



Alliance News

Toledo-Poznań Alliance quarterly newsletter – Fall 2014

2014 Scholarship winners are announced

Congratulations to this year's PACT/TPA scholarship winners! They are:

College category: Jessica Pietrasz, age 18, of Rossford, Ohio who will be attending Youngstown State University this fall, is the recipient of YSU's Red & White Scholarship. She is active in cross country, volleyball, basketball, track and student council. Jessica will receive the Martin A. Blaszczyk scholarship. It is awarded to the "best" submission as determined by the judges. Martin A. Blaszczyk was the editor of the Lagrange Street News, a monthly newspaper that connected residents and former neighbors of its namesake Polish neighborhood with news, gossip, and community functions. He helped to keep the Polish heritage alive in Toledo.

Rachel Perzynski, age 19, of Toledo. Rachel will be attending DePaul University this fall. She is also a DePaul University Presidential Scholarship winner and has maintained a cumulative 4.0 GPA for 4 years. She is active in Speech and Debate, Migrant Ministry, SJJ Marching Band, dance, school plays and was secretary of the Enviro Club.

Casey Sobota, age 21, of Waterville, Ohio will be graduating from Ohio State University in 2016 with a major in Strategic Communications. Casey is also the recipient of a Scarlet and Grey Scholarship. Anthony Wayne Generals Dispatch Editor Scholarship and a transformational Program Grant that allowed her to study abroad in Eastern Europe. She is a member of the Public Relations Student Society of American and a regular contributor to "Her

Campus" online magazine High School category.

William DuPuis, age 14, of Toledo will be attending St. Francis de Sales High School this fall. William is the brother of Joseph DuPuis, a 2013 PACT/TPA Scholarship winner. William is also the recipient of a St. Francis de Sales Scholarship, a GESU music award and he played on the GESU football team 2011-2013.

10 High School Students (Ages 14-16) and 25 College Students (Ages 17- 41) submitted applications. Entries came from 13 different cities: Toledo, Holland, Sylvania, Maumee, Metamora, Perrysburg, Rossford, Swanton, Waterville, Centerville, Curtice, Temperance (MI), and Murrieta (CA).

Seven judges evaluated the applications. Judges for PACT were Tim Paluszak, Rozanne Nitschke, Janice Blaszczyk, and Dan Jachimiak. Judges for TPA were Jackie Konwinski, Tom Sorosiak, and Walter Palicki.

Dozynki 2014

Save the date for this year's Dozynki, it's October 19, 2014. Your invitation is in the mail and an additional reservation form is attached in this newsletter for your convenience.

Silent Auction contributions needed

It's time to think about your contribution to the Silent Auction at this year's Dozyni. Last year the Toledo-Poznan Alliance made over \$500 on the auction and book sale. That's \$500 toward the orphanage in Poznan and the PACT/TPA scholarship fund. The auction needs items from Poland amber jewelry, Bolesławiec pottery, books, canned and packaged food items, glassware, linens with embroidery or appliques, paintings, wooden items such as boxes, eggs, dishes, etc., as well as wycinanki. American gift cards to local stores and restaurants are also valued items. Please call Jackie Konwinski (419) 882-5045 or email at jackie@polishtoledo.com

Meet me at the Polish Oasis

by Denny Kutylowski of www.PolishToledo.com

While Polish desserts like sernik and kisiel are not threatened with extinction anytime soon, without human intervention the Polish desert in Upper Silesia without human intervention could disappear quicker than a platter of Pączki during Ostatki.

No, it's not a mirage: The Błęków desert really exists in the middle of Poland.

The Polish Sahara is one of nature's oddities. Once nearly 150 square miles in size, the giant sand box has been bewildering visitor for centuries. Its sprawling sands are inconsistent with surrounding lush lake districts, rolling plains and thick forests near the town of Klucze. *The eerie emptiness has long fascinated passers-by.* In 1924, a tourist reported seeing a mirage and during World War II, it was used to train occupying German troops before they went to the North African front.

It might seem a little bizarre to some that a conservation project funded by the EU has been charged with preserving this barren anomaly. Over the centuries scrub brush and pine trees have encroached upon Poland's desert to the

point where it stands only 25 square miles in size today.

Millions of złoty are being provided through an initiative to preserve fragile ecosystems and help safeguard this seemingly misplaced desert. The plan calls for deforestation and the eradication of otherwise native plant life.

Some people would say why bother? Just let it grown green. But, Magdalena Moroń, of the Desert Rejuvenation Program says, "This place is worth fighting for. It's worth making sure it doesn't disappear off the map." Being the only desert in Central Europe, she might have a valid point.

The uniqueness of the area could be a tourist attraction if objectives to stabilize the desert, establish nature trails, and produce a guidebook are met. We know humps on a camel's back are there for a purpose. But, it remains to be seen whether the idea of the Polish Sahara as a major tourist attraction will hold water.

Always something about the Poland you don't know at Kutylowski's Blog at PolishToledo.com

Walter's review ...

Oldest Living Man from Poland Dies

Alexander Imich, who was recently declared the oldest living man by Guinness World Records, died on Sunday, Aug. 24th in New York City at the age of 111.

He grew up in a wealthy family of secular Jews in Czestochowa. Mr. Imich and his wife, Wela, fled the country in 1939. The Russians went them to a Gulag and after WWII they emigrated to the United States in 1951. He is quoted as saying "In my life, I have witnessed the development of flight, the automobile, electrification of nations, the telephone, the radio and television, atomic energy, the wonders of bio-scientific medicine, computer technology, great advances in our knowledge of the cosmos,

men walking on the moon – the list could go on and on.

Mr. Imich had a PhD in chemistry and spoke five languages. He attributes his longevity to good genes, but really didn't know why he didn't die earlier. He said "The life you live is equally or more important for longevity." His wife died in 1866. They had no children.

Rev. Walter J. Ciszek, S.J. (1904-1984)

Walter Ciszek was born in Pennsylvania to Polish immigrants. At the age of 24, he entered the Jesuit Novitiate in New York. He also volunteered to serve as a missionary to Russia, and in 1934, was sent to Rome to study theology, Russian, liturgy, and history at the Pontifical Russian College. He was ordained a



priest in the Byzantine Rite in 1937.

A year later, Fr. Ciszek was sent to a Jesuit mission in eastern Poland. When WWII started in 1939, he went to Lvov and followed the many Polish exiles fleeing to Russia. He had the permission of the Metropolitan and for a year he worked as a logger and secretly performed religious ministry.

Fr. Ciszek was arrested in 1941 and was accused of being a spy for the Vatican. He spent 4 years in the Lubyanka prison in Moscow operated by the NKVD. During those five years, mostly spent in solitary confinement and severe torture, he signed a confession resulting in a sentence of 15 years hard labor in the Gulag in Siberia. Fr. Ciszek shoveled coal, worked in coal mines and construction at an ore processing plant.

Even during his long imprisonment, Fr. Ciszek continued to pray, celebrate Divine Liturgy, hear confessions and perform what other ministry he could. He was long considered dead by his Jesuit community and his family.

Fr. Ciszek's hard labor sentence was over in 1955. He was released with restrictions in the city of Norilsk and shortly was ordered by the KGB to move to Krasnoyarsk. There he secretly established mission parishes. He was again told to move to Abakan and began work as an automobile mechanic. During this time period, he was allowed to write his sisters and finally received a letter from them in 1963. After nearly twenty-three years of imprisonment, he was released on October 12, 1963 in exchange for two Soviet Agents. He is quoted as saying "I am an American, happy to be home; but in many ways I am almost a stranger."

After a period adjustment, Fr. Ciszek was assigned to the John XXIII Center at Fordham in 1965 to give counseling and spiritual direction to those who sought him out. Fr. Ciszek died on Dec. 8, 1964. His canonization process was begun in 1996. Servant of God Walter Ciszek, S.J. pray for us!

Fr. Ciszek was given released time to write his two popular books with the help of Daniel Flaherty, S.J.

They are: *With God in Russia*, (1964). Fr. Ciszek writes in his autobiography of the nearly twenty-three years in prison camps in Siberia.

This very gripping account of daily life as a prisoner shows his unbelievable faith in God. He was always in constant danger of death, yet he said Mass, heard confessions and gave spiritual aid when asked. He could have been betrayed many times, but he had complete trust in God.

He Leadeth Me, (1973). Fr. Ciszek recounts his complete reliance on God's will and the courage he found in prayer. He had fears, much loneliness, despair and anguish. Eventually he found solace and inner peace that this difficult ministry was acceptable to him because it was pleasing to God. The author says, "What can ultimately trouble the soul that accepts every moment of every day as a gift from the hands of God and strives always to do his will?" This is a remarkable inspirational book for everyone

Sources: *Wikipedia, Americamagazine.org and Amazon.com*