



# POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION

of Washington, DC

# Newsletter

Fall 2013

Member of the American Council for Polish Culture, Inc. since 1966

## ACPC 65th Annual Convention in Baltimore Hosted by PAAA



*Convention participants at the Katyn Memorial in  
Baltimore's Inner Harbor*

The PAAA hosted the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of ACPC in Baltimore, Maryland, July 31 to August 4, 2013. Taking advantage of the proximity of the convention's venue to the nation's capital, PAAA invited distinguished speakers from the Washington area: Maciej Pisarski, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, and Senator Barbara Mikulski, who was awarded the ACPC Distinguished Service Award.

Celia Glembocki presented instructional materials promoting Polish culture intended for teachers who attend the annual National Conference of Social Studies (NCSS). The presentation spurred a flurry of donations, raising over \$2,000. In the ACPC elections, joining the

newly elected President of ACPC, Camille Kapielski, is the new Second Vice-President, Thomas Payne, PAAA President. The newly elected ACPC Board of Directors includes PAAA members: Janet Beane, Sharon Brzostowski, Ray Glembocki, Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, and Bernadette Wiermanski.

In his keynote speech, Mr. Maciej Pisarski noted, among other things, that Poland will receive the largest disbursement of European Union cohesion funds for 2014-2020, amounting to 140 billion dollars, which will be used to continue to develop the country. During a luncheon hosted by the Polish Heritage Association of Maryland at the Holy Rosary Church Hall, Senator Barbara Mikulski spoke with great feeling about her upbringing in an immigrant family in Baltimore, where her father was a baker. In the evening, soprano Sarah Kate Watson, winner of the 2013 Marcella Kochańska Sembrich Vocal

Competition performed a program of songs ranging from compositions of Karol Szymanowski to Cole Porter.

The Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel was perfectly located within walking distance to the Katyń Memorial, USS Constellation, historic Fells Point with its Polish shops, boutiques, restaurants, and antique stores, as well as other attractions. During an afternoon of sightseeing, the conventioners visited Fort McHenry, where cannons guarded the Port of Baltimore against invasion by the British in 1814, inspiring Francis Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner." The participants also visited the Holy Rosary Church, where Father Andrzej Totzke displayed a reliquary containing a drop of blood from Blessed Pope John Paul II.

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## Message from the President

Greetings to all dear members! As we start the new association year, we are stronger than ever with the addition of new Board members, some seasoned past officers of our Board, and poised to make positive contributions in our Polonia community.

With this issue, I am assuming the Editorship of the newsletter, with assistance of Celia Larkin as copy and layout editor. I wish to express thanks to our past Editor, Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, for ensuring a smooth transition and for sharing her experience and advice on putting the newsletter together. During her tenure as editor, Wanda introduced several new initiatives, including, among other things, the use of color photos, and interesting article ideas. We look forward to her continued contribution as a writer as well as her suggestions on interesting new material.

Our summer was marked by a highly successful Wianki celebration on the Mall, described further on page four. This annual event, in a prestigious setting on the National Mall, reaches wide audiences of sightseers from different parts of the country and the world. Tourists of multiple nationalities stopped to see dancers in colorful costumes and listen to music and songs not normally heard on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. There were visitors of Polish descent from other states and some from Poland who were surprised and delighted to hear the music of their native land in the midst of the nation's capital. We promote our culture by welcoming and encouraging participation from people who get their first-ever taste of Polish culture and by familiarizing them with our traditions. This celebration is to be enjoyed not just by our own membership, but by a very wide and diverse audience. Congratulations to Marianna Eckel and Celia Larkin for their organizational efforts.

We are also happy to announce that the PAAA sponsorship this summer of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) Convention in Baltimore was a rousing success! Highlights are also featured in this edition. Our organization continues to exert influence and leadership in this national organization, as exhibited in the election of six PAAA members to the ACPC Board – myself, Janet Beane, Sharon Brzostowski, Ray Glembocki, Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, and Bernadette Wiermanski. I also proudly accepted the position of the Second Vice President of ACPC

Since our last Newsletter, we have lost one of our beloved members, Jill Filipczyk. Jill was the wife of our past Board member, Ben Filipczyk, and she was serving as PAAA's social chairperson. She will be remembered as a kind and pleasant person and she will be missed.

Our plans for the upcoming association year include, of course, the Wigilia, which will be held at the Knights of Columbus Ballroom in Arlington, VA, on Saturday, December 7. The program will include traditional Polish food and plenty of singing. We also will enjoy another Chopin concert at St Luke's Church on February 2, 2014, featuring Chopin master Brian Ganz.

Please participate in these events and enjoy the multi-faceted articles that have been prepared for you in this Newsletter!

Tom Payne

### PAAA OFFICERS

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#### Copy and Layout Editor:

Celia Larkin

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**The PAAA is a Non-Profit Organization tax exempt under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3) since 1966**





*Convention Chairman Richard Wiermanski and Bernadette Wiermanski*



*Deputy Chief of Mission of the Polish Embassy, Marcin Pisarski (c), with Jaroslaw Golembiowski (l) and Ed Pawlowski (r)*



*PAAA Group: Ted Mirecki, Jim Trefil, Sharon Brzostowski, Ed Pawlowski; Seated: Ray and Celia Glembocki, Wanda O'Brien-Trefil*



*Senator Barbara Mikulski(l) with ACPC President Camille Kopski (r) and Jackie Kolowski (c)*



*Debbie Majka with Sarah Kate Walston, soprano, and Alicia Dutka, Music Committee Chairman and recipient of PAAA Founders Award*



*PAAA President Tom Payne with ACPC past President Debbie Majka*



**65th ACPC Convention in Baltimore**

*Continued from p 1*

At the Awards Banquet on Saturday night, the ACPC Cultural Achievement Award was presented to Maestro Piotr Gajewski, founder, artistic director and conductor of the National Philharmonic Orchestra, who regularly features Polish composers and performers at the prestigious Strathmore Music Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Alicia Dutka, who for many years served as Chairman of the Music Committee and Vocal Competition, received the ACPC Founders Award. The convention festivities continued late into the evening with the performance by the *Ojczyzna* Dance Ensemble from Baltimore under the direction of Dennis Klima, in authentic, colorful Polish folk costumes. The guests were then invited to join *Ojczyzna* performers in dancing the polonaise, two-step, and waltz.

The convention arrangements were co-chaired by Richard Wiermanski and Tom Payne, to whom we say "Serdecznie Dziękujemy!"

**Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Ph.D.**

**Photos: Jaqueline Kolowski**



*Soprano Laura Kafka-Price sang the national anthems*



*Maestro Piotr Gajewski receives Cultural Achievement Award from ACPC 1st Vice President Mary Ellen Tyszka*



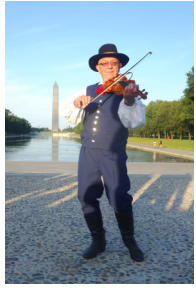
*Bozenna Buda-Ortins and Edwarda Buda Okreglak with a member of Ojczyzna*



*Richard Okreglak with Ojczyzna dancers*



# Wianki Festival on the National Mall



The Polish American Arts Association held its annual Festival of Wreaths, *Wianki*, on June 22, 2013 at the reflecting pool by the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. This annual celebration of the St. John's night customs and traditions includes live Polish music, dancing and making of wreaths which are carried to the water at the end of the evening.

The audience included not only members and guests of our organization but a multitude of tourists and visitors, some from distant states and foreign countries. As they gathered near the reflecting pool, enjoying refreshments brought in picnic baskets, a group of instructors set out bunches of flowers and greenery and invited young girls and ladies to make their own wreath. The workshop was coordinated by Krysia Popso and the result was seen at the evening's end as girls clad in white carried their flowery creations to the edge of the water.

Live music was provided by the "Brothers in Law Band" with Olek Skrypczuk (pictured above) on violin, Richie Popso on accordion, and Stasia Skrypczuk, vocals. Two dance groups from Baltimore performed throughout the evening. The *Ojczyzna* group, under the direction of Dennis Klima, was magnificent in authentic Polish costumes, rich with brilliant colors, intricate embroidery and sparkling beadwork. They started with *Polonez*, the dance of the Polish nobility, followed by folk dances from various regions of Poland and ended with a highly spirited and humorous performance of the *Old Warsaw Polka*. The youthful *Krakowiaki* group, directed by Melissa Kalinowski, no less colorful and just as spirited, alternated with dances from other regions so that all parts of Poland were represented.

At the end, as the lighted wreaths were laid by the water, members of the audience joined the performers in singing and dancing until late in the evening.

Our sincere thanks go to all who made this evening truly as magical as the St. John's nights of old

Marianna Eckel- *Wianki* Chairman  
 Photos by Celia Larkin

Stasia & Olek Skrypczuk with Richie Popso, entertained throughout the evening



Ojczyzna Dance Group amazed with varied dance styles and exquisite costumes



Above: Krakowiak  
 Center: Dances from Nowy Sącz  
 Left: Old Warsaw Polka



Girls carry wreaths to the water



Two young Krakowiaki Dance Group members



Performers and audience danced and sang together until late in the evening





# The Voice of Róża

By Celia Larkin



Róża Nowotarska was a journalist, author, translator, actress, radio personality, painter, lover of music and theater, friend to poets and artists everywhere and avid reader of literature, polemics and news. Anything worth knowing and discussing was her passion. She was a tireless champion of fairness, justice and freedom, especially in her beloved Poland. Among Polonia in the US and other parts of the world, she was known mainly for the books, stories and articles she wrote for émigré press. Over the years she collaborated with publications in America and in Europe, publishing in *Wiadomości* in London, *Kultura* in Paris, *Gwiazda Polarna* in Wisconsin, *Przegląd Polski*, a cultural supplement to *Nowy Dziennik* in New York, and a number of others.

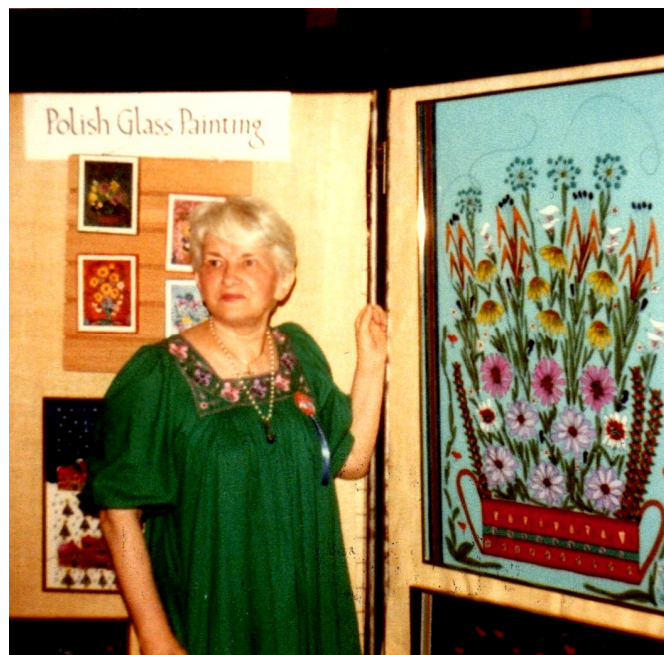
Róża authored about a dozen books, notably *Tryptyk Wojenny*, her penetrating memoir from World War II; *Ziemia i Słowo*, about Pope John Paul II; *Gentleman z Michigan* (co-authored with M. Święcicki); *Georgetown Miasteczko Sliczne*, a monograph about the historic city within Washington, DC, where she lived for many years, and *Świat Jerzego Połomskiego* about her favorite popular Polish singer. She translated the poetry of Rod McKuen and other works into Polish and was in close contact with prominent Polish poets and artists in Poland, the US and other countries.

In Poland, where access to works published abroad was very limited during communist rule, Róża's name became popular through her broadcasts on the Voice of America radio. For over 23 years, she served as translator, broadcaster and producer for the VOA's Polish Desk. She was known for her strength in reporting, excellent command of language, integrity of spirit and dedication. With her knowledge and understanding of American music and culture, Róża was able to produce and broadcast her

own programs about Country Music, something that endeared her to thousands of listeners in Poland. She received countless pieces of fan mail from her listeners and responded to each one of them. Very often, she filled the requests for books and recordings at her own cost, hunting them up on sales and at discount record stores. It can be said that Róża was the person who introduced the genre of Country Music to Poland for the first time.

In addition to the written and spoken word, Róża found expression through painting on glass; her works derived from the Polish folklore, and the naive, stylized Polish folk art. The few thousand pictures she painted can be found in homes of collectors in America, as well as in Poland. Her exhibits in Kraków and Warsaw drew thousands of visitors, a tribute both to her art and the popularity of her name, known to so many from the airwaves.

Born in Kraków, Róża immigrated to the US after World War II, settling first in Detroit and then moving to Washington in 1964. Here, she was one of the original group of some twenty people who established the Polish American Arts Association in 1966. For a number of years, she was active in organizing art exhibits, lectures, musical soirées and other cultural events. She also contributed to the propagation of Polish culture by hosting artists in her home and making their work known to her American friends. She died in March 2012, at the age of 91. A friend from Poland said recently that some people there still refer to the old VOA broadcasts as "The Voice of Róża."





# PAAA College Scholarship Grants 2013

The Scholarship Committee, chaired by Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, including PAAA President Thomas Payne and former PAAA president Dr. Edwarda Buda-Określak, reviewed 10 applications for the Polish American Arts Association Scholarship. We are proud to report that thanks to the thriving endowment and generous ongoing contributions to the PAAA Scholarship Grant Program, we were able to award \$10,000 in grants to five outstanding university students.

The scholarship certificates were distributed at the PAAA Annual General Election Meeting on May 19, 2013. Among attendees at the meeting were several family members and friends of Justin Mostowtt. It was a delight to host this group of Polish-Americans who saw the support given by the PAAA to young people who will one day carry on our organization's work. We are looking forward to seeing them as well as our other scholarship winners and their friends at future event.



Scholarship recipient Justin Mostowtt with family and friends at the PAAA Annual General Election Meeting

## Wanda O'Brien Trefil, Ph.D.



◀ **Matthew Waskiewicz of American University is the recipient of \$3,000 scholarship.** Matthew is a freshman majoring in Economics and Political Science and his ambition is to become a Congressman. In addition to holding a 4.0 grade average, he plays the trumpet with the AU Jazz Band, and was elected to the Student Honors Board. He demonstrates a commitment to the arts and passion for serving others.



▶ **Justin Mostowtt of the Washington and Lee School of Law is the recipient of \$3,000 scholarship.** Justin is a two-term Student Government President. He is a well-rounded young man with varied talents and interests. In addition to being a campus leader, he is a skilled tennis player and a certified sailor.



◀ **Kathleen Strylowski of George Mason University is the recipient of \$2,000 scholarship.** Katie is doubly gifted as a writer as well as a graphics artist and is a website designer. She is the Graphics Director of numerous campus publications, and has her own Photography Studio.



▶ **Michael Szpindor Watson of George Mason University is the recipient of \$1,000 scholarship.** Michael is a Ph.D. candidate in Economics whose research interests include Polish history and Catholic Social Thought. Michael speaks fluent Polish and has extensive experience with Polonia organizations.



◀ **Karina Payerhin of the University of Virginia is the recipient of \$1,000 scholarship.** Karina is a biology major studying to become a veterinarian. A freshman, Karina has won awards for her laboratory work, and is co-author of a research article published in the *Journal of Dental Research*, March 2013.

The PAAA Scholarship Grant Program depends on contributions from our members and friends. Our sincere thanks to all who have contributed in the past. A full list of donors will be published in the winter issue of the newsletter. To make a donation, please make your check to PAAA and mail to: PAAA Scholarship Fund, c/o Mr. Ted Mirecki, 4041 41st St. N., McLean, VA 22101.

For information and a grant application visit: [www.paaa.us/scholarship/](http://www.paaa.us/scholarship/)



## Laura Kafka-Price Presentation at the May PAAA General Membership Meeting

Laura Grażyna Kafka-Price, Ph.D., a lyric soprano and voice teacher at the Peabody Preparatory Program of the Johns Hopkins University, was the guest speaker at the Annual Polish American Arts Association General Meeting on May 19, 2013.



*Karol Szymanowski*

The topic of her presentation was Polish composer Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) and his place in Polish and world music. Dr. Kafka-Price specifically focused on a cycle of children's songs composed by Szymanowski, *Rymy Dzieciece*. Szymanowski wrote these twenty *Children's Rhymes*, Op. 49 in 1922-23 as a mature 40-year old. The combination of Kazimiera Illakowiczowna's (1892-1983) poetic vision and the composer's subtle and sensitive musical treatment of the poetry resulted in miniature gems that are both a joy to sing and fun to listen to for audiences of all ages. PAAA members and guests were treated to a lovely rendition by Laura of several of the songs about *Krzysia* and her doll *Lalka* and the rhymes they make up before going to sleep. The song collection is a series of miniature tableaux about animals and flowers and other lovely images that pass through *Krzysia's* and *Lalka's* minds throughout the night as the little girl and her doll drift in and out of sleep.

Dr. Kafka-Price also discussed her current and proposed research topics and projects, which includes a production of a CD and accompanying illustration book that would combine her English translations of Karol Szymanowski's 20 *Children's Rhymes*. She is also preparing a performance edition and translations from English into French of songs for children's choir. Currently she is writing an article on life and work of California composer, Dr. Salvatore Ferrantelli whose work includes one Polish piece, his setting of the Polish poem, "Noc Majowa." Another project dear to her heart is a recording of the settings of seven Polish kolędy for soprano, oboe and piano by Pennsylvania composer, Dr. Dennis Ritz, together with a kolędy sing-along recording for families

Dr. Kafka-Price has been sponsored by PAAA in numerous recitals since 1989. At the May meeting, she was elected to the PAAA Board of Directors. Due to the recent appointment to a teaching position at the Peabody Preparatory Program, she no longer is able to attend the monthly board meetings but has agreed to serve on the Advisory Counsel of the PAAA. We plan to feature an article written by her on Karol Szymanowski and Polish music in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**PAAA Fall General Meeting** will be held on Saturday, November 16, 2013 at the Knights of Columbus Building 5034 Wisconsin Ave NW at 4:00 PM. Following the meeting, there will be a presentation by guest speaker Carla Tomaszewski, a local Polish American artist specializing in graphic designs with Polish historical and folk motifs as well as the art of Easter eggs, *Pisanki*.

**PAC Washington Division Thanksgiving Dinner** honoring Maestro Piotr Gajewski, music director and conductor of the National Philharmonic, at the Kenwood Country Club in Bethesda, MD on Sunday, November 17, 2013 at 2:00PM.

**Ambassador Theater**, under the direction of Hanna Bondarewska, presents the play **Protest** by the Czech playwright and the first president of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel. Music by Jerzy Sapiyevski. The play will run from November 20 to December 15, 2013. More information and ticket orders at: [www.aticc.org/home/protest](http://www.aticc.org/home/protest).

**PAAA Wigilia Celebration** (see information on back page) on December 7, 2013

**PNA Christmas Party** on December 15, 2013

**PAAA Spring Chopin Concert**, featuring Brian Ganz, a pianist known for championing the music of the great Polish composer in his ongoing project to play all of Frederick Chopin's compositions. The concert will take place on February 2, 2014 at St. Luke's Church, McLean.

*Please consult the respective organizational representative for times and locations and other details..*

Dear PAAA members:

Those of you whose membership is expiring this year will soon receive renewal letters for 2014. Please make sure to complete the forms as soon as you receive them and return with your payment. Your dues allow us to continue the work of our organization to promote Polish culture in America. Keeping your membership current will ensure that you will continue to receive the PAAA newsletter as well as notifications and invitations to all our events.

If you have friends that you think would like to join the PAAA, you can find membership application at: [paaa.us/org/membership.htm](http://paaa.us/org/membership.htm)



# Polish Wigilia



**Saturday, December 7, 2013  
5:00 - 10:00 PM**

**The Knights of Columbus Club of Arlington  
5115 Little Falls Road  
Arlington, VA 22207  
Free parking on the premises**

**Please join us in celebration of Polish Christmas food, traditions, kolędy singing  
and the age old custom of sharing opłatek with friends and family**

**For information/reservations, please contact: Mrs. Marya Pickering, 703-967-5023,  
marigold316@aol.com**

Polish-American Arts Association  
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Washington, DC 20016

