



Alliance News

Toledo-Poznan Alliance quarterly newsletter

Fall 2008

Farewell to Fr. Marek Ciesla

On June 22, 2008 at the Sommerset Hall a farewell dinner and program was presented to a dear comrade of ours, Fr. Marek Ciesla, who has been with us since 1996.

Some of us from Toledo Poznan Alliance were in attendance and had a marvelous tasty dinner of pork chops, chicken and the usual fare.

The program was led by Master of Ceremonies, Jordan Urbanski, with many presentations from the various parish societies, such as the Altar Society and Rosary Society, along with tokens of appreciation from Polish Vets, Catholic War Veterans, Melodies of Poland and the Toledo Poznan Alliance, to name a few. Musical performances were done by Barbara Kondalski, Homero Ortiz and a few dance performances by the Echoes of Poland.

I am sure Fr. Marek was touched with all the comments and the respect that was paid to him that afternoon. Fr. Marek has been an important spiritual leader of our Polish Community.

Toledo Polish Genealogical Society

The Toledo Polish Genealogical Society had a picnic Sunday, July 20th. Hamburgers, hotdogs and all kinds of goodies were there. Everyone brought a dish to share. The food was yummy for the tummy.

There were about 60 members present. We had a blast playing "Name that Polish Tune," "Polish Bingo" and "Polish Price is Right," to name a few games. Everyone went home with a prize.

If anyone is interested in learning more about their family history, please join us for our next meeting at St. Hedwig, on the third Saturday of every month. Our next meeting is September 20th from 10 till noon.

Toledo Polish Genealogical Society members are selling Polish Cookbooks that have authentic Polish recipes handed down from the past by some of our famous cooks right here in Toledo. The cookbooks also have little bits of Polish history as well. The cost is only \$13.00. If you are interested please contact Marge Stefanski, President at (419) 345-7396.

Joe Ann Cousino

20 North Gallery and Richard Cousino are honoring the late Joe Ann Cousino with a retrospective exhibit of her works from August 1st to September 7th. She was the creator of the much beloved *Woman with the Birds* at Toledo Botanical Gardens. Joe Ann was a TPA member and her life-long career was in various art mediums especially sculpture and ceramics.

I was at the gallery reception for Joe Ann, August 3rd and was so impressed with Joe Ann's work. I had no idea how extremely talented she was and how much she contributed to the arts here in Toledo and elsewhere. Both her son Richard Cousino and Peggy Grant gave an excellent presentation on Joe Ann's background and various works.

This is well worth seeing and is on exhibit till September 7.

By Pat Konwinski, Editor

Polish Harvest Celebration - Dozynki 2008

Toledo's 18th annual Polish Harvest celebration of Dozynki will be held on Sunday, Sept 28th, 2008 at the Franciscan Center. Once again presented by The Toledo-Poznan Alliance, this year's Dozynki observance starts with Mass in the Queen of Peace Chapel at noon followed by a procession to the Franciscan Center Commons, with music accompaniment by Larry Szabo, accordionist with Toledo's Glasstown Sound Polka Band. Reception at the Franciscan Center begins at 1pm and the Dozynki program begins at 2pm. This year the Toledo Poznan Alliance will be honoring The Society of Christ Order of priests, whose International Provincial is located in our sister city of Poznan, Poland, along with Rev. Richard Philiposki, pastor of St. Adalbert and St. Hedwig parishes in Toledo, OH. Also honored will be Peggy Grant of 20 North Gallery, Toledo, for her support and promotion of Polish artists, especially her late husband, Adam Grant, whose work is now becoming recognized the world over. Entertainment will be provided by Toledo's Echoes of Poland Folk Song & Dance Ensemble, and pianist Irina Arbatskaya. Dinner menu includes traditional Polish Harvest foods and will be catered by Chef Robert Rosencrantz and the staff of Event Professionals. A raffle and silent auction are included in the afternoon's activities. Co-chairs of Dozynki 2008 are Janet Gawle and Rob Szczublewski, hosts of The Melodies of Poland radio program. Proceeds from this annual event benefit the Dom Dziecka orphanage in Poznan, Poland. Advance reservations by Sept. 15th are only \$30 per person, general seating. Reservations after Sept. 15th are \$35 per person. Event Sponsorship is available for \$100 and includes program recognition, 2 dinners, and preferred seating. Reservations can be sent to Dozynki 2008, c/o 243 E Streicher, Toledo, OH 43608.

Dozynki Silent Auction

We are once again going to do a silent auction at Dozynki, Sunday, September 28, 2008. We are

asking in advance for donated items you think may be of interest to our members and friends. Please try to keep the price of items **no less** than \$20.00. If you have anything you would like to donate please contact Pat Konwinski (419) 726-0116 or Rose Sniegowski (419) 478-1476 and we will make arrangements to pick up your item(s). Thank you in advance for your generosity.

International Performance Extravaganza

The Delmenhorst Sister City Organization along with Toledo Sister Cities International is presenting an International Performance Extravaganza on October 12th at the Maumee Indoor Theater. Different acts representing Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Hungary, Scotland/Ireland, Poland, Tanzania, Africa, Lebanon, Israel and Toledo will be performing. All general admission tickets are \$10.00. Remember the date and plan on attending. Contact Rogene Kohler at 734-856-2913 for more information and tickets. Your support is needed and you will enjoy the show.

Remembering Irena Sendler

Born in Otwock, Poland in 1910, Irena died on May 12, 2008. This courageous Catholic social worker risked her life to save the lives of an estimated 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto during WWII. She has been called the Polish Angel. As head of the Children's Bureau in Warsaw, she was allowed entry into the ghetto. With the assistance of other concerned people, they smuggled out the Jewish children to safety in Catholic religious houses and private homes. Irena listed on strips of narrow paper the identity of all children rescued from the ghetto. She recorded their Jewish name, temporary Christian name, and where they lived. Her work caught up with her and she was taken to the notorious Pawiak Prison where she was beaten and tortured by the Nazis. A bribe to the Gestapo helped in her release.

After the war, she gave the names of the children she had hidden in jars and buried to the Jewish Committee. Since then, Irena was awarded numerous tributes and was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. This Polish Angel's life is a remarkable portrait of courage, strength and love for your fellow man. Irena Sendler deserves to be remembered by us all.

All Saints Day

November 1st has traditionally been associated in Polish legend with ghosts and lost souls. In ancient times, when death entered a peasant's house, all doors and windows were opened at the moment of passing. Mirrors were turned to the wall so that the soul would not be captured in the room. The last rite included a funeral banquet. The vigil lasted until the burial in order to protect the dead soul from evil spirits.

These pagan customs were Christianized later and people were encouraged to pray and light candles instead of conjuring up spirits. The candles were to symbolize the eternal light for which the soul yearns.

By Jeffery Roberts

Must See Sites in Poland

The most significant sites around the world that are historically important are compiled in the book, *1001 Historic Sites You Must See Before You Die*. Poland is well represented with these selected sites:

Malbork Castle is a massive fortress and monument to the age of chivalry and has been beautifully restored.

Wilanow Palace in Warsaw operates as a museum and art gallery. The rose garden hosts outdoor concerts in the summer. The Palace is one of Poland's most important cultural and historical sites.

Marie Sklodowska Curie's birthplace in Warsaw on Freta Street is now owned by the Polish Chemical Society. It contains a museum devoted to her life. The house originally built in the 18th century is a replica built after WWII.

Chopin's birthplace in Zelazowa Wola in the Masovia region was restored due to renewed interest in his life. The furnishings are of the period.

The Black Madonna in Czestochowa is the pilgrimage site for this beautiful symbolic painting of the Virgin Mary with Jesus. The icon is unveiled twice a day for the many visitors and it is credited with numerous miracles.

The Old Town in Zamosc is a Renaissance trading center blending Italian, Dutch and Polish architectural styles. This economic, cultural and religious center was on the route linking northern and western Europe with the Black Sea.

The Wieliczka Salt Mines near Krakow are spread over nine levels and reach 1,072 feet below the surface. The mines contain chapels, artworks, and statues sculpted in salt by the local miners.

Wawel Cathedral in Krakow is best known as the coronation and burial site of the Polish monarchy for several centuries. It also contains a 13-foot high crucifix of the Black Christ that young Queen Jadwiga prayed before, and legend states that Christ spoke to her several times.

The Royal Castle in Krakow located on Wawel Hill was built in Renaissance style using architects and artists from across Europe. It was the royal residence from 1038 to 1504. The castle now houses part of the Polish National Art Collection.

Early Poles in America

The 400th anniversary of Poles landing in Jamestown, Virginia takes place this year. To bring this to our attention, TPA President David Chelminski has written a very informative essay on this event including other historical facts. It is enclosed as an insert in this newsletter for your reading. We've been here a long time!

"Earliest Polish Connections to America"
by David Gwidon Chelminski, Ph.D.

Since time immemorial, Polish culture has directed its attention westward. Not surprisingly, the Polish national coat-of-arms displays the White Eagle facing its right (thus looking out of the East, towards the West) against an amaranth or blood-red field, stylized as the white over red rectangles of the flag of Poland.

Even William Shakespeare would refer to the close relationship across the Baltic Sea between the Poles and the Scandinavians to their north by naming an advisor to a ninth-century Danish King "Polonius." Just over one thousand years ago, the celebrated Viking expedition of Leif "the Lucky" Ericsson which crossed the Atlantic Ocean around the year 1000 A.D. was apparently outfitted in the Polish port of Wolyn, leading to claims that its navigator identified as "Tyrkar" the "Southerner" was actually a Pole named "Tyrkarski." Whatever the Polish involvement in Leif Ericsson's now-accepted "discovery" of "Vinland" on the eastern coast of North America, a Polish Franciscan in 1247 wrote the "Tatar Relation" containing the famous "Vinland Map"—re-copied two centuries later in about 1440—and, as the Smithsonian Institution study concluded, "we have to assume that the anonymous author of the Vinland caption was a Pole." (See Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., Proceedings: Vinland Map Conference ([Chicago]: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 115, 16, 42 and 117).

In 1476, the northern Polish Mazurian named Jan z Kolna (recorded in Latin as "Joannes Scolvus [sic] Polonus" or John of Kolno the Pole) piloted the Danish expedition sent to search (in vain) for the nearly-forgotten Norse colony in Greenland and reached the North American strait leading to what would later be named Hudson's Bay, one hundred years before the voyage of the Englishman Martin Frobisher (accompanied by Queen Elizabeth I's court mathematician and geographer John Dee, who would have been aware of the earlier "Seolvus" discovery). Sixteen years before the first Atlantic crossing by the Genoa-born "Christopher Columbus," the Pole Jan z Kolna possibly explored the coast of the present United States as far south and inland as the navigable waters of the river which the English would name the Delaware, but it is said that he died on the return voyage, partly explaining why his accomplishment was not better publicized. Even if the geographers of the early Sixteenth Century named the Americas after the Florentine explorer Amerigo Vespucci, he was christened after an eleventh-century Polish-Hungarian prince named Amaryk or Emerich or Imre (canonized as a saint in Latin as "Sanctus Americus," feastday November 4th), whose mother and paternal grandmother were both Polish, being the daughter and sister, respectively, of the first Christian ruler of Poland Mieczyslaw or Mieszko I. Thus the very name given to the American continents was originally Polish/Hungarian, and Poles were involved in the discovery, description and exploration of North America long before Columbus ever sailed across the Atlantic.

As a Catholic nation, Poland would have respected the subsequent Papal Line of Demarcation which proclaimed the Spanish and Portuguese monopoly over the non-Christian lands which were being found. For the next several centuries any Poles involved in the westward exploration were typically lone adventurers, quite likely Protestants, whose names if ever recorded are probably Latinized or garbled into the languages of the countries into whose service they were hired. Thus, there are said to have been some "Polish seamen from Gdansk" who arrived in North America—supposedly bringing along their national emblem of the White Eagle on a red field—with Jacques Cartier of France in 1534, sailing up the gulf and river he named the St. Lawrence, looking for "Cathay" in what we now know as Canada. Meanwhile, the oldest known representation of the world as a globe which records the "newly-reported land" of "America" is the Jagiellonian Globe at the university at Krakow (Poland's Medieval capital), which dates from about 1512, and Mikolaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus), the Polish "Father of Modern Astronomy" who convinced himself of the heliocentric theory of the solar system by 1497, would include mention of Columbus's voyages—supposedly "proving" that the world was a sphere—as supporting evidence in his famous book, De Revolutionibus Orbis Coelestium (Concerning the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies), which was not published until 1543, the year he died.

The competition with the Baltic trade and production of naval stores (timber for ship masts, pitch, tar and hemp) of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, by then the largest country in Europe, added incentives to the English plans to set up a colony in the New World. The aforementioned scholar John Dee went to Poland at least twice, in 1583-84 and 1585, and his student Richard Hakluyt specifically recommended that the English hire men experienced in these kinds of work from "Prussia [then a vassal of the Polish king] and [sic] Poland," where they could be found for low wages. The twentieth-century author of America's Polish Heritage, Joseph A. Wyrwal, at least suspected that there may have already been some Polish pitch-burners on Walter Raleigh's first English voyage

to "Virginia" which disembarked in 1585 at Roanoke Island in what is now North Carolina—only to return before its relief ship arrived the following spring. (The more famous second settlement at Roanoke, remembered as the "Lost Colony," disappeared, sometime between 1587 and 1590.)

The next English attempt at settlement, begun at the Chesapeake Bay "Jamestown" colony in 1607, barely survived its first summer and winter—due to malarial fevers as well as the problem of what Captain John Smith, the President of the Colony (who had himself escaped to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from captivity among the Turks four years earlier) identified as "poore Gentlemen, ... libertines, and such like... that never did know what a dayes worke was." The English foothold in North America might not have survived at all had the Virginia Company of London not sent the vessel "Mary and Margaret," which, in addition to "the first gentlewoman, and woman servant that arrived in our Colony," brought "8. Dutchmen [*sic*: possibly meaning Germans—Andrzej Brozek, in *Polish Americans 1854-1939* (1977), referred to Germanized Silesians, while in *My Name Is Million* (1978), W.S. Kuniczak directly stated that some were "Pomeranian Germans" (both referring to historically-Polish regions), while at least one was later identified as Swiss] and [an unspecified number of] Poles, with divers [others] to the number of 70. [*sic*] persons" to establish a glasshouse (or "mill") and produce the needed naval stores such as tar, pitch and lumber, which they did immediately upon their arrival on October 1, 1608, as the ship which had brought them already took the first products of European manufacture from America for sale in England when it sailed home.

While the American records do not list the glassworkers by name, one of them allegedly wrote a memoir upon his return to Europe, *Memorialum Commercatoris/Pamiętnik Handlowca/ Diary of a Merchant*, published in Amsterdam in 1625, which reportedly identified five of the Poles: Michal (Michael) Lowicki, a Polish nobleman "born in England from a family already long settled there," as Boleslaw Gebert explained in *Pierwsi Polacy w Stanach Zjednoczonych* (1958), Zbigniew Stefanski of Wloclawek (author of the memoir, who claimed to have disembarked first and knelt, prayed, and kissed the ground), Jan Mata of Krakow, Stanislaw Sadowski of Radom, and Jan Bogdan of Kolomyja (whom John Smith had personally met when he had been in Poland in 1603).

These and other later Polish arrivals, as Kuniczak wrote, "immediately set about digging wells, building better shelter, clearing the land for cultivation, and felling timber for wood manufactures. They built their glass furnace [now reconstructed at the historic Jamestown park] on a tract of land about a mile from the crude fort, and set up workshops for the manufacture of clapboard, resin, frankincense, and potash." This first European industry known to have been established in North America helped guarantee the first successful English colony's survival prior to the development of the more profitable tobacco plantation economy. In 1609 two of the Poles (reportedly Zbigniew Stefanski and Jan Bogdan) were actually credited with saving the life of the colony's first President John Smith in a struggle with a large powerful native "King" whom they took prisoner. According to the purported Stefanski memoir, the new arrivals as early as 1609 also stirred up sports activities in the colony, and the Poles (at least) were already playing bat-ball (pilka palantowa in Polish) at Jamestown, but some of the Poles already went back to England with Captain Smith in 1609.

According to some sources, however, by 1619 there were about fifty Poles in the Virginia colony of around two thousand Europeans. In 1619 (one year before the Pilgrims aboard the celebrated "Mayflower" came to "New England"), when Virginia Assembly, the first European representative body in any colony in the Western Hemisphere, opened at Jamestown, the Polish glassworkers shut down their factory and demanded equal voting rights in the first successful strike for civil liberties in the entire hemisphere. The Court Book for the Virginia Company of London confirms the decision with the entry for July 21, 1619: "Upon some dispute of the Polonians [*sic*] resident in Virginia it was now agreed (notwithstanding any former order to the contrary) that they shalbe [*sic*] enfranchised, and made as free as any inhabitant there whatsoever."

Thus one of the reasons for celebrating Polish American Heritage Month in October is to honor the arrival of the first glassworkers at the English colony of Jamestown, Virginia, several of whom were Poles (although they were certainly not the first Poles to cross the Atlantic). This year of course marks the 400th anniversary of their historic landing. In the next eleven years, will American education improve enough so that most of our schoolchildren or even college students will at least be aware that the year 2019 will be the 400th anniversary of the first successful strike for civil liberties in the New World, specifically in what would become the United States of America, which was conducted and won by the heroic Polish artisans at Jamestown?