



Alliance News

Toledo-Poznan Alliance quarterly newsletter — Winter 2006

Polska Jesien Poznan Fantastyczny

Imagine a city where elegantly dressed people of all ages are moving quickly by foot, car, bus and tram in all directions, past stylish small stores, bustling restaurants and electric cafes, where block after block of fascinating old and new architecture shares a dialogue with passersby from the 12th century to the present—and you will see Poznan.

In November, thanks to the kindness of my parents on my 40th birthday, I had a chance to spend a week in Poland for the first time since 2003. Poznan truly amazed me, with an atmosphere of vitality and constant motion throughout the city. From the very core of the downtown and old town to the suburbs, there seems to be hundreds and hundreds of newly renovated historical buildings, newly built modern construction and a level of entrepreneurship visibly active that led me to believe that Toledo may be 12-15 years behind Poznan in development.

From the Browar, an internationally recognized new shopping mall in the core of downtown (with not a single surface parking lot in sight, thanks to a rooftop parking garage), to a new megaplex movie theater downtown, new trams, a market square bursting at the seams with restaurants, a low unemployment rate and proud attitude, Poznan is a treat to visit.

In Warsaw, new skyscrapers puncture the clouds with strikingly modern features, while new shopping malls occupy whole city blocks with shiny walls of glass and bright colored displays. It seems at every corner, a new travel agency awaits with bargain-price voyages to Thailand, Egypt, Greece, Croatia and Brazil (but none advertised the U.S.). University students wait in line for Mediterranean corner snack bars selling kabobs, while parents line up to buy superbly decorated chocolate cakes in the pastry shops.

Now more than ever, Toledo has opportunities to grow through her friendship with Poznan. Thanks to

Poznan's dynamic international development efforts, courting the interest of the world through her international fairs, universities and celebrations, we can learn from a model that has worked in Poznan for over 1,000 years. While reading the history of Poznan's cathedral, which described how the building was destroyed at least eight times since the 12th century, I realized that maybe Toledo could be rebuilt into a real city. After all, we have only faced about 50 years of deep challenges, or just a blink of the eye for Poznan. For a breath of fresh air, visit Poznan!

John Henry Fullen, Director of Toledo Sister Cities International, and TPA member

Tour to Europe

Tour to Poland and Hungary is being planned next July, 2007. If you are interested in traveling in small groups contact Kathy Grabel, 419-385-8516 for more information.



General TPA Membership Meeting

The next general meeting for all membership will be on Sunday March 18, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. at the Sanger Branch Library on Central Ave. Contact David Chelminski at 517-264-1115 (H) or 419-530-4480 (W), if you would like to serve on the Board. We need some new ideas and new members.

Dozynki 2006—now only a memory



TPA returned to the Franciscan Center on October 8th for the 16th Annual Dozynki. Over 165 guests were served a typical Polish American style wedding meal prepared and served by Malczewski Catering. This event was chaired by Ann Galloway with the help of Kathy Grabel and Pat Konwinski. The weather that day was cooperating and everyone was in a festive mood by enjoying the food and music. As in the past, we had the harvest procession led by Fr. Paul Kwiatkowski. Though we were unable to schedule the Echoes of Poland, we had an interesting historic presentation of famous Poles entitled *Portraits of Greatness*. Peggy Grant gave a brief talk on the exhibit of her husband's paintings in Krakow. Peter Jackimczuk played a Chopin selection and Jacek Radomski projected scenes of present day Poznan on a large screen. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur was also present and gave a commentary on preserving our heritage. The raffle of baked goods and the silent auction were popular and successful. Many thanks go to Ursula Zulka Cauffiel and Rosalie Hinde for their help. The dinner closed with the singing of "*Jak Szybko Mijaja Chwile.*" We hope everyone had an enjoyable time. The Toledo-Poznan Alliance sent a generous donation to our sponsored orphanage, *Dom Dziecka*, in Poznan.

Welcome new members

Marie Gorka	Russell Pawlowski
Sylvester Kosinski	Dr. Nancy Robon
Dorothy Kott	Betty & Dave Schupp
Rick Napierala	Rose Sniegowski
Ken Pacer	Jane Susdorf
	Deborah Toth

Pat's Corner...

On Sunday, October 29th a few of us from TPA went to Troy Michigan for Chopinana. We missed it last year due to conflicting schedules, but I was glad we once again got a chance to take part in it. As usual the food was awesome, a seven course dinner no less, and the entertainment was top notch. It is always a treat to go there, besides they have the Polish market across the street, where one can always buy your favorite Polish treats.

What I like about Christmas

- Christ's Birthday
- Singing Christmas Carols
- Seeing old friends
- Being with those you love
- Buying presents
- Going to Midnight Mass
- Giving to those in need
- Extra time off from work
- Writing Christmas Cards and receiving them
- Snow on Christmas Eve
- Memories of Christmas past

What I dislike about Christmas

- Too much stress
- Crowds
- Brag sheets in Christmas Cards
- Missing those who are gone
- Eating too much
- Can't find a parking space at the mall

Merry Christmas everyone, may your holidays be blessed.

Wieczor Koled will be presented on Sunday, January 7, 2007 at 2:00 pm at St. Hyacinth Catholic Church on Parkside Blvd. Come and sing along.

Polish Jazz Concert

On October 12th a Polish Jazz Trumpeter and his group, the Tomasz Stanko Quartet appeared at Murphy's Place in downtown Toledo. His eclectic style was definitely that of an individualist, yet smooth and very relaxing. A group of us went to see him perform and we enjoyed his music very much. The Stanko Quartet did a tour of 12 cities, from Los Angeles to New York City, that included Toledo and Ann Arbor. He did all this in one month. His latest release on a CD is called **Lontano**.

Polish Bar Proclaimed Best in USA

Maybe the most famous bar in America was "Cheers", a fictional 1980's TV comedy series rendition of a Boston pub called Bull & Finch. Twenty some years later from a barfly's perspective things remain pretty much the same: Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came.

There's always some bias in claiming one particular tavern to be the best. I've had the great fortune in my travels to visit astoundingly revered drinking spots across our continent from the 21 Club in Manhattan to Harry Denton's in San Francisco, to the Pump Room in Chicago and the Absinthe House on Bourbon Street. Visit one of these and I suspect you'll have no trouble keeping your anonymity.

However, if you're ever lucky enough to be in Minneapolis, do try to stop by, even if just for personal cultural research, a place immediately over the bridge and on a street both named for Father Louis Hennepin called **Nye's Polonaise**. After your first Luksusowa with a Zywiec chaser you'll feel like you're one of the family. It's got to be that "Gosc w Dom, Bog w Dom" attitude found universally in Polish Society.

I make the suggestion primarily based on the fact that the sophisticated, highbrow magazine *Esquire* named the **Polonaise** (established 1949) the best bar in America. Coincidentally, the 2006 proclamation carried in October's issue coincided with Polish Heritage Month. My condolences to the Irish and may St. Patrick forgive my blatant display of Polish pride.

It even makes a tavern aficionado like me even more excited to think the top two bars in America are Polish, because you see, Nye's Bar known as the "Old Side" is connected through swinging doors to the co-owned Polonaise Room. From an ambiance point of view only the *babcia* selected floral carpet and the dim almost flashlight glow tie the two halves together. The subtle soft backlighting of the accordion display over those swinging doors and faint illumination from a few stained-glass lampshades may tax your sight until your pupils dilate.

The "Old Side" is the only room with a window, but it has turned opaque with time and buttered pierogi smoke. Which brings me to the Polish & American cuisine. Kielbasa z kapusta, golabki, pierogi of course, but also bigos and boczek duszony z kapusta kiszona in addition to chops, steak, krul cut ribs, walleye, lobster, crab and fowl.

Piano Bar entertainment is every night, but on the weekends you'll find Sweet Lou Snider polishing the ivories and singing well loved standards and pop music with a smoke stained portrait of Chopin peering over her shoulder. Lou started at Nye's at the tender age of 31, today she's 71.

Knowing a couple thousand songs by heart she takes requests without every saying, "Hum a few bars, and I'll fake it." If you want to borrow the mike and sing for your supper or at least a drink, that can be arranged too.

For those who prefer a little exercise by cutting the proverbial rug, you're in luck because the World's Most Dangerous Polka band has been playing there since the 1960's and was acclaimed one of the top five house bands in America by the prestigious music oriented *Billboard Magazine*.

The hostess, Evie, just turned 77 and has been there for nearly 30 years. Nye's is a union shop and dying on the job is not out of the question. Memories are a living part of this institution. Some of the staff have been there since Nixon was President. When you ask an employee when they plan on retiring, the typical answer is, "When I'm dead."

What really makes this bar so special to be selected America's best? Let me count the ways. Norman Rockwell could have painted the whole of his life's portraits in this place. A marvelous kitschy atmosphere. They have a bartender who can ring up over \$3,500 in drinks during a shift and still wash his own glasses. You'll see a mix of college kids, tie-dyed hipsters, factory workers as well as *babcia* and *dziadek*. The food and music is top notch. The pickles on the relish tray are so fresh they remember when they were cucumbers. For those ladies without a partner, the bar gives a debonair man named Roger free coffee in exchange for taking the ladies for a spin on the dance floor. Everybody says stepping into Nye's is like stepping back in time to even a time before electricity, when people were more open and sociable. Ordering a Polish vodka martini means getting it the Polish way. Maybe the bartender waved the Vermouth bottle over the glass, but that's as close to adulteration as it gets. Oh, did I mention - everybody knows your name? And hey, they usually pronounce it right even if it doesn't have a vowel like *Przybysz!*

Denny Kutylowski, Freelance writer and TPA member

Did you know ...? Adam Mickiewicz, the greatest Polish poet for whom Poznan's Adam Mickiewicz University is named, was born on December 24, 1798. His epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* was made into a movie and it is available on video.

