

## Bobby Vinton Revisited



**Bobby Vinton**

Back in the early sixties, Bobby Vinton's music was heard on every radio station all day long. I especially remember, the Polish Prince's songs being played all at the public swimming pool that we frequented in New Kensington, Crystal Springs. Soaking wet, waiting for French fries and listening to Bobby Vinton.

There is no question that Bobby had a tremendous impact on our culture. Prior to the Beatles, he was the man with the number one hit before the Beatles took over the charts, but he still had more number 1 hits from 1962 to 1972 than anyone else. These hits included *Blue Velvet*, *Roses are Red, I'm Mr. Lonely* and *There I've Said it Again* to name but a few. He was one of the artists that headed to Branson Missouri as he got a little older and opened his own nightclub and retired in 2012. My mother and sister saw him there about 20 years ago.

He was a little schmaltzy, kitschy and sentimental in his song selection, but as I was recently watching a depiction of Bobby (whose real name is Stanley Robert Vintula) in the Scorsese's classic film *Goodfellas*, I began to think about his contribution to American music as well as his legacy, or how he will be remembered. In addition to his music, he is part of two classic American movies. In *Goodfellas*, which is an equally directed mob movie, is based on the real mob informant Henry Hill. The scene

opens when Hill and his girlfriend Karen, arrive at the Copa Cabana for a night out

on the town and are given royal treatment by the staff with a table for two at the front of the audience. The show at the Copa starts with comedian Henry Youngman and the scene progresses to Bobby Vinton singing to the audience. The actor playing Bobby Vinton (actually performed by Bobby Vinton's son Robby who lip synced the song) is singing *Blue on Blue* and as the scene progresses, Bobby sends over to mobster Henry Hill table a bottle of champagne, and, much to the amazement of Henry's girlfriend, gives Henry a sign of greeting. You can watch this scene by searching "youtube goodfellas Bobby Vinton." This scene puts Bobby in the middle

of the whole New York club scene in the early 60s and at the top of his game; the ladies adored him while he had the audience in the palm of his hand. Score one for Vinton in terms of cultural icon being included in Scorsese's iconic movie. Scorsese could have chosen anyone, Fabian, Sinatra but he chose Bobby Vinton and as representing an era.

Next, let's look at the movie classic, *Blue Velvet*. The great director, David Lynch, created an entire neo-noir film based on Vinton's song *Blue Velvet*.

The cast includes real Hollywood

stars with Isabella Rossellini, Dennis Hooper, Dean Stockwell and Laura Dern in starring roles. The movie

has become a cult classic and is considered one of America's greatest movies of the 80s. Score two for Vinton in terms as cultural icon.

Further, in 2005 rapper "Akon" telephoned Bobby to see if he could incorporate his recording of Vinton's *Mr. Lonely*, into a new rap song he was producing and Bobby consented. So now Bobby's music has transcended five decades and moved into urban legend. Score 3 for Bobby Vinton.

Of course we all love this western Pennsylvania native's *My Melody of Love* or as we know its lyrics...*moja droga ja cie kocham, means that I love you so!*

—Rick Pierchalski

**A MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT**

**Please Note:**

**A representative of the Polish Consulate General in New York will visit Pittsburgh in the second part of November 2016 (date to be announced), to accept applications for new and renewed Polish Passports.**

**Please call 412- 871-3347 or email [pccorg.ms@gmail.com](mailto:pccorg.ms@gmail.com) to schedule an appointment.**

## PAC Corner: Current Information

As some of you may know, the Polish American Congress was established in 1944 ([pac1944.org](http://pac1944.org)), as a voice for Polish Americans to counter propaganda from Communist-controlled Poland, and as a voice for Polish Americans and a free Poland. The Congress has been in continual existence since that time. It has helped Poland's entry into NATO. It has worked on various trade and monetary arrangements with the United States after the fall of communism. It is recognized in both the US and Poland as speaking for Polish Americans in the US. The Congress is organized by state, with some states having more than one division. For example, Pennsylvania has two divisions one in the west, of which Tim Kuzma is President and Maria Staszewicz is Vice President, and a division in the east.

During the week of October 14th through the 17th, the annual PAC meeting was held in Chicago. At this meeting, the bi-annual elections were held. In addition to the elections, there



were discussions about current events in Poland, and about the visa waiver status for Poland. There were reports from the Polish Agenda Committee and the American Agenda Committee. Financial and fundraising reports were also made. The Marshall of the Polish Sejm (Parliament) addressed the attendees.

The Polish Agenda report recounted that this August, the PAC held its first meeting outside of the US, in Poland, at the invitation of the city fathers of Rzeszów in the Podkarpackie region of southeast Poland. The meeting was a rousing success; PAC delegates received the warmest of Polish welcome and hospitality. They were addressed by high ranking members of the Sejm on the theme of business development.

On a final note the new national officers of the PAC include:

- Frank Spula, President
- Rick Pierchalski, First Vice President, from Western Pennsylvania
- Tim Kuzma, Secretary, also from Western Pennsylvania
- Debbie Majka, Cultural Vice President
- Mark Pienkos, Communications Vice President
- Bozena Kaminska, Vice President of the Polish Agenda Committee
- Professor Anthony Bidek, Vice President of the American Agenda Committee

If you would like further information on the PAC and want to get involved in the future of Poland, please view the website at [pac1944.org](http://pac1944.org) or call the offices of Sec. Timothy Kuzma at 412-922-2244.

—RICK PIERCHALSKI

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"The opinions expressed by authors do not always reflect the views of the PCC."

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# Piano Recital—Not to be Missed!

*The piano keys are black and white, but they sound like a million colors in your mind.*

—Mexican writer, Maria Cristina Mena

That's what we hope to evoke during the forthcoming piano recital of the famous Polish pianist Ewa Pobłocka. Ms. Pobłocka will perform works of Mozart, Schubert, Paderewski, and Chopin on **Friday, October 21, 7:30 PM** at the **Frick Fine Arts Auditorium**, the **University of Pittsburgh, Oakland**.

EWA POBŁOCKA is a world-renowned pianist, and one of Poland's most distinguished teachers. She is the laureate of many international piano competitions, including the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition, Warsaw, Poland; and the International Viotti Competition in Vercelli, Italy. She was the gold medalist of the International Festival of Young Laureates in Bordeaux, France. Pobłocka has performed throughout most of Europe, as well as in both Americas, in Japan, Singapore, Korea, and Australia. She has appeared in concert with many prominent orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Polish National Philharmonic Orchestra in Warsaw, the Polish Radio National



**Ewa Pobłocka**

Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, just to name a few. She has been broadcast widely and has recorded over 40 discs.

One can go on and on describing her many achievements, but her talent didn't just appear in a vacuum. Before she graduated from the Music Academy in Gdańsk and won the laurels of the international competitions, Ewa Pobłocka appeared in many concerts with her mother, soprano Zofia Janukowicz-Pobłocka, accompanying the masterpieces of the European vocal art. Today, Ewa Pobłocka can often be heard in a family Trio, with her multi-talented daughters, Ewa and Maria Leszczynski: mother is at the piano, the elder daughter sings soprano and plays the piano, and the younger daughter plays the piano, cello and saxophone.

Performing in various instrumental configurations, the Multi Trio always promotes Polish music, captivating enthusiastic audiences with their musicality and unique style.

The piano recital on October 21 is presented in partnership with the Polish Cultural Institute in New York. It is also supported in part by The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts through the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts. It is not to be missed! **To order tickets please send your check to: PCC, Box 81054, Pittsburgh, PA 15217, or buy online: PolishCultural-Council.org.**

—Ewa Tumiel-Kozak



**Multi Trio: Ewa & daughters**

## Three Rivers Film Festival —Polish Films.



This year, 3 RFF will be markedly different from previous festivals. The Festival is going through a transformation, and 2016 is a "transition year". 3RFF will open on November 16th and run for only five days. So...all you Film Fans: **Mark your calendars from November 16-20.**

**Each film will have only one screening!** As always, we try to present the newest and best of Polish cinema. We do not have a complete lineup yet, but the presentation of Polish films will include the hottest titles of 2016.

*The Last Family*, *Ostatnia Rodzina*, directed by Jan P. Matuszyński, tells the story of Zdzisław Beksiński and his family. Beksiński was a Polish surrealist painter who was famous for his eerie post-apocalyptic works. Most people outside Poland have never heard of this late-20th-century

painter. Even within the country, few people are familiar with the director Jan P. Matuszyński. Yet for those paying attention to international arthouse cinema, *The Last Family* should boost name recognition for both. *The film is not simply recreation, but rather an intimate portrait of three intertwined lives.* (*Variety*) This past August, *The Last Family* made its world premiere, in competition at the Locarno Film Festival (Switzerland). For his impeccable portrayal of Zdzisław Beksiński, Andrzej Seweryn, one of the most famous Polish actors, won in the Best Actor category.

*The Last Family* was also triumphant at the 41st Gdynia Film Festival in September. The film won all the top awards: Grand Prix-Best Film; Best Actor; and Best Actress.

**See you at the movies!**

# Happy Birthday, Tadeusz!

By Mary Lou Ellena

Kosciusko, Mississippi; Kosciusko, Missouri; Kosciusko County, Indiana; Kosciusko Island, Alaska; Kosciusko, Texas. Why do so many places in the United States and the world bear the name of Polish patriot Tadeusz Kościuszko? A name that is often mispronounced, usually misspelled and often unknown!

## A Special Year

This year, 2016, marks a special year for both Kościuszko and the United States of America. Not only is this year the centennial of the U.S. National Parks, but it is also the 270th birthday of Kościuszko. Kościuszko holds a small but prominent place of honor among our vast array of National Parks. Located in Philadelphia, the Thaddeus Kościuszko National Memorial is the smallest space managed by the National Park System. It is also the least visited. In 2015, only just fewer than 1300 guests stopped by the home of this son of liberty! Many people are unaware of its existence. Many others would be hard pressed to identify the accomplishments of this great man – even if they could pronounce his name!

## Military Accomplishments in America

Born in Poland in Mereczowszczyzna a town now part of Belarus, Tadeusz Andrzej Bonawentura Kościuszko actually embodies the ideals put forth by our founding fathers in our Constitution. In fact, Kościuszko was so impressed after reading our Declaration of Independence that he initiated a 30-year correspondence with its primary author, Thomas Jefferson. Thaddeus Kościuszko was an abolitionist, a skilled engineer, a military genius, who, at the request of General Horatio Gates, was the mastermind behind the British defeat at Saratoga. In 1776, he offered his military and engineering services to the colonial forces fighting for independence from Great Britain. The Continental Congress appointed him a colonel of engineers. He

designed and oversaw the building of fortifications to protect Philadelphia. He was commissioned by General George Washington to build military fortifications at West Point, which was an important defense point along the Hudson. He was given the rank of Brigadier General in 1783. To this day, Kościuszko occupies a position of honor on the campus of West Point.

## To Poland and Back Again

After he spearheaded an unsuccessful revolt in his native Poland against occupying Russia and Prussia, Kościuszko returned to his Philadelphia home in 1798. Here, he lobbied the new Congress for back pay and was a vocal supporter of the abolition movement. Kościuszko was paid in land and owned what is now Columbus, Ohio. Columbus was sold in the 1850s. The proceeds were used for an educational institute for African Americans. Kościuszko never returned to his beloved Poland. He remained in exile in the United States and Switzerland, where he died in 1817.

## Kościuszko's Will

Provisions of his will named his good friend Thomas Jefferson as executor. Jefferson was instructed to sell Kościuszko's holdings, and to use the proceeds to buy the freedom of slaves – including those held by Jefferson – and educate them to live independently. Unfortunately, Kościuszko's final request was never carried out as stipulated. Jefferson transferred his responsibilities as an executor to a friend. The subsequent discovery of multiple wills lead to law suits. The law suits ended with a Supreme Court Decision in 1856, which finalized the execution of the will nearly 40 years after Kościuszko's death.

## The Kościuszko Foundation

Today the life and accomplishments of Kościuszko are celebrated and promoted by the Kościuszko Founda-



Thaddeus Kościuszko

tion. Founded in 1925, it is a national organization with headquarters in New York City. The Kościuszko Foundation is dedicated to promoting educational and cultural exchanges between the United States and Poland, and to increasing American understanding of Polish culture and history. With eight regional chapters, including one in Pittsburgh, this membership-based organization promotes Polish art, culture and science throughout the United States. Every year, one or two scholarships for summer study in Poland are offered per region to eligible college-age candidates. Check the website for specific requirements and deadlines. The scholarship covers tuition, room and board and travel once the participant reaches Poland.

## Continuing Influence

Kościuszko quietly continues to influence life in the United States today through our American values of inclusivity, tolerance and acceptance; through continuing use of his U.S. military strategies in training at West Point; and through the work of the Kościuszko Foundation in the United States and in Poland. Happy 270th Birthday, Tadeusz! Thank you for helping to shape these United States of America! We will honor you again next year, as we commemorate the anniversary of your death in the Bicentennial Year of Kościuszko in 2017.



# *The Bal Polonaise is Back...and Interactive!*

Come to Grand Hall on November 12th! After a year's hiatus the Bal Polonaise is back in full swing. This year's theme **Muzyka! Muzyka!** will feature dancing and singing as a focal point of the evening. The night will begin with strolling musicians crooning for the crowds with your favorite Polish *koledy* for you to sing along, mixed in with popular obereks and polkas. Dinner entertainment will feature the always in demand North Allegheny Strolling Strings, an ensemble of 100 violinists strolling among the tables with violin music from the heavens. They are a Bal tradition you won't want to miss. Closing the last few hours with a dancing variety for all ages will be a DJ enticing all guests to get out of their seats and join in.

And since we are interactive this year, joining in is exactly what you can do by learning a dance in advance of the evening. Log in to our website [polishcultural-council.org](http://polishcultural-council.org) or visit our facebook page after October 16 and watch our dance video to the Four Seasons' get up and dance song, *December 1963, Oh What a Night*. Follow and learn the steps then join us one and all on the dance floor the night of the Bal, singing along with the words in the program. Oh What a Night it will be!

While you enjoy an endless evening of music, you can do your holiday shopping at our auction tables. Along with our usual variety of wonderful gifts, you will find beautiful heirlooms from the estate of Merle and Irene Addams. The Addams family has lovingly donated hundreds of items from Irene's fine collectibles. You won't want to miss these.



Food glorious Food! Appetizers while you're shopping, sit-down dinner selection of filet mignon or parmesan-encrusted chicken, scrumptious dessert and a special 10 o'clock light buffet featuring Polish delicacies. Come hungry.

As usual, the highlight of the evening will be the presentation of our Debutantes and Escorts, followed by the performance of the Grand Polonaise.

A night filled with something for everyone. If you are not on our mailing list, invitations will be available online at our website. You may also contact us at 412-871- 3347, or e-mail us at [pccorg.ms@gmail.com](mailto:pccorg.ms@gmail.com) to be added to our list.

Tickets are \$130 for members and \$135 for non-members. In addition to the endless food and music, included in

the ticket price is free parking and an open bar. Join us on November 12 at the lovely venue, The Great Hall, for a night of pure entertainment and fun. As so many of us know, Irene Addams was the heart and soul of Bal Polonaise. This year will be the first annual Bal in her honor. As she is no longer here to call you in person and invite you to this beautiful and fun-filled event, the Polish Cultural Council Board of Directors and the Bal Polonaise Committee request the honor of your presence at the Bal in her memory. Please come. Donations can be made in her honor as a thank you to her 23 years of passion and commitment to this event.



# NASZA POLSKA PRZYGODA (Our Polish Adventure)

By Susan and Matt Mancino

After participating in Polish language classes through the Polish Cultural Council, attending bi-weekly private tutoring lessons, traveling to Poland on a brief trip in the fall of 2014 as part of a conference in Jelenia Góra, we decided to put our Polish language skills to the test on a three and half week long trip this summer. This trip was made possible by our friend and gracious host, Józef, who invited us to stay at his farmhouse in Mała Kamienica, a small village near Jelenia Góra. Józef Zaprucki is also a professor at Karkonosze College in Jelenia Góra; he hosted the 2014 conference at his institution. Our friendship with Józef continued to grow during a visiting professor position at Duquesne University when he invited us to stay at his farmhouse.

During our twenty-eight day Polish adventure, we lived in the farmhouse where Józef was born and where he still regularly visits to raise his goats, sheep, and cows, and grow his potatoes and wheat. The farmhouse lies in the picturesque rolling hills of the Lower Silesia region, with views of the Karkonosze mountains. Each morning, we woke to the sounds of roosters crowing, cows mooing, and sheep baaing. As a mid-afternoon snack, we



**Susan and Matt at the Hel Penninsula on the Baltic Sea**

often shared the fresh cherries growing in the yard, accompanied by kielbasa, cheese, fresh bread, and pierogi from nearby shops. We spent our days visiting many attractions local to the Lower Silesia region, such as the Julita Crystal Factory, the Gerhard Hauptmann House, the Bolesławiec Pottery store, Góry Stołowe, and many local castles. We regularly visited the Jelenia Góra rynek, enjoying the restaurants, coffee, and even a summer theatrical festival. We also enjoyed outdoor activities, such as kayaking and hiking. To some, we are known as notorious Fitbit pedometer wearers. Needless to say, each day we easily surpassed 10,000 steps (approx. 5 miles) and

often reached 20,000-30,000 steps.

Our experience also extended beyond the Lower Silesia region. We took a four-day trip to Wadowice, Kraków, and Zakopane. On our way to Kraków, we toured Pope John Paul II's childhood home and ate his beloved kremówka papieska (cream cake) in Wadowice, visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, traveled beneath the ground to the Wieliczka Salt Mines, and explored the painted homes of Zalipie. In Kraków, we bought gifts for our friends and family in the Cloth Hall (Sukiennice), shot archery outside of Wawel Castle, strolled the Vistula River, and climbed to the top of the Trumpeter Tower at St. Mary's Basilica. In Zakopane, we tasted the oscypek sheep cheese before riding the Mount Kasprowy Wierch Cable Car. Not quite realizing what this journey had in store, we arrived at the 1985m summit in flip flops, a dress (Susan), and short sleeves (Matt) surrounded by people dressed in professional hiking attire from their hiking boots to their trekking caps. Although it was cold and we were underdressed, the scenery was breathtaking and a clear highlight of the trip!

On our second trip outside of Mała Kamienica, we ventured to the Baltic Sea and Hel Peninsula. Along the way,



**Mała Kamienica**

we stopped in Toruń to see Poland's leaning tower and the boyhood home of Nicolaus Copernicus; of course, we also were sure to buy several of the town's famous gingerbread cookies. We also toured the famous Malbork Castle (of the Teutonic Knights) and spent a day in Gdańsk, walking along the Długi Targ, digging for amber near the city's Amber Museum, touring the Crane, visiting the Monument to the Defenders of the Polish Post Office, and going to see the Monument of the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970. As we arrived in Jastarnia about halfway along the Hel Peninsula, we were met with cold weather, clouds in the sky, and downpours. The next day, however, brought sunshine and warmth that allowed us to wade in the Baltic Sea, and after a short walk, view the windsurfers gliding along the Gulf of Gdańsk. This experience was certainly another highlight to the trip.

However, our journey to Poland was more than just sightseeing—we were sure to practice our Polish-speaking competency! Throughout the trip, our understanding of and comfort with the language drastically increased. Early on in our trip, we ambitiously went on a tour, in Polish, of the Julita Crystal Glass Museum and found difficulty understanding the entirety

of the tour. As our trip continued, however, we practiced Polish daily and found new comfort speaking the language. We particularly enjoyed speaking Polish in restaurants. We found our waiters and waitresses kind and patient, offering helpful correctives such as when we asked for our check saying “Jesteśmy gotowi płakać (We are ready to cry),” rather than “Jesteśmy gotowi płacić.” (We are ready to pay) We all wound up having a good laugh!

Yet, by the end of the trip, Józef's son Konrad complimented the improvement of our language skills. For example, Konrad was impressed when we purchased a bottle of mead from the Bolesławiec Pottery store. We soon realized that the bottle was leaking. We were able to express the problem in Polish to our sales associate and successfully obtain a new bottle of mead. We also enjoyed listening to Radio Wawa, a radio station exclusively playing Polish music. We regularly listen to Radio Wawa in the United States and were thrilled to sing along with our favorite Polish songs by artists such as Sylwia Grzeszczak and Long & Junior on the radio.

As we reflect on our journey, we are grateful for Józef's hospitality and



**Kraków-Sukiennice**

generosity and for all of the experiences on *Nasza Polska Przygoda*. In our final weeks, we spent our time at meals discussing the itinerary for our next trip including all of the places we need to visit again and those places we were not able to see this time. We cannot wait to return to Poland and are excited to continue our study of the language and culture.

*Susan and Matt Mancino are Rhetoric students in a Ph.D program at Duquesne University. Matt serves as the Editorial Assistant for JACA: The Journal of the Association for Communication Administration and as an Assistant Production Editor for Listening: Journal of Communication Ethics, Religion, and Culture. He has presented papers at state, regional, and national academic conferences. Susan is a research and teaching assistant and editorial assistant for the Journal of Communication and Religion. She is the author of a number of essays dealing with communication ethics, philosophy of communication, and the intersections of communication and museum practice in national and international venues. Susan and Matt have a strong interest in Polish culture, history, and language; they have been studying the Polish language for over three years.*



**Zakopane**



# Speaking Polish – Piece of Cake

by Veronica Wojnaroski

## Miesiące Roku: the Months of the Year

*The Polish names for the months of the year are Slavic in origin, with the exception of maj, May, and possibly marzec, March. Their meanings showcase the predominant weather of the months, flora which appear (or disappear), or activities or items related to the farmer's calendar. Notice that, unlike in English, the Polish months of the year are not capitalized, except at the beginning of a sentence, a title, or a heading*

### Styczeń – January

The name of this month comes from the noun, *styk*, which means *a contact* or *a point of contact*. It is the time when the old year joins the New Year. The verb *stykać* means *to meet, to join, or to connect*. The reflexive verb *stykać się* means *to adjoin, or to adhere*. *Stykać się z kimś* or *z czymś*, means *to encounter someone or something*

### Luty – February

*Luty* is an Old Polish adjective which derives from Proto Slavic. It means, not surprisingly, *severe* and *fierce*. As a name for a month, it tells you that the weather in Poland in February, *w lutym*, is most unpleasant.

### Marzec – March

There are two possible sources for the name of the month of *marzec*: Slavic and Latin. The argument for the Slavic route is that *marzec* comes from the verb, *marznąć*, *to freeze*. Some scholars believe that *marzec* comes from the Roman God *Martius*, the god of war. In Polish, his name is *Mars*. The Romans resumed their military campaigns in March, using the name of the god of war to name the month.

### Kwiecień – April

*Kwiecień* is the blooming month, or, at least the month in which the earliest flowers appear. The name comes from the Polish word for *flower*, *kwiat*. *Kwiatek* is the diminutive form, *a little flower*. The place to buy flowers is the *kwiaciarnia*, the florist. A *kwietyk* is a flowerbed.

### Maj – May

*Maj* is the only month which clearly derives its name from Latin. It was named for *Maia*, the Roman goddess of growth and fertility. Her name means *She Who is Great*, and is related to Latin *maior*, meaning *more*. A Polish word, *majówka*, picnic, evolved from the word *maj*.

### Czerwiec – June

*Czerwiec* comes from the word *czerw*, *a grub* or *larva*. In June, *w czerwcu*, people collected the *czerwy* of bees or moths, dried them in the sun, and made a red dye from them. The verb *czerwienić się* means *to redden, or to turn red*. *Czerwień* is the noun which means *red*, and *czerwony* is the adjective. *Czerwony Krzyż* is the Red Cross. *Czerwony* used as a noun is a pejorative for a communist, *komunista*.

### Lipiec – July

*Lipiec* is named for *lipa*, the linden tree (*Tilia cordata*). This tree has fragrant yellow flowers in July, *w lipcu*. The linden tree has been beloved from pagan times. Gods were thought to live in linden trees, *w lipach*. Later, in Christian times, many legends sprang from the lipa tree, *od lipy*. *Lipa* is said to be the



favorite tree of the Virgin Mary. Many roadside shrines to her are placed under linden trees, *pod lipami*. Prayers offered at these shrines are said to have a good chance of being answered. Churches often plant linden trees on their properties, but only on the perimeters because the flowers attract honey bees, *pszczoły*. Linden honey, *miód lipowy*, is highly prized. The wax from the hives is used to make candles for the churches.

The flowers of the *lipa* are picked and made into a tea which is used as a remedy for symptoms of the common cold and for heart problems. An old linden tree, *stara lipa*, is not to be cut down, lest it bring bad luck to the feller and his family. While the tree is a vigorous and strong tree, its wood is mediocre. Thus, something which is described with the adjective *lipny* is of low quality.

Polish Renaissance poet, Jan Kochanowski, wrote a poem, *Pod Lipą* (*Under the Linden Tree*), which begins with *gościu, siądź pod mym liściem, a odpoczni sobie* (Dear visitor, please sit under my linden tree and relax).

### Sierpień – August

*Sierpień* derives from the word *sierp*, *a sickle*. The sickle is an ancient symbol of the harvest, and so, it gives its name to August, when the harvest, *żniwa*, begins. The sickle is one of the oldest agricultural instruments, dating back to 10,000 BC. Various made through the millennia from flint, clay and metal, it has a semi-circular-shaped blade with teeth on the inner side, and a wooden or metal handle. Before the mechanization of farm equipment, in Poland wheat (*pszenica*), hay (*siano*) and other grains (*zboża*) were harvested primarily by hand (*ręcznie*) with sickles (*sierpami*). Sickles are still in use for small harvesting jobs.

### Wrzesień – September

*Wrzesień* is the time of the blooming of the heather, *wrzos* (*Calluna vulgaris*). *Wrzos* is a low-growing, shrubby plant which blooms in September throughout the hillsides of southern, sub-alpine Poland, forming wide and dense mats. Its gray-green, evergreen foliage is attractive throughout the year, especially during the summertime growth period. However, the true glory of this plant appears in September, *we wrześniu*, when it explodes in a riot of pink and mauve aromatic flowers. Honeybees, *pszczoły*, are fond of the nectar, from which they produce *miód wrzosowy*, heather honey. This honey has a strong



aroma of the heather flower, is not overly sweet, and is slightly spicy and bitter. The honey from Dolny Śląsk in the Lower Silesian Voivodship, is called *Miód Wrzosowy z Borów Dolnośląskich*. Its name is protected by the European Union. By EU regulations, no other honey may use this name. (There are 57,000 beekeepers, *pszczelarzy* in Poland, tending to 1.4 million beehives, *uli*.)

### **Październik – October**

In October, *w październiku*, flax and hemp were harvested and threshed to remove seeds and fiber for food and clothing. The woody, waste bits were called *paździerz*. These bits were picked up by the wind and deposited all over the fields.

### **Listopad – November**

The name of this month comes from the combining of the noun for leaf, *liść*, and the verb for to fall, *padać*. In Old Polish, it was called *liściopad*. In November, *w listopadzie*, leaves are falling, *liście spadają*. *W listopadzie*, the first frosts, *mrozy*, will have come and temperatures, *temperatury*, are steadily falling, too. There is a sort of sadness or poignancy to this month's name, because it tells of an event which signals the coming of winter.

### **Grudzień – December**

If *listopad* is sad, *grudzień* is downright miserable. *Grudzień* comes from *gruda*, an old word of Proto Slavic origin, which means hard clod of earth. Nothing grows on the bare and hard earth. Last month, leaves fell. This month, snow falls, *śnieg pada*, and the wind blows, *wiatr wieje*. The season of Advent, *adwent*, is a time of prayer and anticipation, perfect for the atmosphere in December, *w grudniu*. Then, near the end of *grudzień*, we have the hopeful celebrations of the winter solstice and Christmas, and then the celebration of the New Year.

## **POLISH OLYMPIANS WIN 11 MEDALS; PARALYMPIANS WIN 39 MEDALS**



In its 21st appearance at the Olympic Games, Poland won big. Poland brought 242 athletes, 141 men and 101 women to Rio. There were Polish athletes competing in all sports. Eleven of them went home with medals.

### **OLYMPIC GOLD**

**Anita Włodarczyk**, women's hammer throw. Coming into the Olympics, Włodarczyk held the world's record in this event. She is the first woman in history to have thrown the hammer for more than 80 meters. Besting her own world record, she threw the hammer for a new world's record of 82.29 meters, more than 6 meters farther than her closest opponent, and closely approaching the records of some men in this event.

**Magdalena Fularczyk-Kozłowska** and **Natalia Madaj**, rowing, women's double sculls. Fularczyk-Kozłowska and Madaj kept a steady second place for most of this event. Then, in the last 100 meters of the race, they overtook the British rowers in a stunning upset, finishing in a little more than 7 minutes and 40 seconds, nearly a full minute before the Silver rowers.

### **OLYMPIC SILVER**

Piotr Małachowski, discus throw.

Maja Włoszczowska, bicycling, women's cross-country race.

Marta Walczykiewicz, rowing, women's kayak, 200 meter.

### **OLYMPIC BRONZE**

Wojciech Nowicki, men's hammer throw.

Monika Ciaciuch, Agnieszka Kobus, Joanna Leszczyńska, and Maria Springwald, rowing, women's quadruple sculls.

Rafał Majka, cycling, men's road race.

Karolina Naja & Beata Mikołajczyk, women's kayak double, 500 meter.

Monika Michalik, women's wrestling, 63 kg. category.

Monika Nowacka, women's modern pentathlon.

### **PARALYMPIC MEDALS**

Polish athletes at the Paralympics went home with a record-breaking 39 medals, including 9 gold, far too many for us to name here. Highlights include the setting of two new world records, by Ewa Durska in the women's shotput, and by Maciej Lepiato, in the men's high jump.

—*Veronica Wojnarowski*

## A Sweet History

### A Child's Drawing Evokes Memories

Strange how things happen. After a couple of years asking my family members, I could not find anyone who would agree to take possession of my maternal *babcia's* old treadle Singer Sewing Machine. Ordinarily, I would have donated it to Goodwill, but this family heirloom had survived the 1936 Johnstown Flood and was actually the only possession that our family had after the complete loss of their household during that historic event. But, just a few days ago, on September 12, I finally received a phone call from a cousin saying that she would take the old Singer. Before delivering it, I emptied the various drawers and compartments of over eighty years of stuff. Among the various artifacts I found a curious sketch of a chef holding a tray of what looked like croissant pastries. I had drawn the chef nearly 40 years ago and had completely forgotten about that particular art project.

After realizing what the drawing represented - and especially the date of my finding it - September 12 - I was immediately propelled to the year 1683 to stand alongside Polish King Jan III Sobieski and his famous winged Polish *Hussars* at the gates of Vienna. You see, September 12, 2016 was actually the 333rd anniversary

of this triumphant Polish victory that ended the Turkish siege of Vienna and saved European civilization from the invading Ottoman Empire. No amount of exaggeration can overestimate the importance of the Polish victory at Vienna in 1683. For hundreds of years the Turks had threatened European civilization; they had already conquered the Balkans and Hungary. Now at the gates of Vienna, they were poised to enter the heart of Europe. An immense military and economic powerhouse, the Polish Commonwealth had withstood this Turkish encroachment. Sobieski's defeat of the Turks was so sudden and overwhelming that the Poles secured a massive amount of Turkish arms and other materials, including the entire Turkish encampment. The Grand Vizier's spectacular tent is now on display at the Wawel Royal Castle in Kraków. The victorious Polish King was celebrated across Europe as a living legend in art, music, poetry and literature. His great victory was also acclaimed in food. For certainly, where Poles go, food - particularly *good* food - quickly follows!



**King Jan III Sobieski**

### Vienna's Most Prized Beverage

In addition to King Sobieski and his Hussars, there were other "heroes" of the Battle of Vienna. One was a Polish soldier of fortune, Jerzy Kulczycki, who, during the siege of the starving city, volunteered to slip behind the enemy lines, dressed as a Turk, in order to secure reinforcements. After contacting Austria's allies, Kulczycki returned to the city with a promise of imminent relief. Although the city was close to capitulation, because of that information, the Vienna city council decided not to surrender to the Turkish forces. The story goes that, after liberating the city and searching the Turkish encampment, the Polish army found vast sacks of strange beans which they initially thought were camel feed. They decided to burn the sacks. As a reward for his heroic service, Kulczycki was given his choice of anything he wanted. To the astonishment of King Sobieski and the Viennese, the Pole asked for the beans. In some of the fields, the beans had already been set afire and Kulczycki recognized the tantalizing aroma as that of the black drink that he had enjoyed while making his way as a spy through the Turkish camp. King Sobieski himself presented Kulczycki with the enormous amounts of these beans seized from the Turks. Kulczycki roasted the beans, made them into a beverage and eventually opened Vienna's first coffee house. To please the delicate Viennese taste buds, he blended the coffee with honey and cream, creating the famous Viennese version *mit schlag*.

The Viennese soon forgot about the great deed done by the Poles in saving their city, but they did not forget Jerzy Kulczycki. Until very recently, every year in October a special "Kolschitzky" Feast was orga-

nized by the café owners of Vienna, who decorated their shop windows with Kulczycki's portrait. Although there are no statues of King Jan Sobieski in Vienna, Kulczycki is memorialized with a statue on Vienna's *Kolschitzky Strasse*, the street which honors his memory.



**Polish Postage Stamp honoring Jerzy Kulczycki**

### A New Pastry

So what about my little pastry chef? That is another culinary hero of the Battle of Vienna, although his name has long been lost to history. The story goes that, during the tense hours of the Turkish siege, during the wee hours of the morning, a baker was preparing bread dough in a bake shop near the city walls. He noticed that his puffed-up dough began to quiver and shake in the bowl. Then, listening intently, he heard the muffled sound of picks and shovels. Guessing that the Turks had started to mine the city walls, the baker alerted the city militia and the Turkish assault was repulsed. Like Kulczycki, the Viennese baker was also rewarded for helping to save the city and was promoted to a coveted

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

### New Shapes for Bread

Although the Viennese did not show tremendous gratitude to King Sobieski and the Poles for liberating their city (after all, the Austrians participated in the Partitions of Poland only a short time later), the rest of Europe did. Sobieski was celebrated in art and literature as well as in food. At the time, it was the custom of bakers to commission specially carved gingerbread molds to commemorate significant occasions and special events such as national holidays and coronations. Many prominent bakers in Europe made large commemorative gingerbread figures depicting the triumphant Sobieski atop his steed, trampling the defeated Turks beneath. Fortunately, a few of these wooden molds have survived in museum and private collections. In addition, European bakers began using metal molds resembling the Turkish turban. These types of ornate molds are still used today and are called “Turk’s heads” and they are often used for baking Polish *babka*, that sweet Polish pastry/bread which itself has some heavy Eastern influences including the inclusion of saffron, raisins, exotic nuts, citrus rind and other ingredients which came to

Poland from Turkey and the Middle East.

Another piece of gastronomic lore associated with the Polish victory in Vienna has endured down through the ages. As the story goes, King Sobieski was the first Polish king not to confirm the royal decree of 1496 that mandated that only guild members from Kraków’s baker’s guild could produce white bread and *obwarzanek* rolls (whose name derives from a word meaning “to parboil.”) Although Poland was the breadbasket of Europe, until Sobieski’s reign, Jewish bakers were banned from such guilds and hence banned from baking within Kraków’s city limits. With the King’s decision, Jewish bakers could finally bake bread within the confines of the city walls. When Sobieski saved Europe from the Turkish invaders, to celebrate this great victory and to honor their King, one of the Jewish bakers created a roll in the shape of the king’s stirrup and called it a *beugel* (the German word for stirrup), which ultimately evolved into the modern *bagel*. Whether or not the story is true, Kraków is actually the historic birthplace of both the bagel and the *obwarzanek*, which has recently been designated as one of the European Union’s protected regional foods and can only be produced in Kraków and Wieliczka counties.

It is interesting how conflict often produces unexpected results. In this case, the clash of Western and Eastern civilizations resulted in some tasty outcomes. October is Polish Heritage Month. So, the next time you pour yourself a morning cup of steamy hot coffee and enjoy a croissant, a bagel or even a slice of rich Polish *babka*, celebrate your heritage by remembering good King Jan and the brave Polish *Hussars* who helped bring these culinary classics to your table over three hundred years ago. *Smacznego!* —Dave





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## Kościuszko Foundation Honors PCC Member

At a luncheon on September 17, at the Doubletree in Greentree, the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Kościuszko Foundation honored CMU Professor Krzysztof Matyjaszewski as Outstanding Polonian for his work in the scientific community. Dr. Matyjaszewski was presented with a plaque acknowledging his contributions to humanity and his positive impact on the image of Poles throughout the world. The Pittsburgh Chapter also presented him with a painting by artist Jim Sulkowski of the village of Petrykozy, Poland, a place dear to Krzysztof and his wife Małgorzata. Matyjaszewski received citations from Pittsburgh Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, and other state and local officials. September 17 was designated as Krzysztof Matyjaszewski



**Dr. Matyjaszewski with wife Małgorzata Matyjaszewska flanked by the Board and Officers of the Kościuszko Foundation, Pittsburgh Chapter**

Day in Pittsburgh. Flanked by 80 guests, Dr. Matyjaszewski mesmerized the audience with an overview of his work with polymers. The Officers and Board of the Pittsburgh Chapter

of the Kościuszko Foundation hosted this annual event.

—Mary Louise Ellena, President,  
Pittsburgh Chapter