Changing the historical narrative

by Ed Poniewaz

There are numerous great histories about the Poles in World War II, but *Poland 1939* by Roger Moorhouse (Basic Books, New York, 2020) interested me because it was specific to the “war” of Germany and Russia against Poland in 1939.

I have read many books about the American Civil War and in most of them concerning battles and generals, there is detail about the positions and movements of the combatants, including analysis and commentary to explain the military engagements. This is how *Poland 1939* is organized.

Suffice it to say the Poles were overwhelmed by the Germans and Russians. On the positive side though, Poland’s armies usually were able to hold or beat back their adversaries in battles, at least initially. Then, when ammunition and supplies ran low, they were pushed back to a defensive position or defeated. There are examples of incredible bravery and determination. Polish cavalry units were effective in certain circumstances and battles. This was the pattern throughout.

For the negative, the Poles fought based on World War I strategy, communication among army groups was poor or non-existent. German air superiority was far more important and devastating than the fabled armored *blitzkrieg*, and the quality and quantity of equipment and supplies was greatly lacking not allowing them to sustain any gains or establish viable fronts. There is much, much more to this story and you can read about it.

Here are a few of my personal highlights from the book that perhaps you can use in your own “debates.”

**Allies.** The “action” of the British and French towards their ally Poland after Germany invaded was inept or non-existent. According to Moorhouse, Hitler threw the bulk of his army at the Polish campaign and the western part of Germany was scantily defended. If the French attacked and the British bombed, per-

haps the whole story of the second World War would have been much different. All accusations that the Poles did not “do enough” during the entire World War II and the Holocaust are trumped by this simple fact.

**The destruction of Warsaw.** We think of the destruction of Warsaw during the uprising of August 1, 1944, but the true story is — as General Sosabowski remarked — by the end of September 1939, “everything was destroyed or damaged, dead or dying.” That was also true of most of the country as the Germans bombed and burned cities and villages indiscriminately, whether militarily significant or not. Warsaw, “The Paris of the East,” was “no longer recognizable.”

**Prisoners of war.** A minority of Polish soldiers were lucky and sent home after capture. Many others “would ultimately find themselves dragooned as slave laborers and deported to Hitler’s Germany, where they would endure a punishing existence on farms and in factories in conditions that often mimicked those in the concentration camps.” The murder of the Polish officers at the hands of the Russians at Katyn was horrible, but where are the monuments to the enlisted men and officers who were exterminated at the hands of the Einsatzgruppen?

**Cavalry.** As mentioned, the Polish cavalry was generally useful and effective during the war, and no, it did not charge tanks. Here though, is a bit of trivia that is tantalizing pertaining to this subject: At the battle of Tomaszow-Lubelski, “At dawn on a foggy morning, a two-pronged cavalry charge at German positions on the outskirts of the town soon had the enemy in retreat, pursued by saber-wielding Uhlans. The Polish advance was temporarily checked by a countercharge by elements of the German 17th cavalry regiment, making it one of the last cavalry-on-cavalry engagements in history.” In case you are wondering, no, the Germans did not attack Polish tanks with its cavalry, either.

**Enigma.** Moorhouse states,

“Polish mathematicians – Henryk Zygalski, Jerzy Rozycki, and Marian Rejewski – who had been working to crack the German Enigma encryption machine for the Cypher Bureau of the Polish General Staff ... vital work that Rejewski, Zygalski, and Rozycki did on the German Enigma codes ... would, according to some estimates, shortened the war by perhaps two years.”

I am not sure who made those estimates, but if credible, they are as huge a contribution in saving lives and property as any of the other monumental events of the war: The Battle for Britain, D-Day, Stalingrad, Midway, or Hiroshima.

Perhaps the last and best question was posed by a Warsaw housewife: “If we haven’t got the right arms, why did we dare to stand up to them?”

No one knows what the outcome of any war will be. The Poles undoubtedly knew the strength and capacity of the German military complex leading up to 1939. Culture and tradition, the victory over the Russians in 1920, and the reports and the hope for reports of the participation of their allies led them to fight and unfortunately in some cases to keep fighting.

If you are Polish, Roger Moorhouse has provided an excellent source of information on what happened in Poland leading up to and during the beginning of World War II. Militarily, what transpired after was not that much different in the other European countries facing one of the greatest armies of all time.

As I finished reading the book though, I couldn’t stop thinking of other conflicts and especially the current war in Ukraine. “If we haven’t got the right arms, why did we dare to stand up to them?” Does history repeat itself?

**DNA DIARY.** As they say on the cable news network – Breaking News! and also when determination pays off. **Terrance “Terry” Pegula**, billionaire owner of the Buffalo Bills NFL team, the NHL Buffalo Sabres hockey team, and father of

pro-tennis star Jessica Pegula has a Polish mom. Crack researcher Jack Jackowski found this information.

Pegula’s mother’s maiden name is Eloise De Cage. Her father is Joseph De Cage. According to the 1910 census: Polish was spoken in the home, and her father’s birthplace was Russian Poland. Her mother, Anna Shinoski, was born in Austrian Poland. She is buried in a Pennsylvania Polish cemetery. To be clear, Pegula’s mother had a Polish mother and father.

Pegula was born in Carbondale, Pa., and began his career as a petroleum engineer. His other “interests” are in natural gas development, real estate, and entertainment.

Can’t tell you how many times I have gone through the Catholic hymnal *Glory and Praise* looking for a Polish named songwriter. While this music book has a wide variety of traditional works and composers, it is popularly known for the modern sound, reference to scriptural verse, and full of catchy tunes especially by a group called the St. Louis Jesuits: John Foley, Dan Schutte, Roc O’Connor, Tim Mannion, and Bob Dufford. Not part of that group, but a Jesuit, catchy tune writer as well, and apparently Polish, is **Michael Joncas**. According to Wikipedia,

Joncas was raised in Minneapolis, of Polish descent, attending Nazareth Hall Preparatory Seminary and St. John Vianney Seminary at the University of St. Thomas, earning a bachelor’s degree in English there in 1975.

He is best-known for the most beautiful melody and words, “On Eagles Wings,” which I believe is sung every other Sunday during the Liturgical year. My other Joncas favorite, also in *Glory and Praise*, is “I Have Loved You.” God bless the Jesuits and especially those from Minnesota.

Another Polish rocker: This is so cool. What must it feel like to be part of a group that boasts such greats as Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, and Jimmy Page? The other guys weren’t slouches either, Keith Relf, Jim McCarty, Paul Samwell-Smith,

and ... **Chris Dreja**. All proper English gentlemen and original or former members of The Yardbirds, a “rock band, formed in London in 1963.” Dreja, however, was only half an English gentleman.

His father, **Alojzy Dreja** (1918–1985), was from Poland; he had been exiled to Britain in 1940, and served as a pilot in the Polish Air Force in Great Britain during World War II. Much of the history Polish airmen who eventually made their way to Great Britain is credited to Alojzy Dreja. His accounts were documented in the now hard-to-find 475-page book by Katarzyna Łukaszewicz-Preihs and Jan Preihs, *Czyż mogli dać więcej?* (*Could they have given more?*), which was published in London in 1989.

Alojzy Dreja’s other son, **Stefan**, happened to meet guitarist Top Topham when they studied at the same pre-college art program, and introduced him to his brother. Topham and Dreja were influenced by folk/blues guitarist Gerry Lockran, who influenced them to switch from acoustic to electric guitars... Dreja and Topham became core members of the Metropolitan (or Metropolis) Blues Quartet. During the space of a year Keith Relf, Jim McCarty, and Paul Samwell-Smith joined the group which became the Yardbirds. The 15-year-old Topham left the group when the band went professional, but Dreja continued on to play rhythm guitar with musicians such as Eric Clapton and later Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page.

Dreja was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992. After The Yardbirds, he pursued a career in photography and, for the record, he turned down an offer from Jimmy Page to play bass in a silly little band that would later become Led Zeppelin.

Thanks to Jack Jackowski for tracing Terry Pegula’s roots, and to Roger Moorhouse for writing such an important book, *Poland 1939*.

If you have a thought about this month’s topic, contact me at 3765 Autumn View Drive, Arnold, MO 63010; alinabrig@yahoo.com.

## Salva to Speak on World War II Polish Refugee Children

HAMTRAMCK, Mich. – The Piast Institute invites the public to hear author Imogene Salva share the true-life story of her mother Jozefa (Ziuta) Nowicka, and her family, who survived the World War II ordeal of deportation from their homeland of eastern Poland to a Siberian labor camp. Her book is called, “One Star Away.”

Salva, an educator, said, “I am honored to tell my mother’s story. Growing up in New York City, I realized that my mother’s wartime experiences were shared by thousands and remain relatively unknown to the rest of the world.”

In the Soviet labor camp, the Nowicki family suffered near starvation, disease, separation and arctic temperatures, until the father Konstanty (Kostek) was further emboldened to secure the escape of his wife Teodora (Tola) and six children from the camp. Their love for each other and their strong faith sustained them through the arduous journey toward freedom.

Eventually, Ziuta, with her older sister, Jadwiga (Jadzia) and their

brother, Jozef (Jozek) found a second homeland during the years of 1942-1947 in an unlikely part of the world – India. This major accomplishment was due to the efforts of Polish General Sikorski who reached out to other countries to take in 500 Polish refugee children. And a generous benefactor in the form of an Indian Maharajah responded to his request.

Throughout her childhood, Salva, traveled yearly to Poland. She studied in France and earned an M.A. in TESOL or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. A resident of Colorado, she has taught Spanish, Polish and French, K-12, in New York City and Colorado.

Piast Institute is proud to host Salva, Thur., March 9, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Warren Civic Center Library, 1 City Square, Warren, Mich. (A link to Eventbrite: <https://rb.gy/gox7jk> has been added for individuals to RSVP for this special lecture, although walk-ins are also encouraged to attend). Her appearance is the first of a two-part lecture

series sponsored by Piast to mark its 20th anniversary year.

**ANNIVERSARY AND UPCOMING PROGRAMS.** The Piast Institute began its 20-year journey in Detroit. The brainstorm of Dr. Thaddeus C. Radzilowski and Virginia Skrzyaniarz is now nationally recognized nonprofit research center that focuses on Polish and Polish American affairs.

In 2006, the Institute was designated as an official Census Information Center (CIC) by the U.S. Census Bureau, one of 48 centers in the nation. Its mission and programming aim is to celebrate Polish contributions to America as well as world culture and history.

Over the years, the Institute has grown its work to include community outreach and has become a strong voice in promoting prevention of substance abuse for the youth of the community. As an integral part of the community, the Institute supports and promotes the long history of diversity and cultural exchange that is still a vital part

of Hamtramck. It sponsors annual events that celebrate the history of Polish Americans and Poles and encourages healthy lifestyles for the community at large.

Over the next 12 months, the Piast Institute will host several events to celebrate its 20th anniversary. In addition to Salva presentation, in May Dr. Dominik Stecula will

review his book, “Polish Americans Today,” giving a firsthand look at the current values and beliefs of Polish Americans across the country.

If you would like more information about the Institute or these and other upcoming events or would like to make a donation, visit [www.piastinstitute.org](http://www.piastinstitute.org).

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## DANCE TIME

# A Polka Buzz Update and Dyngus Day Fever is in the Air

by Jennifer Pijanowski

*Polka Buzz* presented by WBBZ Buffalo's local MeTV station is still one of the most popular programs on the network. Monthly, hundreds of polka lovers come out to get their chance to be on TV dancing to local polka bands.

For the past year, *Polka Buzz* has been traveling throughout the Western New York area highlighting many venues, clubs, and organizations by changing the location of their show tapings. Polish Falcons, Batavia Downs, Matthew Glab Post, St. Hedwig's Social Center are some of the more recently showcased venues for the program.

As it has decided to move locations monthly, it has opened the doors for many new faces to take part in this polka phenomenon that seems to bring hundreds to dance a polka when local dances struggle to



Julie and Dave Maguda — Hard Times Dance.

The next live taping will take place at Matthew Glab Post 1965 Abbott Road, Lackawanna on Tuesday March 21 with music by John Gora.

vanian. Considering these gentlemen are not able to meet for usual weekly in person practices, they mesh like a group that has been playing together for years. From simple honky style tunes to traditional polkas, obereks, and waltzes this band really had the crowd energized. The floor was brimming with dancers throughout the night and remained packed far into the evening. The band even played a while longer than scheduled, as polka fans cheered for one more song!

Original band members Greg Chwojdak and Joe Ryndak are now joined by Troy Gawlak on concertina and Andy Kuczarski on drums. The band boasts Dale Wojdyla on trumpet, along with Gary Krupski on trumpet, clarinet, and saxophone, and Tyler Zawatski on accordion. They had another Northeast Pa. musician Mike Yevich join them on stage for the Hard Times dance on bass.

This new combination of eight talented musicians has really rounded out the sound and enthusiasm of Concertina All Stars. Their schedule is filling up, so check them out this year at a polka convention or a local event in your area.

**JUST SAYIN'.** I cannot express how wonderful it was to see so many polka fans turn out for these few events I have attended in the past month. Unfortunately, the Buffalo polka music scene, which not too many years ago could enjoy boastful crowds at three or four events every week, has really seen a slump in those attending local events. Unfortunately, many of our older fans have passed on or are not able to come out, so it is imperative to sup-

Plans are also in the works for April 27 at Batavia Downs. If you live in the area and have not joined for a live taping, you are really missing out.

**HARD TIMES RETURN.** Western New York's polka fans cherish their favorite events and one of them made its debut after a few years' hiatus. The Hard Times Dance was held on February 11 at Potts Banquet Hall and was welcomed back by quite a large crowd. With the bargain of \$8.00 admission, \$1.00 off all beverages, and \$1.99 baloney and onion sandwiches, fans were thrilled to join **Concertina All Stars** for an evening of polka music.

What was historically a Buffalo-based band has now somewhat changed, having added players from Ohio and Northeast Pennsyl-



Concertina All-Stars members Joe Ryndak, Andy Kuczarski, Greg Chwojdak, Mike Yevich, Tyler Zawatski, Troy Gawlak, Gary Krupski, and Dale Wojdyla.



Carol Szramkowski, host Ronnie Dombrowski, and Joe Szramkowski — Polka Buzz, Polish Falcons in Depew.

get anywhere close to 100 people to attend.

Polish Falcons of Depew recently had a taping featuring **Captain Tom & the Hooligans**. A band not necessarily on our typical polka radar consists of a very young group of talented musicians who have embraced the joy and culture of polka music. Band leader Tom Sieracki, who dons an iconic captain's sailor hat is no stranger to polka music as he grew up in a musical family. His dad performed with some local WNY polka bands and he is very fond of the music and culture.

Sieracki and his unorthodox group of musicians have the ability to draw the crowd in with joy, smiles, and the desire to dance.

While their approach is definitely not traditional, they pay tribute to a host of polka icons including Walt Solek, Jimmy Sturr, and Ray Budzilek, among others. With a mix of a play on traditional music, their own tunes, as well as some Irish and German music, this ambitious group packed Polish Falcons and had the dance floor jumping for much of the evening. Songs like "Alice," Walt Solek's "Blondie" polka, and "Who Stole the Kiszka" were among the favorites when you couldn't find a square inch to join on the dance floor.

While many are skeptical of this talented group bringing a twist to traditional polka music, I am thrilled to see new faces, smiles, and laughter of the fans they bring along to embrace polka music. The band offers a full sound with accordion, standup bass, violin, guitar, clarinet, trumpet, drums, and a soulful saxophone.

You can check out episodes of *Polka Buzz* on YouTube or watch on WBBZ Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.



Diane Berek, Steve Gromala, Nancy Tarnowski: the "Dunkirk Gang" at the Hard Times Dance.

port these local events. We have to work together on schedules, events, and promoting dances to make sure we exhaust every option to keep the music alive.

We are lucky to have so many talented polka musicians in our area and my hope is that they all begin to see the importance in supporting

Transit Rd from 4:00-9:00. This is the second year for this venue and those who attended last year raved about the atmosphere, service, and space to dance.

A few new venues have popped up to add to your Dyngus agenda. Frank Gierlach Ladies Auxiliary

to Pubski's, it is a neighborhood corner bar whose owner makes everyone feel like family. While it is a smaller venue, there is something very special about hearing Lenny and the guys play in this cozy neighborhood space.

While the complete Dyngus Day calendar is still taking shape, there are a host of venues who have secured their entertainment for the blowout celebration. The Boys will continue their trip to Buffalo as they appear at Sto Lat Restaurant located at 4475



Captain Tom and Hooligans — Polka Buzz, Polish Falcons in Depew.

one another. No one can save these events or this music alone, it needs to be a group effort.

As we welcome spring and better weather, I am hopeful that our 2023 polka calendar starts to fill up locally and more venues take a chance on welcoming the polka genre and the joy that comes along with the music.

**DYNGUS FEVER STARTING.** The best part of being in the midst of the Lenten season is knowing that Easter and Dyngus Day are just around the corner. Plans are coming together for a blockbuster lineup in Buffalo of spectacular polka bands.

The traditions of pre-Dyngus will continue on Easter Sunday with music by **The Boys** at Potts Banquet Hall 41 S. Rossler Ave. The fun continues on Dyngus with music by **John Stevens** as well as another band yet to be announced.

Pubski's Pub will once again share in the Easter festivities as they feature the **Buffalo Touch** for their pre-Dyngus kick-off. Buffalo Touch will appear at Pubski's as the afternoon entertainment on Dyngus Day before polka legend **Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push** take the stage for the evening celebration. If you haven't made your way

will showcase **Phocus** at Sloan Fire Hall, 55 Gates Street in Buffalo from 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

The Hawk at Diamond Hawk Golf Course has been promoting polka music with their monthly polka night and this year, they will have their first Dyngus event with **Seven**. Festivities are being held from 12:00-9:00

St. Gabriel's is once again the place to be for a full day of Dyngus celebrations, there will be a polka Mass by **Special Delivery**, then music afterwards in the church hall with **New Direction** and **Tony's Polka Band**. Special Delivery, who are really making the rounds on this Monday, will appear at a Polka Mass at St. Gabriel's in Elma at 11:00, then from 1:30-5:30 at Polish Falcons located at 445 Columbia Ave., Depew, N.Y., and then heading to Buffalo Distilling at 960 Seneca St. from 7:00-10:00 p.m.

You can check your favorite polka band's schedules on the internet to see where and when they are performing for Dyngus Day. Let's hope for beautiful weather and thousands of fans enjoying polka music bellowing through the air in Western New York to celebrate one of their favorite Polish holidays.



**MARCH POLKA BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays courtesy Li'l John's Polka Show, Sat. 9:00 a.m.-12 noon, WXJX 910 AM and 98.7; <http://www.westmorelandgold.net>. For information, write to: 121 Seminole Dr., Greensburg, PA 15601; (724) 834-7871; [johnnalevanon@aol.com](mailto:johnnalevanon@aol.com).

2	Todd Zaganiacz		Polka DJ / Polka Jammer IJ	Massachusetts
3	Fred Hudy	1942 8-31-13	Bandleader / Musician / IPA Officer	Chicago
3	John Richnafsky	1952	Polka DJ WMBS	Uniontown, Pa.
3	Hank Guzevich	1963	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Pennsylvania
4	Lucy Floccic		Polka DJ	Massachusetts
5	Dick Pillar	1940	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / DJ / Promoter	Connecticut
6	Rick Rzeszutko	1958	IPA President / Musician / Vocalist	Chicago
6	Al Pala	1945	Musician / Arranger (Pala Brothers)	Indiana
6	Jerry Tokarz	1952 2-3-20	Drummer / Pala Br., Lush, Versatones	Indiana
8	Christopher Piotrowski		Pan Franek-Musician / Vocalist	Michigan
8	Big Daddy Lackowski	1937 4--4-22	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Michigan
9	Nick Kanyan	1949	Musician / Vocalist / DJ	Indiana, Pa.
9	Eddie Siwiec		Musician / Vocalist / Arranger	Michigan
10	Stephanie Pietrzak		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Buffalo, N.Y.
10	Ray Kolodziej	1955	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / DJ	Pennsylvania
11	Chester Pala	1943 1-16-23	Musician (Trumpet) Pala Brothers	Chicago
11	Fr. Dennis Bogusz	1950	Polka DJ	Pennsylvania
11	Steve (Simms) Seremet	1954	Musician / Vocalist	Pennsylvania
12	Tommy Wanderlich	1966	Musician / Vocalist	Arizona
13	Gene Mendalski	1933 4-19-15	Bandleader / Musician	New Jersey
14	Casey Kliszak	1939	Musician (Concertina)	Buffalo, N.Y.
15	Joni Zychowski Minehart		Polka IJ (Polka Jammer)	Pennsylvania
17	Larry Walk	1942	Polka DJ / Promoter IPA	Youngstown OH.
17	Patrick Henry Cukierka	1963	Polka DJ / Promoter	Chicago
17	Jeff Mlecenko		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Michigan
18	Jeff Dyl		Polka DJ	Massachusetts
19	Stas Ogrodny	1954 8-7-06	Musician / Vocalist (Versa Js)	Pennsylvania
19	Emily Bizon	2003	Vocalist	Massachusetts
20	Jim Kaminski	1954	Musician / Vocalist	Buffalo, N.Y.
20	James Macie	1940	Musician / Vocalist	Buffalo, N.Y. / GA
21	Ted Tomczak	1945	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Indiana
22	Ted Lang	1976	Musician / Vocalist	Ohio
24	Mark Kohan	1960	Musician / Vocalist / Bandleader	Buffalo, N.Y.
26	Steve Fenus	1946	Musician / Vocalist Trel-Tones	Pennsylvania
27	Stas Bulanda	1954 1-6-2010	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / Arranger	Chicago
28	Lynn Marie Rink		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Tennessee
29	Danny Mack Mackewicz	1943 2019	Musician / Arranger	Florida
29	Bobby Shutty	1952	Musician (Carousels)	Pennsylvania
30	Rick Pijanowski	1959	Musician / Vocalist	Buffalo, N.Y.
31	Judy Stringhill		Musician / Vocalist / Promoter	Pennsylvania
31	John Krizancic	1929 4-25-2009	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / Polka DJ	Hermitage, Pa.
31	Dave Gregg		Accordion / Polka Gents	Pennsylvania

**PJN Raises Money for Refugees**



**THE POLKA JAMMER NETWORK (PJN)**, an internet streaming service, recently raised money for the Ukrainian refugees in Poland. As part of its annual fund-raising appeal known as Jammerthon, it included a custom-designed t-shirt proudly proclaiming "Stand With Ukraine" as a premium. The funds were given to the Kosciuszko Foundation to help support their work with the refugees. Over 500 PJN listeners donated to the cause and received the t-shirt. After the expenses for manufacturing and postage, the net proceeds were \$3,500.

In the spirit of the holidays, Keith Stras, secretary and PJN board of directors member, made the check presentation during a festive affair featuring Chicago's Lira Ensemble. Lidia Filus, president of the Chicago Chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation accepted the check, and several Chicago board members were on hand for the presentation. The actual check was delivered to Marek Skulimowski, president and executive director in New York.

Polka Jammer Network also known as the Polka Music Preservation Society is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to streaming polka music 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is a network with over 30 IJs and prides itself on being "Your World Leader in Polka Entertainment." It can be heard at [polkajammernetwork.org](http://polkajammernetwork.org) or [wpjndb.com](http://wpjndb.com).

**POLKA CALENDAR**

Compiled by John Ziobrowski

To list your event, please send date, band, location, times, and contact number to: [ziobrowskijohn@gmail.com](mailto:ziobrowskijohn@gmail.com)

**MARCH 2**

• Jimmy Sturr — Strawberry Fest, Plant City, Fla., 10:30 a.m.-12:30.

**MARCH 3**

• Friday Night Special — Holy Spirit Party Ctr. Parma, Ohio, 7-11, (216) 496-0223

**MARCH 4**

• Jimmy Sturr — Polish Club, Port St. Lucie, Fla., 12-3, (727) 879-9616  
 • The Boys — PACC, Ludlow, Mass., 7-11, (203) 231-1819

**MARCH 5**

• Dennis Polisky / Lenny Gomulka / Eddie Forman — PACC, Ludlow, Mass., 2-7, (203) 231-1819  
 • Joe Stanky — VFW, Dupont, Pa., 2-6, (570) 650-0436  
 • Jam Band — Polish Society, St. Petersburg, Fla., 3-6, (727) 844-9908

**MARCH 11**

• Crusade — Holy Spirit Party Ctr. Parma, Ohio, 6-10, (216) 496-0223

**MARCH 12**

• New Direction — Potts Banquets, Cheektowaga, N.Y., (716) 826-6575  
 • Golden Tones — VFW, Dupont, Pa., 2-6, (570) 650-0436  
 • Jasiu's All Stars — Polish Society, St. Petersburg, Fla., 3-6, (727) 844-9908

**MARCH 18**

• Lenny Gomulka — Holy Spirit Party Ctr., Parma, Ohio, 6-10.

**MARCH 19**

• IPA Tribute Band — Royalty West Banquets, Willow Springs, Ill., 1-5  
 • Lenny Gomulka — Falcon Hall, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., 2-6, (724) 547-8962  
 • SwingMasters — VFW, Dupont, Pa., 2-6, (570) 650-0436  
 • IPA All Stars — Polish Society, St. Petersburg, Fla., 3-6, (727) 844-9908

**MARCH 24**

• Polka Family/NuTones — Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, W.V., 7-12.

**MARCH 25**

• John Gora / The Boys / The Beat — Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, W.V., 3-12.  
 • Special Delivery. Broadway Market, Buffalo, N.Y. 12:30-3:30.

**MARCH 26**

• DynaBrass / Polka Family — Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, W.V., 12-6.  
 • Frank Moravcik — Polish Society, St. Petersburg, Fla., 3-6, (727) 844-9908

**APRIL 2**

• Northern Sounds — Polish Society, St. Petersburg, Fla., 3-6, (727) 844-9908  
 • PA Villagers — VFW, Dupont, Pa., 2-6, (570) 650-0436

**APRIL 6**

• Special Delivery. Broadway Market, Buffalo, N.Y. 3:00-6:00.

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Send Good Wishes to family, friends, and fellow Polish-Americans



The Polish American Journal is asking you to support its mission to preserve and promote our culture for future generations. We do this by producing special holiday editions of the newspaper, which focus on beautiful and treasured customs of that season. The income generated by these editions offset year-long production and mailing costs.

Like us, you have witnessed these traditions fade with the passing of each generation. We must not let this happen! Our customs define who we are, and serve as reminders of the inseparable relationship between our heritage and our faith.

The Easter 2023 edition will contain greetings from subscribers, friends, businesses, and organizations who are proud to proclaim their solidarity to their Polish roots. We ask you to help strengthen these ties during this season rich in Polish tradition.

If you have any questions, please call 1 (800) 422-1275. Don't be left out!

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**St. Hedwig's R.C. Church, Manchester, N.H.**

by Gregory L. Witul

147 Walnut Street  
Manchester, New Hampshire  
Status: Open

Poles on the whole are a hearty bunch. We've survived invasions, wars, famine, and extreme cold temperatures as low as the mid -30s C. Well those freezing numbers are nothing compared to those the Polish Americans of New Hampshire faced last month, as the wind chill on Mount Washington plunged to -78 C. To counter those extremes, perhaps those brave Slavs living in Manchester, New Hampshire could stay warm at one of the daily Masses at St. Hedwig's Roman Catholic Church.

At the end of the 1800s a large wave of Poles settled in Manchester, finding work in the textile mills and clothing factories that were dominating the area. When Father John Puchala arrived in the city in October of 1900, he found a ready-made congregation of 650 Polish souls. The immigrants from around Poland's Lithuanian and Russian border first celebrated Mass with Father John in the lower chapel of St. Joseph's Cathedral.

After a year of listening to Polish Mass and devotions in the cathedral, Bishop Denis Mary Bradley authorized the purchase of the old First Christian Church on the corner of Merrimack and Pine and consecrated it St. Hedwig's. To give the church a more Catholic feel, a tower was added, niches for statues were carved, and the coat-of-arms of Poland was added with the inscription "God Save Poland." On the first Sunday of August 1902 Father Puchala celebrated the first Mass in their new home.

With a large and growing congregation, one of the first acts Father Puchala took was constructing a school for the parish. Built on Union Street, Reverend John had



an eye toward the future and constructed a three-story brick building with rooms to accommodate two hundred children. Blessed as the School of St. Casimir's, the Felician Sisters of Buffalo, N.Y. were charged with teaching the students. The larger school was soon filled as by 1908 the parish rolls numbered just over 2,000. As there were more marriages, births, and confirmations, there were also more funerals. To fulfill the need for the dearly de-

parted, 23 acres of land in Bedford, New Hampshire were purchased in 1914 to serve as a parish cemetery.

As St. Hedwig grew, it went from not only being the religious epicenter of the community, but the social center as well. From the parish hall the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Society, the St. Ann's Society, Rosary Society, and St. Joseph's Society were born, giving parishioners the opportunity to fraternize and socialize.

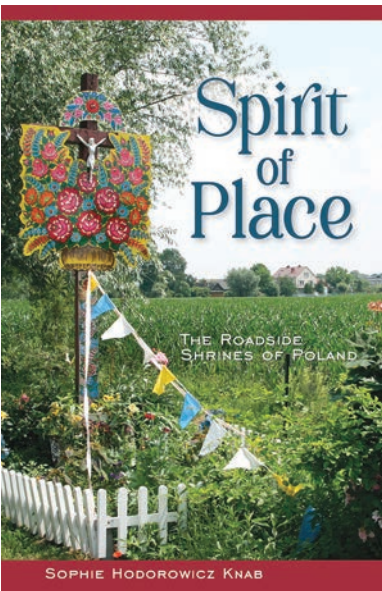
Father Puchala tended to his flock for fifty years and in 1951 Pope Pius XII raised him to a Monsignor. With the new title, Monsignor John undertook a new endeavor, building a new church for the parish. As planning for the new church was underway, Monsignor Puchala fell ill and passed away. In May of 1952 Rev. Frederic R. Kaznocha was installed as the second pastor of St. Hedwig's. It would be his mission to see the completion of the new church.

Father Kaznocha hired architect John D. Betley to design a distinctly mid-century modern building. On September 6, 1965, the new St. Hedwig's on Beech Street was blessed and dedicated.

For over half a century the new building has been serving the Polish community of Manchester. For years the parish teamed up with Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Polish National Catholic Church to host the Manchester Polish Fest and Pulaski Day Celebration. Today the parish maintains its distinct Polish flavor with a stained-glass window and icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, a remembrance area for John Paul II, and an occasional visit from former President of Poland, Lech Walesa.

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It is said that every country has its own *genus loci* or "spirit of place." A thousand years of Christianity, and the Polish Catholic tradition in particular, have left their mark on the landscape of Poland. *Spirit of Place* is a unique look into the tens of thousands of roadside chapels, crosses and shrines that dot both its cities and countryside, and tells of Poland's faith, history, and culture.

*Gdy gęś dzika w marcu przybywa, ciepła wiosna bywa.*  
 When geese arrive in March expect a warm Spring.