



POLISH-AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION

of Washington, DC.

NEWSLETTER

Fall Issue 2011

Member of The American Council for Polish Culture, Inc. Since 1966

Great Fun at the Gala celebrating the 45th Anniversary of PAAA



Past Presidents of the PAAA: Henry Chauski, Esq., Dr. Richard Okręglak, Richard Wiermanski, Tom Payne, Stefan Łopatkiewicz, Esq., Dr. Ed Pawlowski, Mary Ann Evan, Sharon Brzostowski, Dr. Edwarda Buda, Dr. Estelle Wachtel-Torres, Mary Flanagan, Marianna Eckel, Bernadette Wiermanski.

WIGILIA Supper

Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 4:00 pm.

The Whittermore House
1526 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington DC 20036

Traditional Wigilia cuisine, Polish kolędy, Chopin concert

Message from the President



Greetings! A lot has transpired since our Spring Newsletter. Many of our members attended the ACPC Convention in Cleveland in July, which you will read about in this newsletter. We also had our summer Wianki on the Mall, for which Marianna Eckel invited excellent dance groups. This is a fantastic way to acquaint the general public to the customs of our heritage, and I believe that we are the only large Polish American organization which sponsors such an event – this is one of the ways that your membership fees and donations can advance our culture.

Our Annual Meeting in June included elections of new officers and also was crowned with the award of scholarships to three most deserving Polish American youths. As a member of the Scholarship Committee, I am amazed at the accomplishments of our scholarship applicants! They are making our job harder each year. The celebration of our 45th Anniversary is also chronicled in this newsletter and I know that I can speak for all who attended that it was exquisitely enjoyable.

And just as we are beginning to plan our activities for this coming business year, we get hit with Hurricane Irene with its flooding rains and also a bona fide 5.8 magnitude earthquake in Virginia! We received the unfortunate news that, along with the Washington Monument and other official buildings, the Polish Embassy experienced structural damage during the earthquake. We are glad that no one was injured and our thoughts and prayers extend to the Embassy in dealing with the magnitude of the dilemma. We were saddened to learn that as a consequence the Embassy had cancelled all programs for the remainder of the 2011-2012 season. Although the Embassy has graciously allowed us to hold our Wigilia and Chopin concerts at this grand venue in the past, we will march on and plan this year's events at the historic, elegant Whittermore House which boasts a beautiful dining room with crystal chandeliers and a Steinway concert grand piano. The Wigilia and Chopin concert are critical to raising funds for our scholarships and they will continue to be very enjoyable. So I encourage all who have attended and supported us in the past to continue to do so. I wish everyone a great Thanksgiving season, and see you at our Wigilia!

Tom Payne, President PAAA

THE POLISH-AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON, DC, INC.

Editor: Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Ph.D.

The PAAA Inc is a Non-Profit Organization Charter under US Law c3 since 1966

www.paaa.us

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Proofreading: Tom Payne



Annual General Membership Meeting

Installation of New Officers and Presentation of Scholarships



President Tom Payne, Matthew Stefanski, Kelsey Hutchison,
Christopher Siuzdak, Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Chair

On June 12, 2011, PAAA held its annual election meeting at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Wisconsin Ave. in Washington, DC. President Tom Payne welcomed some 50 members and guests, and presented the President's report on major activities for the past year. These included the Wigilia and Chopin concert, both at the Polish Embassy, Wianki on Capitol Hill, and a general membership meeting.

The Nominating Committee presented the candidates for the 2011-2012 term of office and Dr. Pawlowski conducted the election. Dr. Susanne Lotarski, President of the Polish American Congress, Washington Metropolitan Area Division, installed the officers. The Association awarded three scholarships totaling \$7,500. Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, announced the winners:

1st Prize: Christopher Siuzdak, Catholic University, History and Psychology major. Christopher is 1st generation of Polish immigrant parents. He has distinguished himself by being one of the organizers of the „Future Leaders of Polonia” conference in Doylestown, PA and by winning the prestigious Roy Bode Memorial Award from Catholic University for excellence in academics, leadership, and Christian ideals.

2nd Prize: Kelsey Hutchison, Muhlenberg College, Dance and Creative Writing major. Kelsey's grandparents emigrated from Poland and settled in the College Park, MD area where her family continues to be active in several Polish organization. Kelsey performs at a variety of volunteer and community outreach activities, including performing at the US Department of Agriculture in traditional Polish costume.

3rd Prize: Matthew Stefanski, American University, International Relations major. Like Christopher, Matthew is 1st generation from Polish immigrant parents. He comes from a Polish community in Bayonne, NJ, where he was President of the Bayonne High School Polish Cultural Society. Matthew impressed the committee with a strong research paper which demonstrated his knowledge of Polish history of the last 50 years.

President Tom Payne presented checks of \$3,000, \$2,500 and \$2,000 to the awardees. The \$2,500 award was funded by the Leonard Karpinski Endowment for Scholarships which had been donated to the PAAA. After the meeting, attendees had the pleasure of watching Kelsey perform a modern dance, and in chatting in Polish to Christopher and Matthew. Please continue to support the PAAA Scholarship program!

Dr. Pawlowski introduced Dr. Ewa Shadrin as a guest speaker. Ewa and Nick Shadrin, the youngest destroyer commander in the Soviet Navy, defected from Gdansk-Gdynia to Sweden in 1959; the CIA brought them to the United States. Through fascinating events, the CIA and FBI turned Nick into a triple-agent. Eventually, Shadrin met his death at the hands of the Soviets in Vienna. Dr. Shadrin showed a Polish Television video of this case. Refreshments and libations were offered thanks to Sharon Brzostowski and Ben Filipczyk, who made the arrangements for the meeting.

Dr. Ed Pawlowski

NEW OFFICERS

President
Thomas Payne

1st Vice President
Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil

2nd Vice President
Marianna Eckel

Treasurer
Thaddeus Mirecki

Recording Secretary
Irene Sowa

Corresponding Secretary - Vacant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ben Filipczyk

Bernadette Wiermanski

Richard Wiermanski

Dr. Richard Okręglak

Dr. Ed Pawlowski

Estelle Wachtel-Torres, MD

Wianki 2011

In Poland the eve of St. John is fraught with miracles and magic. Flowers and grasses, made into wreaths which are floated on the water, forecast a maiden's fate. The celebration is also related to the summer solstice—the longest day of the year. In the 16th century, Jan Kochanowski wrote of the 'Wianki' celebration: "Let us this evening celebrate, with all its accustomed state, with joyous melody and song"

What a beautiful celebration it was of this ancient Polish tradition on June 25th 2011, at the Reflecting Pool in front of US Capitol, Washington DC. This event has been sponsored by the Polish American Arts Association of Washington D.C. since 1967.



Michas Dancers in front of US Capitol

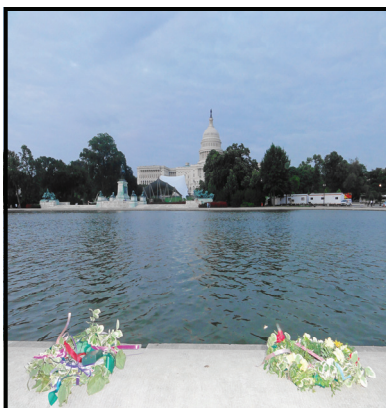
In the shade of big trees a group of girls were making wreaths under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. John Kasper and with supervision of Krysia Popso. The celebration began with live music by 'The Brothers-In-Law Plus Band', under direction of Olek Skrypczuk, and singing led by Stasia Skrypczuk, followed by performances by Polish Folk Dance Ensembles. First, the "Michas Folk Dancers" appeared wearing colorful handmade costumes from the Podhale region of Poland, with their bright colors and intricate embroidery. Audience participation with the dancers truly enhanced the dance experience. Then dancers from 'Maki Children's Polish Dance School' performed, wearing beautiful handmade costumes from the Rzeszow and Krakow regions of Poland. When "Maki" took the stage, everyone watched with a smile. Their singing and performance was heartwarming.

At dusk, the "Wianki" pageant began; the candles on the wreaths were lit, and to the strains of Polish music, the wreaths were placed near the waters of the Reflecting Pool in front of U S Capitol. The program ended with public dancing and a picnic provided for all the dancers and musicians by the PAAA. Thank You to the Wianki Comnmittee, which included John Eckel, Jacquelyn and Matt Guerin, Olek Skrypczuk and the "Brothers-in-Law Plus Band", Mike Levinsky and the "Michas Folk Dance Ensemble", as well as Krystyna Olszewska and the "Maki Children's Polish Dance School."

Marianna Eckel, Chair, " Wianki" on the Mall Festival



Olek Skrypczuk and the Brothers-in-Law Band



Wianki at the Reflecting Pool



Maki Polish Dance School performers

American Center for Polish Culture

63rd Annual Convention 2011



Tom Payne and Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil at the Western Reserve Historical Society archives.

Cleveland, Ohio was the site of the 63rd convention of the American Council for Polish Culture, held July 14 through 17, 2011. Eight representatives of the PAAA of Washington DC attended the conference and mingled with representatives of the 32 member organizations and affiliates of the ACPC.



Julie Hamula sings at St. Stanislaus Church

Most of these organizations and

affiliates have similar goals that include events to promote Polish culture and scholarships for students of Polish heritage. Interesting speeches ranged from researching geneology to the process of writing The Polish American Encyclopedia. Thus, the convention was a wonderful opportunity to cross-pollinate and create ties.

President Debbie Majka strongly urged that all the member organizations and affiliates sponsor at least one college student to attend the Youth Leadership Conference to be held in June of 2012 in Washington DC. for young people of Polish background, ages 17-26. This is a week-long program in which young people meet professionals of Polish descent who work in leadership positions in politics, business, media, academia, and arts. The cost is \$500 plus travel. Debbie Majka urged that each member organization take responsibility for promoting the conference and for sponsoring at least one outstanding young person. The young people are our future! Full details and an application form can be found online at www.polishcultureacpc.org.

The theme of the convention was "Celebrating the Maestro," honoring the 70th anniversary of the death of Polish pianist and statesman, Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941). On the 4th day of the convention, there was an installation of a sculptured bust of Paderewski in the Cleveland Cultural Gardens in Rockefeller Park. The dedication was highlighted by historian Dr. James Pula and a performance of Paderewski's music by vocalist, Julie-Ann Hamula, who was the winner of the ACPC Marcella Sembrich Award. Ms. Hamula also gave a full recital on July 14th at the beautiful St. Stanislaus Church in Slavic Village.

Ben Stefanski, chair of the 63rd Convention Committee, led the conventioners in a variety of excursions around Cleveland. At the Western Reserve Historical Society Polish Archives we viewed original documents and artifacts of the many years that Polish immigrants developed in the city of Cleveland. A visit to the beautiful Cleveland Museum of Art was followed by a visit to West Side Market, a huge source of kielbasa, every type of meat, produce, dairy, and baked goods. In front of the market, DJ Kishka provided music, and people danced the polka on the street. Finally, the ACPC Awards Banquet, held at the John Paul II Cultural Center in Slavic Village provided a more formal, but familial atmosphere for sharing delicious Polish foods and honoring deserving awardees.



Jackie Kolowski, winner of the ACPC Founders Award is congratulated by sisters Tracey, Mary, and Celia Larkin

Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, 1st Vice President, PAAA

45th Anniversary Gala 2011

On Sunday, September 11, 2011, the PAAA celebrated its 45th Anniversary by holding a Gala Dinner Dance at the Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, MD. This club boasts membership from many past U.S. presidents and many other dignitaries, so the venue was very elegant with a gorgeous view of the golf course which has hosted many PGA Golf Tournament Championships. Alice Laning, the Chairperson for this event, greeted the guests.



Dining, Dancing, Clowning

Top: Congressional Country Club, Bethesda MD
Left Up: Henry Chauski and Dr. Estelle Wachtel-Torres
Left Down: Constance and Stephen Donnelly
Right Up: Richard and Bernadette Wiermanski
Right Down: Ben and Jill Filipczyk, Sharon Brzostowski, Stefan Łopatkiwicz

Past Presidents in Attendance

Mary Flanagan (1977-78)
Stefan Łopatkiwicz (1978-79)
Bernadette Wiermanski (1981-2)
Mary Ann Evan (1985-6, 1993-4)
Richard Wiermanski (1992-93)
Marianna Eckel (1994-96)
Dr. Richard Okręglak (1996-97)
Dr. Edwarda Buda (1997-98)
Dr. Estelle von Wachtel-Torres (1999-2001, 2003-04)
Henry Czauski (2001-03)
Dr. Ed Pawlowski (2004-06)
Sharon Brzostowski (2007-08)
Tom Payne (2010-12)

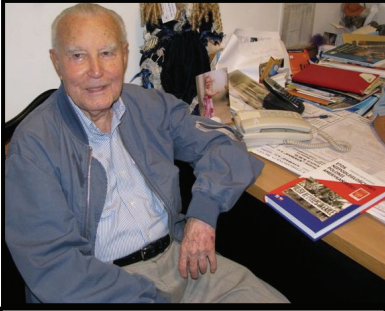
Father Majka opened with an invocation giving thanks for the meal and offering prayer on behalf of the attendees. An exquisite dinner of filet mignon or salmon was served, topped off by a scrumptious crème brûlée for dessert. Music was provided during the entire occasion by Dan Skoler and his combo. Many of the guests took advantage of the spacious dance floor throughout the evening to enjoy a variety of tunes.

PAAA President, Tom Payne, addressed the guests and recognized our special attendees, Krystyna and Michał Sikorski from the Polish Embassy, Dr. Susanne Lotarski from the Polish American Congress, Teresa Bukowski from the Polish National Alliance, Richard Okręglak from the Friends of the Polish Library, and Connie Donnelly from the Friends of John Paul II. The theme of the Gala was honoring our past presidents and their accomplishments.

The Program booklet outlined the highlights of the PAAA's history, beginning with our first president, Marta Korwin Rhodes. The PAAA began an exciting era in the late 60s in which many Polish artists and poets were brought to the Washington DC area. PAAA began to celebrate Wigilia in 1979 during the presidency of Myra Leonard. These celebrations began in small halls where members did all the cooking. A new era of excitement arose in 1991 under the presidency of John Kasper in which several cultural programs of the PAAA, including the Wigilia, took place at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in a cooperative sponsorship. We are indebted to the early pioneers of the PAAA who kept Polish arts and culture in the DC area very much alive during the early years, before the new democratic government of Poland could arrive and establish the warm relationship that we enjoy with the Embassy today.

Tom Payne, PAAA President

Pride of Polonia: Zachariasiewicz and Mirecki



Walter Zachariasiewicz, author of
Independent Ethos of American Polonia

MANY HAPPY RETURNS WALTER ON YOUR 100TH BIRTHDAY!!!

In Poland people sing “STO LAT” “may you live 100 years” - on birthdays and other very special occasions. This beautiful, ancient tradition goes back to a time when people lived on average 40-60 years. So wishing them 100 years was like wishing them something unattainable. Even today, a 100th birthday is not a common occurrence. But Walter Zachariasiewicz has achieved that, and so very much more, during his long lifetime. As he celebrates his 100th birthday on Nov. 7th, 2011, we are reminded that when he was born in Cracow in 1911, Poland was not even on the map and was not a free country. Walter decided to devote his life, his love for Ojczyzna (the Fatherland) to ensure Poland will be on the map.

We all are born to live, but not all are born to lead. Walter’s life experiences coupled with personal determination have made him a natural leader. As a graduate of Cracow’s Jagiellonian University School of Law his training became handy when he effectively lobbied for Polish causes with US congressmen, presidents and political activists. As a veteran of the Polish army and a survivor of Soviet prisons and gulags, in 1946 he evacuated with General Anders' army to London and two years later emigrated to the United States. Assuming leadership, he worked on effectively organizing the Polish-American Immigration and Relief Committee in New York.

Walter also initiated, organized, and spearheaded a long list of Polish-American organizations. He was one of the founding fathers of the Polish American Arts Association in Washington, DC, and served as one of its earliest presidents 1969-72. Walter served three consecutive terms as the President of ACPC, and received the ACPC Founders Award in 1978 as well as the Distinguished Service Award in 1986. His fruitful efforts helped to establish the Friends of John Paul II and Dom Pielgrzymy, the Pilgrim’s Home in Rome. He is a member of the Polish Knights of Malta. Walter’s book, *Independent Ethos of American Polonia*, has been hailed as an indispensable compendium of cultural and political history of Americans of Polish descent.

In 1991 Walter was recognized by Pope John Paul II with the distinction of Knight Commander in the Order of Saint Gregory, and in 1995 by President Walesa with the title of Commander in the Order of “Polonia Restituta.” However, Walter cherishes the “Pride of Polonia” Award the most. When Polonia celebrates your “Happy Birthday,” we all wish you, Walter, continuous health, incessant enthusiasm, and joy of life, with gratitude for your leadership, which inspires us to also serve and share our own experience for the greater common – Polish and Polonia - good. MAY YOU LIVE FOR DECADES BEYOND 100 YEARS !!! **Mark Michalski**

CONGRATULATIONS TED ON THE ‘PRIDE OF POLONIA’ 2011 AWARD!!!

The Pride of Polonia Award is presented by the National Polish Apostolate Committee to a person whose personal integrity and involvement in the Polish community is exemplary. Such a man is Ted Mirecki, the Treasurer and webmaster of PAAA. Ted was born in Poland; his family escaped the Nazis to France. Ted grew up in Canada, and came to Chicago as a teen. His MS in Computer Science and minor in Financial Planning from the Illinois Institute of Technology, fluency in Polish and English, as well as career with Microsoft gave Ted the skills which he has used for his lifetime of service to Polonia.

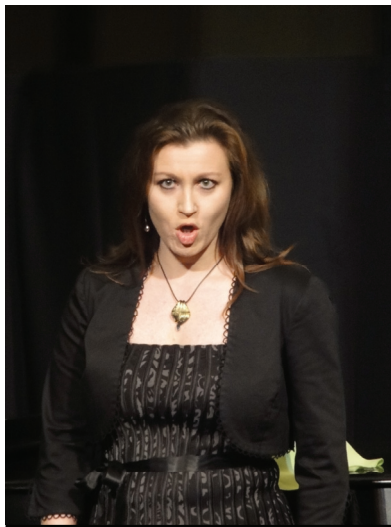
Ted is a skilled translator of Polish into English as well as English into Polish. At Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish he is chair of the Financial Council, and has taken an active part in charitable fund-raising events organized by the PAAA, the Polish Embassy, and the Friends of John Paul II Foundation. Ted has worked on computerizing the offices of the Washington Office of the National Polish Congress, the Polish Library, and ACPC. He is a member of the Polish Knights of Malta and has been awarded the Cavalier’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland. WE THANK YOU AND WISH YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS!!! **Dr. Wanda O’Brien-Trefil**



Ted Mirecki, past President of
ACPC and recipient of the ACPC
Founder’s Award

Magdalena Wór: Polish-American Opera Star sings Carmen

Ambassador Theater: Madman and the Nun by Stanisław Witkiewicz



Mezzo-Soprano, Magdalena Wór

Anyone who has heard Magdalena Wór sing finds her performance unforgettable. Her dark, sensuous mezzo-soprano voice and a passion in her body language compel the attention of audiences and critics alike. In 2010, after her performance as ‘Carmen’ with the Palm Beach Opera, FL, a reviewer described Magdalena’s voice as “rich and seductive...acting as the sultry, sexy and fiery cigarette girl [with] just the right amount of intensity.’ In The Atlanta Journal, a review wrote that it is ‘a pleasure to hear the plush textures and dark, chocolatey timbre of her voice.” In February of 2011 she sang the role of Suzuki in Puccini’s ‘Madame Butterfly’ with the Virginia Opera. Soon after, Magdalena’s talent was showcased by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, where she performed a concert of Chopin, Rybicki, and Bizet songs in June of 2011.

Magdalena Wór is a Polish born mezzo-soprano who has lived and trained in the United States since 1991. She received her Bachelor and Masters degrees in vocal performance from Georgia State University. Magdalena is the First Place Winner of the 2010 Marcella Sembrich Competition sponsored by the Kościuszko Foundation and the Moniuszko International Vocal Competition. She is also a National Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Competition. Her impressive resume and repertoire can be found on www.magdalenawor.com.

Dr. Wanda O’Brien-Trefil

Upcoming Performances of Magdalena Wór

Women Pioneers — November 12, Music Center at Strathmore

Copland, Tower, Saint-Saens, and Beach with
the National Philharmonic Orchestra

George Bizet’s Carmen with the Lyric Opera Virginia

May 4, 2012 Newport News, VA
May 11, 13, 2012 Charlottesville, VA
May 19, 20 Richmond, VA
May 23, 24 Virginia Beach, VA



AMBASSADOR THEATER PRESENTS
**THE MADMAN
AND THE
NUN**
*or, There is Nothing Bad Which
Could Not Turn into Something Worse*
by **STANISŁAW WITKIEWICZ**
AKA **WITKACY**

TRANSLATED BY **DANIEL CHARLES GEROULD**
DIRECTED BY **HANNA BONDAREWSKA**

PREVIEWS NOVEMBER 29-30, 2011
SHOWS DECEMBER 1-18, 2011
Thursdays - Sundays at 8PM
Matinees Sat & Sun at 2PM

FLASHPOINT: Mead Theatre Lab
916 G St. NW, Washington DC
www.aticc.org

AMBASSADOR THEATER
INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTER

You are invited to the PAAA

WIGILIA

Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 4:00 pm

at the historic, elegant

Whittermore House

1526 New Hampshire Ave. NW

Washington DC 20036

**Enjoy Wesolych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia
and Merry Christmas**

with the Music...

Kolędy in Polish and English

led by Polonia favorite, Józef Surowiec

Concert of Chopin's music

performed by competition winner Wen-Yee Ho



Music Room with Steinway concert grand piano

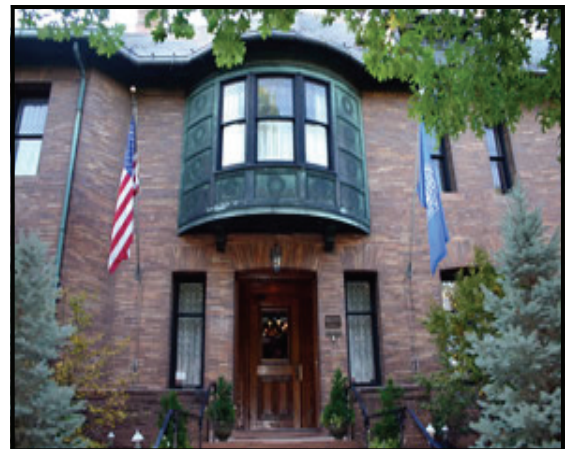


Warm family atmosphere in the elegant dining room

with the Opłatek...

and Traditional Wigilia foods

Easy parking across the street \$7.00



Easy access:

Metro - Dupont Circle station

Walk from Dupont Circle

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Additional details will follow with your invitation



WIGILIA Supper

Sing kolędy with Józef Surowiec
Share opłatek with Father Majka

Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 4:00 pm

The Whittermore House
1526 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington DC 20036

Elegant historic house by Dupont Circle; Parking across the street \$7.00
Look for your invitation in the mail !

**Polish-American Arts Association
P.O. Box 9442
Washington, DC 20016**

