



# Polish Heritage

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As delegates started to arrive at the Wyndham Hotel on Wednesday, August 11, a constantly changing weather pattern also arrived and started to make life interesting with intermittent downpours throughout the weekend. On Thursday the convention opened with a welcome by ACPC President Tom Payne, presentation of colors, the national anthems of Poland and the United States sung by Margaret Gowaty, and an invocation by the Rev. Canon Philip Majka.

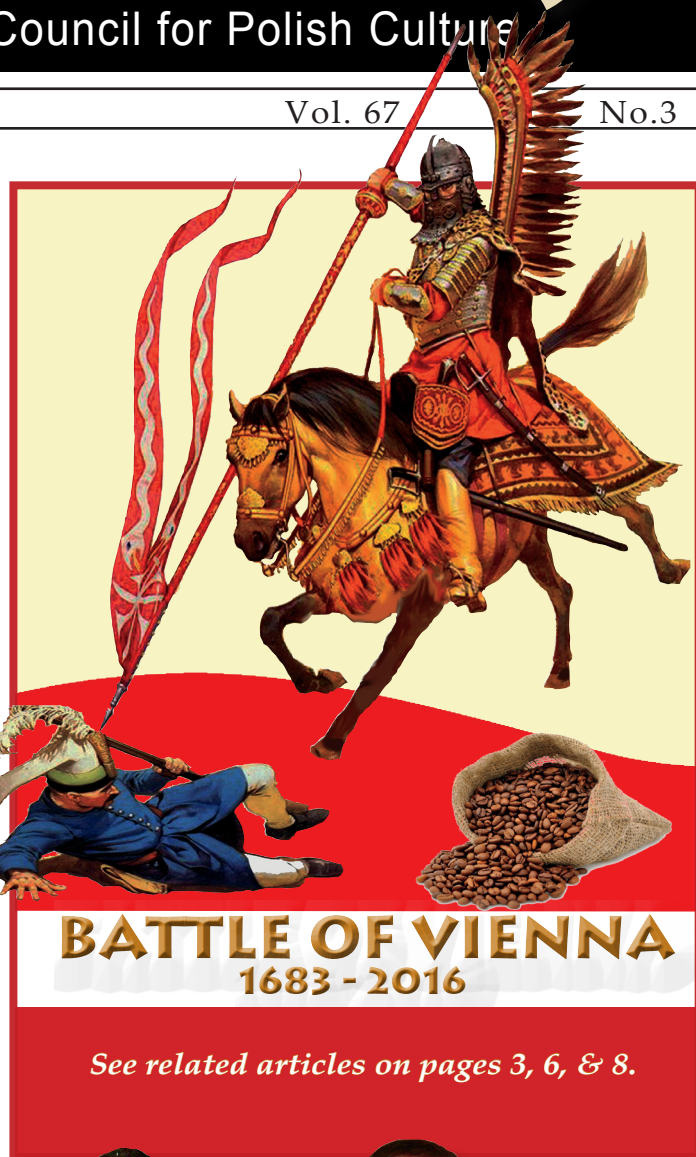
U.. S. Representative Timothy F. Murphy (R 18th District PA) delivered the keynote address. The son of Irish and Polish parents, he addressed the relations between Poland the United States and the strong bond that links the two countries. Following him was Pittsburgh City Council Member Natalia Rudiak who made everyone feel at home when she spoke about her Polish upbringing in Pittsburgh. Second generation Polish, she has shown potential for an outstanding political career.

After the morning business session that day Professor Oscar Swan gave the luncheon presentation on his book *Kaleidoscope of Poland: A Cultural Encyclopedia* which list all kinds of interesting and little known facts about Poland. It was a fascinating presentation, though some of the little known facts were already well known to this audience.

*continued on page 10.*

*Literary Notables at this year's National Convention included (left to right): 2016 ACPC Distinguished Service awardee Prof. Oscar Swan, author of "Kaleidoscope of Poland"; Convention Keynote Speaker Mary Lou Ellena, coordinator of the "Polish Hill Remembered" book project, and Cecilia Glembocki, (with Congressman Tim Murphy), holding a copy of "Poland - Portrait of a Country Through its Festivals and Traditions."*

*(Photos: Jackie Kolowski)*



*See related articles on pages 3, 6, & 8.*







## From the President



Thomas Payne

Fall Greetings to Our Members!

We had an outstanding 2016 Convention in Pittsburgh and I want to thank Debbie Majka for all of her efforts planning and supporting the activities and a special thanks to Dave Motak for his great activity planning and a very special Program Book.

The Sembrich Concert was one of our best ever and all who attended were very pleased with the entire week of business and fun. We welcome our new Directors: Jacqueline Kolowski, Ceil Glembock, Patricia Kaczynski, Henrietta Nowakowski, Barbara Lemecha, and Robert Flanagan.

Now we get ready all of a sudden for the Fall Board Meeting in Hartford as we help our Hartford affiliate celebrate their 45th anniversary. This year has certainly been a special anniversary for several of our clubs (Chicago, Washington, Hartford, did I miss anyone else?) Congratulations to these long-standing pillars of Polish-American culture!

I also want to congratulate our very own Ray Glembocki for his recent Pride of Polonia Award. I had the pleasure of attending the Mass in Doylestown, followed by the presentation of the award, and I was moved by Ray's proud and humble reception of the award as his family members flocked in to witness one of the highest awards from American Polonia. The Adam Styka Art Exhibit sponsored by Polish heritage of Philadelphia was also showing on that day in Doylestown, and I was impressed by the quality artistry on display. Which brings up the subject, if your club is having a special affair that you would like me to attend, by all means send me an invite and I will try to fit into my schedule so that your club members know that they do have the support of the ACPC.

On December 2 and 3, ACPC will sponsor a booth at the National Conference for Social Studies Convention in Washington DC. If you are in the area, you should stop by and see the excellent promotion of Polonia as we educate Social Studies teachers on the truths and misconceptions surrounding our rich history.

If you have any suggestions for new features or articles for ACPC *Polish Heritage* Newsletter, or even better, if you wish to contribute an article to our newsletter, feel free to let me know. Dave Motak is doing an outstanding job as Editor, and he is always open for literary contributions. Have a great Fall Season!

Sincerely,  
Thomas Payne  
President

## PULASKI SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

In November of each year, the Chairman submits a press release announcing the availability of our Pulaski Scholarships for Advanced Studies Program. Serving on the Committee are Alicia Dutka; Carolyn Meleski, MS; Deborah M. Majka, MS, Stephen E. Medvec, PhD, and Chairman Marion V. Winters, MA. The release is submitted to the Polonia press and posted on our website, [www.polishcultureacpc.org](http://www.polishcultureacpc.org). The press release details the requirements which the applicant must meet and sets a filing date deadline of March 15 of the following year. The individual award is \$5,000 and except for a couple of earlier years, our Pulaski Endowment Fund enables us to dole out such an award annually to five students.

\$5,000 is a sizeable award, which can be of considerable help to students in advanced studies at an American university. For this reason, we urge our ACPC Affiliates and our Supporting Organizations to get the word out to their members so that they can alert the children in their families – and even the children of their neighbors, who may be qualified to apply for this grand award. The application involves a considerable amount of research and effort, so an early start is most helpful.

The basic requirements that have to be met in order to apply for this scholarship are: Polish descent; USA university; must have completed a Bachelor's degree and is either working in the second year on an advanced degree (Master, PhD) or expects to earn it by the year of the application deadline. There are no restrictions as to the field of study (education, science, medicine, law, etc.).

Questions concerning this program may be addressed to Mr. Marion V. Winters, 51 Camile Rd., Webster, MA 01570; tel: 508-949-0160; e/m: [mvwinters@charter.net](mailto:mvwinters@charter.net).

## JAMESTOWN GRANT DEADLINE EXTENDED

The deadline for applying for the \$5,000 grant has been extended to December 31, 2016.

Any student or scholar in Eastern European Studies and/or American History can apply. The main focus of the research should be the 1619 strike, but not only. Details can be found on <http://jamestownpoloniaresearch.com> or on ACPC's website [www.polishcultureacpc.org](http://www.polishcultureacpc.org) or in the Winter 2016 issue of the *Polish Heritage* Newsletter.



## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Strange how things happen.

After a couple of years asking my family members, I could not find anyone who would agree to take possession of my maternal *babcia's* old treadle Singer Sewing Machine. Ordinarily, I would have donated it to Goodwill, but this family heirloom had survived the 1936 Johnstown Flood and was actually the only possession that our family saved after the complete loss of all household belongings during that historic event.

But, just a few days ago, on September 12, I finally received a phone call from a cousin saying that she would take the old Singer. Before delivering it, I emptied the various drawers and compartments of over eighty years of stuff. Among the artifacts, I found a curious sketch of a chef holding a tray of what looked like *croissant* pastries. I had drawn the chef nearly 40 years ago and had completely forgotten about that particular art project.

After realizing what the drawing represented - and especially the date of my finding it - September 12 - I was immediately propelled to the year 1683 to stand alongside Polish King Jan III Sobieski and his famous Winged Polish Hussars at the gates of Vienna. You see, September 12, 2016 was actually the 333rd anniversary of this triumphant Polish victory that ended the Turkish siege of Vienna and saved European civilization from the invading Ottoman Empire.

I imagine that I had Sobieski and Vienna on my mind as a few weeks prior I had received a request from author James Conrod Martin to include a review of his newest book *The Boy Who Wanted Wings* in the next issue of the *Polish Heritage*. Jim's book, coincidentally, is about characters connected to King Jan Sobieski and the Battle of Vienna.

I was also asked to submit material for my *Kacik Kulinarny* column in the Polish Cultural Council's *Polish Journey* newsletter, so, of course, I wrote about Vienna, 1683. I engaged the project in a curious way, perhaps, as my article approached this famous battle and its outcome from a vantage point not of a historian, but rather someone who enjoys food, cooking and culinary lure.

Perhaps many of you were worn out from the annual Convention, but I received fewer submissions than usual for this particular issue of the *Polish Heritage*. Consequently, I have decided to create this issue as both a celebration of Polish Heritage Month as well as of Jan Sobieski and the 333rd anniversary of this momentous Polish victory.

My article as well as the review of Jim's new book are featured on pages 6 and 8.

*Dave Motak*



## Poland's Minister of Culture Visits Philadelphia

by Peter Obst



On September 25, the city of Philadelphia had a very distinguished visitor, Vice-premier and Minister of Culture and National Heritage Prof. Dr. Piotr Gliński. He and an entourage of seven persons toured the Kosciuszko House Memorial on 3rd and Pine Streets where he also met with the US National Parks Service Superintendent for the Independence Hall District Cynthia MacLeod. Marie Hejnosz of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia coordinated the museum visit. It was also an opportunity to present the Gloria Artis Medal. Julian Fox accepted the medal posthumously for his father Frank Fox who had passed away in August. Prof. Fox was an ardent promoter of Polish culture and lecturer of Polish history. He had written many articles about Poland which appeared in internationally circulated magazines. He also assembled a collection of 2,500 Polish posters which is now at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

After a meeting with Honorary Consul in Philadelphia, Deborah "Debbie" Majka, the group traveled to the Associated Polish Home in Northeast Philadelphia for a meeting with leaders of the many Polonian organizations in the area. During this session, which included an interesting exchange of viewpoints, the Minister was presented with a plaque honoring the Underground Resistance Forces (*Niezlomni Żołnierze Wykłęci*) by sculptors Bożena and Andrzej Praszczyk, from the B&A Atelier. He graciously accepted this gift in the name of the ministry.

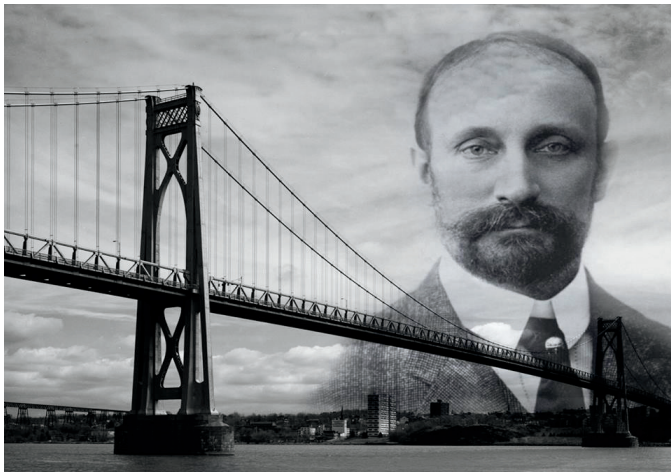
As Debbie Majka said in her introduction, "we are confident this meeting won't be the last of its kind in Philadelphia." The local Polonians were pleased to meet Prof. Gliński and he learned something about how Polish culture was being promoted by the local organizations.

*Photo captions: Top left: Peter Obst with Minister Gliński; Top right: Chargé d'affaires Maciej Pisarski, Polish Embassy and Julian Fox. Bottom: Presentation of the plaque: left to right: Maciej Pisarski, Piotr Gliński, Bożena i Andrzej Praszczyk (Photo credit Janusz Romański)*





# AFFILIATE & SUPPORTING MEMBER NEWS



## BRIDGING URBAN AMERICA

by Jean Joka



Attending the film screening were, from left to right: Dr. Janusz Romanski, Marie Hejnosz, Basia Muszynski, Peter Obst, Debbie Majka, Jean Joka and Eleanor Kirbyson

On Sunday, July 10, 2016 the red carpet was rolled out at the Mandell Theater on the campus of Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA, for the premiere of the documentary film by Basia & Leonad Muszynski, *Bridging Urban America*, the story of Ralph Modjeski, bridge engineer.

The story of Ralph Modjeski is intended to bring this important engineer back into prominence. Working against convention, he created new precedents in bridge construction, pushing the concept of "form follows function" to new limits, simultaneously creating truly beautiful structures that still evoke wonder. The spare and slim solution he first employed on the bridge between Philadelphia and Camden is replicated and reflected in the silhouettes of hundreds of bridges around the world.

After the showing of the film, a Q & A panel consisting of members of the Modjeski and Masters Engineering Firm which is located in Mechanicsburg, PA and Engineers from the DRPA (Delaware River Port Authority) answered questions from the audience. A reception followed for invited guests.

The Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia in addition to the Philadelphia Chapter of the Kościuszko Foundation, financially contributed to the possibility of making this documentary film and bringing it to Philadelphia. This film documentary will also travel to major cities in the United States, beginning with San Francisco.

This film was wonderfully presented and made us so proud to be Polish. Ralph Modjeski was a very talented engineer and well respected by his peers. A copy of the movie can be purchased from the producers. Please contact me if interested.

## The Pride of Polonia



On August 28, ACPC Bord Member Raymond Glembocki received the Pride of Polonia Award from the Polish Apostolate Committee at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA. The prestigious award is in recognition of his service to Polonia and to the Catholic Church. As Past President and Current Treasurer of the Washington D. C. chapter of the Friends of the John Paul II Foundation, Ray and Cecilia have been often recognized for their dedication and achievements, including receiving the Cavalier Cross of the Order of Merit in 2012 from the President of Poland. For the past six years, they have been co-chairs of the ACPC's Polish Perspectives Booth for the American Council for Polish Culture at the annual National Conference for Social Studies. Through their generosity and untiring efforts, Ray and Cecilia are helping increase an appreciation of Poland and the Polish cultural heritage. Congratulations, Ray!



# Adam Styka Art Exhibit

*Submitted by: Jean Joka, President, PHSP*

*Drs. Janusz  
and Malgorzata  
Romanski.*



The Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia (PHSP) in cooperation with the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) and the Pauline Fathers, held its 38th Annual Adam Styka Art Exhibit, Sale, and Preview Reception on Sunday, August 28, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa located in Doylestown, PA. The room was filled to capacity with members, friends and artists awaiting the names of the winners. It was like an evening at the Oscars.

Jean Joka, President of the PHSP welcomed everyone and then turned the program over to Marie Hejnosz, Director of the Adam Styka Art Exhibit. For over fifteen years Marie has been involved with the exhibit, and has truly given her all in securing many qualified artists, consisting of new exhibitors and many who have been our favorite for years.

The Judges (Richard Druch and Jan Zaleski) were quite overwhelmed with the artists' works, and at times had difficulty in selecting the highest quality and originality. 1st Prize \$500 from the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia to Jaś Szygiel for his oil painting "Barn Reflections II" was presented by Marie Hejnosz.

ACPC President Tom Payne, presented the 2nd Prize of \$300 (ACPC Award) to Fred Place for his watercolor painting "Fence Line." The 3rd Prize of \$200 (ACPC Award) was given to Justin Kolbe Jędrzejczyk for "Flowers," 4th Prize \$100 to Matthew Szczepanowski for "Silent Pilgrim," and another 4th Prize \$100 to Jacek Szymula for "Zamyślenie." The Emilia Piasecka Award of \$150 was presented to Marek Wojtowicz for his oil work "The Sphere." There were also a number of Honorable Mentions given to the artists.

After the presentation of the awards, everyone toured the room to admire the excellent works and, hopefully, find a favorite painting to purchase.

On another note, Cecilia and Raymond Glemocki, members of the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, D. C. surprised us with a visit to the exhibit. At the noon mass they were presented with the "Pride of Polonia" award for their dedication to promoting Polish Culture & Education thru their exhibit at the National Conference for Social Studies. (Please see photo and story on facing page.)

To close the program, refreshments of wine and cheese were served in addition to many wonderful deserts.

Kudos to Marie and her Committee for another successful exhibit sponsored by the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia.



*One of the winners Marek Wojtowicz,  
Marie Hejnosz and Tom Payne.*

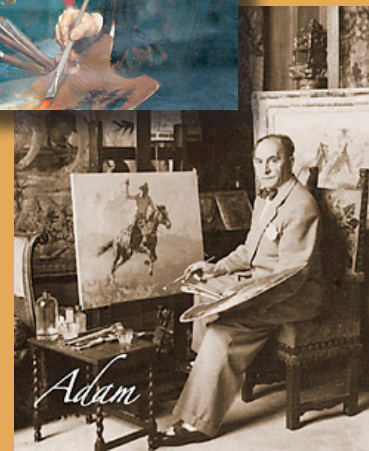
*Photos on pages 3, 4 & 5 are courtesy of  
Peter Obst, Dr. Janusz Romanski and  
Andrew Pustelniak.*

## About Adam Styka....

Polish painter Adam Styka was born in Poland in 1890. In addition to attending the prestigious French Academy of Fine Arts, the young Pole was also significantly influenced by his artist father, Jan Syka, under whose supervision Adam studied painting during his early life. The young Adam exhibited his paintings in numerous galleries throughout Europe as well as in the Americas, always earning the highest praise. Upon completing the French Military Academy at Fontainebleau, he served in the French army during World War I. He was decorated with the Cross of Merit and given French citizenship.

The French government also provided Adam far-reaching assistance during his trip to the French colonies in North Africa. During these travels, Adam created an entirely new series of works featuring tropical, middle-eastern and oriental themes. These paintings showed his amazing sense of the atmosphere and hot colors of Africa and other "exotic" locations. His mastery of light and fascination with its effects on color earned him the nickname "Painter of the Sun." A similar reputation and recognition of his work awaited him when he traveled to the United States and began painting themes associated with the American Wild West.

Toward the end of his life, Adam began to paint pictures with religious themes and many of these works adorn churches in Europe and the United States. He died on September 23, 1959, and was buried in the section set aside for famous Poles at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Mr. Styka was the first dignitary to be so honored.





# A TASTE OF HISTORY VIENNA 1683 - 2016



*Jan III Sobieski*

No amount of exaggeration can over estimate the importance of the Polish victory at Vienna in 1683. For hundreds of years the Turks had threatened European civilization; they had already conquered the Balkans and Hungary, now, at the gates of Vienna, they were poised to enter the heart of Europe. An immense military and economic powerhouse, the Polish Commonwealth alone had withstood this Islamic encroachment. And it was Polish King Jan Sobieski and his mighty Winged Hussars who came to Vienna's rescue.

After months of siege, Vienna was on the verge of capitulation; even the Austrian emperor fled the besieged city for safety. Coming just in time, Sobieski's defeat of the Ottomans was so sudden and overwhelming that the Poles secured a massive amount of Turkish arms and other materials, including the entire Turkish encampment; the Grand Vizier's spectacular tent is now on display at the Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków. The victorious Polish King was celebrated across Europe as a living legend in art, music, poetry and literature. His great victory was also acclaimed in food. For, certainly, where Poles go, food - particularly *good* food - quickly follows!

In addition to King Sobieski and his Hussars, there were other "heroes" of the Battle of Vienna. Although not widely celebrated in the annals of history, these personages have nonetheless made their mark if in gastronomic lore and whose contributions continue to please our palettes.

One of these was a Polish soldier of fortune, Jerzy Kulczycki, who, during the siege of the starving city, volunteered to slip behind the enemy lines dressed as a Turk in order to secure re-enforcements. After contacting Austria's allies, Kulczycki returned to the city with a promise of imminent relief. Although the city was close to capitulation, because of this hopeful information the Vienna city council decided not to surrender to the Turkish forces. The story goes that, after liberating the city and searching the Turkish encampment, the Polish army found vast sacks of strange beans that they initially thought were camel feed and they decided to burn the sacks. As a reward for his heroic service,

Kulczycki was given his choice of anything he wanted. To the astonishment of King Sobieski and the Viennese, the Pole asked for the beans.

In some of the fields the beans had already been set afire and Kulczycki recognized the tantalizing aroma as that of the black drink that he had enjoyed while making his way as a spy through the Turkish camp. King Sobieski himself presented Kulczycki with the enormous amounts of these beans seized from the Turks. Kulczycki roasted the beans, made them into a beverage and eventually opened Vienna's first coffee house. To please the delicate Viennese taste buds, he blended the coffee with honey and heavy cream, creating the famous Viennese *schlag*.

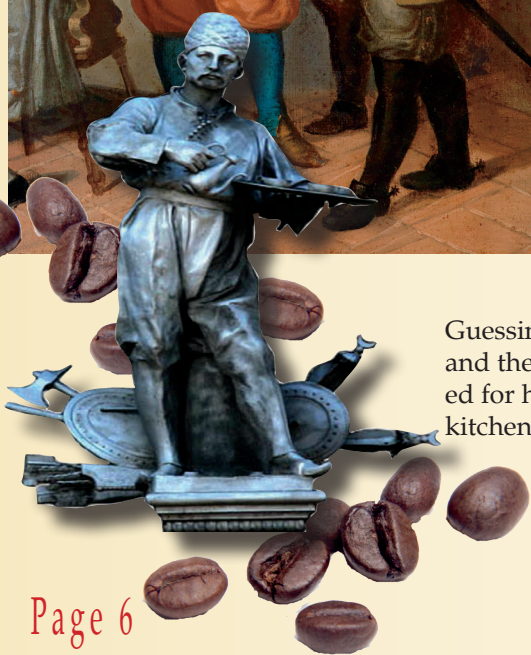
The Viennese soon forgot about the great deed done by the Poles in saving their city, but they did not forget Jerzy Kulczycki. Until very recently, every year in October a special "Kolschitzky" Feast was organized by the café owners of Vienna, who decorated their shop windows with Kulczycki's portrait (illustration at left). Although there are no statues of King Jan Sobieski in Vienna, Kulczycki is memorialized with a statue on Vienna's *Kolschitzky Strasse*, the street which honors his memory.

So what about my little pastry chef that I mentioned in the *Editor's Note*? That is another culinary hero of the Battle of Vienna, although his name has long been lost to history.

The story goes that, during the tense hours of the Turkish siege, during the wee hours of the morning a baker was preparing bread dough in a bake shop near the city walls. He noticed that his puffed-up dough began to quiver and shake in the bowl. Then, listening intently, he heard the muffled sound of picks and shovels.

Guessing that the Turks had started to mine the city walls, the baker alerted the city militia and the Turkish assault was repulsed. Like Kulczycki, the Viennese baker was also rewarded for helping to save the city and was promoted to a coveted position in the Austrian royal kitchen. To commemorate the great victory, he created crescent-shaped rolls based on the

*Top Left: Detail of vintage painting depicting the opening of Jerzy Kulczycki's coffee house in Vienna. Bottom Left: Statue of Kulczycki pouring coffee which was erected on Vienna's Kolschitzky Strasse, the street that honors the Pole's memory.*







BY DAVID J. MOTAK

“Turk’s Head”  
Babka Molds



crescent moon on the Turkish banner; these pastries were soon being sold everywhere in the city. The Austrians called them *kipfel*, literally “crescent.” Later, when the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette became queen of France, she brought the recipe for the *kipfel* with her to Paris, where the chefs of the French court added their own touch. Today, this item is a favorite breakfast food known the world over as the *croissant* or crescent roll.

Although the Viennese did not show tremendous gratitude to King Sobieski and the Poles for liberating their city (after all, the Austrians participated in the Partitions of Poland only a short time later), the rest of Europe did. Sobieski was celebrated in art and literature as well as in food. At the time, it was the custom of bakers to commission specially carved gingerbread molds to commemorate significant occasions and special events such as national holidays and coronations. Many prominent bakers in Europe made large commemorative ginger bread figures depicting the triumphant Sobieski atop his steed, trampling the defeated Turks beneath. Fortunately, a few of these wooden molds have survived in museum and private collections.

In addition, European bakers began using metal molds resembling the Turkish turban. These types of ornate molds are still used today and are called “Turk’s Heads.” They are often used for baking Polish *babka*, that sweet Polish pastry/bread which itself has some heavy Eastern influences including the inclusion of saffron, raisins, exotic nuts, citrus rind and other ingredients that came to Poland from Turkey and the Middle East.

Another piece of gastronomic lore associated with the Polish victory in Vienna has endured down through the ages. As the story goes, King Sobieski was the first Polish king not to confirm the royal decree of 1496 that mandated that only guild members from Kraków’s baker’s guild could produce white bread and *obwarzanek* rolls (whose name derives from a word meaning “to parboil.”) Although Poland was the breadbasket of Europe, until Sobieski’s reign, Jewish bakers were banned from such guilds and hence banned from baking within Kraków’s city limits. With the King’s decision, Jewish bakers could finally bake bread within the confines of the city walls. When Sobieski saved Europe from the Turkish invaders, to celebrate this great victory and to honor their King, one of

the Jewish bakers created a roll in the shape of the king’s stirrup and called it a *beugel* (the German word for stirrup), which ultimately evolved into the modern *bagel*.



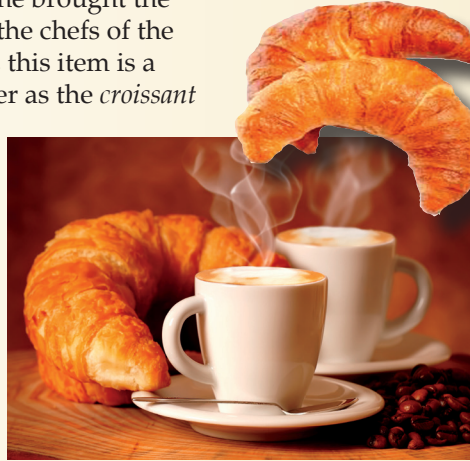
Kraków obwarzanek vendor.

Whether or not this particular story is true, Kraków is actually the historic birthplace of both the *bagel* and the *obwarzanek*, which has recently been designated as one of the European Union’s protected regional foods and can only be produced in Kraków and Wieliczka counties.

It is interesting how, 333 years after the defeat of the Ottoman Turks, Western society is still dealing with difficult issues concerning Islam. But it is also interesting how conflict often results in unexpected results. In this case, the clash of Western and Eastern civilizations

resulted in some tasty outcomes. October is Polish Heritage Month. So, the next time you pour yourself a morning cup of steamy hot coffee and enjoy a croissant, a bagel or even a slice of rich Polish *babka*, celebrate your Heritage by remembering good King Jan and the brave Polish Hussars who helped bring these culinary classics to your table over three hundred years ago.

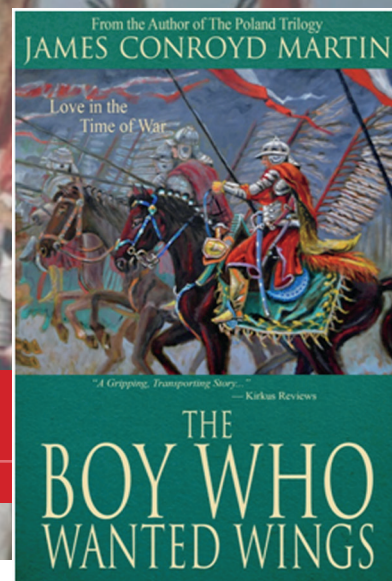
*Smacznego!*





# BOOK REVIEW

contributed by Mary Flanagan



## *The Boy Who Wanted Wings*

by: James Conroyd Martin

ISBN: 978-0997894516 (cloth bound) \$25.00

ISBN: 978-0997894509 (paperback) \$14.99

Hussar Quill Press

6558 SE 63rd Ave.

Portland, Oregon 97206-7402

E-Book available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Kobo, Smashwords, and I-tunes

The story takes place from May to October, 1683. The decisive battle outside the walls of Vienna with the Ottoman Turks against the Holy Roman Empire, led by King Jan III Sobieski of Poland with his winged Hussars took place before all the armies were assembled on September 12, 1683. Final skirmishes continued until the 18th. The date is close to our memorable date in the U.S., September 11, 2001, when Islamic terrorists attacked the U.S.

Entwined within these historic events is a love story that appears hopeless due to class difference and prejudice. The author embroils his characters in situations which seem irredeemable, yet finds some last minute unexpected resolution which, in turn, creates more complications and the readers' curiosity is tweaked to read further.

All this on the background of the Holy War at the Gates of Vienna. The author's description of the battles, the customs and dress, is wonderfully researched and true to history. Anyone who loves history will love the excitement and accuracy of his telling this story. I envy anyone beginning to read the book, the pleasure and excitement is not equaled. Mr. Conroyd was our guest speaker at a luncheon during our ACPC Convention in Connecticut. He described how the family of an 18th Century countess came to him with her diary to request that he may be able to write a novel based on the facts in her diary. The book *Push Not the River* became a great hit. He then wrote two sequels creating the "Poland Trilogy." His in depth descriptions so well researched are a historical gem. Don't miss *Push Not the River*; *Against a Crimson Sky*, and *The Warsaw Conspiracy*.

M. Flanagan

## *The Story*

Aleksy, a dark-complexioned Tatar raised by a Polish peasant family, holds in his heart the wish is to become a Polish hussar, a lancer who carries into battle a device attached to his back that holds dozens of eagle feathers. As a Tatar and as a peasant, this is an unlikely quest. When he meets Krystyna, the daughter of the noble who owns the land on which his parents toiled, he falls hopelessly in love. But even though she returns his love, race and class differences make this quest as impossible as that of becoming a hussar. Under the most harrowing and unlikely circumstances, one day Aleksy must choose between his dreams.

## *The Setting*

On the eve of September 11, 1683, a massive Muslim force was besieging the gates of the imperial city of Vienna and had been doing so since the previous July. Now, however, they were just hours from capturing this capital of the Holy Roman Empire. The Turks' intent was to bring Islam to all of Europe, and this city was seen by East and West alike as the gateway. With the window of time closing for Vienna, the walls were about to be breached on September 12 when the vastly outnumbered Christian coalition, led by King Jan III Sobieski and his famous winged hussars, descended Kahlenberg Mountain to engage the Turks in an attempt to lift the siege. As crucial and consequential as the Battle of Hastings in 1066, the ensuing battle changed the course of European history.



# BOOK REVIEW

## Other Reviews

"A poor archer in medieval Poland (sic) takes aim at the love of his life in this epic novel from Martin. Aleksy Gazdecki embodies the ethnic and political tensions of Europe during the reign of the Ottoman Empire. The believability of this novel, which is sprinkled with period specific details, is never in question. Martin sets the stage so tidily that the plight of Aleksy and Krystyna, who desire to move beyond the social classes that keep them apart, transcends the historical moment. Sprawling but never slow, the plot moves naturally from battle to intimacy and back again. A gripping, transporting story of self-determination set against fate."

Kirkus Reviews

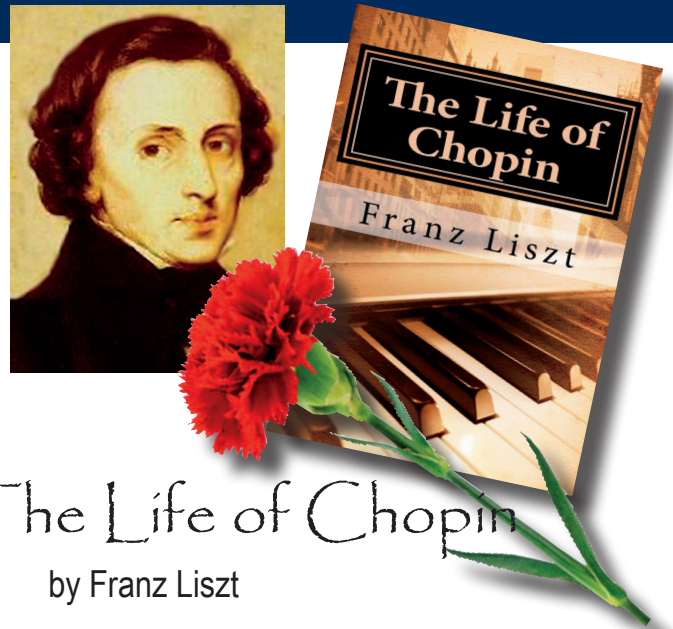
"Amidst class and religious warfare, this alternately romantic and brutal love story is also a reminder that the struggle between Christianity and Islam is a great deal older than 2001. Culminating in the re-creation of the Siege of Vienna in 1683 this is a meticulously researched and convincingly written tale of love's triumph that will surprise historical fiction readers with its little known historical backdrop."

Leonard Kniffel,  
Former Editor-in-chief  
of American Libraries

## About the Author

James Conroyd Martin is the author of The Poland Trilogy: *Push Not the River*, a novel based on the diary of a countess in 1790s Poland; *Against a Crimson Sky* which continues the family saga into the Napoleonic era; and *The Warsaw Conspiracy*, a story that details the Polish cadets' rising against mighty Russia. *Hologram: A Haunting* is a Piers Anthony recommended ghost story with a modern twist. Mr. Martin holds degrees from St. Ambrose and DePaul universities and he resides in Portland, Oregon.

## Other books by James Martin -



## The Life of Chopin by Franz Liszt

Available from Amazon Books,  
\$24.95 Hardcover

*The Life of Chopin* by Hungarian composer Franz Liszt, is not so much a biography of Chopin as it is a way of better understanding Liszt and the circumstances of his time. In a fascinating sort of way, *The Life of Chopin* illustrates what romanticism is all about. Though critics of Liszt's book have assailed it for various literary infractions, it is not without merit. There is much to be learned within its pages about both Chopin and Liszt. Frederic Chopin, a Polish virtuoso pianist and piano composer of the Romantic period, is widely regarded as the greatest Polish composer, and one of the most influential composers for piano in the 19th century. Franz Liszt was a Hungarian composer and virtuoso pianist of the 19th century.

He was a renowned performer throughout Europe, noted especially for his showmanship and great skill with the piano. To this day, he is considered by some to have been the greatest pianist in history.

According to Antonia Colibasanu of *Geopolitical Futures*: "Both composers have written about history through their music. And they have both been revolutionary in their style and their take on history. This book is short reading of music and society in Central Europe in the 19th century. As Liszt admired Chopin's courage in addressing Poland's challenges through his music, Liszt also speaks, in between the lines, about Hungary, his own country. The book is not what you would expect from a biography – it focuses less on Chopin's life and depicts the time they lived through, the romanticism of music and the respectful relationship between colleagues. And this is why it has value."





*continued from page one*

That evening's dinner was at the glass enclosed gazebo-like Schenley Park Café located several blocks from the Wyndham Hotel and the University of Pittsburgh main campus and near the beautiful grounds of Phipps Conservatory. In keeping with the evening's theme, Dave Motak created interesting centerpieces featuring portraits of famous Polish composers and recordings of Polish classical music, compliments of Debbie Majka, provided a delightful accompaniment to the meal.

The dinner was followed by a musical performance at the Frick Fine Arts Auditorium by this year's Sembrich Award Winner, Rachel Ackerman, Coloratura Soprano, accompanied by Eunae Ko Han on the piano. It is a shame that more persons could not have heard her very spirited and highly polished performance. The program started with the Queen of the Night aria from Mozart's *Magic Flute*, progressed through short works by Szymanowski, Moniuszko, Gunod and Verdi, finishing with three selections from the American musical theater - Lerner-Lowe, Rogers-Hammerstein, and Leonard Bernstein. Musically, it was a delightful and very satisfying evening. Many thanks to Wanda O'Brien Trefil Ph.D., the outgoing chair of the Kochanska-Sembrich Committee for her excellent work in organizing the concert and publicizing the Marcella Kochanska Sembrich Vocal Competition over the last few years.

On Friday morning Mary Lou Ellena, former high school teacher, presented on writing project that she accomplished with her students, a book titled *Polish Hill Remembered*. The book is based on the lives of people who lived on Polish who were interviewed by the student research team. The book is an illustrated remembrance, not a history, a walk down memory lane. Mary Lou also encouraged Convention delegates to consider doing a similar project in their communities.

After the business session, our Pittsburgh host Dave Motak coordinated a "Polish Picnic" on the Terrace of the Wyndham Hotel. This special event featured a "make your own" *chłodnik* bar, various *pierogi* and *gołąbki* donated by Mrs. Helen Mannarino, owner of

*Some of the Convention delegates enjoy the impressive view from Pittsburgh's Mount Washington. Photo: David Motak*



*Dr. Jaroslaw Golembiowski accepts the Cultural Achievement Award on behalf of Maestro Adrian Sylveen from First Vice President Robert Synakowski.*



*Debbie Majka presents the Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Oscar Swan.*

*Pierogies Plus* in McKees Rocks, PA, as well as *kielbasa* grilled by the hotel chef. We then spent the afternoon touring the city. Our group first visited the Cathedral of Learning, an ornate, forty-two story Gothic revival landmark that was literally next door to our hotel. The Cathedral of Learning is the University of Pittsburgh's main administrative building. Here our group participated in a walking tour to view the various Nationality Classrooms endowed



by local ethnic groups. The high point of the visit to this truly magnificent building was, of course, the Polish Room. Dating to 1940 and reflecting various elements of Wawel Castle, the room features stained glass windows with Polish University coats of arms and a large replica of the 16th-century Jagiellonian Globe, one of the oldest existing globes to depict North America as a separate continent. The Polish Room also features a reproduction of Jan Matejko's famous painting *Copernicus*, and the original Paderewski score for the opera *Manru*. The cornerstone of the Polish classroom is a fragment of Gothic cornice preserved from Collegium Maius, the oldest building of Jagiellonian University, dating back to the 14th century.

Dave then led delegates on a bus tour that went through the Strip District and Polish Hill with a stop at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church. St. Stan's was damaged in the 1930s when a banana storage warehouse across the street suffered an explosion of "ripening gas" (ethylene) and tons of yellow fruit went flying in the direction of the church at Mach 2 speed, destroying the domes of the two church towers and damaging a large part of the building. Over eighty years after this event, St. Stan's parish is still dealing with the structural damage caused by this explosion.

Intermittent rain interfered with the tour which concluded on Mount Washington overlooking the city and the confluence of the rivers Allegheny and Monongahela into the Ohio River. This is an unique and fabulous view of the city and many photographs were taken as souvenirs.

In addition to being exposed to the wonderful Pitt Campus and the smoke-less atmosphere of a post-industrial Pittsburgh, along with its rich immigrant culture, the conventioners managed to finish up quite a few important pieces of business.

Discussions centered on finances and ongoing programs as well as the challenges of extending membership and various reports were given. Cecilia and Ray Glembocki made a presentation on the last NCSS conference in New Orleans and spoke about the next one to take place in Washington, D. C. Henrietta Nowakowski reported that no one has yet taken up the research grant for the Jamestown Strike of 1619. Marion Winters related the results of the Pulaski scholarship selection. This year, another five outstanding post-graduate students of Polish descent received a \$5,000 grant each. Details may be found on the ACPC website. In addition, the convention voted for ACPC to support the creation of a "National Museum of the American People" to be built in Washington D.C. This support is not linked to any mandatory financial donation.

Elections were concluded for the empty slots on the board and several committees; a general election is scheduled for the next convention. Every effort is being made to communicate our mission and events to the world through the ACPC Internet Site and Facebook. Among the resolutions was mention of the fact that historian Edward Pinkowski, one of the founders of the Philadelphia affiliate, the Polish Heritage Society, would reach age 100 in August 2016.

At the awards banquet, held at the hotel, Maestro Adrian Sylveen could not be present to accept the Cultural Award



*Left to Right: Accompanist Eunae Ko Han, Dr. Jaroslaw Golembiowski, Sembrich Award Winner Rachel Ackerman, Dr. Wanda O'Brien Trefil, Alicia Dutka, and President Thomas Payne.*

for his great service and musical accomplishments. Jaroslaw Golembiowski accepted in his place. The Distinguished Service award was presented to Dr. Oscar Swan for his many years of teaching Polish literature, culture and cinema. This University of Pittsburgh professor, is not of Polish descent, but learned to love Poland through his studies and travels there. The ACPC Founders Award recipient was Marie Hejnosz, past president of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia for her many years of active service, especially in organizing the Styka Art Exhibit at the National Shrine of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA. Present at the banquet, and sharing the moment, were her husband Andrzej and son Alexander.

The banquet closed the Pittsburgh convention on an upbeat note. All agreed that the Convention Committee had done an outstanding job on organizing the event. Many thanks to Dave Motak for being the "local host" in Pittsburgh and creating a really beautifully designed color program book. Now the organization needs someone to show similar initiative and drive to facilitate our 2017 ACPC convention.



*Second Vice President Alicia Dutka presents the Founders Award to Marie Hejnosz.*





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