

PCC Polish Journey

Newsletter of the Polish Cultural Council • Vol. 21 • Spring/Summer 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I'm happy to focus our light on the recent and very successful Ostatki 2023. The Ostatki Committee, chaired by Marysia Zioncheck, was responsible for every aspect of the event, and there were many. While the celebration was on a two-year COVID hiatus, it took a greater than normal amount of effort from all of our volunteers to restart the event. The result was an Ostatki celebration pulled off without a hitch. I would like to congratulate our executive director, Maria Staszkievicz for finding such an impressive new venue, one that worked perfectly. In addition, we were honored to have the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York, Adrian Kubicki. He made himself available to all of our members

and we were all impressed. Often overlooked, but not forgotten, are those who contributed to the success through gifts. I need to mention Maria's son Tomasz Skowronski and Kate Lasky, owners of the award-winning restaurant Apteka, for donating the dinner packages as part of the auction. These were highly sought after and created a nice contribution to our organization. Thank you, Tomasz and Kate. And also a thank you goes out to Basia Zawadzki and Jerry Itzkoff for their annual pączki contribution.

Our turnout was good and as I walked around the room, there seemed to be a general satisfaction with the evening. Hopefully we can build upon this success for next year and increase

our participation to capacity. The event has become iconic and is synonymous with the PCC. Could there be other ideas or events we can create to further involve our membership? I'm sure. I think we all need to be thinking about this as we have come to expect the unexpected from our talented committees. Last year, Evanne Addams introduced the wreath ceremony, combined with a picnic, again, another event that our members participated in and loved.

As we come into the spring and summer months, let's keep an open mind as to things that we may wish to create. We more than welcome any ideas from our membership.

—Rick Pierchalski

Accolades for Pittsburgh's APTEKA Restaurant

In recent months Pittsburgh's own **Apteka** restaurant in **Bloomfield** has been winning praises and award nominations. Apteka is owned by co-chefs and co-owners **Kate Lasky** and **Tomasz Skowronski**. Tomasz is the son of PCC Executive Director, Maria Staszkievicz and her husband, Marek Skowronski. The restaurant's menu is based upon Central and Eastern European fare and is

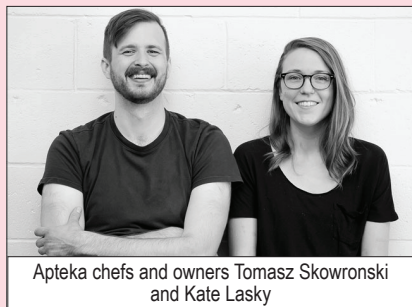
entirely vegan.

First opened in 2016, Apteka was lauded in 2018 by the restaurant review site, **Tripadvisor**, as one of the best places to eat in Pittsburgh. With their reputation growing for excellent and unique cuisine, in September, 2022, Apteka was listed in the **New York Times Restaurant List, 2022**, subtitled, **50 places in America we're excited about right now**. The list is compiled by food reporters, reviewers and critics. They wrote: *The twist at Apteka is that the food is vegan: the thrill is that you won't notice anything missing and added that the co-owners and life partners, Kate and Tomasz, build depth, texture and flavor with fermentation, ingenuity (don't miss the celeriac schnitzel) and cultured nut milk as lush as crème fraiche.*

In March, 2023, Apteka moved from a semi-finalist to a **finalist in the 2023 annual award for Best Chef, Mid-Atlantic** by the **James Beard Foundation**. Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the foundation said, *The James Beard Awards celebrate outstanding achievement and exceptional culinary talent, as well as all those doing incredible work on behalf of our communities and wider food system. This year's nominees, winners and honorees are inspiring exemplars of that.* The nonprofit James Beard Foundation was established more than 30 years ago, to celebrate, support and elevate the people behind America's food culture. The first awards were given in 1991.

All of us at PCC happily congratulate the young chefs of Apteka for their terrific achievement!

Życzymy dalszych sukcesów!!!



Apteka chefs and owners Tomasz Skowronski and Kate Lasky

The Masters of Water and Beetroot Confiture by Magda Rybka

In the beginning of March, we set off on our annual bird-watching expedition. We used to make our observations by the banks of the Bug or the Narew Rivers. This year, however, we fancied the banks of the Włocławek Reservoir on the Vistula River. We watched some busy ducks and swans, listened to the screams of cranes, and caught sight of a few proud pheasants. Nothing out of the ordinary. Anyway, since the weather was windy and hostile on that day, we quickly decided to head home. Then we suddenly realised that we were very close to **Wiączemin Polski**. We remembered that this village hosts a relatively new branch of the Płock Museum, namely: **the open-air museum (skansen) of the Vistula settlement**. This interesting, though small, exhibition is devoted to the Olender people who settled in the region of Masovia by the Vistula River. Wiączemin Polski is located about 100 km west-northwest of Warsaw.

At this historical moment, when we are witnessing a growing wave of national chauvinism and the rise of far right parties, it is really nice to look back to the times when people in our area seemed to be more

Outgoing Board member, Timothy Kuzma

This year Timothy Kuzma, President and CEO of the Polish Falcons of America, has resigned as a long-time member of the PCC Board of Directors. Our thanks and appreciation for his support and his contribution to the mission of the organization. Wishing him lots of success in his important endeavors.

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

Rick Pierchalski, President;

Maria Staszkiwicz, Executive Director,
pccorg.ms@gmail.com;

Eva Tumieli-Kozak, Editor-in-Chief;

Veronica Wojnarowski,

Maria Staszkiwicz, Editors;

Kasia Goszcz-Bruniany, Graphic Artist;

Mary Seamans, Graphic Design;

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A house in Wiączemin Polski

tolerant, hospitable and pragmatic. So we easily agreed that it was a good idea to visit the skansen. It is small, but the story this site tells is fascinating. I must also say that the three guides who showed us around and explained the function of each building and the artifacts were very passionate and knowledgeable.

The word *Olęder/Olender* describes two groups of settlers. First, it relates to settlers from Friesland and the Netherlands on the whole. These people were often Mennonites, who, in the 16th and 17th centuries, settled in Royal Prussia, along the Vistula and its tributaries, in Kujavia, Masovia and Wielkopolska. They possessed knowledge of flood control and had a well-developed agrarian culture. At that time, they were the wealthiest group of peasants. They maintained personal freedom, and their own religion and beliefs.

Later, the term *Olędrzy* referred to settlers of different ethnicities who also benefited from similar privileges, such as personal freedom, long-term or perpetual use of land, and the possibility of transmitting land



Inside a House

to heirs. The most important characteristic, however, was collective responsibility of the entire Olęder community for its obligations toward the land owner and the specific character of the community's self-government. In 1624 the Dutch reached as far as Warsaw, where they settled, for example, on Saska Kępa. I learned to my surprise that Saska Kępa used to be called Holland.

These guests were often invited and welcomed by landowners, because they were able to bring valued profits and benefits for the whole area. They frequently settled in the wetlands, which were inaccessible for other farmers because the wetlands were seasonally flooded. They were highly skilled in melioration works and knew how to control the rivers. They were also talented and hardworking craftsmen and food producers. Their cheese and fruit preserves were famous and popular. No wonder that there were about a hundred Olender settlements founded in Poland. Apart from trade and economic exchange with local people, the newcomers rather kept to themselves. They formed closely-knit religious communities centered around the place of faith. The Mennonites, especially, lived according to the rules of modesty and duty to God and to the community. Their sense of obligations, know-how, and hard work ensured them a relative well-being and brought high income for the landowners. I have not found any evidence of violence towards Olenders; although I conjecture that there must have been much envy towards these

well-off and free peasants, while the majority of the village population was serfs.

The open-air museum of the Vistula settlement in Wiączemin, Polski is one of two open-air museums in Poland devoted to the Olender settlements on the Vistula and the only institution of this type in Masovia. The official opening of the skansen took place on October 14, 2018.

There are two Olender farms, a church, a school, a cemetery and the so-called Polish house. We also saw woven wicker fences, which were designed to slow down the outflow of water, *terpy*, which were artificial hills on which buildings were located, so that they would not be so easily flooded. There is also a retention pond which holds and distributes rain runoff, which in turn prevents flooding.

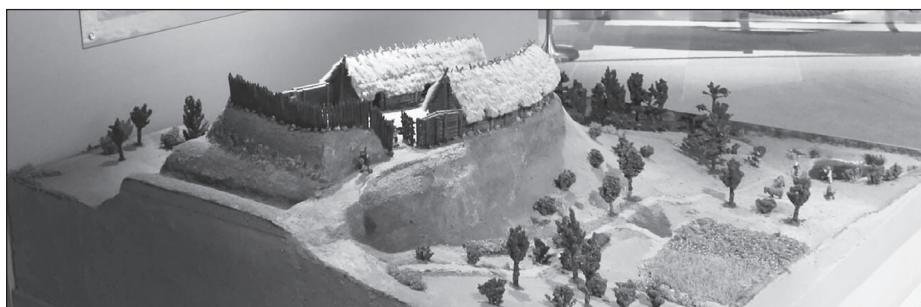
The central point of the museum, visible from afar, is the church, also located on a *terpa*. It was built in 1935 and, until 1945, it was used by the local people of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession. The former school building nearby was also used by local people until 1945; the teacher, the *cantor* lived and taught in the school. The church was designed by a member of the Rinas family living in Wiączemin. On the walls inside the church you may find many old photos and a great deal of information about the history of the community.

Next to the church building there is an old school which also functioned as a vicarage. It was probably built in 1901; the date on the wall indicates this. Adolf Pletz was



A langhoff in Wiączemin Polski

the last pre-war teacher. After the Second World War, the building was still used for teaching purposes and as a teacher's flat. In this building we can visit a classroom furnished with old school benches. Actually, I remember similar benches in my primary school. They had a special opening for a jar of ink. Also, if you are lucky, there you



A Village Model

can meet a mysterious red cat who shall not escape your caresses. I couldn't listen to the guide because my whole attention was focused on this huge, purring monster.

A single-building farm perfectly illustrates the idea of traditional Olender construction in the form of a *langhoff*, a long and narrow building. This structure brings together the space occupied by people, a cowshed with a stable, storage rooms, and a barn and, in this case, a multifunctional annex. It must have been quite a convenient arrangement during the rain and floods because it guaranteed easy communication between all of the rooms without leaving the building. It must have also been good for the animals that could easily be heard and looked after. The residents had at their disposal a huge attic space, which they could use in the case of high water. In the home, the original paint colors and the original wallpaper have been recreated.

On the left side of the road, there is a farm which consists of three buildings – a house with a cowshed, a chamber for making confiture, and a barn. The core of the homestead is a house in which the residential part is connected to the barn; this allowed easy access to animals during flooding. The house was built in 1889 and was relocated from the village of Białobrzegi on the other side of the Vistula.

The next and rather small building made of red brick combines several functions. There is a fruit dryer with an interesting heat circulation system, a smokehouse, and an oven for cooking beetroot confiture. Inside you can admire interesting equipment such as a copper confiture boiler, cylindrical barrels for transporting dried fruit or an old press for squeezing beetroot juice.

There is also a free-standing, wooden barn, which was built at the beginning of the 20th century in the village Piotrkówek, 7

km away from the open-air museum. You will see there a cart typical for the local Olenders, the so-called *żelaźniak*, as well as a carpentry workshop. I have heard that in warmer seasons the museum organises some educational workshops for learning skills needed by the Olenders, such as squeezing beetroot juice, which is probably fun for the kids.

The history of Polish – Olender coexistence inevitably ended with the outbreak of WWII. Many inhabitants of Olender villages were automatically enlisted in Wehrmacht forces. That, together with the strategy of the People's Republic of Poland of forceful uniformisation of the country population, made them no longer welcome in Poland and led to the mass emigration of Olenders in the period after the war.

Still, this is a very interesting chapter in history and definitely worth remembering. Now, we are left with these characteristic long buildings and countless Polish villages gifted with the name *Holendry*. A visit to this open-air museum may invite awe for these hard-working, industrious and skillful people, who knew how to cope with a difficult environment and collectively sought to solve all difficulties. It may also, however, cause us to reflect upon our relationship with the surrounding world and our attitude to ecology. Should we really insist on transforming the world according to our needs, or should we rather adjust and respect what we encounter? The idea of drying the marshes does not seem as wise today as it did a few centuries ago. It is much wiser to let the river flow.

Useful links:

<https://muzeumplock.eu/en/wystawa-stala/the-open-air-museum-of-the-vistula-settlement-in-wiaczemin-polski/>

https://www.historiaposzukaj.pl/wiedza.historiomat,1756,historiomat_olendrzy_w_polsce.html

The Language of Flowers in Polish – Język kwiatów po Polsku

As is the case the world over, in Poland flowers (*kwiat*, sg., *kwiaty*, pl.) and herbs (*ziele* sg., *ziola*, pl.) can tell a story. The language of flowers in Poland is not as elaborate as was the scheme for communicating via flowers in Victorian England. Some meanings trace their roots to pre-Christian folklore, when the forest was a sacred place. Herbs were used extensively in traditional medicine. Some were believed to ward off evil or to summon good. In Poland flowers are abundant at all celebrations and many of them convey meaning by the ways which they are used.

Some floral and herbal words

Both words, *kwiat* and *ziele*, are derived from proto-Slavic. In addition, *kwiat* comes from the same Proto-Indo-European word from which we get the English word *white*.

kwiatowy	floral
kwietnik	flowerbed
kwiecisty	flowered
kwiaty cięte	cut flowers
bukiet kwiatów	bouquet of flowers
kwaciarnia	floral shop
kwiecień	April
miód ziolowy	herb honey
zioloterapia	herbal therapy
zielarstwo	herbalism
ziololecznictwo	herbal medicine
ziolowy	herbal

Giving flowers as gifts

Giving gifts of flowers has always been a part of Polish culture. Flowers are appropriate and appreciated gifts (*prezenty*, *upominki*) for birthdays (*urodziny*, sg. & pl.), namedays (*imieniny*, sg. & pl.), hospital visits (*wizyty u kogoś w szpitalu*), Mother's Day (*Dzień Matki*), and Women's

Day (*Dzień Kobiet*). Children (*dzieci*) bring flowers to their teachers (*nauczyciele*) at the end of the school year. To arrive at the home of friends or family without a hostess gift (*prezent dla pani domu*) is considered not polite (*niegrzeczność*). While pastries (*ciastka*), chocolates (*czokoladki*), or a bottle of wine (*butelka wina*) are fine hostess gifts, flowers are the best choice.

In old times, it was not considered appropriate to bring red or white flowers or yellow chrysanthemums. Red flowers represent romantic love (*romantyczna miłość*); white flowers represent purity (*czystość*); yellow chrysanthemums (*żółte chryzantemy*) are reserved for funerals (*pogrzeby*). Some popular flowers are roses (*róże*), gerberas (*gerbery*), carnations (*goździki*), wildflowers (*polne kwiaty*), flowers of the fields, and tulips (*tulipany*). Ferns (*paprocie*) and other greenery (*zielone dodatki do kwiatów*) can be included. Flowers should be of an odd number, because an even number is considered bad luck (*pech*), and they should be unwrapped. Every town center (*rynek*) has flower stalls (*stoiska z kwiatami*), where inexpensive, beautiful and abundant flowers can be found.

Flowers and herbs for romance, engagements and weddings

In Poland, as elsewhere, the red rose (*czzerwona róża*) is the ultimate symbol of romantic love. You can expect to get these flowers on Valentine's Day (*Walentynki*), from your sweetie (*ukochanego, ukochanej*). The daisy (*stokrotka*) can be used to determine if you are loved by someone. Much as we chant in English as we pick off the petals of a daisy, "He loves me, he loves me not", the Polish countdown is:

kocha	loves me
nie kocha	loves me not
serdecznie	sincerely
statecznie	sedately
bardzo malo	very little
wcale nie	not at all



Some flowers and herbs have in the past, (and especially in the countryside) been associated with virtuous young maidens who are of a marriageable age. In the traditional countryside, young unmarried young women wore wreaths (*wianki*) made of white flowers and greenery as a symbol of virtue. These differentiated unmarried women from married women. Women who had had a child out of wedlock were forbidden to wear these wreaths. Rue and rosemary (*ruta i rozmaryn*) were grown in country gardens as a sign to eligible bachelors (*kawalerowie*) that marriageable daughters lived in the house. Once engaged, a man would wear a sprig of rosemary in his hat.

In the countryside, myrtle (*mirta*), rosemary, lavender (*lawenda*) and rue were included, along with flowers,

especially the red poppy, in the elaborate wreathes (*wianek, wianki*) worn by brides at their weddings (*ślub, śluby*).

Lavender and myrtle are usually associated with love, and rosemary with fidelity (*wierność*). The wreathes as a whole are associated with girlhood and innocence. Following the wedding, the wreathes were removed in a ceremony called *oczepiny*.

Uses in folk medicine

Elderberry (*dziki bez czarny*) has been used for centuries to combat colds and flu and to protect the immune system; in addition, flowers of the elderberry which were picked on St. John's Eve were said to have greater medicinal powers. Also on the Summer Solstice, people who threw wreathes of mugwort (*bylica*) onto fires were said to be safe from illness for 12 months. It was said that illness runs like a witch from garlic (*czosnek*), *Ucieka jak czarownica od czosnku*. Lemon balm (*melisa*) makes a calming tea. St. John's wort (*dziurawiec*) is great for the health of your liver and for anxieties. Oregano (*oregano*) helps to protect you from colds. Loveage (*lubczyk*) was used as a remedy for a sore throat or a toothache.

A special flower

The red poppy (*czzerwony mak*) is the national flower (*kwiat narodowy*) of Poland. Also known as the corn poppy and the Flanders poppy, *czzerwony mak* is native to



Poland and to Europe, where it grows easily in both cultivated gardens and in the wild; it flourishes in fields of cereal grains, such as wheat or corn. During and after World Wars I and II, fields that had been disturbed by battle bloomed with red poppies; the flower has become a symbol of those wars. When used in wartime commemorations (*uczczanie pamięci poległych*), red poppies represent patriotism and also respect and solemnity for fallen soldiers. Red poppies are worn on lapels for *Remembrance Day*, November 11, which is also Poland's Independence Day. Specially cultivated poppies have edible seeds, eaten on Christmas Eve, for good luck in the coming year. They are used in the Polish poppy seed cake, *makowiec*.

For further reading

There is much more to be learned about the language of Polish plants, their symbolism, their traditional medicinal uses, and the importance of various trees. Sophie Knab's book *Polish Herbs, Flowers & Folk Medicine* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1995) was very useful for the writing of this article. (You may remember Sophie Knab from her visit to PCC in 2018, when she discussed her book, *Wearing the Letter P* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 2016). The website culture.pl was also useful.

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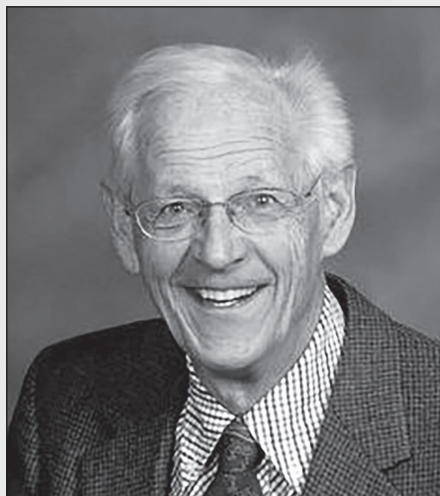
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Professor Tadeusz Bronisław Massalski 1926-2022 – In memoriam

by Marek J. Drużdżel, *Professor Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh*



Professor Tadeusz Bronisław Massalski

When asked about his exemplary health condition in his 90s, Tadeusz would usually say with a mischievous smile on his face that the most important decision that one makes in life is the choice of parents. He certainly chose his parents wisely. Massalski (of the city of Mosalsk) is one of the oldest Polish princely families, a cadet branch of the Rurik dynasty of Kievan Rus', one of Europe's oldest royal houses.

The mischievous smile and an immortal young boy's spark in his eyes were what I will always remember. Somewhere, deep inside, there was a curious child in him, even though he was a mature man, both in terms of his looks and his achievements. When joking about his choice of parents, Tadeusz was being modest by not mentioning many important decisions that he actually did make in his life and that were not as effortless as the choice of parents. Some of these were respect for education, knowledge, and wisdom, the courage to make a change, not shying away from hard work, leading a healthy natural life style that included strenuous physical work around his six acres garden, forming and nurturing his family and friendships, and valuing his Polish ancestry. Even though he left Poland at a young age and spent most of his life in English-speaking environments, he felt Polish and spoke Polish nearly perfectly at the age of 96.

Life was not easy on him. Born in Warsaw in 1926, at the age of 16 he left at

less than 24 hours' notice of the nightmare of German occupation of Poland with the help of family friends in the Polish underground. The passage included a night stroll through a minefield on the German-Swiss border. The Swiss cheated him of his family funds – the bank falsely claimed that the account number that he had presented was incorrect. On his own and without a penny, he joined the Polish Army in exile, pretending to be older than he really was, and served first in France and then in Italy. When the war ended, he wanted to pursue a university education. A “minor” problem was that he did not have an Italian high school diploma. He had not a single school diploma for that matter, as all of his education up to that point was through private tutors. This would not stop him.

With his knowledge of Latin, he learned Italian well enough to pass the matriculation exam and to begin his studies at the Royal Polytechnic of Turin (*Reggio Politecnico di Torino*). Some sixty years later, when accepting a *honoris causa* doctorate from this institution, to the amazement of the distinguished audience, he started his acceptance speech in Italian. After moving to England, he had to take another matriculation exam in English, as the Italian matriculation was not recognized in England at that time. He continued with his university degree, first at the Imperial College London and then at the University of Birmingham, obtaining a Ph.D. (1954) and a D.Sc. (1964). In England, Tadeusz met and married (1953) his beloved wife, Sheila Joan Harris, who had also made a wise choice of her ancestors, one of the oldest families in England. The couple spent two years (1955-1956) in the US, where Tadeusz was a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for the Study of Metals, the University of Chicago. After three years in England, the family returned to the US in 1959. Within a few years, Tadeusz became a professor and later one of the directors of Mellon Institute, where he built the reputation of a brilliant researcher, a gifted mentor, and an excellent teacher, authoring over two hundred publications, making several key scientific discoveries over the decades of his service to the field of metallurgy, and

educating many scientists. His book *Structure of Metals* with C.S. Barrett has been a classic in the field of metallurgy for over 50 years. He was the editor in chief of the leading journal in the field, *Progress in Materials Science* (PMS). In 2012, when asked by his editorial colleagues and the publisher to continue his appointment, with humor typical for him, he wrote a note to PMS readers “My first 40 years as editor.” The joke was in that very few people hold editorial appointments for that long! He received two doctorates *honoris causa*, was a member of three foreign academies, a fellow of numerous societies, and received many national and international awards. His mind did not seem to be affected by the burden of age and he was professionally active well into his 90s.

Tadeusz was a true aristocrat. I am not referring to his royal descent, which he himself would never mention, but rather to who he has become over the course of his long and productive life. What many would consider a privilege, he viewed his “choice of parents” as an obligation. He was well educated, cultured, yet polite and extremely modest. There would be little small talk with him at the table and conversations would quickly focus on important topics. A careful observer would realize only indirectly, as the conversation developed, that Tadeusz had a more than thorough understanding of the issues being discussed. Yet, he was interested in the opinion of others. He was a deeply religious man, respectful of others and other ideas, a true gentleman who has set the example for many and who will be missed by many.

Prof. Massalski is survived by his daughter Renny, his son Christopher, three grandchildren, Alex, Christina and Ann, and numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews all over the world. His dear son, Peter, died untimely at the very start of a promising scientific career. My wife and I had the honor to get to know Prof. Massalski's daughter, Dr. Renny (Massalski) Hutton, a retired US Navy Commander. It is thanks to her that Prof. Massalski completed his long, productive life in his home, in his bed, and close to his family.

CONGRATULATIONS to Jakub POLACZYK!

It is not often that a composer has an autobiographical album released. Composer Jakub Polaczyk, known to Pittsburgh audiences, the winner of many international top awards, and a graduate of the Carnegie Mellon Music Department, just had one, entitled *Union Square*. Jakub resides presently in New York City and is the director of the International Chopin and Friends Festival. He is also a member of the faculty at the New York Conservatory of Music, teaching composition, music theory and piano performance. As a radio broadcaster, every Sunday he presents contemporary and classical music to audiences in New York City and Chicago, available by streaming world-wide.

In Polaczyk's own words, the music presented on the recording is "combining different techniques and cultural elements which are blended to create a new whole". Most of the works were composed in New York City's Union Square, thus the title. Polaczyk loves to go there and play chess with people, meeting and interacting with various cultures.



The recording contains several varied works, for different instrumentation and performed by various ensembles or soloists. For example, one of them, entitled *Ginkyo-ya Pendula*, commemorates Polaczyk's late professor, Krzysztof Penderecki, and his love for arboretums. The *Ojibbeway* (dedicated to Eva Tumiel-Kozak), won the American Prize in Composition in the professional chamber music division. *Mazurka-Fantasy* features "shadows from mazurkas of the past," composed by Polish composers Szymanowski and Chopin.

The recording, which is on Albany Records, just won a Silver Medal at the Global Music Awards in California, for composer, and for the release of a new album. His compositions on the recording received glowing and thorough reviews from Colin Clarke, music critic at *Fanfare Magazine*.

Our warmest congratulations Jakub!



Honors for Professor Strójkwąg



Professor Andrzej Strójkwąg, world-renowned scientist, recipient of many awards, Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and Chief Technology Officer of PDF Solutions, had the **Doctor Honoris Causa** bestowed on him, on April 24th, 2023, by the prestigious Warsaw University of Technology. The Institution is one of the leading ones in Poland and the largest in Central Europe. Our warmest congratulations and best wishes to our long-time friend and active member of PCC!

Did you speak Polish as a child? Do you have family documents in Polish? Are you planning a trip to Poland? Do you want to learn to speak Polish? If you can say "yes" to any of these questions, please consider the Polish language classes offered by the Polish Cultural Council.

REGISTER FOR POLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

POLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES WILL RESUME ON SEPT 9TH, 2023 AT 10 AM-NOON, AT THE CYA BUILDING IN LAWRENCEVILLE, CORNER OF FISK AND GOVERNMENT LANE, ON PENN AVE. & BUTLER AND/OR ONLINE. CLASSES RUN THROUGH MAY 2024.

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Remembering the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising



April 19, 2023 marked the 80th Anniversary of the Ghetto Uprising. On that day, in 1943, the Jews of Warsaw took up the armed struggle against the Germans, hoping for victory. Knowing the impending annihilations, they decided to fight before imminent death. It was the most heroic act of armed Jewish resistance during World War II.

The Anniversary was marked around the world, with a special ceremony in Poland to honor the insurgents at the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw (Pomnik Bohaterów Getta). It was attended by three Presidents: Andrzej Duda of Poland, Yitzhak Herzog of Israel and the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, all praising the undying bravery, dignity and heroism of the insurgents.

It began with the joint singing of the Polish anthem, by Israeli and Polish combined choirs, followed by a speech by Professor Marian Turcki, Holocaust survivor and vice-president of the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland.

Our civilization has adopted over a dozen symbols of resistance and heroism, said Prof. Turcki. I have the right to say that eighty years ago, the insurgents from the Ghetto

transformed the streets surrounding us – Gesia, Mila, Niska, Muranowska – into Jewish Thermopylae, they repeated the Jewish Masada, the Jewish Westerplatte. One of the commanders of the Ghetto Uprising, Marek Edelman – I was lucky to know him, I talked to him many times – he often repeated significant words: life is the most important thing. And when you have life, the most important thing is freedom, and often you have to give your life for this freedom.

The rabbis and clergy – Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant said an

interreligious prayer, followed by a reading of an appeal to the memory of the fallen. A wreath was laid at the Monument to the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto.

It is impossible to summarize the entire month of the heroic fights. Most of the ghetto buildings were burnt down, and the whole area was razed to the ground. There were approximately 56,000 Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto during the uprising. Close to 7,000 were murdered by Germans on the spot, and almost 7,000 were taken to Treblinka extermination camp. Close to 6,000 Jews died during the fights. The rest were deported to labor and concentration camps located on the territory of the German Government.

Perhaps a part of the speech at the event by the Mayor of Warsaw, Rafał Trzaskowski, gives a special closure:

This huge tragedy of the Holocaust, the tragedy of the Warsaw Ghetto is also a huge tragedy of Warsaw, my, our beloved city. After all that has happened, there is no room for anti-Semitism in Poland, in Europe, or in the world, nor should there be room for intolerance.

Compilation from material by Polin.pl





LET'S COOK POLISH

We have a new title for our article on Polish cooking, **Let's Cook Polish**. We welcome contributions from our readers of their signature recipes for the next issues of the Polish Journey and we welcome any comments you might have.

Our inspiration for this issue's cooking column comes from the book *Quarks, Elephants & Pierogi, Poland in 100 Words*, from their article on twaróg. The authors tell us what twaróg is, and give us the *back story* of how this ubiquitous Polish cheese came to be known also as *quark* cheese. The article is here re-printed with the permission of the publisher, culture.pl and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. (Glinski, Mikołaj; Davies, Matthew; Żuławski, Adam. Burdzyńska, Magdalena, illustrator. *Quarks, Elephants & Pierogi, Poland in 100 Words*. Warsaw: Adam Mickiewicz Institute, 2018. See the News Briefs, p. 8 for further details about this book.)

Twaróg

What links the name of an ancient Slavic food speciality with the word for the most elementary particle in the universe?

In the English-speaking world, **twaróg** is usually called '(white) curd cheese' or 'quark', and today often passes for a very prized and pricey health food. But as Polish quark gourmets will surely tell you, it doesn't get even close to the taste and consistency of the original Polish **twaróg**.

Tastiest of all, though, is the word's backstory.

As you may know, 'quark' also happens to be a term from theoretical physics denoting an elementary particle – a fundamental constituent of matter. The name itself was first used around 1963 by Murray Gell-Mann, one of the two physicists who posited the quark model.

Gell-Mann later recollected that he had come across the word in one of his "occasional perusals" of James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake". He found it in the phrase "Three quarks for Muster Mark" and adopted it for his theory.

The scientist believed that the phrase might be a distorted version of "Three quarts for Mister Mark", thus linking the origin of the Joycean phrase with a call for drinks at a bar (quark = quart). However, the majority of Joyce scholars today are inclined to suspect an altogether different vendor's cry behind this Wake fragment.

According to this hypothesis, the vendor's cry which Joyce had likely picked up at some marketplace in Germany (where he lived at the time) sounded more like "*Drei Mark für muster Quark!*" which can be translated as: "Three Marks for excellent curd cheese!"

Quark is a German word for curd cheese, but it also just happens to be one of the very few early loan words in Old German taken from a Western Slavic language, very likely from Polish (**twaróg**).

The etymology of this Polish word goes back to the Proto-Slavic *tvarogъ*, which in turn goes back to *tworiti* (which became **tworzyć** in Polish), meaning 'to create or form'. Not the worst etymology for a word that denotes the most basic element that forms our reality.

»» M.G

Twaróg is not available in US supermarkets. Substitutes we might find are ricotta cheese, dry cottage cheese and farmer's cheese. But these are not the same, because they are not made from soured milk, as authentic twaróg is. We are lucky in Pittsburgh where authentic twaróg can be found. However, if you would like to try making your own cheese, here is a recipe from Alice Water's book, *My Pantry* (New York: Pam Kraus Books, 2015), which is about as authentic as you can make at home. It uses only buttermilk, not fresh milk.

Farmer's Cheese (Twaróg)

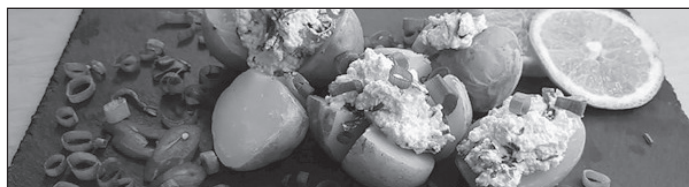
- 3 cups buttermilk
- Sea salt (optional)

Pour the buttermilk into a 1-quart canning jar and put the lid on tightly. Place the jar in a pot and cover with enough water to keep it submerged. Hold over medium-high heat until little bubbles appear on the jar and in the water, but before the water reaches a boil. Turn off the heat and let the buttermilk cool in the pot until the water reaches room temperature.

Meanwhile, line a nonreactive sieve with a few layers of cheesecloth, or a single layer of butter muslin, and set it in a nonreactive bowl deep enough that there is an inch or two between the sieve and the bowl.

Once the water has cooled, remove the jar of buttermilk and pour the contents into the sieve. You should have firm white curds. You can add a pinch of salt to the curds at this point, if you wish. Cover the curds with the tails of the cheesecloth or muslin and refrigerate the bowl for 12 to 24 hours, depending upon how soft or crumbly you like your farmer's cheese. I drain mine for about 16 hours, at which point the cheese is soft enough to spread, but dry enough to crumble onto salads.

This recipe could be used in various dishes such as: pancakes with white cheese (*naleśniki z twarogiem*), easy dumplings (*kluski leniwe*), "Russian" pierogi (*pierogi ruskie*), cucumber and radish salad (*salatka z ogórka i rzodkiewki*), or simply as a spread, mixed with seasonings of your choice, on good rye bread. Unless you are from Poznań, you might not be familiar with the regional specialty, baked potato with white cheese, *pyry z gzikiem*, where potatoes are *pyry* and *twaróg* is called *gzik*.



David Motak has decided to retire his column **Culinary Corner** in our newsletter. Our thanks and appreciation for his contributions for so many years. We wish him all the best!

Astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus honored with new postage stamp



The year 2023 marks the 550th anniversary of the birth of the great Polish astronomer, Copernicus, the scientist who changed our perception of how the solar system works. The stamp was issued by Poczta Polska, the Polish post office, which traces its origins to 1588. Its president, Krzysztof Falkowski, lauded Copernicus' achievements for humanity, and hoped that the stamp would increase the public's knowledge about him. The new stamp's image is based upon an epitaph found in

the cathedral in the northern town of Frombork. Copernicus was long-associated with Frombork, where he was a canon between 1512 and 1516, and then again between 1522 and 1543. It was there where he wrote *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, the first work to formally posit that the earth rotated around the sun, and not vice versa. Copernicus is buried in the Archcathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Andrew in Frombork.

2023 Passport Awards for achievements in theater, literature, music and visual arts

Filmmaker **Jan Holoubek**, who directed the acclaimed Netflix series, *High Water* has been named among the winners of the 2023 Passport Awards, a prestigious accolade for Polish artists and cultural creators, which is granted by *Polityka* weekly. Holoubek's award is in the film category. The drama is based on the real-life story of a devastating flood that swept southwestern Poland in 1997.

Grzegorz Piątek received the award in the literature category for *Gdynia: The Promised Land*, a book about the creation of Poland's northern port of Gdynia during the interwar period. **Anna Sułkowska-Migoń** won in the classical music category for her participation in the *La Maestra* competition for women conductors in Paris. Other winners were **Agata Słowak** for visual arts, for popular music, **Anna Górnicka** and **Jakub Górnicki** in digital culture, and **Jakub Skrzywanek** in theater. In addition, the **Creator of Culture** prizes went to novelist and playwright **Dorota Masłowska**, painter **Wilhelm Sasnal** and musician **Ryszard Poznakowski**.



A beautiful book about Poland



Should you want to introduce your English-speaking friends to Poland, the stunning book, *Quarks, Elephants & Pierogi: Poland in 100 Words* will be a great help. It was first published in 2018, as an etymological guide to Poland, when it won the award for **most beautiful book** in Poland. It was published by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute as part of the international cultural programme POLSKA 100 accompanying Poland's centenary of regaining independence. It was financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and Sport of the Republic of Poland as part of the multi-annual program NIEPODLEGŁA 2017-2022.

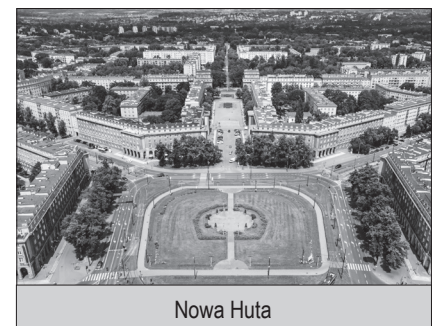
Each word, its etymology and its importance to Polish language and culture is described in a single page, expertly written by **Mikołaj Gliński**, **Matthew Davies** and **Adam Żulawski**. All kinds of Polish words are covered, including **dzień** (day),

mazurek (a cake and a dance), and **język** (language and tongue), to name only three. We have excerpted the article about **twaróg** (quark, or white curd cheese) as the inspiration for our cooking article in this issue of the *Polish Journey* (p.10). Full color illustrations by award-winning graphic designer, **Magda Burdzyńska**, enliven the pages with shades of red, turquoise, pink, black and gold. The text and the headings are printed in two beautiful type fonts, **Nocturne Serif** and **Sudety**, designed respectively by Polish designers **Mateusz Machalski** and **Jan Estrada Osmycki**. In short, the book is beautifully written, beautifully illustrated, beautifully printed and beautifully bound. For more information and a chance to see some of the illustrations, go to <https://culture.pl/en/work/quarks-elephants-pierogi-poland-in-100-words-mikolaj-glinski-matthew-davies-adam-zulawski>.

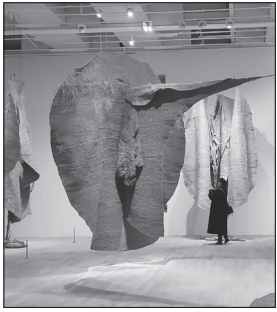
Nine new Polish “monuments of history”

In February 2023, Poland's president, Andrzej Duda, granted **Monument of History** status to nine heritage sites across the country. The *Monument of History* is a prestigious title that is conferred by the President at the request of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. Poland has relatively few heritage sites because of the many destructive wars in its history. However, government spending on such sites has more than doubled since 2015, and the

number of heritage objects elevated to *Monument of History* status has increased from 60 to 123. These elevations are in line with the government's policy of taking special care of Polish culture, identity and history. Included in the new list is Kraków's planned, *Soviet Utopia*, **Nowa Huta** district. Other sites include the *Collegiate Church of Saint Martin in Opatów*, the *Orthodox Monastery of the Annunciation in Supraśl*, and the *St. Onufry Orthodox Monastery in Jabłeczna*.



Magdalena Abakanowicz: Every Tangle of Thread and Rope

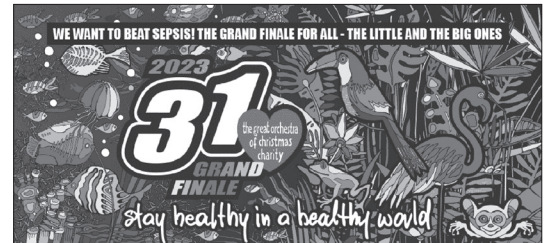


Magdalena Abakanowicz (1930-2017) is the late Polish artist who wove textiles on a grand, three-dimensional scale. She worked under the oppressive communist regime, but managed to build a reputation of international renown. Her art is on exhibit now through May 21, 2023 at the Tate Modern, London. In a review in the Guardian, Laura Cumming wrote, “What she did was so radical that it startles even today.” The tapestries can appear to be faces, spider webs, trees, a vast funeral robe, and other fantastical things. Some of the cylindrical pieces can be entered and you can look

into the myriad of weaving techniques. Cumming observes that all of the sculptures transmit an extraordinary warmth and dubs Abakanowicz an experimental pioneer. For the complete review in the Guardian, which includes color photographs, go to <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/nov/20/magdalena-abakanowicz-tate-modern-london-review-every-tangle-of-thread-and-rope>. Another review, from artnews, can be found at <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/in-pictures-magdalena-abakanowicz-tate-modern-2212797>.

Polish charity nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy) has been nominated for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize. The Speaker of the Senate, Tomasz Grodzki submitted the nomination to recognize the high-profile foundation for “mobilizing all generations of Poles in a country divided and torn over politics”. Since its formation in 1992, the charity has raised about USD 50 million a year to support various branches of the health care system”.



New name for Warsaw Zoo



The **Antonina and Jan Żabiński Zoological Garden** is the new name for Warsaw Zoo, in order to recognize the wartime heroism of the then director and his wife. Their story was told in the Hollywood film, **The Zookeeper's Wife**. Jan Żabiński was a zoologist and director of the Warsaw Zoo for many years. He also fought in the Polish-Bolshevik war, was a member of the AK resistance and participated

in the Warsaw Uprising. He was a populariser of science, writing science books and appearing on the radio. Antonia Żabińska was raised in Petersburg. In 1923, she repatriated to Poland and, in 1931 married Jan Żabiński. During World War II, Antonia and Jan were saving Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, and hiding them at the zoo. In 1965, they were both recognized by **Yad Vashem** as **Righteous Among the Nations**.

Poland's bison population on the rise

A group of national park employees, foresters and researchers has estimated in their annual count that the European Bison population in the Białowieża Forest, in northeastern Poland has grown. The count for 2023 is 829 bison, compared to 779 in 2022, and 715 in 2021. An additional 700 bison live on the Belarusian side of the border. The count is always conducted in the winter when the animal gather in larger groups at feeding

sites, making the count easier. An encouraging sign is that there is a large number of young, with about 138 calves under two years of age. The bison were hunted to extinction by 1919. Efforts to restore the population have been made ever since. Bison are found in other parts of Poland, in the Bieszczady region and in the Knyszyńska and Borecka Forests. The overall population is approximately 2,500.



Iga Świątek named #1 by World Tennis Association



In February **Iga Świątek** won her first title of the year at the **Qatar Open** in Doha. She bested No. 4 seed, American Jessica Pegula, winning 6-3, 6-0 in just 69 minutes. She successfully defended her Qatar TotalEnergies Open title from last year, claiming her 12th career singles title. Świątek had an outstanding 2022 season, in which she won 67 matches. She became the new world number 1 in women's tennis, becoming the first Pole to top the WTA listings. She now leads the world in rankings, with 10,485 points. Świątek has been named by *Time Magazine* as one of the most influential people in their list for 2023.



Polish Cultural Council
P.O. BOX 81054
Pittsburgh PA 15217-0554



www.PolishCulturalCouncil.org

Important information! Fall Elections in Poland (Wybory do Sejmu i Senatu)

There will be specially organized polling place at the Polish Falcons of America office.

We'll notify the public about the date of **Wybory**. A valid Polish passport is required to be eligible to vote. Please send an email to pccorg.ms@gmail.com if you want to be on the voters list.

Save the Date!

PCC Members' "Picnic in the Park"
September 17, 2023 from 1 - 5 PM
Boyce Park, Silver Beaver shelter and ball field

