



Polish Heritage

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When the idea of producing a concert based on music related to the Polish hunting tradition was first proposed, the idea seemed unique; producing it would be both challenging and exciting.

Every musical project is preceded by months of preparation. My great dream is to document the behind-the-scenes of such an event in a film. So far, I haven't managed to do so. It's a shame, because something interesting always happens—sometimes even something that cries out for a script of its own. For example, at the premiere of my string quartet, a very serious violinist asked the first violinist of the quartet, right as the musicians were sitting on stage, if it was really worth listening to my piece, because he had invited "eminent experts" and didn't want to embarrass himself. Another time, the cellist forgot the sheet music for his part, and the audience had to listen to a lecture on Polish music for nearly an hour before I could glue the missing pages together. These were still days before computers, so saving the concert felt more like the work of a book-binder than a composer.

For now, all that remains is another story written on paper. Every project involves several elements: preparing program materials and adapting them to the ensemble's performance capabilities, rehearsals, and promotion in the media and among friends, colleagues, and members of affiliated organizations. Another time-consuming step is seeking sponsors—sometimes requiring more patience than the artistic work itself. Gathering documentation in written form or as a film reportage is also crucial. The final step, of course, is securing copyright.

The realization of any program requires many sacrifices that the organizer must make. Other projects then take a backseat or must wait for their turn. For now, I'm postponing the preparation of the orchestral parts for the piano concerto and editing other compositions. In short: art is art, but there are still stubbornly only 24 hours in a day.

Preparations for a concert of Polish hunting mass and music began in the summer of 2025 with a search for a brass band among friendly ensembles and school principals. The 15-year-old Polish Orchestra of Chicago, founded and led by Konrad Pawełek, agreed to a multi-month project that included the preparation of Lech Głowicki's "Polish Hunting Mass" (*Polska Msza Myśliwska*.) and the premiere of hunting signals by Jarosław Golembiowski – the author of this account.

Konrad Pawełek,
Jarosław Golembiowski
and Grzegorz Sarna
Photo by Andrzej Baraniak



A TRIBUTE TO THE POLISH HUNT

A Musical Celebration of an Age-Old Tradition

by Jarosław Golembiowski,
The Chicago Chopin Society

Therefore, in 2026, the youth of St. Blaise Polish Catholic School in Summit, Illinois, prepared, in addition to previously planned performances, a "Hunting Mass" concert. The concert took place on May 10, 2026, at the Polish Mission of the Cistercian Fathers in Willow Springs, Illinois.

To engage as many young people as possible, the program also included the St. Blaise Choir, directed by Karolina Czernik. The program included two songs: "The Hunter" by Aleksander Arc, with lyrics by Artur Oppman, and "The Hare" by Zygmunt Noskowski, with poetry by Maria Konopnicka.



Ewa Kowcz-Fair and Andrzej Marek Urbaniak present opening remarks
Photo by Andrzej Baraniak

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I am very pleased to present you with this latest edition of *Polish Heritage*.

Our feature article is courtesy of Jarosław Gołębiewski of the Chicago Chopin Society.

A man of many hats, Jarosław is a musician, composer and prominent member of Chicago Polonia's cultural community. In his article, Jarosław shares information on a recent concert of Polish hunting music which he produced on May 10. He also shares some of the obstacles one encounters in bringing a creative concept to realization. Those of us who have ever been involved in executing any sort of creative idea can appreciate his description of successfully realizing a project with many moving parts; he and his volunteers and performers are to be congratulated. As no amount of words can compensate these talented musicians for their efforts, we all realize that we all promote Polonia out of a sense of duty and affection for our heritage. Mr. Gołębiewski deserves wider recognition for his fine work.

The topic of the Polish hunting tradition is perhaps not a familiar one with many of us in Polonia, especially those of us whose forebearers left Poland as part of an earlier immigration. As wild game hunting was originally the privilege of the landed gentry or *szlachta*- our grandparents might have played only a supporting role in such activities. Fortunately, over the years the sport of hunting in Poland became more egalitarian. Under the influence of the Polish Hunting Association, the Polski Związek Łowiecki (PZŁ) time-honored customs and traditions have been preserved and made accessible to a wider number of Poles.

Consequently, I hope that you enjoy the section we are offering on Polish hunting traditions. For many of us, these customs are relatively unknown, however they shed a light on the Polish character. Like Native Americans, the traditional Polish hunter shows respect – even a reverence – for wild game and an appreciation of the need to preserve the natural habitat. It is not without reason that Poland is reputed to be the “greenest” country in the European Union, with volunteers from the PZŁ annually planting thousands of saplings throughout the country in an effort to preserve and expand Poland's precious woodlands.

Darz Bór!



David Motak
Editor/Designer



Dave Motak

Open Call for Submissions



30th Friends of Polish Art Fine Arts Competition

In Partnership with the Polish Institute of Culture & Research



Detail of painting by Richard Kubinski

All visual art media are welcome

Please submit by August 17, 2026

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/FPA-Competition-Submission>

Accepted works will be exhibited at the Galeria
on the Orchard Lake Schools campus located at
3535 Commerce Rd, Orchard Lake, MI, 48324

Opening Reception
September 12, 2026

Closing Reception
October 24, 2026

Send questions to Elijah Majeski, PICROL Galeria Manager
majeski@picrol.org

NOTICE!

Dear Member Organizations, we would like to publicize and promote your future major planned events on the ACPC website.

We solicit brief announcements of name, place, and dates for your future major events. We want to assist you in “getting the word out.”

This is a major benefit of ACPC membership.

A major event could be an organizational anniversary, additions to your facility, a special awards presentation, the creation of a memorial, a featured guest speaker, a major gift received, a new program or project, recognition that you have been awarded.

Please submit your future event announcement, and photo if available, to:

Website Chair John Cebrowski
at jcebrowski39@gmail.com

Your announcement will appear under the NEWS tab, under the EVENTS sub-tab, on our ACPC website. THANK YOU!

John Cebrowski
Second Vice President

Pulaski Scholars

from Dr. Steven Medvec



Zuzanna Bereszczuk

Daria Komeza

Dominika Oblizajek

Alexander Szymczak

Four winners of the 26th annual \$5,000 Brig. Gen. Casimir Pulaski Scholarships were announced recently by the ACPC's Pulaski Scholarship for Advanced Studies Committee. The scholarship program was initiated 26 years ago as a result of a sizeable endowment by the Conrad R. Walas family with continuing support from Polonia. Serving on the 2026 Pulaski Scholarship Committee are Dr. Stephen E. Medvec, Chairman; Deborah M. Majka; Patricia Malski; Carolyn Meleski and Peter J. Obst.

The exceptional qualities of schoolwork and research plus dedicated community services performed by the applicants made the final selection process very difficult. The Committee felt that most of the applicants deserved recognition for their outstanding achievements and honestly wished that funding was available, which could have allowed for several more scholarship awards.

The Pulaski Scholarships Committee wishes these four outstanding students continuing success and is confident that they will attain their career objectives fully. The Committee trusts that they will honor their heritage by ultimately remaining close to the Polish community wherever possible during their careers.

Zuzanna Bereszczuk

A native of Schaumburg, Illinois, Zuzanna is the daughter of Polish immigrants and was raised with a strong connection to her heritage – attending Polish school, participating in scouting, and spending summers in Poland. She earned a B.S. in International Business, with minors in supply chain management and German studies, from Saint Louis University. She is currently pursuing an M.S. in supply chain management at Loyola University Chicago. In 2023, Zuzanna sailed aboard the Polish brig “STS Fryderyk Chopin” during the Tall Ship Races, crossing the North Sea along routes known for their demanding conditions. Drawn to life at sea, she returned to the “Chopin” in 2024 and remains actively involved in Chicago's Polonia, participating in Polish Yacht Club Chicago events, regattas, and sailing on Lake Michigan under the Polish flag.

Daria Komeza

A native of the Chicago suburbs, Daria holds a B. S. in Psychology from Loyola University Chicago with a minor in psychology of crime and justice. She is currently pursuing a PhD in clinical psychology at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology at National Louis University Chicago. Her clinical interests are in forensics, trauma, severe mental illness, and community

work, currently working on comprehensive court-ordered pre- and post-conviction psychological evaluations. During her undergraduate studies Daria was one of six students chosen to represent Loyola University Chicago at the Symposium on Human Rights in Warsaw. Discussions included topics such as immigration policies across Europe and its impacts on mental health, traumatization of individuals in war-ridden countries, and mental health outside the United States.

Dominika Oblizajek

A native of Poznań, Poland, U.S. citizen and resident of Long Island City, New York, Dominika is currently pursuing a Master's degree in business analytics and AI at New York University. She holds a BA in finance with a minor in political science from Baruch College, City University of New York. She also holds a Master's in management and law from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She is deeply committed to the Polish American community through cultural involvement, education, and service. This includes active membership in the Galazka Polish Folk Dance Ensemble. From 2013 to 2021, Dominika volunteered as a teacher at the Polish Supplemental School of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Greenpoint, New York, where she taught children Polish language, history, and culture. She also prepared students for the Kangaroo Math Competition, working closely with them to build both their skills and confidence. She also volunteers with the Kościuszko Foundation. In recognition of her academic and community achievement, she was selected as a recipient of the SUSTMAN (Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development and Manufacturing for Students) program.

Alexander Szymczak

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Alexander holds a BA in biochemistry and economics with a minor in Spanish from Miami University. He is currently pursuing a MD degree at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, specializing in otolaryngology with a clinical and research focus on pediatric and adult obstructive disorders such as obstructive chronic rhinosinusitis and obstructive sleep apnea. He has a special research interest in the functional and structural complexities of the upper airway which has culminated in several academic papers. The son of two Polish immigrants, Alexander learned Polish as a child. He attended Polish Saturday school throughout most of his foundational education. He has participated in primary care of Polish patients in Chicago-area hospitals. He is also fluent in Spanish and completed a month-long medical elective in Bolivia.



President's Message



President
Cecilia Larkin

The ACPC 2026 Spring Board Meeting took place in mid April in a charming town of Chicopee, Massachusetts. Nothing in the name suggests it but if you search online for what this town is known for, you will learn that it is "celebrated [among others] for its deep Polish roots, seen through institutions like the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning and local purveyors of traditional foods like Millie's Pierogi and Chicopee Provision Company (kielbasa)." Indeed, when you drive through Chicopee's tree lined neighborhoods, with neatly kept gardens and homes, Polish names are readily seen on stores, credit unions and other establishments. I arrived one day early and was graciously shown around town by Ken Lemanski of the Polish Center for Discovery and Learning, which hosted our meeting. Ken, a former Massachusetts state legislator, is currently an ACPC Board member and is involved with our Polish Perspectives Project. After stopping at Bernat's Deli, where I was happy to find some *poziomkowa* (forest strawberry) tea, we went to the Basilica of St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr with its imposing stained glass windows and doors, where, upon entering, we heard a Polish rosary being recited by a group of faithful.

The tour of the Polish Center for Discovery and Learning can only be described as a revelation. The three stories of its 19th century building that was once a church rectory, contain what a brochure describes as "a living monument that celebrates the many contributions, both past and present, made to the economy, arts, and sciences of our nation by Polish people and their descendants." You can read the history of Poland and of the local community in the exhibits of both historic artifacts and items donated by area families and individuals.

The Center was originally opened in 1999 in the library room of nearby Elms College, with which it continues to maintain strong partnership, often using its facilities to hold lectures and stage other events. In fact, our Board Meeting took place on the Elms campus in a conference room boasting a large oval table under an ornate ceiling and decorative light fixtures, and equipped with modern technology to facilitate virtual participation. After a productive day of reports and discussions, we went back to the PCLD building for a delicious Polish dinner in a book-lined room, catered by the afore mentioned Bernat's Deli.

My sincere thanks to the PCLD's President and Chairman, Joanne Gruszkos, its board and staff for their gracious hospitality to the ACPC Board and for showing us what a devoted Polish community can accomplish in preserving and teaching about its heritage and history. If this brief introduction sparked your interest, you can find out more by visiting: <https://polishcenter.net>

Many of our organizations are participating in celebrations of the 250th Anniversary of the United States with emphasis on the contribution of Poles to winning the country's freedom and to its growth and overall culture. For example, the Polish American Cultural Society of Metropolitan St. Louis, with the help of an ACPC Matching Funds donation, co-sponsored the placement of a Pulaski Memorial Monument in the Jefferson Barracks Park in St. Louis. The unveiling ceremony took place on May 16, with participation of Polish and American dignitaries. The Polish American Arts Association is focusing its annual Wianki Festival of Wreaths on saying Happy Birthday America with addition of patriotic songs to its program. The Festival takes place in the most visible place in the nation's capital, the Reflecting Pool at the steps of Lincoln Memorial. Everyone is invited so consider taking a trip to Washington to participate.

Other organizations have many plans for events, some of which already took place, others are upcoming. Visit our website at <https://polishcultureacpc.org/organizations/> and see who is doing what. And remember to send a rundown of your activities for the ACPC Annual Reports Book which will be published for our upcoming Convention in Philadelphia.

Speaking of the Convention, the Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia is preparing a once in 250 years experience for us in the place where our country began. We will celebrate the participation of Poles in the American Revolution among whom are Generals Tadeusz Kościuszko and Casimir Pułaski. Among events being planned is a ceremony at the Kościuszko House National Memorial, the house where he resided 1797-98, as well as a dinner at historic Carpenters' Hall. The location of the convention at the Philadelphia Marriott Old City Hotel is in the vicinity of many historic sites so an extended visit is recommended. You will find details and registration information elsewhere in this issue.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Historic Philadelphia in August.

Cecilia Larkin



POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION *of Washington, D. C.*

PAAA's 60th Anniversary Year in Full Swing

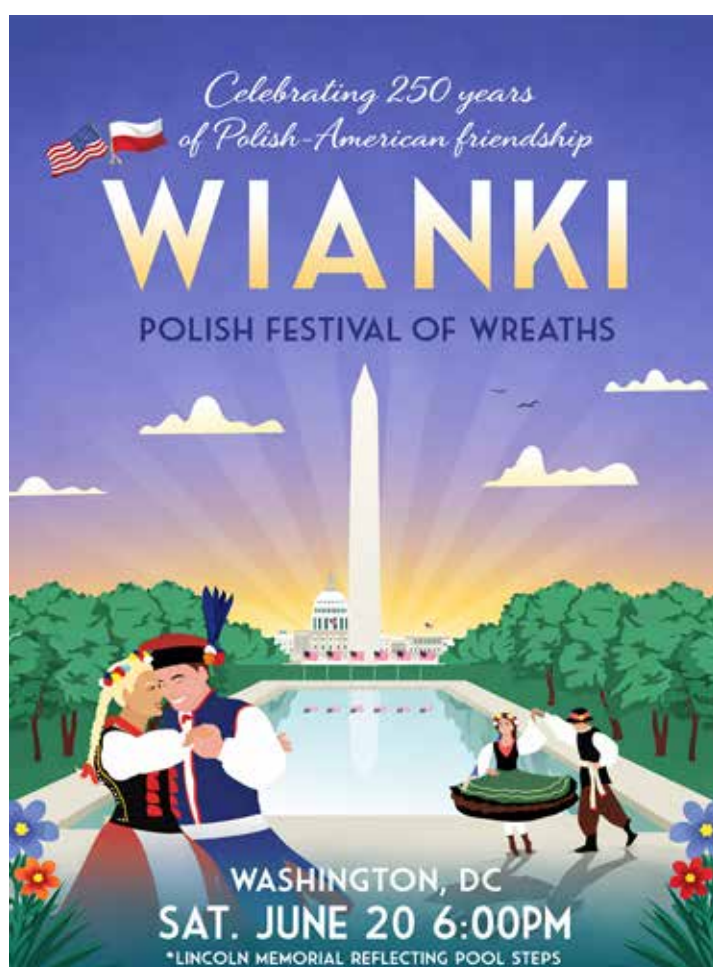
Big things are underway in Washington, DC — and it's not just the celebrations being planned for America's 250th anniversary. The Polish American Arts Association (PAAA) of Washington, D.C., is also marking a major milestone: 60 years of promoting Polish culture in our nation's capital.

Festivities began late last year at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, where PAAA organized a special Polish-American Mass at the Our Lady of Czestochowa Chapel, dedicated to the memory of departed members.

On May 31, the Association held its annual membership meeting. As is customary, the meeting will feature a special program, including a presentation by the renown author Andrew Och titled, "Celebrating America 250 Through the Lives and Accomplishments of Our First Ladies: From the Battlefield to the White House." The meeting also included the presentation of scholarships to two deserving Polish-American students: Victoria Karpowicz, a graduate student from New York City pursuing a Master's degree in Homeland Security at George Washington University, and Veronica Kuzma, also of New York City, who is completing a Bachelor of Science degree in neuroscience at George Washington University. PAAA is proud to continue its more than 20-year legacy of supporting Polish-American students in their academic pursuits.

On June 20, our Wianki Festival of Wreaths takes place on the National Mall and will feature performances by the Ojczyzna Polish Dancers from Baltimore and the Maki Dancers from New Jersey, along with special musical performances, wreath-making activities, group dances, and more. We will be joined by the representatives of Bractwo Kurkowe in their characteristic traditional costumes. They appeal to all of Polonia to come to Washington to show our unity as we celebrate America's birthday.

contributed by Matthew Stefanski



To tie into the America 250 anniversary, the festival will include patriotic elements and is sure to be another spectacular evening of fun for the whole family. Please join us at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool beginning at 6:00 PM.

The PAAA 60th Anniversary celebration will culminate in a gala on Sunday, September 13, at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia. The event will commemorate our organization's six decades of service while honoring pianist Brian Ganz for his dedication to the music of Frédéric Chopin.

Since its founding in 1966, the Polish American Arts Association has shared the richness of Polish culture throughout the DMV region. Help us mark this milestone by joining us on September 13 for an evening of celebration, song, dance, and good cheer. All are welcome!

For more information, please visit www.paaa.us.

Zapraszamy!





The concert's *sygnalista* (bugle master) was Krzysztof Kryk, the initiator of the American premiere of *Polish Hunting Mass* (*Polska Msza Myśliwska*.) As Andrzej Marek Urbaniak wrote in an article published in the Polish hunting quarterly *Nemrod*: "Krzysztof Kryk is one of those who never part with the hunting tradition. A hunting horn accompanies him constantly at Hubertus and Christmas Eve gatherings and its presence has been a fixture in Polish

The introduction to the concert, titled *A Tale of Forest Music*, was prepared by Andrzej Marek Urbaniak. Narration was provided by two distinguished members of the Bractwo Kurkowe Riflemen's Brotherhood: Dr. Waldemar Nikliński and Marek Adamczyk. Excerpts from Book IV of Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* titled "Diplomatics and Hunting," were recited by Andrzej Krukowski. The principal trumpet player was Greg Strauss, who supported both the instrumental performance and the preparation of the orchestra's students. Together with Natalia Przybocki, he premiered a duet for two trumpets, titled "A Hunting Coronation."

Also collaborating in the May 10 concert were Konrad Pawelek – Polonia Orchestra, Chicago (*Polonijna Orkiestra Chicago*), and Karolina Czernik conductor of the St. Blaise Choir.

In the program, Chicago highlander Grzegorz Sarna, a well-known trumpeter of shepherd's horns, presented the stories and unique sounds of horns and shepherd's pipes.

The hunting signals are based on five natural sounds produced by hunting horns, such as the Fürst Pless horn, the par force horn, and the pocket horn. This unusual combination of the "Polish Hunting Mass" with the sound of hunting horns inspired me to write organ and piano accompaniments to the original signals. Several of these arrangements were performed during the concert described here. In my compositions, I decided to experiment, combining the natural harmonic sound of

"Sygnalista" Krzysztof Kryk presents Renata Lalik-Gała Vice-Consul of the Republic of Poland with a CD of Polish Hunting Mass music.



Top photo: all the participants and performers in the May 10 concert.

Bottom: Among the participants were Dr. Barbara Niklińska, Andrzej Marek Urbaniak, kapelan myśliwych Ojciec Wacław, Lech Głowacki, Renata Dwojak, Wacław Ustupski, Izabela Anna Orzechowska, Mariola Urbanek, Iwona Puc and Dr. Waldemar Nikliński, Wojewoda of the American branch of the Bractwo Kurkowe.

hunting horns with the full chromaticism of classical music.

At the conclusion, the chaplain, Father Wacław Lech Głowacki, emphasized the unique nature of the event and the commitment of all the performers.

Rehearsals had lasted for several weeks, and, thanks to the discipline and enthusiasm accompanying this innovative undertaking, the young people prepared the program brilliantly.

Finally, I would like to thank the parents, students, members of the shooting and shooting fraternities, conductors, sponsors and our audience.

As you can see, collaboration between multiple organizations is yielding very satisfying results. We're already planning more concerts, which we'll discuss in the next episode.

The concert was promoted by the following radio stations and programs: 1490 AM "Na Góralską Nutę" by Wojciech Dorula, "Babskie Gadanie" on 1030 AM hosted by Agnieszka Wrocławska, WLUW Chicago 8 8.7 FM, as well as University Radio hosted by Trudy Leong and William Morton.

A video of the concert can be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfFp7Fuj0MY>

*Photos on this page
by Andrzej Baraniak*

POLISH HUNTING TRADITIONS

by David J. Motak

The Polish hunting tradition is a collection of centuries-old customs, ethics and ceremonies, at the heart of which lies a deep respect for game animals and the natural environment. With its vast forests teeming with wild game, hunting played a significant role in Poland's culture and history. As Poland's forests belonged to the crown, only the king, nobles and aristocracy were originally permitted the privilege of hunting game. Wild game hunting was often used as a diplomatic tool by various Polish kings and the annals of Polish history are filled with examples of how such kings as Jagiełło, Stefan Batory and others entertained foreign diplomats with extravagant hunting expeditions. This included hunting roe deer, bear, wild boar, various fowl, wolves, lynx and even the magnificent Polish bison, which was hunted to near extinction.

Even after the partitions, Polish nobility retained the right to hunt game and foreign rulers often availed themselves of the privilege to hunt Polish game. The Romanoffs frequently hunted in Poland's vast Białowieża primeval forest and kept an elaborate hunting lodge at Spała, south of Warsaw. Over time, Poland became a destination point for hunters from other European countries. This has continued well until the present time.

Poland has many venerable hunting traditions, having origins far back into Polish history. Wild game hunting has often been celebrated in Polish literature and lure, such as by Adam Mickiewicz in his epic national poem *Pan Tadeusz*.

The Polish Hunting Association (Polski Związek Łowiecki) was founded in 1935 to manage and promote sustainable hunting practices in Poland. The association aims to protect wildlife and their habitats, provide education and training for hunters and advocate for wildlife conservation policies. It plays a role in fostering community engagement in hunting activities and promoting Polish hunting traditions.

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Above: A Polish hunting mass.
Left: A folk embroidery of St. Hubert patron of hunters.



BRACTWO KURKOWE



The Polish Bractwa Kurkowe (literally, "Rooster Brotherhoods") are marksmanship organizations that trace their origins back to the 13th century. There are Bractwo Kurkowe groups throughout Poland, and many similar organizations across Europe. Among the most well-known of the Polish groups – and one of the oldest such defense organizations in Europe – is the Bractwo Kurkowe in Kraków. The original purpose of these groups was to organize citizens to defend their homes and communities through preparation and training. Historians recount their activities in Poland spanning over 750 years of faithful service to God and Country. For centuries, they served as civil and territorial defense forces, and later, by cultivating ancient customs and military traditions, they became an arena for the struggle for Polishness and independence, and for preserving national identity and culture, particularly during the partitions and foreign occupation. The stance of the Bractwo Kurkowe groups in Poland, their sacrifice, and the participation of its members in the fight for independence, is a beautiful page in Polish history.

Today, such groups do not directly defend their communities, but rather are dedicated to upholding Polish culture, traditions and history. Due to its historic emphasis on marksmanship, there is also a strong association with various hunting organizations in Poland.

The most impressive jewel of the Kraków Bractwo Kurkowe, its symbol, is a silver rooster

Friends of Polish Art

Friends of Polish Art (FPA) has continued its vibrant spring season with programs celebrating both Polish heritage and the broader world of artistic and cultural expression.

On Sunday, April 26, 2026, FPA hosted its annual Świąconka Dinner at the American Polish Cultural Center. This beloved celebration of Polish Easter traditions brought together members, families, and guests for an afternoon filled with culture, fellowship, and tradition. Attendees were welcomed by beautifully decorated displays featuring traditional Easter baskets adorned with colorful pisanki, hand-embroidered linens, and symbolic Easter elements representing faith, renewal, and family heritage.

Guests enjoyed a traditional Polish Easter dinner served in a festive spring atmosphere accented with Polish-inspired décor and lively conversation. During the event, FPA proudly presented special recognition awards to Donna and Tom Skurski on behalf of the Wawel Folk Ensemble, honoring the ensemble's longstanding dedication to preserving and promoting the artistry of Polish folk dance, music, costume, and cultural education throughout the Detroit metropolitan community and beyond.

Adding to the celebration, the Dunajec Song and Dance Ensemble delighted the audience with an energetic and colorful performance featuring vibrant costumes, spirited choreography, and the unmistakable joy of Polish folk traditions. The afternoon concluded with a popular basket raffle that brought laughter, excitement, and community spirit to a festive close.

Continuing its focus on arts and cultural enrichment, FPA also organized a docent-led tour at the Detroit Institute of Arts on Saturday, May 9, 2026. Led by DIA docent Marjorie Fein, the tour guided approximately 25 FPA members and friends through several of the museum's remarkable collections, including The Dutch Golden Age, The Grand Tour of Italy, and selections from the temporary exhibition, Art of Faith from the Jewish Museum of New York.

Ms. Fein, who has served as a DIA docent since 2007, provided insightful commentary that illuminated the historical and cultural context behind the artwork while drawing attention to symbolic details that visitors might otherwise overlook. The tour encouraged thoughtful discussion and reflection as participants explored masterpieces by renowned artists including Rembrandt van Rijn, Jan Steen, Rachel Ruysch, and Jacob van Ruisdael. Among the highlights were two special "Polish accents" within the collections: a silver filigree spice container crafted in Gdańsk and a painting by Bernardo Bellotto, court painter to Poland's last king, Stanisław August Poniatowski. Known in Poland as "Canaletto," Bellotto's work offered an especially meaningful connection to Polish artistic history.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to slow down and engage more deeply with works they might otherwise pass by during a typical museum visit. In addition





Entries due: August 15, 2026

Suzanne Marie Margaret Sloat Youth Literary Competition	Estelle Wachtel-Torres, MD Adult Literary Competition
Open to all Michigan students: Level I: 4th – 6th Grade Level II: 7th – 9th Grade Level III: 10th – 12th Grade	Open to all adult Michigan residents.

Visit our website for contest rules:

Themes
Awards
Submission forms

www.friendsofpolishart.org/competitions/

to FPA members, attendees included representatives from the Polish American Congress – Michigan Division, the Polish Cultural Fund of Ann Arbor, and the Polish Institute of Culture and Research at Orchard Lake. Following the tour, many participants gathered at the DIA's Kresge Court for coffee, lunch, and conversation, extending the afternoon of fellowship and shared appreciation for the arts.

The Friends of Polish Art has an exciting lineup of upcoming programs and events planned for 2026. Scholarships & Grants will be presented during the next General Membership Meeting on Friday, May 22, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the American Polish Cultural Center, 2975 East Maple Road (15 Mile Road) at Dequindre Road in Troy, Michigan.

FPA is also pleased to announce its two annual Literary Competitions for 2026. The Suzanne Marie Margaret Sloat Youth Literary Competition is open to Michigan students in grades 4–12 and will be based on an assigned theme. The Estelle Wachtel-Torres, MD Adult Literary Competition is open to Michigan residents age 18 and older, also based on an assigned theme. These competitions continue FPA's commitment to encouraging creativity, cultural appreciation, and literary expression throughout the community.



Above: Some of the guests at the PFA annual Świeconka. Right: Raffle winners Anna Bieciuk and daughter, Kinga enjoy one of the Swieconka prizes.



*Photo captions:
Top, middle and bottom right: FPA members and friends at the Detroit Institute of Arts on May 9.*

Mark your calendars for the Friends of Polish Art's Annual Picnic & Fundraiser on Sunday, July 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at The Galeria on the Orchard Lake Schools Campus, 3535 Commerce Road, Orchard Lake, Michigan. Members, families, and friends are all invited to attend for an afternoon of fellowship, food, and fun.



Friends of Polish Art is also excited to host the 30th Fine Arts Competition in 2026 in partnership with the Polish Institute of Culture & Research (see ad on page 2 of this issue.). The exhibition will take place at The Galeria, 3535 Commerce Road, Orchard Lake, Michigan. The Opening Reception will be held on September 12, 2026, with the Closing Reception on October 24, 2026. Entry is free, and all are welcome to attend and celebrate the outstanding artistic talent within our community.

Through programs such as these, Friends of Polish Art continues to strengthen cultural connections within the community while celebrating the richness of Polish heritage and artistic expression.



*submitted by Brian Malski,
President, FPA.*

Polish Arts Club of Trenton

On Sunday April 26, 2026, the Polish Arts Club of Trenton (PACT) held its annual luncheon to award thirteen scholarships, \$ 1,500 each, to area high-school students who are going to start in college this year. This year's luncheon also celebrated PACT's 80th anniversary. Since 1946, PACT has promoted an appreciation of Polish culture and encouraged young people of Polish descent to pursue higher education and, to-date, has awarded \$478,500 in scholarships to high school seniors of Polish descent entering institutions of higher learning. The event took place at the Trenton Country Club, and included a performance by members of the PKM Folk Dance Ensemble from Philadelphia, PA.

The following individuals received scholarships: **Aniela Elizabeth Adamski** - committed to Catholic University of America; **Gabriel Nicholas Pena Bak** - committed to Rutgers University - New Brunswick; **Vanessa Bartnikowski** - accepted to multiple colleges; **Alicja Braczewska** committed to Bloomberg University; **Diana Doliwa** - committed to Rutgers University - New Brunswick; **Christian Ryan Kania** - committed to DeSales University; **Sara Olivia Kwasniewski** - committed to The College of New Jersey; **Maya Casey Mokrzecki** - accepted to multiple colleges; **Cameron Robert Popso** - committed to the University of Delaware; **Ryan Wojciechowski Prince** - accepted to multiple colleges; **Luke James Rogers** - committed to Rutgers University; **Camden Elizabeth Patrice Sagan** - Mercer County Community College; **Karolina Trzuskot** - committed to the College of New Jersey

They also received the following awards: A Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation from the City of Trenton from Mayor Reed Gusciora, a Certificate of Recognition for Scholastic and Academic Achievement was given to each student by Jennifer C. Williams, North Ward Councilwoman, City of Trenton, New Jersey on behalf of the Trenton City Council. Certificates of Honor for Outstanding Academic Achievement from the Mercer County Board of County Commissioners were presented by Lucille R.S. Walter - Chair, Board of County Commissioners. The Mercer County Executive, Dan Benson was also present.

PACT scholarship awards were drawn from a monetary fund maintained by PACT; a memorial fund established and maintained by PACT from a bequest made by Irena and Lubomir J. Zabalski for the express purpose of funding scholarships; and, donations to cover individual scholarships made by in Stanley Winowicz Jr. in memory of Stephanie B. Winowicz; and by Poulson & Van Hise, Funeral Directors.

Information about these scholarships may be found on the PACT website: <http://www.trentonpolisharts.org/>



Above: 2026 Scholarship students with Committee Chair Christine Muszynski and Father Jacek Libinski.



Above: Mayor Gusciora and Bill Muszynski.

Left: Scholarship student Luke James Rogers with Stanley Joe Winowicz Jr.

During the luncheon the Honorable W. Reed Gusciora, Mayor of the City of Trenton, received an award in recognition and appreciation of his lifetime of public service, especially those initiatives in public and safety, housing, economics, and veterans affairs to improve the quality of life in the Trenton area. Mayor Gusciora is the first mayor of Trenton that is of Polish descent. He was born in Passaic, NJ and raised in Jamesburg, NJ where he attended public schools and graduated from Jamesburg High School in 1978. His father, Walter Gusciora was born in Garfield, NJ to parents who emigrated from Poland in 1913. The mayor was accepted into the 2019-2020 Bloomberg Harvard Cities Leadership Initiative program along with 40 other mayors from around the world. Mayor Gusciora serves on the Steering Committee for the Mayors Innovation Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a board member for Mercer County ARC, a developmental disability advocacy group; Regional Vice Chair of the New Jersey Urban Mayor's Association; and a Member on the Steering Committee of the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia

The Annual Chopin Concert was held on Sunday, April 12, at Philadelphia's Music Settlement School on Germantown Avenue. This year's soloist was Evelina Kleczek who gave an outstanding performance. The audience was delighted by her interpretation of Chopin's works. A light reception followed the concert. Scholarship Luncheon
The annual Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia Scholarship Luncheon took place on Sunday, May 3 at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa in Doylestown, PA, after 11:00 am Mass. Each of eight students received a \$1,500 check each plus a gift bag. The following eight individuals were so recognized this year:

Jacob Andrzejczuk - is currently attending Penn State University majoring in mechanical engineering with a minor in nuclear engineering.

Michelle Gondek - a senior at Upper Dublin High School who plans to attend Penn State University to study public policy or international relations.

Veronica Komorek - graduated in the top ten of her class from John F. Kennedy Memorial High School, presently a student at Swarthmore College, where she is excelling as a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor's degree in biology.

Staś Kraynak - a senior at Germantown Academy, where he earned high honors, plans to find ways to blend art and science, integrate engineering, arts, and sciences with the goal of becoming a scientific illustrator and communicator.

Gavin Lipski - a senior at Moorestown High School, where he has consistently earned a place on the Honor Roll, will attend Wake Forest University in North Carolina and study engineering.

Maya Ostasz - a graduate of Pennridge High School, she is concluding her junior year at Penn State University, where she is studying for a Bachelor of Science degree in biobehavioral health.

Stefan Rogowski - graduated with honors from Cheltenham High School. He is currently a junior at the Rochester Institute of Technology, where he is pursuing an interdisciplinary individualized course of study.

Olivia Szymkiewicz - a senior and Honor Roll student at Council Rock High School North, intends to study psychology and neuroscience with particular focus on language acquisition and cognitive development.

We congratulate all of our scholars and wish them continued success in their academic careers.

*submitted by Peter J. Obst, President,
Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia*



*Top photo:
The Philadelphia Heritage Society scholarship recipients and their families at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa on Doylestown, Pa. Scholarship Committee Chair, Teresa G. Wojcik, Ph.D. is third from the left, front.*

*Middle photo:
At the 2026 Chopin Concert (left to right): Paul Krzywicki, Margaret Zaleska, Debbie Majka, Evelina Kleczek, Agnieszka Simon, Peter J. Obst (president of the Polish Heritage Society), Jewels Rogowska-Teneva, Mike Hrabowski, John Wisniewski, and Tiffany Loomis.*

Photo on left: Agnieszka Simon (on left) presented flowers to pianist Evelina Kleczek.



Spring is in the air, and the promise of renewal and new growth is imminent. That's true not only in nature but in what's happening at the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning in Chicopee, Massachusetts. The past year saw change, excitement, new faces, new exhibits and so much more.

Perhaps the most notable event was hosting the ACPC Annual Spring Meeting. We welcomed a large contingent of board members in person with others joining via Zoom. The meetings were productive, and touring the museum, on-site dining, socializing, and visiting local sites will be remembered as a highlight of the weekend.

- **Folk Art Exhibit at Elms College** - An exhibit of Polish folk art installed at the Borgia Gallery at Elms College drew many visitors from all over New England. It included woodcarvings, *wycinanki*, *pisanki*, folk dress, tapestries, figurines, wooden tools, *szopki*, *pajaki*, embroidery and more. The College said with the foot traffic, it was the busiest exhibit ever held.

- **Pisanki Class** - The original class scheduled to learn egg painting morphed into two separate classes due to the interest. A group of international students from Quinnipiac University attended bringing their own national heritage to the designs on the eggs which made for interesting conversation. It was an exciting day.

- **Dzień Świętego Józefa (St. Joseph's Day)** The Center in conjunction with Rumbleseat Bar & Grille and Bernat's Polish Deli celebrated the Feast of St. Joseph as an all-day event which saw large crowds coming to eat Polish food, listen to live music from the Mummies Aqua String Band, and enjoy the idea of spring just around the corner. It was a very lively day!

- **Passport Adventure Program for Children** Thanks to the creativity of Emily Paseos, a 15-year-old Girl Scout who, based on her travels abroad, thought to bring an experience to children visiting the Polish Center. Each child receives a bag containing a wooden egg to paint, crayons to color pictures of regional costumes, and a passport with photos of objects in the museum with stickers to paste when they find them. School groups, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and families enjoyed the experience. Emily received the Girl Scout Gold Award for this effort, an honor she clearly deserves.



Top left: Krakowiak Polish Dancers prepare to march in the City of Chicopee parade.

Above: The pisanki workshop at the Center.

Left: Emily Paseos.

Below: ACPC board members visit St. Stanislaus Basilica in Chicopee, MA.

submitted by
Joanne M. Gruszkos
President and Chair of the Board



- **Polish Heritage Night at the Springfield Thunderbirds**

For the second year, the Polish Center held a Polish Heritage Night at the Springfield Thunderbirds which saw a full house of attendees. Polish food and drink were offered at the concessions stands, Polish music played throughout the arena, attendees received a Polish flag and the Hussar dropped the puck. Another night to take pride in our heritage!

- **Krakowiak Polish Dancers March in the Parade**

The City of Chicopee invited us to join their contingent in the St. Patrick's Day parade. The Krakowiak Polish Dancers of Boston - 12 dancers in full costume - joined us in the parade and danced the Polonaise and other folk dances. This parade draws over 400,000 spectators from the East Coast, with many of Polish descent applauding as we walked down the streets of Holyoke, MA.

POLISH CULTURAL CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD, INC.

Celebrating our 50th Anniversary

The New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, Connecticut hosted "Polish Heritage Celebration Day" on March 28, which included artists, vendors, performers, and community organizations. Lilia Kieltyka, Ursula Brodowicz, Fran Pudło, Gini Pudło, and Juliana Story represented the Club. This was the first Polish Day at the museum, and it proved to be a very lively event. The local Polish Saturday School provided a variety of entertainment, and vendors were sprinkled around the museum for the public to explore. The Club hopes to be invited back again.

"Polish Day at the Capitol" in Hartford was celebrated on April 30. Members Zofia Bieniek, Kasia Brodowicz, Ursula Brodowicz, Deborah Krawiec, Anna Ramoya, and Renata Vickery attended this annual commemoration of the declaration of the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791. The salute to the Polish community took place on the lawn of the Connecticut State Capitol where the Polish Flag was raised followed by the singing of Hymn Narodowy. The event was started 35 years ago by State Representative Stanley J. Krawiec. His daughter, Deborah Krawiec, a member of the Polish Cultural Club, has continued this family tradition by taking over its leadership.

The PCCGH also serves on the planning committee. Several awards are distributed each year to deserving Poles recognized for their service to Polonia. After the ceremony, which was led by Lt. Governor, Susan Bysiewicz, a *pączki* reception was offered.



Deborah Krawiec (PCCGH member); Mateusz Sakowicz, Consul General of the Republic of Poland--New York; Janusz Kocur (United Polish Societies); and Ursula Brodowicz (PCCGH member).

Submitted by Lilia Kieltyka and Fran Pudło



Bractwo Kurkowe *continued from page 7*

set with precious stones. It was a gift from the Kraków City Council in 1565. Legend has it that King Sigismund II Augustus gave this jewel to the organization. A true work of Renaissance art, the rooster symbolizes vigilance and watchfulness, reflecting the group's protective role. It represents the tradition of hunting, as the Bractwo Kurkowe groups were originally formed as guilds for marksmen. The silver color signifies purity and excellence in marksmanship.

The uniform of the Bractwo Kurkowe is based on traditional Polish gentry attire. This includes the *żupan*, a long, ankle-length, close-fitting inner coat over which is worn the *kontusz*, a distinctive overcoat with long open sleeves. The attire includes a long, ornate silk sash tied around the waist and a brimless fur cap called a *kolpak*. This Polish national dress is the official attire worn by members of the Bractwo at events and ceremonies and expresses their dedication to Polish history and tradition.

The concept of establishing an American affiliate of the Bractwo Kurkowe was conceived and championed by Dr. Waldemar Niklinski, MD. Dr. Niklinski and other leaders in American Polonia had been concerned about the erosion of Polish identity in American Polonia. Dr. Niklinski currently heads the American affiliate in the role of "Wojewoda." By adopting the goals and



Participants in the inaugural Ceremony of the U.S. Chapter of the Bractwo Kurkowe, which took place on Friday, May 5, 2023, at St. John Cantius Church in Chicago, IL. Photo: Bractwo Kurkowe - US

ideals of the Bractwo Kurkowe, members of this American affiliate work to preserve and inspire Polish culture and identity in the United States. The establishment of this Polish cultural organization in North America is an exciting milestone for American Polonia. ACPC Board member and First Vice President, Mark Szpak, is a member of the American affiliate.

Information on Bractwo Kurkowe – US, including numerous photos of their ceremonies and activities, can be found at: <https://bractwokurkowe.us/>



The Heart of the Bay Area Polish Community established in 1926

by Magda Szczodruć

For generations, Dom Polski has been a place where Polish identity thrives in Northern California. The Polish Club is so much more than a building — it's a vibrant hub of culture, connection, and community.

.....And this year, the Club will proudly celebrate its 100th anniversary!



Bringing the Community Together

As part of the Club's mission, we host quarterly gatherings for the Polish community. These informal events bring together people of all ages from across the Bay Area—both longtime residents and newcomers—creating a space for connection, conversation, and shared heritage. Additionally, the Club (colloquially called Dom Polski or The Polish Home) organizes special events, hosting notable guests, offering inspiring and memorable experiences. One such guest was renowned Polish explorer Marek Kamiński, who shared stories about his extraordinary polar expeditions.

A Home Full of Life

In the evenings, Dom Polski becomes a dynamic space for various neighborhood organizations and our very own Polish dance group. Cultural groups, community initiatives, and social groups find a welcoming place in "our home" where historic pictures and Polish artifacts are labeled for those unfamiliar with Polish heritage and the history of Poles in San Francisco's historic Mission District (now the City's "Latino Cultural Heritage District"). San Francisco's beloved Polish folk ensemble, Łowiczanie, holds weekly rehearsals at the Club—keeping alive traditional Polish music and dance.

A Beloved Tradition: Christmas Carols (Kolędy)

The biggest event at the Club is our annual Christmas celebration, where Poles gather to sing Polish and American carols, a cherished tradition that brings together entire families. Our Hall fills with the sound of Polish carols, creating a warm and festive atmosphere. Of course we share delicious Polish food and beverages, including grzaniec (mulled wine)! We offer to our holiday guests pierogi, kiełbasa, Polish des-

serts and much more. This beloved event has a special charm for children. In 2025, the youngest attendees met gift-laden Santa Claus (Św. Mikołaj), making the celebration truly magical for families.

Supporting Key Polish Events

The Club plays an active role in supporting major Polish cultural and national events in the San Francisco Bay Area, contributing to celebrations such as Constitution Day (May 3rd), Polish flag raising at City Hall, and dance performances. Our local celebrity, Olenka Lisiecki of Recultured Designs, sells her exquisite clothing, inspired by Polish folk motifs.

The Polish Club fulfills its mission to share Polish culture by keeping Polish customs and traditions alive in our "home away from home."

A Place of Civic Engagement

The Polish Club plays an important civic role. It serves as a polling location for Polish citizens living abroad, where members of the community take part in Polish parliamentary and presidential elections. This allows the diaspora in San Francisco and beyond to stay connected with Poland's democratic process and to have their voices heard from abroad.

Supporting the Wider Community

The Polish Club is not only a home for Polonia (or, as we like to say, Poles) — it is also a place of openness and solidarity. The Club actively supports the Ukrainian community, hosting film screenings, singers and Ukrainian vendors of food, collectibles, clothing and more. This collaboration highlights the shared values and strong bonds between Slavic communities in the Bay Area.

Polish schools of Forum of Polish Teachers on the West Coast preserve Polish traditions

The Polish schools of Forum of Polish Teachers on the West Coast USA continue to thrive, passing on the Polish language, history, and geography of Poland to new generations of children and young people of Polish descent. Education in Polish schools helps students not only gain knowledge, but above all nurture a sense of Polish identity in the hearts of the younger generation.

In addition to regular academic classes, each school belonging to the Forum carefully preserves Polish traditions, which are an important part of patriotic and cultural education. In many schools, religion classes are also included in the curriculum, helping children learn Christian values and Polish religious traditions.

A special place in the schools' activities is devoted to preserving traditions connected with Christmas and Easter celebrations. These holidays are an inseparable part of the educational program and school community life. Children and youth enthusiastically participate in St. Nicholas Day celebrations — a beautiful tradition during which St. Nicholas visits schools and distributes gifts.

During the Christmas season, students prepare Nativity plays (*Jaselki*) presenting the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. These performances not only teach children about Christian traditions and history, but also help develop their artistic talents. *(top photo on right)*

The Easter season is celebrated just as solemnly. An important part of the preparations is preserving the tradition of making Easter palms. Children and youth enthusiastically create colorful palms from branches, dried flowers, tissue paper, and ribbons while learning about the meaning of Palm Sunday in Polish and Christian tradition. They also handcraft colorful Easter eggs for the traditional Easter basket, *(bottom photo on right)* which they later bring with their



parents to church on Holy Saturday for the blessing of the food. The traditional Easter basket and Easter breakfast remain important symbols of preserving Polish family customs even thousands of miles away from their homeland.

Working together with parents, the Polish schools of the Forum help preserve and pass on the most important Polish and Christian values to the younger generation. Thanks to their efforts, the Polish language, traditions, and spirit of Polish heritage remain alive in the hearts of children and young people growing up outside their homeland.

A Century of History — and an exciting Future Ahead!

Reaching 100 years is a remarkable milestone. It reflects not only the longevity of the Dom Polski but also the strength and resilience of the Polish community in San Francisco.

Ours is a story of generations who built a community, supported one another, and preserved Polish culture abroad. As the Club enters its next chapter, we will continue to serve as a cornerstone for Polish life in the Bay Area.



As the photos in this article indicate, San Francisco's Polish Home is the center of numerous social events for Polonia in the Bay Area. The Club also offers numerous activities for children and youth in an effort to keep them connected to their Polish heritage.



A Bright Start for the Polish American Society of Greenville, South Carolina

by Anita Dolman

The past several months have been busy for the Polish American Society of Greenville, SC. Since its inception in September 2025, our non-profit has have worked diligently to support and serve the Polish community, as well as to proudly promote our heritage within the greater Upstate South Carolina community.

Starting in the fall, we presented our Polish heritage at the International Festival at St. Mary Magdelene Catholic Church in Simpsonville. Besides having one of the most popular stands at the event selling our tasty pierogi, kielbasa, bigos and cakes, our new Polish dance troupe, Polanie, performed twice during the festival. The festival was the perfect event to build connections, inform others in the community about our organization and invite them to participate in monthly bilingual Masses at the church and pot-luck gatherings with the community afterwards, as well as the many other activities we had planned.

In December, we proudly made our presence known at the largest Christmas parade in the Upstate, where our Polanie dancers represented our Polish community, dancing the Polonez in their colorful ethnic costumes through the streets of Greenville, SC. Polish Hussar knights marched alongside our dancers, creating quite an attraction for onlookers!

One of our organization's long term goals is to establish a Polish language school in our area, and as a first step, we launched the Akademia Młodego Polaka, or Academy for the Young Pole. The weekly classed provided an opportunity for children to learn, play, craft and sing in the Polish language. This school year, the Academy served over 20 children from three to eleven years old, and we look forward to expanding our program in the coming years.

Our most recent opportunity to promote our culture was at the May 1-3 Polish Fest, organized by Greenville's Fireforge Brewery. We were impressed by how many people attended the event and were excited to reconnect with their Polish roots. Polish food, beer, music and crafts were available at the event. Once again, our Polanie dancers performed beautifully during the festive weekend and even invited the public to join them in a joyful polka or two.

We are delighted that interest in the Polish American Society of Greenville, SC, is growing and we look forward to continuing our work to promote the Polish culture and community in our region.



Top photo: Brightly attired winged Polish Hussars accompanied members of the Polish American Society in the Greenville South Carolina Christmas Parade in December.

Middle photo: The Polish American Society of Greenville participated in the International Festival at St. Mary Magdelene Catholic Church in Simpsonville which featured a performance by the Polanie Dance Ensemble.

Bottom photo: Young students at the Akademia Młodego Polaka display cards saying "Łączy Nas Polska" (Poland Connects Us).

In Remembrance of the Heart of Early Polonia: **St. Michael's Church and Its Quarter**

by Alice Poore Executive Director, Polish Heritage Center

On May 20, 2026, the Polish Heritage Center, in partnership with the Bexar County Historical Commission, formally commemorated the unveiling of two distinguished historical markers recognizing St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church and the historic Polish Quarter of San Antonio, Texas.

St. Michael's Catholic Church and the historic Polonia Quarter of San Antonio were dismantled in preparation for the 1968 World's Fair, marking a heartbreaking moment for the city's Polish community. The loss of this cherished parish and neighborhood was deeply felt by generations of families who had built their lives, traditions, and faith around St. Michael's. It remains a poignant chapter in the story of Polish heritage in San Antonio.

Fifty-seven years later, these markers now stand near the original St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, next to the oldest tree in Hemisfair Plaza- a place rich with memory and meaning, that honor the enduring faith, cultural identity, and civic contributions of the early Polish settlers whose presence helped shape the social and spiritual landscape of San Antonio. Their legacy--rooted in devotion, perseverance, and community leadership--continues to enrich the heritage of South Texas and stands as a testament to the strength of immigrant communities in the region's development.

This momentous occasion was celebrated with traditional Polish costumes, delicious pierogies and beautiful Polish music performed by Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, along with the presentation of the Polish flag and the Polish National Anthem.

This significant achievement was realized through the dedication and collaboration of many esteemed individuals and supporters. With sincere appreciation, we acknowledge: The late Bishop John W. Yanta; Aloys Notzon, Chairman & President of the Polish Heritage Center; Father Kevin Fausz; Belinda Gavallos, Chair of the Bexar County Historical Commission; the Honorable Judge Peter Sakai, Bexar County Judge Alice Poore, Executive Director, the staff of the Polish Heritage Center and the Bexar County Historical Commission, Event Hosts Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz who performed traditional Polish music; refreshments were provided by Apolonia Catering.

We would like to express a very special thank you to Ronnie and Terry Urbanczyk of Urban Concrete for their generosity in donating the concrete plinths for the commemorative plaques and for sponsoring the event. Their leadership, generosity, and commitment ensured that historic recognition was observed with dignity and respect, preserving the memory of Polish Texans for generations to come.

A proud moment for Polish Texan history!!



Old St. Michael's Church in San Antonio



Long-awaited reveal at Hemisfair Plaza of the Polish Quarter and St. Michael's Catholic Church Historical Markers. Pictured left to right: Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, Honorary Consul General for the State of Texas; Alice Poore, Executive Director of the Polish Heritage Center; Belinda Gavallos, Chair of the Bexar County Historical Commission; Terry and Ronnie Urbanczyk of Urban Concrete, sponsors of the event; and Al Notzon, Chairman and President of the Board of the Polish Heritage Center.

Al Notzon, Chairman and President of the Board of the Polish Heritage Center (left), together with Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, Honorary Consul General for the State of Texas and Board Member of the Polish Heritage Center who delivered the welcome and emphasized the significant historical importance of these markers.



POLISH HUNTING TRADITIONS

continued from page 7

The Polish hunting tradition is characterized by a rich vocabulary and jargon, specific hunting calls and deep cultural roots. These principles are regulated by the Polish Hunting Association.

Included among these traditions and practices are:

- **Hunter's Oath** - *Ślubowanie myśliwskie*

Upon passing an examination, a newly admitted novice (*fryc*) takes the Hunter's Oath after which they are formally invested as a hunter by the Hunt Master. The hunter's oath is a tradition deeply rooted in the history of Polish hunting. The ceremony dates back to the Middle Ages, when hunters swore an oath of loyalty to the king and the land. The oath signified a commitment to hunting service and a respect for nature and tradition.

Over the centuries, the ceremony evolved, yet it retained its original character. The hunter's oath, which usually takes place at the beginning of the hunting season, is not merely a ceremony, but also an opportunity to emphasize hunting values and a commitment to nature conservation. This ceremony usually takes place at the beginning of the hunting season, during an event organized by local hunters.

- **The Hunting Baptism** - *Chrzest myśliwski*

The hunting baptism is one of the oldest hunting rituals. This ceremony marks the admission of a young hunter into the ranks of true hunters; it takes place after the hunter has bagged their first game animal. Originally, a hunter was "baptized" only once in a lifetime—specifically after killing the first animal of their career. A bugler—who should be present at every driven hunt—plays the specific signal for that animal. The novice steps forward and kneels on his left knee. The master of ceremonies dips a hunting knife into the animal's blood and uses the weapon to trace the sign of the cross on the young hunter's forehead. This signifies deep respect for the spirit of the slain animal.

- **The Pokot**

The pokot is a ceremonial tribute to the harvested game and the formal conclusion of a collective hunt. Each of the animals is arranged in a specific order and every such arrangement requires careful execution. A specimen's position in the display reflects its status as game, the rank attributed to it within the forest, and the challenges a hunter must overcome to secure it. During the pokot, the "King of the Hunt" (*król polowania*) is announced.

- **The Last Bite** - *Ostatni Kęs*

The "last bite" is a hunting tradition that involves placing a sprig of fir or spruce into the mouth of the harvested game as a symbolic gesture of honor and gratitude for the sustenance provided. This ritual holds a prominent place in hunting folklore and is regarded as an expression of respect for both the animal and nature.

The practice has its roots in ancient Slavic beliefs, according to which the spirit of the slain animal returned to the heavens upon death; placing the "last bite" was intended to symbolically facilitate the creature's journey back to its home.

Early 16th century Polish woodcut featuring a hunting scene.



- **Hunting Salutation**

Darz Bór „Good Hunting” a traditional greeting among foresters and hunters when meeting, parting ways, or wishing each other good luck on a hunt.

- **The Hubertus Tradition**

Hubertus, also known as St. Hubert's Day, is one of the oldest and most significant hunting festivals in Poland. Its origins trace back to the Middle Ages and are linked to St. Hubert, the patron saint of hunters, who lived in the 7th century. Originally an aristocrat, St. Hubert underwent a spiritual conversion after a mystical encounter with a stag bearing a cross in its antlers. This event was interpreted as a divine call to lead a devout life and dedicate oneself to hunting in accordance with ethics and respect for nature.

St. Hubert's Day is celebrated on November 3rd and symbolically marks the end of the hunting season and the beginning of winter, signifying preparation for upcoming hunting activities. Initially, it was primarily a religious holiday, where hunters attended a mass in honor of St. Hubert, followed by hunting ceremonies. Over time, the festival evolved, blending religious elements with hunting traditions to create unique rituals that continue to this day.

Some Polish Hubertus customs include:

- **Hubertus Mass:** The centerpiece of the celebration is the holy mass, where hunters pay tribute to St. Hubert. This event not only highlights the spiritual dimension of hunting but also provides an opportunity to reflect on ethics and conduct in the field.

- **Hubertus Hunt:** Following the mass, a traditional hunt takes place, often culminating in a ceremony where results are announced. After the hunt, hunters and often their families gather for a festive occasion with traditional food, music and entertainment that emphasize the communal spirit of the celebration. In different

regions of Poland, Hubertus celebrations may include various local customs. For example, some areas host parades with participants dressed in historical hunting uniforms and impressive presentations involving hunting dogs and horses.

• The Christmas Eve Hunt

- *Wigilijne polowanie*

The Christmas Eve hunt begins early in the morning and is purely symbolic. While it resembles regular hunting, its main goal is to nurture bonds – both with nature and fellow hunters. This tradition dictates that most game should be released, ensuring prosperity in the coming year. The event typically concludes with a ceremonial bonfire, during which hunters share the Christmas *opłatek*, exchange best wishes and often participate in a mass held in the forest. A special tradition involves bringing food and *opłatek* to the feeding stations, sharing with the woodland creatures. In accordance with hunting ethics, hunting activities in Poland are suspended during major Christian holidays, including Christmas Day and Easter.



awarded to hunters in the form of bronze, silver, and gold medals, as well as the supreme hunting honor known simply as the "Złom."

• The Polish Hunting Uniform

- *Mundur Myśliwski* (shown on left)

The traditional Polish hunting uniform is not merely an item of clothing; above all, it is also a symbol of centuries-old tradition, respect for nature, and membership in an elite group of hunting enthusiasts. Its appearance, color scheme, and details are strictly defined by regulations, and every element carries deep historical significance. While the origins of specialized hunting attire date back to the Middle Ages, the hunting uniform in a form resembling the modern version began to take shape during the 18th and 19th centuries. In historical Poland, hunters of noble birth typically

hunted in traditional national attire—such as the *kontusz* and *żupan*—garments prized for their comfort and durability. It was only through the influence of Western European styles—primarily Saxon and Austrian—that the standardization of hunting attire emerged. During the era of the Partitions, the hunting uniform often served as a vehicle for expressing patriotism; Polish hunters would subtly incorporate elements referencing national colors or traditional cuts into their outfits as a form of resistance against the regulations imposed by the partitioning powers. In the inter-war period, the traditional Polish hunting uniform acquired its current style, evolving from distinctly military styles toward a more civilian, elegant jacket. As a result, the modern hunting attire of the Polish Hunting Association (PZŁ) is the result of a long-standing process in which practicality has merged with a deep commitment to national tradition and hunting ethics.

• Polish Hunting Dog Breeds - *Polskie rasy psów myśliwskich*

There are several popular breeds of Polish hunting dogs. These include: the Polish Hound (*Ogar Polski*) - a versatile scent hound known for its tracking ability and endurance which was popular with the Polish nobility and the Polish Hunting Dog (*Gończy Polski*), bred for the pursuit and tracking of large game. During the communist era, both of these breeds became nearly extinct, but have regained their popularity in recent years. Another popular Polish hunting breed is the Polish Greyhound (*Chart Polski*).



Gończy Polski



Chart Polski

Material for this article was gathered from various Internet sources as well as from the web site of the Polish Hunting Association.



Polish "sygnaliści." The banner of the Polish Hunting Association (PZŁ) can be seen in the background.

• Hunting Calls - *Sygnaty Myśliwskie*

Polish hunters employ a wide range of hunting horn calls signifying the various animals hunted as well as functions of the hunt. These types of calls include hound calls, field calls (calls made to coordinate hunting activities); game calls used to attract game and chasing calls, signals used to indicate the pursuit of game.

You can hear many of these calls at www.kolo-lowieckie-zubr.com.pl/sygnaly.html

• Złom

"Złom" is a Polish hunting term used in two contexts. First, it refers to a broken-off twig—typically from a tree species characteristic of the local forest, such as fir—presented to a hunter after they have successfully shot big game. The twig is dipped in the animal's blood and then attached to the headband of the hunter's hat. The term can also refer to the highest distinction that can be



First Lady Marta Nawrocka Honors Polish Diaspora at Washington's National Shrine

The diplomatic trip of Poland's First Lady, Marta Nawrocka, to Washington, D.C., was built around a brief and demanding itinerary centered on major international events at the U.S. Department of State and the White House. Despite her tight schedule, she prioritized a meaningful visit to the Saint John Paul II National Shrine on March 24 to connect directly with the Polish diaspora and honor their shared cultural heritage.

After touring the Shrine—a cornerstone for all who take pride in the late Pope's spiritual leadership and profound impact on world history—the First Lady spent time with representatives of the local Polish-American community, hosted by the Washington, D. C. chapter of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation. Many of these dedicated members are also highly active across a number of other local Polish-American organizations. As part of her visit to the sanctuary, which welcomes pilgrims from across the globe, she also toured its impressive permanent exhibit dedicated to the life and legacy of John Paul II.

Journalist Edyta Hołodyńska (*Republika*) noted the deep significance of the event, highlighting the Foundation as a vital organization dedicated to cultivating Polish traditions. She emphasized how crucial these face-to-face meetings are to recognize the diaspora's year-round efforts to preserve Polish identity and promote the nation's history abroad.

Reflecting on the visit, Marta Nawrocka shared on her Instagram:

"During my visit to Washington, I visited the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. This unique sanctuary—a place of prayer and pride—plays an important role today for the Polish diaspora living across the ocean. I would also like to thank the Polish community active in the John Paul II Foundation for their engagement, their care for Polish heritage, and their beautiful example of patriotism."

Members of the Foundation expressed their delight in hosting the First Lady, noting her warmth and keen interest in their mission and key accomplishments. As a token of appreciation, the Foundation presented her with flowers, background information on the chapter and a children's book titled *Poland*, authored by members Carla Tomaszewski and Cecilia Glembocki. The book offers a vibrant portrait of the country through its festivals and traditions, featuring dedicated sections on John Paul II as well as Easter and Christmas customs.

The gift beautifully reflects the cultural aspects that St. John Paul II cherished deeply. He famously believed that Polish culture possessed a unique resilience because it was firmly rooted in Christian values and an enduring love for freedom.

submitted by R. Pace



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!



ANNOUNCING THE 2026 ACPC CONVENTION

**2026 Convention in Philadelphia
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 places 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 the following page.



Downtown Philadelphia



Independence Hall



Philadelphia Marriott Old City Hotel



Carpenters' Hall



Kościuszko House



General Casimir Pułaski statue in the Garden of Heroes



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 Kochańska 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 ☐



On behalf of the ACPC Awards Committee, it is our privilege to announce the 2026 ACPC Awards Recipients to be honored at the 2026 Convention in Philadelphia.



Deborah M. Majka
*Lifetime
Achievement Award*



Donna Chmara
Founders Award



Paul Krzywicki
*Cultural
Achievement Award*



Janusz Romanski
*Distinguished
Service Award*



Richard Porembski
Founders Award

TIME TO PLACE AN AD.....

A Convention Journal book will be printed for this year's ACPC Convention. Individuals and groups are encouraged to support the Convention by placing ads. Ads may be of congratulatory or advertising in nature. An explanatory letter plus an Ad Contract for may be found under: <https://www.poles.org/PHSP/Convention/Letter.pdf>

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Tel: _____

Club or Organization _____

Authorized by (signature) _____

Cost of ads is as follows (page size 11 inches high, 8.5 wide, allow 1/2 inch margins)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Back Cover | \$1,500.00 (11 inches high, 8.5 inches wide) |
| ☐ Inside Covers | \$1,000.00 |
| ☐ Full Page | \$500.00 |
| ☐ Half Page | \$250.00 (5.5 inches high, 8.5 inches wide) |
| ☐ Quarter Page | \$125.00 (5.5 inches high, 4.25 inches wide) |
| ☐ Business Card | \$50.00 |
| ☐ Line Listing | \$50.00 |
| ☐ Other | _____ |

Total Amount: _____

All art work and/or text should be submitted to Peter Obst, peterpjo@aol.com no later than July 20, 2026 (artwork should be 300 dpi, either .jpg or .pdf).

Send checks to: *Debbie Majka, 812 Lombard St., #12; Philadelphia, PA 19147*

If you have any questions, please contact
Peter Obst - 215-946-5723 e-mail: peterpjo@aol.com



American Council for Polish Culture
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Annandale, VA 22003

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Individual Membership in ACPC including
Subscription: U.S. - 1 yr. \$25

Attention Affiliate and Supporting Members:

Please email all submissions to djm713@yahoo.com.

Photos should be submitted in jpeg format, 300 DPI. Mailed photos will not be returned. Please submit all articles as a Word document or imbedded in an email and send to djm713@yahoo.com.

The editorial staff are not responsible for transcription errors for handwritten or typewritten submissions and retain the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

Editorial Team: Managing Editor/Designer: David Motak
Copy Editors: Debbie Majka, Peter Obst

web site: <http://www.polishcultureacpc.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanCouncilforPolishCulture/>

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Address Service Requested

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