

PCC Polish Journey

Newsletter of the Polish Cultural Council • Vol. 12 • Winter/Spring 2014

If you have never been to the PCC's Ostatki (Mardi Gras) party, you don't know what you're missing! There is great food, great music, and plenty of chances to dance. The members of the PCC have been holding this party annually for almost ten years.

It seems to get better with age. The setting has always been critical to the success of the party, but when you add in Polish vodka, the amazing Polish culinary table, the music, the dancing, paczki of course, well, it's a party you really don't want to miss.

This is our 5th year holding Ostatki at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts on Fifth Avenue in Pittsburgh. This year's theme, "Anything Goes", has been in the planning stages for over six months. Ostatki promises to be loads of fun, with many surprises. The

work of the PCC Ostatki Committee is nothing short of remarkable. Most of the volunteers who are working on the food for this party are from Poland. They prepare their families' recipes.

Ostatki has also become an important fundraising event for the PCC, whose mission I remind you, is to promote the best in Polish Culture for audiences of western Pennsylvania. So, if you want to do something for Polish Culture and celebrate Mardi Gras/Ostatki, in the Polish style, I'll see you 7 PM Saturday, March 1st, at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. I'll be the one who hands you your welcoming drink of Zubrowka (Bison Vodka) and sok jablkowy (apple juice) on ice.

— Rick Pierchalski

Message from the President



Pictured at Polish Day 2013 from left Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, Miss Polonia 2012 Emily Herold, and Miss Polonia 2013 Maura Saxon. Please see the article on page 3.

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On the last Saturday of the Carnival, immerse yourself in the ambiance of the art gallery, live entertainment and dancing. Join us for the specialties of the **Polish Culinary Table, tempting drinks and vodka tasting. Don't miss the exciting and unique raffle items!** Live music by the **Continental Dukes!** Dancing to the sizzling rhythms of **Zumba; Anything Goes "selfies" in the Costume Booth.**

Saturday, March 1, 2014 • 7:00 - 11:00 pm

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, The Marshall Building Galleries
6300 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232 • Parking on the premises

\$75 PCC Members \$85 Non-members • **RSVP by Friday, February 21, 2014**

For more information call 412.871.3347 or email: pccorg.ms@gmail.com
Informal evening attire. **Masks and costumes welcomed!**

Invitation available online at PolishCulturalCouncil.org

ED PAWLOWSKI, MAYOR OF ALLENTOWN

For the first time in memory, a Polish American threw his hat into the ring for the democrat nomination for Governor of Pennsylvania. Ed Pawlowski, the mayor of Allentown, quickly realized that the governor's race required monetary commitments beyond his current capabilities. He was the first candidate to withdraw. Other candidates for nomination have put millions of their own dollars into the race. Unfortunately, Ed, who has been an honest public servant his whole career, simply could not match the money. I had an opportunity to meet



Ed Pawlowski stands with his father.

Ed recently in Pittsburgh, as he was looking for support from his fellow Polish Americans. I found him to be an ordinary man who has accomplished extraordinary gains for his city.

Ed was born and bred in Chicago.

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His family owned and operated a very well-known Polish restaurant in the Polish neighborhood near Fullerton and Pulaski. The restaurant, "Jakes, Little Bit of Poland" was a Chicago fixture for 25 years. Ed and his family lived in an apartment above the restaurant. When Ed was a young boy, he started working in the family restaurant. He continued to work there until his parents sold the restaurant when he was in high school. Both parents were Polish. In his iPhone, Ed proudly carries a picture of himself as a six year old, wearing a Gorale vest.

Ed has always been interested in politics. After getting a Masters in Public Policy, he took the position of Executive Director of the Lehigh Housing Development Corporation in Allentown PA, in 1996. Under his leadership, the non-profit corporation expanded to six surrounding counties. It is now known as the Alliance for Building Communities. His success eventually led him to become the Director of Community Development in Allentown. In 2006, after repeated requests by the community to run for Mayor, Ed became Mayor of Allentown, a position he holds today.

When Ed took over the reins of Allentown's government, the city was on the brink of bankruptcy. Because of his executive experience as the chief of Alliance for Building Communities, Ed put together a team of professionals who analyzed the problems that Allentown faced and created a step-by-step process addressing each issue.

As mayor, Ed has had two commendable successes in Allentown: he rescued the municipal pension fund; and he created a booming economy. (Other communities could learn a lot from his accomplishments.) When he took over the pension fund in 2006, it was only 52% funded. Six years later it was fully funded. I, as someone in the financial world, can say that the rescue of the pension fund was a remarkable achievement. Ed did this by leasing the water authority to a private enterprise. (That actually lowered water rates.) This lease arrangement brought more than enough income to fully fund the pension plan. Contrast that with the City of Pittsburgh, whose pension plan



Mayor Ed Pawlowski at his desk in Allentown.

has a \$1 billion liability and is funded at only 61%. (Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Sept., 2013)

In addition, during Ed's tenure as mayor, he created a "Neighborhood Improvement Zone" that has forever changed Allentown's downtown. His program pumped more than \$1 billion dollars into private/public partnerships. Downtown Allentown now showcases a new stadium, as well as new office and apartment buildings. When he took office, the city was running an \$8 million dollar annual deficit. Today, it enjoys balanced budgets.

Ed is only 48 years old, but he has a strong list of accomplishments. As a political candidate, Ed is more of a traditional Democrat on social issues, and a fiscal conservative when it comes to our tax dollars. Whatever job or office Ed holds in the future, his strong message of reliability and consistency will make him an attractive candidate to future voters.

As Polish Americans, our voting records are among the highest of any of the ethnic groups. According to statistics compiled by the Polish American Congress, there are over 850,000 Pennsylvanians of Polish ancestry. A future governor needs only about 2,000,000 votes to win. Maybe one day we'll have the opportunity to vote for Ed, should he again consider running for a state-wide political office.

— Rick Pierchalski

How to Combat Winter in Pittsburgh: Dream of Polish Day!

by Mary Louise Ellena

Polar vortex! A -27° F wind chill! Snow! Ice! Freezing rain! It's winter in Pittsburgh!

It would be so nice to escape, to hop a plane to Florida, or to take a cruise to Puerto Rico. For most of us, however, the best we can do is dream of Summer, of August, of Polish Day at Kennywood Park!

The 82nd annual Polish American Day at Kennywood, on August 6, 2013, was perfect in every sense of the word, including comfortable weather. Most of all, it featured our special honorary Guest, the prominent Allegheny County Executive, Rich Fitzgerald, introduced by Polish Cultural Council President, Rick Pierchalski as a man of vision. The event also welcomed the Honorable Judge Joseph Borkowski; John Bartus, President of the local Kosciuszko Chapter; Timothy Kuzma, National President of the

Polish Falcons; and Joseph Kaminski, Vice-President of PCC.

Co-chaired by Evanne Addams and James Clark, the event featured the famous Polish Kitchen, chaired by Brother Tom Hartman and Victor Bastecki. The Kitchen served an array of traditional Polish gastronomic delights: golabki, pierogi, cucumbers and sour cream, haluski, and kielbasa with sauerkraut. Father Miro Stelmaszczyk, with his famous potato pancakes and dill pickles, complemented the kitchen fare.

Spearheaded by Ernestine Jeroski, and assisted by Betty and Dorothy Kolano and Mary Lou Ellena, the annual bake sale was the best ever, with home made nut rolls, Polish pastries, paczki, and chrusciiki, interspersed with traditional American brownies and toll house cookies. No one's sweet tooth was unchallenged. Dave Dombrowski on the accordion and Ed Gibson on the Bass entertained diners as they stood in line.

The program began at 2 PM with a performance by the Lajkoniki Dancers, directed by Frank Pociask and sponsored by the Holy Family Polish National Catholic Church of McKeesport. A concelebrated Mass followed with Rev. Joseph Swierczynski and the Roman Catholic Polish-American Priests. Polish Hymns were lead by the Karuzela Chorus, directed by Dr. Neil Stahurski, with Debbie Frauenholz providing violin accompaniment, as well as serving as the stage manager.

Following Mass, The Most Reverend Canon Joseph Sredzinski offered the Invocation followed by Margaret Gowaty, who sang the Polish and American National Anthems. Fran Yakima-Urbaniak was honored as the Polonian of the Year, and Maura Saxon was crowned Miss Polonia. After the program, guests danced the night away to the music of "The Polka Family" in the main pavilion.



Family and friends of Miss Polonia 2013, Miss Maura Saxon, gathered at Kennywood Park to watch her crowning.

Remarkable Polish Films —In Retrospective



Ryszard Bugajski and Maria Mamona at the Warhol Museum

No matter what you say about television or the theatre, there are still certain things which movies express better. There are opinions that the art of cinema has been dying for a long time, and that television is taking over, with an abundance of fine acting and a plethora of choices. There is some truth to these opinions, but seeing all of the theatres so packed at the Three Rivers Film Festival (TRFF) somehow presents a different picture (pun unintended).

Perhaps audiences still prefer to join the crowds and share, in person, their ad hoc critiques of the newest creations from international story-telling. Perhaps they like to argue with actors and directors about their points of view. And film festival audiences know that they will be seeing the newest cinema. In November, 2013, the Polish Cultural Council presented five Polish films, in partnership with the Polish Film Festival in America—Chicago, and the Three Rivers Film Festival.

These Polish films, created within the last two years, are seldom available on DVDs or Blue-ray, until they make their way through a myriad of international festivals. Also, directors must overcome many obstacles, the financial ones not the least important. They must experiment creatively in order to engage the viewer. And last year's presentations prove that.

I had a chance to see four of the Polish films: *The Girl from the Wardrobe* (Dziewczyna z Szafy) by Bodo Kox; *Loving* (Milosc) by Slawomir Fabicki;

The Closed Circuit (Uklad Zamkniety) by Ryszard Bugajski; and *Papusza*, directed by Krzysztof Krauze and Joanna Kos-Krauze. Our showings were honored by the presence of Ryszard Bugajski and his main heroine, Maria Mamona, and the young director, Bodo Kox. It was a great pleasure for the audience to ask questions, venture their opinions, and rub shoulders with our special guests at the receptions. The actress and both of the directors were simply delightful in conversations, eager to discover our city, especially its various art places. There was no predictability, either in their films or in everyday talk with them, only sheer enthusiasm and joy in hearing their ideas for future possibilities, perhaps even movie-making — in Pittsburgh! Indeed, their creations were recognized world-wide with many awards and festivals.

All of the films were the best examples of film media supremacy, beautifully showing the vision of the directors, especially the last film, *Papusza*. This masterpiece in black and white is the story of the Roma poet, Bronislawa Wajs, and her people. The ingenious and gorgeous music score by Pawluskiewicz made *Papusza* especially unforgettable.

Bravo to the PCC's Film Committee for such good choices. Bravo to Polish cinematic art, which is known around the world. We should be proud of its influence and its plentiful, new ideas and perspectives. Proud and happy that one more collaboration brought our mission to the forefront of the attending audiences, whether Polish or American.

— Eva Tumiel-Kozak



Meeting at the top — Guyasuta, Bodo Kox, and Washington

PCC Member Honored

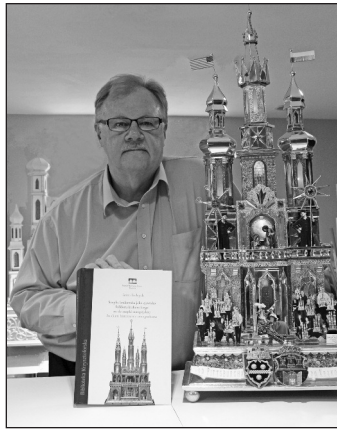
PCC board member David Motak, regarded as a noted expert on the szopka art form, has been appointed to a prestigious Polish commission which promotes Polish culture internationally among Polish youth. "Być Polakiem" ("To Be a Pole") is a world-wide initiative of the Polish government. Its purpose is to stimulate pride in Polish heritage among young Poles, by encouraging them to experience their Polish heritage through the arts. Być Polakiem sponsors a variety of programs in Polish communities around the world. It also holds an annual international competition in which young persons of Polish ancestry express their heritage through poetry, prose, and art.

The members of the committee are mostly native-born Poles; however, the Pittsburgh-based graphic designer and noted szopka artist was appointed to serve as a member of the organization's honorary committee because of his continued efforts to promote Polish culture internationally, and because of his programs for children and youth.

Since Dave launched his szopka art project in 2003, nearly 800 individuals, including children and families, have studied szopka making at Dave's workshops. They have been conducted locally and around the United States. Among these have been popular workshops at the Pittsburgh Children's Museum; at various Polish organizations; and for inner-city school children, which he has taught for the Polish Embassy in Washington, D. C.

Dave was asked to participate in the annual Award Ceremony for the 2013 "Być Polakiem" Competition at the Royal Castle in Warsaw in July, 2013. In addition to serving on the Być Polakiem initiative, Dave has also been featured recently in a newly-produced scholarly study of the szopka art form published by the City of Kraków History Museum. The work, "Szopka krakowska jako zjawisko folkloru krakowskiego na tle szopki europejskiej" ("The phenomenon of the Folklore of the Kraków Szopka within the Context of the European Nativity Tradition.") was written by Dr. Anna Szałapak, the leading European expert on this unique Polish art.

Dave met Dr. Szałapak in Kraków in 2004, when he was conducting initial



Dave Motak with the award-winning *From Pittsburgh to Kraków szopka*, and the recently published study of the szopka art form.

research for his szopka art project. At the time, Dr. Szałapak was the coordinator of the annual Szopka Competition in Kraków, and was curator of the extensive szopka collection owned by the City of Kraków History Museum. Because of this meeting, Dave met several distinguished Kraków szopka artists. These acquaintances paved the way for his apprenticeship with noted szopka master, Maciej Moszew, in 2008. The month-long apprenticeship was supported by the Pennsylvania-based Institute for Cultural Partnerships. Among other honors, Dave's contributions to Polonia and to the Pittsburgh region have been recognized by the Polish Cultural Council, who named him Polishman of the Year in 2012; by a special proclamation of the Pittsburgh City Council in 2011; and by the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's Work of Art Award in 2009.

The extensively illustrated, Polish language publication - literally an "encyclopedia" of szopka art - details the szopka's transition from a humble, rustic theatrical tradition into the modern, ornate constructions which are produced in present-day Kraków. The 500-page publication includes detailed information on all the leading szopka makers. Dave has been prominently included, with three pages of photographs of his work, which is accompanied by descriptive text, noting his contributions to the "international" szopka art scene. Samples of Dave's work can be viewed at his artist's web site: www.davidmotak.com.

The initiative met with a resounding success!

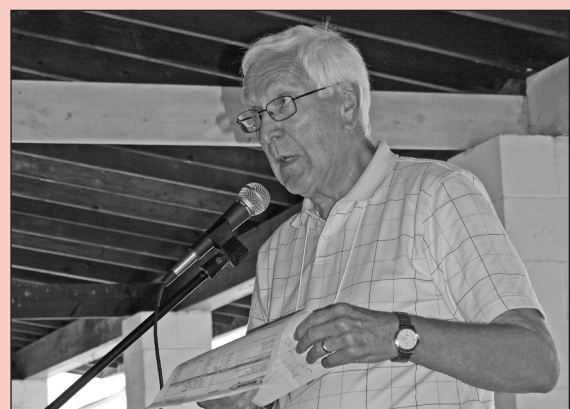
"We should do this again!" seemed to be the resounding call from many who attended the first "Volunteer Appreciation Picnic" and membership meeting on September 15th. Held on a glorious Sunday at the Croatian Center, a well-preserved picnic shelter tucked away in Millvale, more than 120 participants enjoyed a delicious pig roast catered by Remo's. Attendees shared home-made desserts and enjoyed the cheerful banter of bartender Andrzej Wojcieszynski! Perhaps he will share his new-found talents with us again at Ostatki on March 1st!

The afternoon began with an address by Deborah Majka, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland in Philadelphia, and the representative of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC). Since the PCC decided to be affiliated with the ACPC, Ms. Majka happily informed us that younger PCC members will be able to apply for various scholarships and benefits that the ACPC provides. Pittsburgh Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak of District 4 sat down with several of the PCC members while they enjoyed their meal, updating them on the latest "goings on" in city government. My husband Michael and I enjoyed her company and sense of humor very much!

continued on page 6



Deborah Majka addressing the crowd.



Joe Kaminski reporting ...

The initiative

(continued from page 5)

Rick Pierchalski, President of PCC, warmly welcomed everyone to the picnic. He spoke about PCC's mission and various programs that they offer. Joseph Kaminski reported on the profit made on the PCC picnic held in August at Kennywood Park. Foot-tapping music was provided throughout the day by accordionist Dave Dombrowski.

All in all, this first "Volunteer Appreciation Picnic" was a resounding success! Many thanks go out to Mary Lou Ellena, Dave Motak, Lorene Vinski, Evanne Addams, Terri Berger and her daughters, and Marysia Zioncheck and Rick Pierchalski for their efforts in planning what we hope will become an annual "Volunteer Appreciation Picnic"!

— Gerra Gembarosky



Ready for the delicious pig roast?



Wow! What a variety of food.



PCC members enjoying the day.

Duke and Fort Pitt on Tap?



Do you remember your parents or grandparents having a Duke or a Fort Pitt beer? Those brands went away many years ago; but, thanks to Polish American attorney Mark Dudash, Duquesne Beer is back. Look for Fort Pitt beer to return to your local distributors in the spring of 2014.

Duquesne Beer is an iconic brand with a storied history in Pittsburgh. Remember the enormous Duquesne Clock on the South Side's Duquesne Beer Brewery? It used to advertise Duke Beer with its Have a Duke marketing slogan. The clock is still there, but the former brewery is now a home for many local artists. Do you remember the pictures of the sashed Duke holding high his tankard of Duquesne beer? That logo, retired 42 years ago, is back. In 2008, Mark bought the brand names of both Duquesne Beer and Fort Pitt, and decided to revitalize the brands. In its first full year of operation, 2010, Duquesne Beer sold 14,000 barrels with the help of its master distributor, Frank Fuherer.

I asked Mark how the new Duke stacks up against the old. He feels that he brews a better beer. Mark imports hops from Slovakia and Germany. He buys the best two run barley, so that he can create an award-winning Pilsner. In 2011, Duquesne Pilsner beer won the 2011 blind taste test at the World Beer Cup in Chicago, which is sponsored by the renowned Seibel Brewery School.

Although Mark's Fort Pitt beer won't be released until this spring,

the beer will be very different from the Duquesne pilsner. The Fort Pitt beer recipe will go back to its historic beginnings as the first brewery west of the Alleghenies. Mark will be importing the same English hops which were used in 1765 at Fort Pitt. The beer will be of an English ale style, with a deep copper color, and a thick, dark brown head.

Mark grew up in Mt. Lebanon. He attended St. Pius School in Brookline. A Catholic education continued with attendance at South Hills Catholic High School; Duquesne University, for both his undergraduate and law degrees; and St. Francis, for a Masters in Labor relations. Mark and his lovely wife Maria have four grown children, two girls and two boys, with degrees in medicine, pharmacy and economics.

Last summer Mark and his wife took a trip to Poland. He was very impressed with the economy of Poland and with the resilience of the Polish people. As an amateur historian, he commented on the rebuilding of Warsaw, as well as on his love affair with the city of Krakow. He fondly remembers that he and his wife sat in Jan Pawel II's pew at the pope's church in Krakow. During their trip, he sampled many Polish beers, which he grew to respect because of their taste and the purity of their ingredients. He was impressed with the support of Poland for its regional breweries. He hopes to use that model in order to remake Duquesne and Fort Pitt breweries as powerhouses in regional brewing.

Speaking Polish-Piece of Cake

By Veronica Wojnarowski

With this issue, Polish Journey is initiating a new column about Polish language topics. We hope to entertain, teach, learn and enjoy. Any language-related issue is fair game, for example, word derivations, grammar, idioms, or phrases from historical events. If there is a topic of interest to you, please send us suggestions at: pccms@gmail.com. Our first article concerns some colorful, equivalent English and Polish idioms.

ENGLISH AND POLISH IDIOMS

Idioms are colorful phrases which are abundant in both Polish and English. Many of them are funny. Some are wickedly witty. Some are completely illogical, but convey their meanings anyway. They can refer to body parts, foods, colors, animals, or plants. Many take the forms of similes or imperatives. All of them are short, succinct ways to convey thoughts and to describe situations. Often their meanings cannot be derived from the individual words. Think about 'It's raining cats and dogs.' Water, not animals, falls from the sky, but we know what this idiom means: "It's raining really hard." For your enjoyment, here are some Polish and English idioms which have equivalent meanings.

How easy was that?

If you are asked this question, and if what you did was easy, English and Polish both have idioms for the answer. In both languages, the idioms at first glance seem illogical and both refer to food. In English, you could answer, 'Piece of cake!' In Polish, you could answer, 'To małe piwo!' (that's small beer).

So, what is easy about cake? Certainly not making it, especially if you are starting from scratch (an idiom for another column). Eating cake is easy. But the origin of this idiom lies elsewhere, in the

history of African Americans. At social gatherings, slaves would dance or circle around a cake, usually cornpone. The most graceful pair would win the cake. Thus, the word 'cakewalk' and the phrase 'piece of cake' describe a difficult task which is made to seem effortless. They are also used to mean easy. 'Piece of cake' first appeared in print in 1936, in Primrose Path, by the American humorist and poet, Ogden Nash. He wrote 'Her picture's in the papers now, and life's a piece of cake.'

What is easy about a small beer? Surely not making the beer. Drinking a small glass of beer would be easy. But, in the phrase "small beer" (not "a small beer"), the adjective small does not refer to the size of the serving. Rather, it refers to the concentration of alcohol in the beer, that is, very low. In Medieval Europe, people made small beer for sanitary reasons. Alcohol from fermented malt and the boiling water used to make beer were known to kill water-borne pathogens. Through the process of making small beer, polluted water was made safe to drink. Small beer was used for hydration, without consequent drunkenness, in households and by people engaged in heavy labor. Small beer was not regarded highly. There were more expensive beers, which had a higher concentration of alcohol, and which were used for festivities. Thus, "small beer" means a trifle, a thing of little importance.

Not everything is easy

In fact, things can go from bad to worse. We have idioms for this. In English, you "jump from the frying pan into the fire". In Polish, you go "z deszczu pod rynnę", "from out of the rain to under the gutter". The English expression can be traced back to a collection of fables, Hecatomythium, which was assembled by the Italian author Laurentius Abstemius in 1495. The fable tells of live fishes which are thrown into a pan of boiling fat. One of them advises his fellows to escape death by jumping out of the pan. Into the hot coals they go,

with predictable consequences. The anonymous author of Aesop at Oxford repeated this story in his fable Worse and Worse. The moral of the story is: "Don't escape a bad situation by choosing a worse one."

The Polish phrase, z deszczu pod rynnę, while using different images, has exactly the same feeling about it. You can get wet standing out in the rain. Better to stand under something. But if you stand under a gushing gutter, expect to be thoroughly drenched.

Facing two bad choices

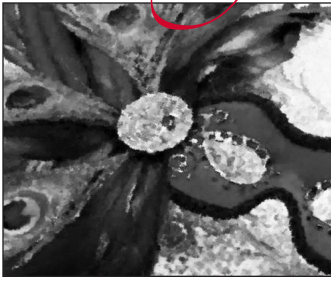
Sometimes, you have two courses of action, neither of which is likely to result in a good outcome. For this situation, in English we say that you are "between a rock and a hard place". In Polish, we say that you are "między młotem a kowadłem" (between a hammer and an anvil).

The English expression may have originated with the Bisbee Deportation. On July 11, 1917, 1,300 striking copper miners and others were illegally deported. A group of 2,000 vigilantes kidnapped the miners in the town of Bisbee, Arizona and held them captive at a baseball park. They were then transported by cattle car through desert heat without food and water. They were dumped in Hermanas, New Mexico, a small farming community of only 150 people. They had no money, transportation, or shelter. They were warned not to return to Bisbee. Rescued by US troops on July 14, the men had spent two days between the rocks of the mines and the hard place of Hermanas.

The Polish idiom is more straightforward. It refers to the metal which is sitting on the anvil and being beaten by the hammer. Ouch! Au!

Note: Historical and etymological information for this article comes from Wikipedia.

Through the Eyes of a Peacock



On November 16, 2013, The Circuit Center and Ballroom was overflowing with debutantes, escorts, and honored guests. It was the scene of the 21st Annual Bal Polonaise. The theme, "Through the Eyes of a Peacock", played heavily throughout the room. The centerpieces featured three-foot tall, artisan-crafted peacocks in the theme colors of blue and green. The peacocks were accented with genuine peacock feathers, tulle and ribbon.

Guests enjoyed a marvelous sit-down dinner, featuring prime rib and salmon. While they dined, they were entertained by the one hundred-member violin ensemble, The North Allegheny Strolling Strings. As guests dined, the Strolling Strings roamed the room, encircling the tables as they performed. Four members of the ensemble also participated as debutantes and escorts.

The high point of the evening was the presentation of the 2013 Debutantes. Each girl carried a single orchid, highlighted with peacock feathers and trimmed

with blue and green ribbon. After their presentation, they danced the Grande Polonaise, disguised behind sequined peacock masks for part of their performance.

The Polish Cultural Council is proud to announce the 2013 Debutantes and Escorts: Miss Allison Beck escorted by Christian Ford; Miss Julie Karabin escorted by Tom Cwalina; Miss Riley Kern escorted by David Antol; Miss Melissa Paterni escorted by Bradley Puskar; Miss Taylor Puc escorted by Patrick Duggan; Miss

escorted by Matthew Wisneski and Miss Haley Zaleski escorted by Eric Dunbar.

Immediately following dinner and the debutante presentation, guests were entertained by Canada's favorite band, John Gora and his orchestra. With a wide selection of musical styles, the orchestra packed the dance floor for every dance. After a break, the debbs and the escorts took the floor one more time, performing The Hand Jive, a number choreographed just for them.

ment of our volunteers. Planning begins a year in advance. Committee members dedicate countless hours throughout the entire year. The Polish Cultural Council extends our most sincere appreciation to Evanne Addams and Marie-Zielmanski Fallon, Co-Chairs of the event, as well as to the Committee Members Irene Addams, Janice Amend, John Bartus, James Clark, Chris Conly, Lillian Grindle, Kris Gutkowski, Anna Herold, Amy Havonec, Joe Kaminski, Ted Michalik,



Stephanie Rodak escorted by Sam Volosky; Miss Maura Saxon escorted by Greg Saxon; Miss Isabella Sedor escorted by Kevin Costello; Miss Jacquelyn Sinclair escorted by Stephen Harrison; Miss Rachel Sudo escorted by Jake Maisto; Miss Lauren Tedrick

The girls were lifted onto their escorts' shoulders, a group of the guys performed dynamic Gorale moves on the floor, and they brought the house down.

The continued success of the annual Bal Polonaise stems from the dedication and the commit-

Antoinette Mizgorski, Lisa Sasinoski, Melissa Snee, Maria Staszkiwicz, Frania Yakima-Urbaniak, Barbara Wally, Bill U Monica Zanieski and Marysia Zioncheck. Thank you! And we look forward to the 22nd Annual Bal Polonaise.



Debutantes and escorts pose for a photograph at the 21st Annual Bal Polonaise, Nov. 16, 2013.



Kącik Kulinaryny

Polish Culinary Corner

by Dave Motak

Around the world, February 14 is increasingly celebrated as a day of romance, love and affection. This is especially true in the British Isles and in North America, where the tradition of making, giving and receiving valentines has been a popular custom for generations. In Poland, the practice of celebrating St. Valentine's Day as a day for commemorating romance is relatively recent, actually, only over that past two decades. Traditionally, the Poles have regarded St. Valentine as the patron of individuals afflicted by severe diseases, including mental and nervous disorders as well as epilepsy. He is also regarded as the patron saint of the Diocese of Przemyśl in eastern Poland.

If you would like to observe St. Valentine's Day this year in a special "Polish" way, I offer the suggestion of fusing two Polish traditions, one relatively new and another rather ancient.

The making of pierniki — gingerbread cookies — has been a Polish custom since the Middle Ages. The Polish city of Toruń, birthplace of Copernicus, is particularly associated with this tradition. In an era when spices were particularly costly,

townsmen and landed gentry in old Poland stored their spices in special chests, for which the homeowner, his wife, or his chief steward had the only key. Spices were seen as a status symbol. Polish nobles enjoyed lavishly infusing as many spices into a recipe as they could afford, in order to demonstrate their wealth. This practice often resulted in dishes which were not always very tasty, but they certainly proved the host's affluence.

The practice of adding spices to baked goods, along with honey, dates back to ancient Slavic times; however, it was during the Middle Ages when Polish bakers began to prepare their pierniki in ornate molds which depicted official events, such as municipal anniversaries, battles and coronations. And, of course, hearts and loving couples were also extremely popular themes. These gingerbread cookies—many often were very large—were presented as gifts and/or hung in the home as sort of an old fashioned potpourri. The aromatic spices provided a pleasant aroma and testified to the homeowner's good taste and wealth.

Heart shaped cookies are often made and given in Poland at various times throughout the year, including dożynki (harvest festivals), religious festivals and carnivals, as well as on St. Nicholas Day.

I might suggest that, this year, rather than buying some expensive candy or purchasing a commercially printed valentine, you might consider trying your hand at making your own valentine-shaped pierniki. The recipe for the gingerbread is printed below. If you do not have a heart-shaped cookie cutter, you might wish to make a heart-shaped template from card stock (simply by folding it in half and cutting out the heart shape.) Then, trace the heart outline on the rolled out dough with a knife and transfer to your baking sheet. Once the pierniki are baked, you can decorate them with icing

(such as readily prepared pipe icing in various colors.) You can use your imagination for the design and perhaps include something written in Polish, such as "Kocham Cię" ("I love you") or "Dla Ciebie" ("For You"). This would also be a wonderful gift for Mother's Day, for which you could use the Polish sentiment "Dla Mamy" ("For Mom").

Ingredients:

2 large eggs
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon baking soda dissolved in 3 table-
spoons water
1 cup honey
3 cups all-purpose flour

Preparation:

In a large bowl, beat eggs with sugar until light and lemon-colored. Add the spices, baking soda-water mixture and honey. Mix well. Add flour gradually and mix until a stiff dough forms. Shape into a ball, wrap in plastic and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Heat oven to 400 degrees. On parchment paper cut to fit your baking pans, roll the dough to a thickness slightly over 1/4-inch. Cut into whatever shape you desire. Lift the parchment paper by opposite corners and place on the baking pans.

Bake for 10 minutes or until lightly brown around the edges. Let cool completely before icing. Store the pierniki in an airtight container until you are ready to wrap them for presentation.

Smacznego!



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Polish Cultural Council

WE NEED YOU AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT!

A growing membership is vital for the Polish Cultural Council to continue its important work.

An increasing and involved membership permits us to bring Polish cultural events that add quality to your life. Without membership growth, our various programs, such as Polish theatre, concerts, the Bal Polonaise or support of Polish composers on WQED-FM, simply cannot continue. If promoting Polish achievements in the arts and sciences is important to you, then please consider a family or individual membership. Individual membership is \$25; families: \$35; businesses or large organizations: \$125. The PCC seeks members who want to help in developing, planning, and executing ideas, that make a difference.

Our newsletter, the *Polish Journey*, keeps you informed on the who, the what, the where and the why of Western Pennsylvania Polonia. The *Polish Journey* brings you interviews with prominent western Pennsylvania individuals of Polish heritage, discussions of events still in the planning stages as well as a calendar of events, recipes and a column that deals with the lives of our local members. Joining is easy, but getting involved is the fun part.

Please call us at **412.871.3347** or send in the membership application today. Please remember, your contribution to the PCC is tax deductible and the membership is valid for one year, from January 1 to December 31.

Rick Pierchalski, President

Keeping Polish Culture Alive!

**Polish Cultural Council
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www.PolishCulturalCouncil.org**

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Miss Polonia 2014

The Polish Cultural Council is now accepting applications for Miss Polonia 2013. She should be a young lady age 16 or older of Polish descent. Miss Polonia will be crowned at Kennywood Park on Polish American Day, August 5, 2014.

For more information or to apply, contact Mary Louise Ellena at 412-855-8330, or visit our website at PolishCulturalCouncil.org.



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