



Polish Heritage

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Poznań - a Royal Pearl on the River Warta

by Peter J. Obst

In any listing where you may look up information about Poland's cities, the fifth place is usually occupied by Poznań with just under 600,000 inhabitants. But even when it is outranked by Warsaw, Kraków and others, it is a place many people call Poland's "hidden treasure" after they had a chance to sample its unique ambiance.

When grand-duke Mieszko I decided to Christianize his realm and bring the benefits of Western culture and the Roman Catholic faith to his people he was also legitimizing himself as a potent monarch in Christendom and a force to be reckoned with. Though unlettered and regarded as a pagan prince he must have been quite a leader and diplomat to hold sway over a large assemblage of Polanie tribes, ruling from his royal compound on an island on Lednica Lake.

In this area called Wielkopolska, or Greater Poland, the fortified wooden settlement already known as Poznań controlled the east-west passage over the Warta River. Though Gniezno became the capital and the bishop's seat, Poznań grew in importance as a trading town and passage over the river. Soon it had its own Cathedral named for Sts. Peter and Paul, the town's patrons. One of the funerary chapels is dedicated to Mieszko I and his son Bolesław Chrobry (the Brave, also called Great). During the Middle Ages the town acquired double brick walls and King Przemysław I built his castle there with a 47 meter high watch tower. Over time, the walls and adjoining buildings fell into ruin, but at the beginning of the twenty-first century the castle was restored and the tower rebuilt on the original foundations, not without some controversy. Though it has a somewhat Disneyesque feel, the brick not having yet aged, it blends in well with the architecture of the old town. In addition, the panoramic view from the top is unparalleled. The castle complex now houses the city's museum of applied arts.

Though King Kazimierz the Restorer moved the capital to Kraków, Poznań's fortunes rose again as it received a city charter in 1253. Later, the Jagiellonian kings granted it additional privileges. During the Renaissance a new town hall or Ratusz was constructed under the guidance of Italian architect Giovanni Battista di Quadro.

It is a most graceful building equipped with a striking tower clock and, to entertain the townsfolk and tourists alike, a set of animated figures. Everyday as the clock is ready to toll the noon hour, metal doors open over the clock face and two goat figures slide forward, then turn toward each other and begin to butt their horns one against the other, once for every clang of the bell. According to the background story, this early animal-tronic was inspired

continued on page 8

Cover photo: Poznań's main market square and historic town hall with Apollo Fountain in the foreground.

As the official publication of the American Council for Polish Culture, the *Polish Heritage* has had a long and distinguished history. For many years, it set the standard with regards to articles on Polish history, art and culture.



Dave Motak

When I assumed the position of *Heritage* editor fourteen years ago, I set my personal goal of returning this publication to that esteemed status.

Consequently, over the years I have included many articles on various topics of interest, many of which I had researched and written. As we also continued to include news from our affiliates as well as updates on our organization's general activities, this, of course, required the publication to be somewhat larger and acquired the status of a small-sized, glossy magazine.

In selecting topics for such articles, I have always tried to favor topics which are not normally featured in Polonian publications, as they usually cover more common topics or seasonal traditions. In contrast, our feature *Heritage* articles have proven to be very popular among ACPC members, with many of you contacting me to express your appreciation.

At a recent meeting of the ACPC board, the board members endorsed continuing the practice of including such feature articles from time to time. And, as such, I will attempt to continue this practice. During the meeting we discussed soliciting such articles from our members. Our intention is to include articles that are well written and well researched and cover unique and informative topics.

Consequently, it is with great please that we feature the first such article, written by Peter Obst, President of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia and a very well-respected scholar within our community. Peter's chosen topic is his native town of Poznań, a city not frequently visited by foreign tourists, which is quite a pity as it offers a unique fusion of tradition, history and modernity. Peter's article is very informative and shows his deep love of his hometown. I feel very honored to be able to augment Peter's article with some layout and design work. I'm certain that you will enjoy this visit to a truly remarkable and beautiful Polish city.

If you or your organization have an article which you would like to have considered as a feature for this publication, please contact me at

djm713@yahoo.com

Życzę wszystkim przyjemnej lektury!

David Motak
Editor/Designer



American Council for Polish Culture Marcella Kočańska Sembrich National Vocal Competition 2026

The American Council for Polish Culture Music Committee is accepting applications for the ACPC Marcella Kočańska Sembrich Vocal Competition now through May 15, 2026.

The competition is being conducted online. Please see below for eligibility and requirements.

The winner will perform a recital at the ACPC Convention in Philadelphia, PA, August 12-15, 2026 .

First Prize: \$3,500
Second Prize: \$1,000
Third Prize: \$500

Eligibility:

Must be of Polish descent and a United States citizen or permanent resident
Singers age 18-38 in early stages of career development
Not under professional management

Requirements:

Submit application with required attachments.
Provide a link to a VIDEO recording of a performance approximately 15-20 minutes long, consisting of Arias and Art Songs in several languages, including Polish, with one mandatory song specified in the application.

Deadline: **May 15, 2026**

Details and Application Form on ACPC website:

<https://polishcultureacpc.org>

For additional information send an email to:

acpcsembrich@gmail.com



**2025 Sembrich Award
Winner Soprano Jules Furgal**





**ANNOUNCING THE 2026 ACPC CONVENTION
in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
August 12-15, 2026**

"Poles in the American Revolution"

This year the 78th Annual Convention of the American Council for Polish Culture will be hosted by the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia affiliate.

As the convention takes place in the year of the American Semiquincentennial we will celebrate the participation of Poles in the American Revolution among whom are Generals Tadeusz Kościuszko and Casimir Pułaski.

The location of the convention is the Philadelphia Marriott Old City Hotel in the vicinity of many historic sites.

Several events are being planned including a ceremony at the Kościuszko House National Memorial, the house where he resided 1797-98, as well as a dinner at historic Carpenters' Hall.

Member organizations and individuals are encouraged to place ads in the Convention Journal.

**Forms and additional information are posted online at:
<https://www.poles.org/PHSP/Convention>**

Participants to the convention may wish to book additional days at the hotel to tour some of Philadelphia's historical sites. The Philadelphia Marriott Old City at One Dock Street is situated in the heart of the Historic District, near Independence Hall, the Betsy Ross House, Liberty Bell, the Kościuszko House, the Museum of the American Revolution and the National Constitution Center.

Those who wish to wander farther afield may want to visit the Toruń Triangle which commemorates Philadelphia's connection to its Sister City in Poland. Located near Logan circle and the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, it is home to the Copernicus Memorial. Just across the street one also finds a statute of Thaddeus Kościuszko. Down the Benjamin Franklin Parkway is the Philadelphia Museum of Art and, on its western side, a statue of Casimir Pułaski.

A visit to Philadelphia during the Semiquincentennial can be the highlight of the year for a traveler who plans ahead.

For your convenience, a Convention Registration form is provided on Page 5 of this issue.



Downtown Philadelphia



Independence Hall



Philadelphia Marriott Old City Hotel



Carpenters' Hall



Kościuszko House



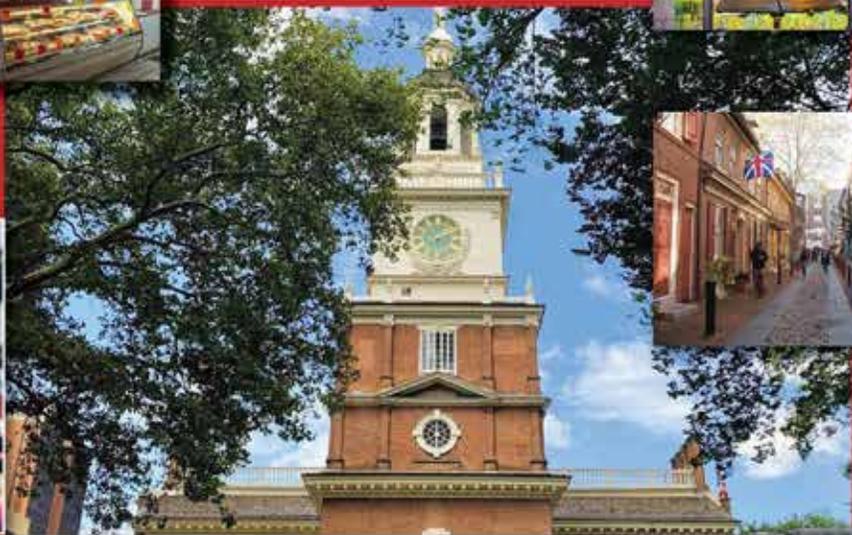
General Casimir Pułaski statue in the Garden of Heroes



Visit the Polish shops in the neighborhood of Port Richmond, experience local tradition at the Mummers Museum or enjoy fresh cannoli at the Italian Market in South Philly or an authentic Philly Cheesesteak in the bustling Reading Terminal Market with over 80 food vendors, Amish farm produce, crafts and more.



Stroll the streets of the Old City, the neighborhood known as America's most historic square mile featuring Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Betsy Ross House and other historic sites.

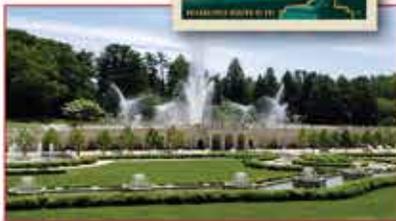


**READING
TERMINAL
MARKET**

Come to historic Philadelphia!



Tour the famous Philadelphia Museum of Art, home of one of the largest collections of paintings, sculptures and fine art in the country.



Or visit the world famous Longwood Gardens, located just 28 miles from the city.



Celebrate our Nation's Past at the impressive Museum of the American Revolution situated in the heart of Independence National Historical Park.





Registration Form - ACPC Convention 2026

August 12-15, 2026 - Philadelphia, PA - Marriott Old City Hotel

Arrive on Wednesday Aug. 12, all inclusive Convention Fee \$500.00 _____

Includes First Night Reception, Pre-Convention Board Meeting, Hospitality Room, 3 Lunches, Speakers, Gala Awards Banquet, Dinner at Carpenters' Hall, Marcella Kocharńska Concert and Reception, includes \$50 ACPC registration fee.

Additional guest ticket for Gala Awards Banquet - # _____ x \$120.00 _____

Total Amount: _____

Please remit full amount or deposit of \$250.00 per person by **July 12, 2026**.

Balance due upon arrival. Checks should be made out to:

Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

and mailed with this form to:

Debbie Majka, ACPC Convention 2026, 812 Lombard St., Apt. 12; Phila., PA 19147

You must make your own room reservations at the Marriott Old City Hotel before deadline of July 17, 2026 to get the convention rate:

Rooms - doubles - are at the convention rate of: \$189.00 + tax, per night

Use code: ACPC tel: 1-800-535-4028.

Hotel link is on the Convention page: www.poles.org/PHSP/Convention

Philadelphia is a friendly city with numerous historic places, museums and historic sites.

It has a large Polonia and many places that are linked to the Polish Presence. You may wish to extend your visit to tour places such as: Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Betsy Ross House, Museum of the American Revolution, the Constitution Center and other points of interest.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail: _____ Tel: _____

Club or Organization _____ Delegate





President's Message



President
Cecilia Larkin

We have just crossed the threshold of the 250th anniversary of the United States of America and as we look forward to participating in the national celebrations, we look for ways to remember and highlight the stories of Poles who contributed much to first winning the freedom and then to the growth and cultural fabric of our country. As we do this, I think it's good to also ask how we see ourselves in this country in which we live.

Last year, as the Polish American Association of Sarasota was preparing to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of its founding, it put forth a question to the American Polonia: What does it mean to be a Polish-American in today's world? The answers, compiled by John Cebrowski and delivered in a key-note speech at the Anniversary Gala in November, were many and highly personal, ranging from recollections of going to Saturday schools to learn Polish or belonging to Polish Scouts, to statements like "we are all ambassadors for Poland...", "Being Polish-American today means having an instant friend in any other Polish or Polish-American person I meet...", "...carrying two homes in my heart...", "creating harmony between two cultures and giving both the space to thrive...", "Many families came here before Poland existed as an independent country. They 'became' Polish here in America. - They created a Polish culture that is American, not European." "...I have consciously made a decision to become an American of Polish descent, not a Pole in America," etc.

Above is just a fragment of the many responses John received and we look forward to a more comprehensive picture that he plans to put together. What is salient in the few examples cited here is that Polish identity has not melted in the American pot as was thought to happen in this country over a century ago. After the Second World War and especially in the mid 1960's the metaphor of the "melting pot" was changing into one of "American mosaic," and the ideal of assimilation or Americanization was replaced by a fuller recognition of diverse, separate, and vibrant ethnic cultures. For many years in the past, parents who didn't speak English encouraged their children not to speak Polish outside of their home. How many people do we meet now who say that they spoke only Polish until they went to school and are sorry that they didn't keep it up because it would be good to know it now. It was better not to be different and being Polish was sometimes a liability. With the changes after the Civil Rights Act, when the phrase "black is beautiful" became all popular, why not "Polish and proud?"

A mosaic is an artwork made up of colored, often irregular pieces of stone, glass, ceramic, or other materials, known as *tesserae*, or tiles, secured to a base by some form of adhesive to make a large, vibrant image. Each piece has its own quality and color but joined with others it often takes on the characteristic of its neighbor so the colors

reflect off one another resulting in a harmonious picture. In the 250 years of its history, the United States was built of such tiles in larger or smaller groupings, not melted into a gray mass, but each bringing its own value and contribution to the growth of the country. As immigrants or children and grandchildren of immigrants, we are primarily Americans, products of American schools, culture and a part of its overall society, but we do retain another identity that is based on the heritage, traditions and culture of the nation from which we descend.

The Poles who came to America made remarkable contributions to this country, to winning its freedom, to its achievements in industry, sciences, academia, arts, and overall culture. In the American Council for Polish Culture, it is our job and our mission to showcase the *tesserae* of our Polish culture, traditions and heritage well polished and visible to all in the American mosaic.

Cecilia Larkin



TO OUR READERS.....

Producing and mailing our high-quality *Polish Heritage* magazine requires a substantial investment from our general fund. Membership dues cover only a part of our programming needs. To ensure that we can continue offering such services to our community, please consider supporting our efforts by making a tax-deductible donation to the ACPC general fund. This can be done by scanning this QR code which will take you directly to the donation page. You can also donate by check made out to *The American Council for Polish Culture* and mailing it to:

Treasurer Tom Payne,
4628 Columbia Circle,
Annandale, VA 22003.



Dziękujemy za wsparcie! - Thank you for your support!



ACPC's Polish Perspectives Exhibit at the 2025 NCSS Conference



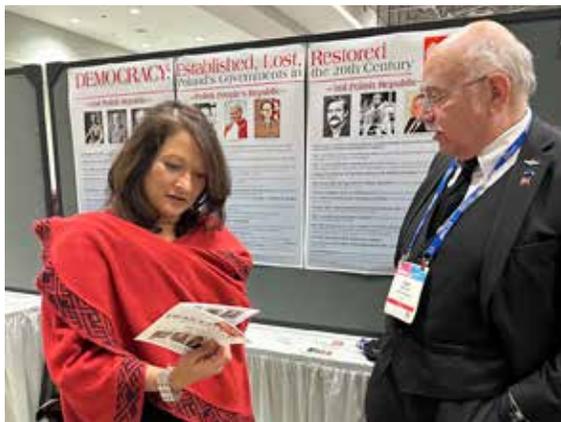
The American Council for Polish Culture took part in the National Council for Social Studies 105th Annual Conference (<https://www.socialstudies.org/conference>) at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C., under the theme "Because Democracy Depends on It." The conference stands as the singular event in the nation dedicated to exploring history, social studies, geography, US and world history, and civics. The participants include teachers, teaching consultants and university representatives.

This year's conference was attended by approximately 3,300 educators, featured more than 240 exhibitors, and offered over 500 sessions. Peter Obst participated in the Poster Presentations (1 hr. slot) with a poster display titled "Democracy: Established, Lost, Restored" which traced Poland's political history from 1918 to the present day. Carla Tomaszewski created the artwork on the posters and a theme booklet. An expanded Power Point version of the presentation is available on <https://www.poles.org/Poland/>

On December 5-6, 2025, the ACPC displayed its Polish Perspectives exhibit meant to "educate the educators" in a prominently placed booth with materials meant to present information on Polish history, culture and traditions to the thousands of social studies teachers attending the conference, and especially on the contributions made by Poles, in the past and present, to the United States and world culture, sciences and history. In addition to the knowledge gained during their visit, the attendees received various materials and teaching aids they could take to their schools.

The ACPC gratefully acknowledges the generous co-sponsorship of the Polish Perspectives exhibit by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, which provided generous financial support as well as materials for distribution to attendees. In addition, the exhibit is supported by major contributors such as the Polish American Congress - Charitable Foundation, numerous ACPC Affiliates, Polish organizations, institutions, and individuals who identify with the mission of this project. Their collective contributions have made this showcase a meaningful and enriching experience for all attendees.

The Polish Perspective exhibit has been in existence for 25 years and, for the past 15 years, it had been chaired by Cecilia and Ray Glembocki who greatly expanded its scope.



Top photo: Volunteers Ken Lemanski and Debbie Majka.

Middle photo: A visiting teacher with Peter Obst discussing the Polish Democracy presentation.

Bottom photo:

Dr. Teresa G. Wojcik, Chair of the Department of Education at Villanova University, Carla Tomaszewski and Cecilia Glembocki.

Right: Edward Krolikowski as General Casimir Pulaski and Jeff Thomas as a colonial militiaman.

Far right: The Polish Perspectives Booth.





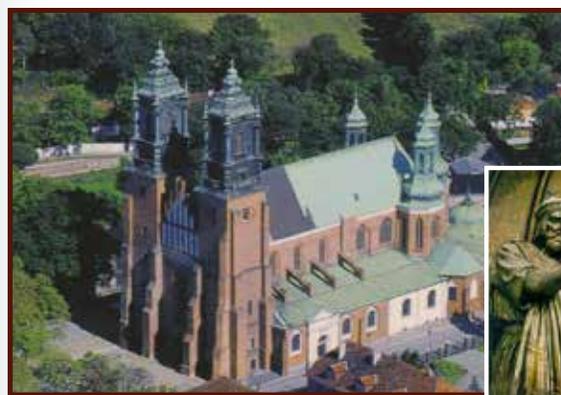
by two cantankerous goats that somehow got loose on the scaffolding of the town hall while it was being built.

The city suffered during the Potop Swedish Invasion of 1736 and the Seven Years war 1756-1763. Yet, Poznań managed to rebound each time. After the Second Partition of Poland in 1793, Poznań was relegated to the Prussian administrative zone. For a while it seemed that Poland's political fortunes might improve when Napoleon Bonaparte spent a week in Poznań during 1806, but it was not to be. Recognizing the city's strategic importance, the Prussians started to surround it with a series of earth and brick forts and artillery emplacements. By the end of the nineteenth century these were obsolete and their removal allowed the city to grow. The city gained its first railroad connection to the port city of Stettin (now Szczecin). Soon there were rail lines running in all directions of the compass and Poznań became a major rail transportation hub.

An imposing imperial building also known as the Zamek Cesarski was built by the Prussians on the main city thoroughfare. The city also gained an opera house and a university. Yet, leaders of the city's Polish population would not stand to have the city Germanized. They adopted the Positivist approach and strove to establish Polish institutions, societies and industry. The populace funded a National Theater building that would host performances by Polish artists and playwrights. The city's Polish merchant and entrepreneurial elite met regularly at the Hotel Bazar in the city center. This led to the founding of the Cegielski Machine Works in 1846, which grew from a repair workshop to producing farm equipment and tractors, later advancing to locomotives, rail stock, machine tools and large diesel ship engines.

It was at the Hotel Bazar that the Powstanie Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland Insurrection) began and established Poland's western frontier. As World War I was winding down, Poland's future was uncertain. While Józef Piłsudski was attempting to secure the eastern reaches of Poland, an underground movement in Poznań organized a militia that could incorporate the region of Wielkopolska into the reborn nation.

After Ignacy Paderewski gave a patriotic speech from a Hotel Bazar window to an excited crowd, shots rang out in the square during the night of December 27, 1918 striking windows at the hotel. The word was passed and units of the Polish citizens' militia mobilized a take over of various important buildings in town. Uniformed men, using supplies and arms confiscated from the Germans, removed the city government officials from the Town Hall and replaced them with temporary Polish ones. This was no disorderly mob, but a well planned and disciplined insurrection conducted by Polish militiamen, many of whom received training in the German army after being forcibly drafted, and now were using the occupiers' weapons against them. Poles rapidly took control of the situation, capturing surrounding towns and German stockpiles of materials. This included the airport at Ławica where captured



The Poznań Cathedral.



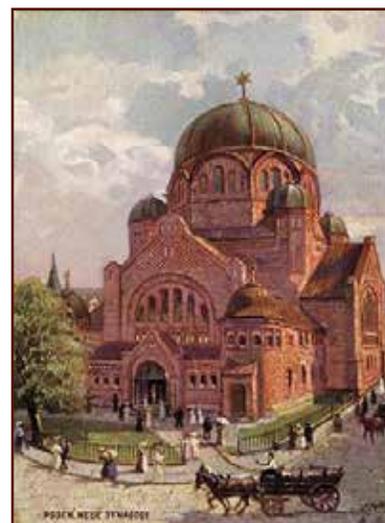
Right: The Chapel honoring Mieszko I and Bolesław Chrobry.



Above: Greater Poland Insurrection. Below: The historic Hotel Bazar.



The great Poznań Synagogue desecrated by the Nazis during WWII.



Statue of Saint George slaying the dragon in which St. George is portrayed as a Polish Cavalry Officer. The statue recalls the Polish-Soviet war (1919-21). Photo: Peter Obst.



aircraft and airplane parts were soon used to form and supply the embryonic Polish Air Force. In February of 1919 the Polish western border was recognized by the Allied Powers and Poznań once again became a bustling industrial and merchantile center and part of a reborn Poland. A museum of the Wielkopolska Insurrection and a monument now stand to honor the insurrectionists and the over 2,000 Polish militia who died in the fighting.

Poznań experienced growth during the 1920s. Local industries developed partly because of its economic significance as a rail transportation center and home to the Poznań International Trade Fair. This annual event attracted exhibitors from around the world and showcased the newest developments in consumer goods, technology, automobiles, machinery and industrial design. These good times were not to last as Hitler's forces attacked Poland on September 1, 1939. The German armies flanked the city and Army Poznań moved to make a valiant stand on the Bzura River, in an attempt to block the invaders from taking Warsaw. In the end, after Poland capitulated, the Nazis staged a triumphant march in the center of an undamaged Poznań. Soon after, the great synagogue at the end of Żydowska Street in the old town was desecrated by German troops.

Because of the strategic importance of Poznań as a transportation center and the Focke Wulf factory (producing deadly FW-190 fighter airplanes) the city found itself on the target list of the British Bomber Command. Though it lay at the extreme range of his reach, Air Marshal Arthur "Bomber" Harris dispatched several attacks against the city. Each such raid was a complex operation involving orders sent to dozens of air stations specifying how many crews and aircraft would be sent and the number of bombs and gallons of aviation gasoline to be loaded. The aircraft were then sequentially sent off into the night forming a bomber stream that would deliver a blow to the enemy's infrastructure, and the unavoidable collateral damage to the civilian population of Poznań. As the aircraft made their way through the darkness, they would be spotted by German radar and night fighters alerted. As this was the early age of radar air-to-air interception most of these British aircraft would get through. As the bomber-stream arrived over the city a fascinating and terrifying light and fireworks event began. Fast Mosquito bombers came in on a low precision strike to drop target markers, long burning colored flares, creating an aiming reference point for the heavy bombers. Then the remaining bombers, usually Wellingtons, also known as Wimpeys, came in above the target. German light flak and heavy 88-mm anti-aircraft guns began to fire continuously. Searchlight beams groped through the darkness, like blind fingers attempting to crush annoying insects, pinpointing the planes for anti-aircraft guns. The beams crossed and re-crossed often pinning an unfortunate aircraft in a cone of light. Bombs fell on the rail yards, the nearby warehouses and in the city center. Then - silence, except for the occasional explosion, with smoke and fires leaping high into the night.

Damage from these air raids remained well into the
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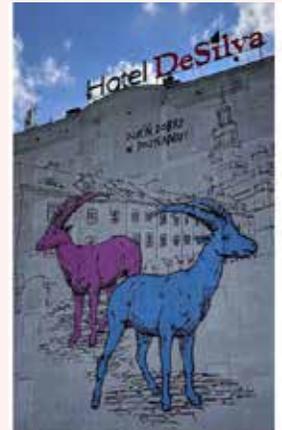
POZNAŃSKIE SŁOWIKI

Greatly enhancing the city's rich cultural life, the Poznań Boys Choir - Poznański Chór Chłopięcy - serves as Poznań's musical ambassador. The Choir traces its origins back to the Poznańskie Słowiki (the "Poznań Nightingales") a world-famous boys choir established in 1939. These young vocalists have represented Poland and their hometown at concerts around the world.

MURAL ART



Poznań has become famous for its urban street art, including over 200 impressive murals gracing buildings, walls and various public buildings.



STARY MARYCH

Stary Marych was a fictional Poznań character created by Julius Kubel, who first appeared on the program "Blubry Starego Marycha" on Polish Radio in 1983. For many years Stary Marych raised the hearts of Poznań residents through the appreciation of the richness of their native dialect. In recognition of his services in promoting the dialect and traditions of Poznań, his fellow citizens honored him with his own monument in Półwiejska Street.



1960s as barren areas could be seen throughout the city. The liberation of Poznań was not easy as the Germans were well entrenched. It took the combined efforts of the Soviet Red Army and

Polish volunteers to pry them loose. The fallen were laid to rest on Citadel Hill. This is also where British airmen and prisoners from the "Great Escape" Stalag Luft III are buried. After that the city, with over half of its buildings damaged or destroyed, started to rebuild. Among the first to be restored were the Town Hall and the Cathedral. Some places were not deemed worthy of restoration. One of those was the Upper Silesia Tower on the grounds of the Poznań International Fair. In another bombed-out area, a modernistic circular, nine story department store, popularly called the *Okrągłak*, was built and since has earned a permanent place among the city's architectural landmarks. The railroad station was also rebuilt, but it was replaced in 2012 by a modern building linked to a downtown shopping mall. Because of its rounded roof it has acquired the popular name of *Chlebak* (Breadbox). Currently, Poznań's Main Station handles over 22 million passengers per year.

During the Communist times in Poland, Poznań's manufacturing industries expanded, including electronic, chemical and pharmaceutical firms. Expansion of the housing stock in the city



The 1956 workers demonstrating "We Demand Bread!"



Adam Mickiewicz monument and the monument to victims of the 1956 protests.



Poznań's Rynek



The Old Market Square or Rynek is the center and oldest part of the Old Town of Poznań and the third largest market square in Poland (after Kraków and Wrocław.)

It is unique in being extraordinarily rich in outstanding objects of art and culture making it an unforgettable experience for visitors.



Rogale Museum

The St. Martin's Croissant (Rogal Świętomarciński) is a traditional pastry from Poznań, shaped like a horseshoe and filled with a sweet, rich paste of white poppy seeds, nuts, dried fruit, and candied orange peel, topped with a glaze and chopped nuts. Eaten on St. Martin's Day (Nov. 11th), the rogal is a flaky, semi-puff pastry with a protected designation, meaning that authentic versions can be only made in Poznań. A museum celebrating this culinary tradition is located across from the Ratusz.



The Poznań "Koziołki"

To the delight of children and tourists, on the historic Ratusz (town hall) tower two mechanical goats make an appearance and butt their heads together, once for every hour the clock strikes. The goats represent an age-old Poznań legend. This performance takes place every day at twelve noon attracting large crowds. A pair of butting goats have been a symbol of Poznań for many years. The mechanical *koziółki* were introduced in 2006 as a tourist attraction to symbolize the city's rich history and folklore and have become a beloved icon of Poznań over the years.

began with the introduction of prefabricated slab construction. New housing developments with multiple apartment buildings of about ten stories were built in the city's outlying districts. Among the main employers were the Cegielski Machine Works which was renamed as the Stalin Metal Works in 1953. It was here that on June 28, 1956, workers filled the streets seeking better working conditions and were met with violent repression. Their signs read "We demand bread!" A crowd of approximately 100,000 people gathered in the city center near the Ministry of Public Security building. Shots rang out and between 57 to over a hundred are estimated to have died, including a 13-year-old boy, Romek Strzałkowski. Hundreds of other people sustained injuries. Tanks quelled the protest but it triggered a change in the Communist Party. Władysław Gomułka, a communist imprisoned for his pro-Polish nationalist views, was released and became head of the Party. Later, in 1981, a monument was placed on Mickiewicz Square, in front of the University, in remembrance of those who took part and died during that momentous protest.

Despite its Communist administration the city was always western oriented, especially with the annual International Trade Fair attracting scores of exhibitors from around the world. This gave Poznań residents a unique opportunity to

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*Poznań's two castles:
Above: The Imperial Castle built in 1910 as a residence for the German Emperor Wilhelm II. Heavily damaged during World War II it now houses cultural institutions, including museums and galleries.*

The Royal Castle, originally erected in 1249 by Duke Przemysł I was heavily modified during its long history and suffered significant damage in WW II. Restoration work began in 1950. It currently houses the Museum of Applied Arts.



Typical traditional Bamberka folk costume.

Bamberki

The Rynek features a monument honoring the Bamberki (or Bambrzy) - descendants of settlers who came from the area around Bamberg, Bavaria who were brought to Poznań by city authorities in the years 1719-1753 to settle abandoned villages that had been destroyed during the Great Northern War and the resulting plague epidemic. Known for their agricultural skills and distinct, colorful traditional costumes, they assimilated into the local Polish culture while maintaining a unique cultural identity, often symbolizing hard work and reliability in the Wielkopolska region.

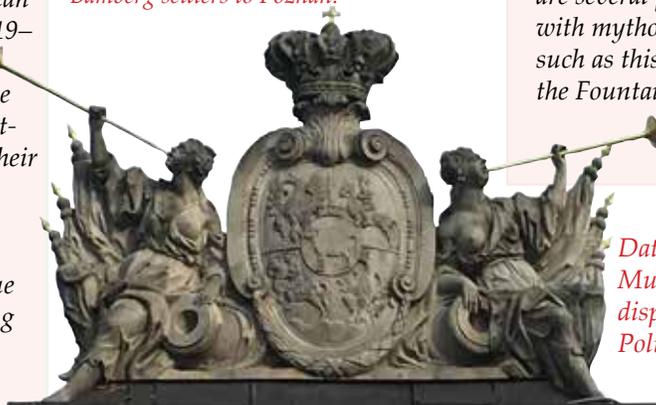


Statue commemorating the Bamberg settlers to Poznań.



The Poznań Rynek features colorful merchant houses dating to the 14th century.

One of the distinctive features of Poznań's Market Square are several public fountains with mythological figures such as this statue of Mars and the Fountain of Apollo shown on the front cover of this issue.



Dating to 1785, the Poznań Municipal Guardhouse displays the seal of the old Polish Commonwealth.





Forum of Polish Teachers' Conferences – Unity, Identity, and Mission

Polish schools in the United States shape the linguistic and cultural identity of the young generation of the Polish community abroad. Teaching the Polish language builds an awareness of national belonging and turns students into ambassadors of Polish heritage in the countries where they live. A special role in this mission is played by Polish teachers and by the Polish Teachers' and Parents' Committees Members Conference, which integrates the educational community outside Poland's borders.

The first Polish Teachers' Conference in America took place in 1985 at Alliance College in Pennsylvania, during a period of particular growth in Polish heritage education.

The Forum of Polish Teachers of the West Coast—an organization still young, only 27 years old, bringing together Polish schools from eight U.S. states—has organized five Polish Teachers' Conferences to date.

The 6th Conference of Polish Teachers and Parents' Committees, held on May 26–29, 2000, in Los Angeles, was the first convention organized by the Forum. The event was attended by 256 participants, including 241 teachers representing 52 schools from 12 states. Its guiding theme was “Polish Education in the New Millennium”—a reflection on the teaching process in an era of dynamic technological development.

The next Conference, held on May 24–27, 2002, in Las Vegas at the University of Nevada, brought together about 300 participants from 16 states, as well as international guests. The motto “For All Poles Are One Family” emphasized the idea of unity within the Polish diaspora. Workshop topics included heroes of two continents—Kazimierz Pułaski and Tadeusz Kościuszko—as well as issues related to the future of Polish education.

The 9th Conference in Houston in 2006, attended by more than 320 representatives of Polish schools, was devoted to the history of Polish emigration in the United States, with particular emphasis on the 150th anniversary of the founding of Panna Maria—the first Polish settlement and school in America.

The 11th Conference in San Francisco in 2010 gathered 350 participants from 14 states. Lectures, panels, and workshops focused on modernity and the effectiveness of teaching.

The 15th Convention, held on May 25–28, 2018, in Portland, Oregon, took place under the honorary pa-

XVIII ZJAZD NAUCZYCIELI POLONIJNYCH
I KOMITETÓW RODZIELSKICH
SAN FRANCISCO, 22-25 MAJA 2026



Organizers of the conference in Portland, Oregon. From left to right: Anna Gindlesperger, Renata Dajnowska, Jadwiga Witkowska, Gabriela Strączek.



tronage of the First Lady of the Republic of Poland, Mrs. Agata Kornhauser-Duda, and was attended by 276 people. The leading themes were “One Hundred Years of Poland's Independence” and “The Polish School: Creative and Pro-active.”

All of these conferences brought together not only teachers, principals of Polish schools, and representatives of parents' committees in the United States and Canada, but also a wide circle of guests representing institutions in Poland and abroad. Among the participants were representatives of the Polish Ministry of National Education, the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles, lecturers from Polish universities, and representatives of language publishing houses.

Polish Teachers' Conventions have always been characterized by a joyful, friendly, and family-like atmosphere. Teachers attend not only to deepen their knowledge, acquire new teaching materials, and share experience, but also to meet others, talk about everyday school challenges, and jointly seek solutions to similar difficulties. This exchange of ideas, mutual support, and sense of community ensure that the conventions have become a permanent part of the history of Polish education.

We invite you to San Francisco!

On May 22–25, 2026, the 18th Conference of Polish Teachers and Parents' Committees will take place in San Francisco. It is organized by the John Paul II Polish Language School in Walnut Creek, in cooperation with the Forum of Polish Teachers of the West Coast. This will already be the sixth convention organized by a school affiliated with the Forum. The leading theme of the conference will be “Bilingualism – Opportunities and Challenges in the Polish Diaspora School of the 21st Century.”—a reflection on the role of the Polish language in emigrant communities, the importance of bilingualism, and the challenges facing contemporary Polish diaspora schools.

We warmly invite all those who care deeply about the well-being of Polish education and the cultivation of Polish identity!

Submitted by Lilia Kieltyka and Fran Pudlo



Mini-Szopka Workshop held at the Hartford Polish Saturday School.

The first official Mini-Szopka Workshop was conducted for the Hartford Polish Saturday School on December 6 at the invitation of Katarzyna (Kasia) Brodowicz, Director of Education. Club volunteers Ursula Brodowicz, Lilia Kieltyka, Fran Pudlo, and Gini Pudlo enjoyed working with the eight students and were greatly impressed with their attention, enthusiasm, independent work style, and creativity. This Workshop was created by szopka artist, David Motak.

Lilia Kieltyka hosted a table at the Dożynki Festival at St. Stanislaus Church in Bristol, Connecticut last September. Although an ominous weather forecast loomed over the day, the strong Polish spirit prevailed.

The 2025 Polish Holiday Fair held on November 22 and 23, jointly sponsored by the Ladies Guild of SS. Cyril and Methodius Church in Hartford and the Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc., provided a festive introduction to the holiday season.

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc. and we look forward to celebrating this milestone with an assortment of programs and events. It is going to be a busy year!

Workshop student with mini-szopka



Left: Florence Langridge. Right: (left to right) Ursula Brodowicz, Lilia Kieltyka, Gini Pudlo, Dr. Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, Dr. Mary Erdmans, Fran Pudlo, and Dorena Wasik.



Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

This year the Annual Polonaise Ball of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia was held on November 15, 2025 in the elegant Belvedere Ballroom of the Associated Polish Home. A delicious buffet was catered by Elzbieta Przybysz of Astoria Restaurant. Dance music was provided by the Clear Day Band.

The Polonia Achievement Award was presented to Dr. Teresa G. Wojcik. The daughter of Walter and Teresa Wojcik, Dr. Wojcik is Chairperson and Associate Professor in the Department of Education and Counseling at Villanova University and an exemplary representative of selfless leadership within the Polish American community. Teresa has served Polonia in numerous capacities and has considerable achievements to her credit, including a Fulbright Award to Poland. She currently serves as the Chairperson of the Society's Scholarship Program. For over twelve years, Dr. Wojcik was the President of the Philadelphia Chapter of a Polish American foundation. Since 2014, she has spearheaded the Polish American Family Festival and Country Fair at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa. In 2019, Teresa co-founded the nonprofit Eagle-Orzel Educational and Cultural Exchange, Inc., which organizes English language and American culture immersion camps for youth in Poland, among other initiatives. She is also a member of the National Polish Apostolate Committee.

It was a very enjoyable evening with the chance auction raising sufficient funds to cover next year's scholarships to be granted by the Society. Our grateful thanks to the many sponsors who took ads in the Ball Journal and donors to the Chance Auction.

Celebrating Kościuszko's 280th Birthday

The 280th Anniversary of Thaddeus Kościuszko's birth fell on Wednesday, February 4th. This turned out to be a sunny but cold day following the snow-storm that blanketed Philadelphia and caused much difficulty to drivers on the narrow streets of the Old City. However, that did not stop Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland Deborah "Debbie" Majka from putting on her snow boots and bringing flowers to Kościuszko's former residence on the corner of 3rd and Pine Streets. She was joined by Alexandra Golaszewska-Kelly, and Peter J. Obst, president of the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia.

This was an auspicious start to the celebration of the participation of Poles in the American Revolution, as part of the the Semiquincentennial of the founding of the United States. More information about the Kościuszko House National Memorial may be found at:

<https://www.nps.gov/thko/>



*Top Photo: Dr. Teresa G. Wojcik with friends and family during the awards ceremony.
Middle photo: Dr. Wojcik receiving the Polonia Award from Peter J. Obst.
Below: Dr. Wojcik with Stasiu Wolanin.*

Above left: At the front entrance to the Kościuszko House Memorial (left to right) Peter J. Obst, Hon. Consul Deborah "Debbie" Majka, Alexandra Golaszewska-Kelly.

Greater Hazleton Area Polonaise Society

September through December were very busy months for the Greater Hazleton Area Polonaise Society.

In September, we participated in the Mahanoy City, PA Community Days where we had a bake sale, Polish pottery sale and also made people aware of all of the activities of our Society.

In October, to celebrate Polish/American Heritage month, the Society held its first Dożynki Festival in over 30 years. It was a huge success with 125 people in attendance! The event was held at the Mahanoy City Elks Lodge number 695 on Sunday, October 20th. The event began with Father Janiec blessing the harvest wreath and table in both Polish and English. Guest and fellow ACPC

member Laura Kafka-Price sang both the Polish National Anthem and the Star-Spangled Banner. Music was provided by the locally well-known Shenandoah All-Star polka band, which is famous for their original song, the *Hałupki Polka*. And speaking of *hałupki*, they were on the menu along with *haluski*, pierogi, kielbasa with sauerkraut sandwiches and more. Homemade nut roll, apple pie and a local favorite "flicht" (a special peanut butter rolled candy), were available to purchase for dessert.

A beautiful display of Polish pottery and headpieces was also available for purchase. Guests had the opportunity to try their luck in winning a gift card from our raffle. Total of all the gift cards was \$1,000. Many took advantage of our harvest display photo op and our six new members registered at our Dożynki event.

Every December, we have our beautiful Wigilia dinner. This event is extremely popular and this year, we had 137 guests share Christmas Eve dinner as one family. Living in Northeast PA and at an elevation of 1800 feet, weather is always at the top of our list. The weatherman predicted one to two inches of snow for Sunday, December 14th. Unfortunately, they were a bit off since our area received about eight inches of snow overnight. The stress was on but by 11 a.m. the sun came out and by 12 noon, people began arriving from within a 100 mile radius.

We had our event at the Sand Springs Country Club in Drums, PA. We began by having members enter singing *O Come All Ye Faithful* as Tom Kopetskie Jr carried Baby Jesus to the manger. Father Janiec said the opening prayer in both English and Polish and blessed the crèche and *opłatek*. Sergeant-at-arms Gerard Kufrovich presented the toast and we all shared our *opłatek* and Christmas wishes. Following tradition, a 13 course home style meatless meal was served. Steve Saive, DJ, played beautiful holiday music.

Our main entertainment was by ACPC member and wonderful American Soprano, Laura Kafka-Price. Laura sang both Polish *kolędy* and Polish folk songs. Laura was fantastic and her songs were enjoyed by all attending. Eileen Cornett provided the piano accompaniment for Laura.

At our Wigilia, we had a Polish Pottery/ornament sale;



Top two photos: Wigilia celebration.

Photo below: The Dożynki Harvest Table.

a local vendor selling pierogi plushies, a basket raffle and the chance to win an awesome gingerbread house made by member Paula Sokolowski. Dessert included homemade nut/poppy rolls and a variety of cookies made by members. Of course, the big guy himself, Santa, along with his elf made an appearance.

At this year's Wigilia, the officers presented a \$300 check to Tom Kopetskie Jr. Tom, his Pastor and 11 others from St. Joseph's Church of East York, PA went on a mission trip in January 2026 to hurricane ravaged Jamaica. They visited nursing homes, hospitals and schools.

After a short break for the holidays, the Society was back at it on January 6th, picking dates and making plans for a busy 2026. First on the list, our Pączki Dance on Sunday, February 15th.

submitted by Cheryl Sabol

Friends of Polish Art

One of Friends of Polish Art (FPA) biggest achievements in 2025 was bringing back the FPA Fine Arts Competition, formally known as “the Kubinski Fine Arts Competition,” after a ten-year hiatus. It was possible thanks to a seamless and fruitful partnership with the Polish Institute of Culture & Research at Orchard Lake (PICROL) for which FPA is deeply grateful.

Twenty-one talented Metropolitan Detroit artists representing different generations participated in the 29th Friends of Polish Art Fine Arts Competition, showing 74 striking and diverse art pieces, among them oil and acrylic paintings, drawings, watercolors, small sculptures and objects, digital photographs and prints, embroidery, head scarfs and costumes. The juror of the Competition, which took place at the OLS Galeria, was the designer Martin Skalski.

FPA celebrated writers and the art of storytelling on October 25, 2025, at the Orchard Lake Schools Galeria. Prizes were awarded to the winners of the Suzanne Marie Margaret Sloat Youth Literary Competition with categories for elementary, middle and high school levels. In addition, prizes were awarded to adult writers who competed in the Wachtel-Torres, MD Literary Competition. During the ceremony, excerpts from the winning entries were read by the writers, which were thoroughly enjoyed by those in attendance. FPA is proud to announce that over \$1,900 in prize money was awarded in these writing competitions.

In November, FPA sponsored its annual Szopka Competition held at the Polish Art Center in Hamtramck. This year's event was chaired by Charles Pelshaw. Seven szopki were entered in both the adult and youth categories. The winning entries were presented at the annual Wigilia hosted at the Ameri-



2026 Officers - sitting: Brian Malski, FPA president and Barbara Hantz, director. Standing (L-R): Barbara Lemecha, 2nd vice president, Stella Szczesny, director, Carol Surma, financial secretary, Patty Malski, director, Deana Welemirov, director, Alina Klin, 1st vice president and Iwona Jedrzejczak, treasurer.



At the Youth Literary Competition were (left to right) Brian Malski, Antoni Spiewak, Adam Kryczek, Ania Kryczek, Iliana Woloch, Sasha Gilders and Alina Klin



At the Fine Arts Competition: Above: Nancy Kozlowski and her painting *Rzepak.* Right: Galeria Manager, Elijah Majewski and Ann Marie Curley with her painting; *"Poletown: Song, Procession, Protest."*



Szopka Competition Adult 1st Place - Carolyn Janosky.



Above: Annual Wigilia: - Laurie Gomulka and Father Gary Michalik breaking opłatek and the Wawel Folk Dance Ensemble and Curtis Posuniak leading Polish and English Christmas carol sing-along.

can Polish Cultural Center in Troy. This event is eagerly anticipated by members, their families, and friends each year. The occasion provided a festive holiday setting and showcased numerous Polish Christmas traditions, including the sharing of opłatek, a traditional meatless Christmas Eve meal, a szopki display, a photo presentation of 2025 FPA events, and concluded with performances by the Wawel Song and Dance Ensemble and a singalong of kolędy, and English Christmas carols.

Finally, the first general membership meeting of 2026 and annual elections were held on Saturday, February 7 (delayed a few weeks due to the bitter cold and snow). The following are the results of the election: President - Brian Malski, First Vice President, Alina Klin, Second Vice President - Barbara Lemecha, Treasurer - Iwona Jdrzejczak, Financial Secretary - Carol J. Surma, Directors - Donna Bielecki, Barbara Hantz, Patricia Malski, Stella Szczesny and Deanna Welemirov.

*Submitted by Carol J. Surma.
Photos by Alina Klin*



Sarah Horbacewicz

The ACPC Eye of the Eagle also referred to as the Władysław Zachariasiewicz Memorial Scholarship is pleased to announce the 2025 recipient of a \$5,000.00 scholarship award.

Sarah Horbacewicz is an Emmy and Edward R. Murrow award-winning broadcast journalist who is pursuing a Masters of Legal Studies degree through Cornell University Law School. Through her legal studies degree Sarah is working to further strengthen her journalism skills and have a deeper understanding of how the law connects to her reports.

Sarah received her undergraduate degree from Ithaca College where she graduated with honors from the Park School of Communications as a Park Scholar. Through her near decade of experience in journalism, Sarah has worked both for local newsrooms across the country and network outlets across the globe including CBS, CNN, and NBC among others. Through all of these experiences, Sarah is proud to share her Polish heritage and hopes to share stories that impact this community and so many others.

Community service plays a big role in Sarah's life. She has worked to build homes after natural disasters, teach free after-school programs, train seeing eye dogs, serve at food pantries and volunteered in the NICU at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

The Eye of the Eagle was established in 2018 in memory of Władysław Zachariasiewicz and is supported by his Memorial Scholarship Fund. The scholarship is awarded to a student pursuing a career in journalism and/or mass media in the United States or Poland. The award is based solely on professional and academic merit with an appreciation for issues that affect Polish-Americans. The Scholarship Committee members are: Donna Chmara, Basia Lemecha, Brian Malski, Henrietta Nowakowski and Rose Kobylnski.

Submitted by Brian Malski

Polish Cultural Council Celebrates *Ostatki*



The *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* featured the Polish Cultural Council (PCC) in a special article on February 14 about the Polish pre-lenten tradition of *paćzki*. Although Western Pennsylvania's Polish community has greatly diminished in recent years, nearly every bakery in the region celebrates "paćzki day" with a wide array of delicious versions featuring both traditional and inventive fillings. In the article, the *Post Gazette* interviewed former PCC executive director Eva Tumiel-Kozak who discussed this Polish culinary tradition.

The article also promoted the upcoming *Ostatki* Celebration which was hosted by the PCC at the prestigious Edgewood Club on Valentine's Day. The event is led by Honorary Chair, former Allegheny County Commissioner Michael Dawida and chaired by PCC member Marysia Zionchek. Due to the excellent quality of the event, the PCC's annual *Ostatki* is eagerly anticipated by Pittsburgh Polonia as it is highlighted by a lavish Polish culinary table featuring outstanding Polish cuisine prepared by talented volunteers. The event also features a tasting of a variety of Polish vodkas, live music and a popular silent auction. Jim Cunningham of WQED FM radio served as master of ceremonies.



The PCC's Ostatki event held at the Edgewood Club. photo by Kris Gutkowski



Right: One of the lavish buffet tables featuring Polish gourmet foods prepared by the talented members of the organization. photo by Kris Gutkowski



Left: The Polish Cultural Council also supports the annual Kolędy Concert performed by the Karuzela Chorus at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Pittsburgh's Polish Hill neighborhood. Immaculate Heart of Mary is part of the cluster of historic parishes designated as "The Shrines of Pittsburgh."



file photo

Szopki "In the Strip"....

This past Christmas season was especially festive at Saint Stanislaus Kostka church in Pittsburgh's Strip District. To help celebrate Saint Stan's 150th anniversary as the oldest Polish parish in Western Pennsylvania, fellow parishioners asked szopka artist Dave Motak to display one of his award winning szopki in the church during the Christmas season. The szopka that Dave selected was a five foot high construction with three rotating mechanical figures, each dressed in Polish folk costumes and each holding a miniature szopka. This particular szopka has been displayed around the country and was one of several of his szopka pieces that were exhibited in a major display of Dave's work in Hong Kong, China in 2011.

This is the third year that Dave has displayed his work at Saint Stan's and these displays have proven to be very popular with church attendees, especially children.



photo: Jim Lucas

Saint Stanislaus Kostka is a notable landmark located in the bustling Strip District, a one-half square mile neighborhood that is adjacent to Pittsburgh's downtown. A former



POZNAŃ

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see the western consumer lifestyle and products on exhibit. Interestingly, the modern kitchen of the famous "Kitchen Debate" of Vice President

Nixon with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was on exhibit there in 1960 at the USA Pavilion.

To make the city seem more cosmopolitan city administrators decided that there should be more neon signs on the streets at night. More and more were added through the 1960s and

70s and, indeed, some of them were quite imaginative. Vivid red, yellow, blue, green and orange tubes flashed colorful



display signs on the main streets of Poznań over bicycle, toy and shoe stores (the products within sometimes unavailable). The popular milk bars had sequential animations in layers of neon tubes as did attractions such as the Zoo, the haunted Castle in Kórnik, the Poznań Boys' Choir and the "Baltic" movie house. Many of those signs eventually disappeared



as they were fragile and maintenance was expensive. Infinitely worse, however, was the decision, made during the 1970s, to replace the 19th century "bourgeoisie" houses on the north side of Red Army Street (formerly St. Martin Street) with five tall, mixed-use modern (and rather non-descript) buildings.

*Top: Stary Browar.
Bottom: The "Okraglak" building in Poznań's dynamic city center.*

After the 1989 elections and the ensuing economic changes, Poznań became more vibrant than ever. The International Trade Fair is still an economic driver, with many different trade exhibitions taking place there the year round. The cityscape of Poznań has also changed. Foreign investment has multiplied the number of hotels and industries. Adam Mickiewicz University now has a modern campus in the outer suburbs, accessible by a high-speed tram line which also services several housing developments and an American style shopping mall. Downtown, an old brewery building was repurposed into a multistory shopping venue, the *Stary Browar*, becoming not just a place for commerce but a destination in itself. Poznań is constantly improving itself. The Old City Square was recently repaved with stones and still retains its old world charm. The old airport at Ławica is now Wieniawski International. More new buildings are going up. For those looking for Polish history, great charm and good food in a lively setting, Poznań is the city to visit.

Further information is available online and those interested enough to make some searches will be rewarded with an inside look into a most historical, unusual and captivating city.



Consul Poremski (right)

Consul Poremski Awarded the Pułaski Medal

On November 12, 2025 at the celebration of Poland's Independence Day at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, D.C. Honorary Consul of Poland Richard P. Poremski, serving the State of Maryland, at Baltimore City, was awarded the prestigious 1929 General Casimir Pułaski Medal. The medal was awarded by the Polish American Veterans Association (PAVA)/Stowarzyszenie Weteranów Armii Polskiej (SWAP).

The Pułaski medal's citation reads: "In recognition for his many years of contributions to building the prestige of the Polish American community, for promoting the annual commemoration of the Katyń Massacre anniversary, and for collaborating with Polish American organizations as Honorary Consul in Baltimore, Maryland."

warehouse district that was once home to many mills, factories, truck and railroad terminals and produce vendors, today the Strip District is a destination for gourmet foods and groceries, restaurants, bars, and art. Recently, it has become home to dozens of high tech and robotics companies as well as a rapidly growing residential population, as many of the old warehouses have been converted to high-end luxury apartments and condominiums.

As the Strip District had suffered a severe downturn in the 1970s, Saint Stan's was in danger of being closed, however, with the influx of new residents, membership in the parish has surged in recent years. It has since been incorporated into a cluster of old historic ethnic churches designated by the Diocese of Pittsburgh as the "Shrines of Pittsburgh," each having its own distinctive architectural, cultural or religious significance; these are now a major pilgrimage destination. As St. Stan's has an all-day open-door policy, shoppers, tourists and the faithful are welcome to visit the church throughout the day, making it the most frequently visited church in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.



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