



# Alliance News

Toledo-Poznan Alliance quarterly newsletter — Fall 2007

## Dozynki—2007

Make plans to bring the family to this year's Dozynki, which will be on Sunday, September 30th at the Franciscan Center on the campus of Lourdes College. The Dozynki dinner will be preceded by a Mass at the Queen of Peace Chapel at 12:00 Noon, on the campus of Lourdes College, and it will be presided by Fr. Paul Kwiatkowski. After the Mass, a procession will take place from the Chapel to the Franciscan Center for the dinner. The procession will be led by Fr. Paul and an accordion player. We welcome all singers to be in the procession and sing Polish hymns. It should be very festive. The dinner and program will start at the Franciscan Center at 2:00 pm.

This Mass will fulfill your obligation of a Sunday Mass. So plan on attending the Mass at Noon, at Lourdes College on Sunday, September 30th.

Signs to the Chapel will be posted near the Franciscan Center.

Read more on the interesting history of Dozynki inside this newsletter.

## Poland in July

Seven travelers flew to Berlin for the start of their excursion in Poland. They were met by Janusz, the driver, and taken to Szczecin, the birthplace of Katherine the Great of Russia. It is not a typical tourist destination, but it is an excellent starting point for further explorations of northwestern Poland. We were met by our guide, Karolina, who was very knowledgeable and most friendly. After a tour of the city which included the Royal Castle and the Cathedral, the day finished with a dinner hosted by the tour company at a restaurant on a Russian ship.

The next day we went on to Slupsk to meet with Kathy Grabel's cousin for tea, coffee and pastries plus a tour of their beautiful home. We spent the night at Lesny Dwor, a tourist recreational campsite.

On to Gdansk to see the Solidarity Memorial, St. Mary's Church, the Royal Way, and Old Town. This medieval city can be explored easily on foot and though it was almost entirely destroyed during World War II, it was restored to its former glory. Gdansk is the place to buy amber and there were many stores selling it at all price levels. We also took a very enjoyable boat cruise there on a pirate's ship. Our driver and guide drove through Sopot and stopped at Gdynia where we were able to wade into the waters of the Baltic Sea. This is a very busy tourist area for many Poles.

Torun, the home of Copernicus, was our next stop. It is one of the few Polish cities to have survived World War II without much destruction. There a local guide took us through the city, St. John's church and to the gingerbread store. We left Torun for Ciechocinek, a spa resort, and stayed at the Targon Hotel. A horse wagon ride took us to an outside bonfire feast and horse riding for those willing to try it. One of our travelers was able to meet up with friends she had been corresponding with for some time. It was a joyous reunion with good food, singing and dancing for all.

On Sunday we went to Lichen for mass in the largest basilica in Poland, the Shrine of Our Lady of Lichen. It has the largest pipe organ, the largest bells, the tallest tower, the biggest dome and took ten years to complete. The crowds were huge in the church and the surrounding area. The basilica was very impressive.

Poznan would be our next stop. It is a really beautiful city and the capital of Greater Poland. Poznan has been an east-west trading center for over a thousand years. The people living in Greater Poland are known for their cleanliness, order and thrift, something they learned from the intensive Germanizing policy during the partition period. We walked through the Old Market Square and Old Town. Ample time was allowed for casual exploration, shopping and lunch. At noon we watched the clock tower on the town hall as metal goats come out and knock heads twelve times.

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## *Celebrate Dozynki Sunday September 30*

"Dozynki" is a time-honored Polish Harvest tradition, steeped in ritual and more elaborate than thanksgivings of most other cultures.

Throughout history from ancient times until today many cultures around the world have set aside a day to celebrate the bounty of harvest. Each year on October 4, the Romans celebrated a harvest festival called *Cerelia*, from which the word cereal is derived.

In northern Europe where the growing season is shorter, especially through the so-called "Little Ice Age" 1350 - 1750, crops needed to be reaped before the onset of autumn. Therefore, the Polish Harvest Celebrations of our forefathers took place during a period starting around Assumption on August 15 through mid September.

The week before Dozynki, peasants gather together to prepare the *przepiorka*, a three-dimensional wreath usually resembling a dome-shaped crown decorated with wild flowers and ribbons, to present to the revered Lord and Lady (*Panstwo Gospodarze*), the landowners on whose property the harvesters work.

*As the Lord oversees the progress of the harvest, he is hailed and toasted with chants "Ten bedzie Sto Lat zyl!" (that he may live and prosper for 100 years). The most industrious female harvester is chosen as the "przodownica" (harvest queen). She receives this honor with a crown made of wheat, rye, oats and field flowers, in a moving ceremony, as the entire harvest community encircles her.*

The typical Dozynki Day celebration starts with Mass, followed by a procession to the Manor House. Even today, traditional costumes of the region are worn by many participants. Additionally, it is common practice to offer the lord and lady on whose property the event takes place a freshly baked *babka* or other loaf form of bread. Then the squire pours a measure of vodka for himself and the eldest male peasant to toast the entire congregation.

The pastor of the local church blesses the food to be consumed and the feast begins. Various forms of entertainment, dancing and other merriment could continue far past sunset. In rural Poland way back when peasants

toiled in the fields before the advent of powered farm implements, physical labor was intense, but luckily did not go without its reward.

TPA's annual observance of Dozynki incorporates all the major elements of the cherished Dozynki custom, and this year Mass will be celebrated in the chapel near the dining hall at Lourdes's College as a convenience for making your Sunday obligation. A procession, entertainment and authentic Polish cuisine in addition to bidding on Polish heritage items for the benefit of the Poznan orphanage will provide a truly memorable event.

I'd encourage everyone to invite at least one non-Polish couple, friend or neighbor to share in this beautiful cultural experience. The one's I invite are always amazed and impressed how we Poles honor our heritage. It provides them insight, appreciation and better understanding of the rich culture we preserve. In promoting a Polish event this way, we not only gain more respect for our lineage, but also help insure the things we hold dearest about our Polishness are not resigned to a footnote in history.

*For your convenience additional registration forms for Dozynki 2007 can be printed from [www.polishtoledo.com](http://www.polishtoledo.com) in the Toledo-Poznan Alliance section of the Website.*

*Denny Kutylowski, freelance writer*



**Do you have an item, new or almost new, for the silent auction? If so, contact Rose Sniegowski at 419-478-1476, or Walter Palicki at 419-475-6688.**

## *Pat's Corner...*

Where have all the **POLKAS** gone??? Other than the Lagrange Street Festival and a few dances here and there it seems to be fading away slowly here in Toledo. With the various Catholic Churches merging or closing, the festivals also have changed their venues considerably. Most of the music is now geared toward a younger crowd which prefers Rock and Roll.

But the **POLKA** is alive and well in Michigan with a gusto. A group from Toledo went to the Summer Music Fest in Frankenmuth a few weeks ago. It was a week long event with various Polka bands performing. We happened to go on Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. Some of the bands were The Polka Family (fabulous) from Pennsylvania, Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push from Chicago, of course, and Henny & The Versa J's. There were a number of other bands that may be more familiar to you as Duane Malinowski and Glass Town Sound.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Wyandotte, Michigan also had a festival this month. A Polish Mass was said Sunday. Dancing was on a dance floor out in the open which brought back memories of long ago, when we had Polka bands playing in various parks. Remember that???

At both festivals the joy was in seeing so many young people enjoying the Polish music. The enthusiasm was abounding within the crowd.

I picked up a leaflet from TAPS and IMA listing many bands, some of which I have mentioned above, that will be playing at The Conn-Weissenberger Post throughout the year here in Toledo. Dances are open to the public. Hope to see you there.

### *More on Polish events:*

At Ski's Polish American Restaurant starting Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup> and continuing then throughout October till Oct. 22 there will be speakers who will speak on Toledo's Own Polish Community, their landmarks and traditions.

Starting Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup> will be "The History of "Lagrinka", then following Monday, Oct. 1, "The History of "Kuschwantz", Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> "The Poles and the American Revolutionary War", Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> "Sharon and Chet's Polka Party" and last but not least Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>. "The History of the Ohio Theatre and The Lagrange Street News". Sounds **INTERESTING!**

*Pat Konwinski, contributing writer*

*(Poland in July - continued from page 1)*

From Poznan we went on to Czestochowa, the home of the Jasna Gora Monastery and the Black Madonna. While attending the evening prayer, we were able to get a front row place at the altar where this holy picture is enshrined. This was a moving and spiritual experience for all. After an overnight stay at the Pilgrims House we continued on to Krakow.

One can never get tired of visiting Krakow as there is always much to see. We did the usual stop at St. Mary's Church to view the famous wooden altarpiece with more than 200 carved figures, the work of the 15<sup>th</sup> century artist, Wit Stwosz. Krakow has the largest medieval square in Europe and is always alive with history, pigeons and people. We toured the Wawel Castle, the Town Hall tower, the Jagiellonian University and of course time to shop at the Sukienice. Side trips were taken to Auschwitz and the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Lagiewniki. We also enjoyed our stay at the beautiful Turowka Hotel.

Now we go to Zakopane, the highest and southernmost town in Poland. The main thoroughfare is lined with countless restaurants, bars and souvenir shops. A ride up the railway to Mount Gubalowka gave us a panoramic view of the valley. An old wooden church and its historic cemetery were also visited. The day ended with dinner in a local restaurant where highlander musicians entertained the patrons.

Wadowice, the birthplace of John Paul II was our next stop. There we toured the house where he was born and the church where he was baptized. The crowds that day were long, but we were patient and waited our turn.

Our final stop was Wroclaw formerly known as Breslau when it was part of Germany for a long time. Much of its Germanic heritage is still visible today. A quick walk was taken to the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist to hear the 10,000 pipe organ at the start of mass. A local guide provided an interesting commentary on the city. We had time for lunch, some shopping, an overnight stay and on to Berlin and the flight home. An enjoyable trip - friendly people, good weather and excellent food! Join us on our next trip to Poland.

*Walter Palicki, contributing writer*