



POLISH AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION of Washington, DC

Fall 2018

NEWSLETTER

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

Reflections on 100 Years Since Poland's Resurrection

By Ted Mirecki

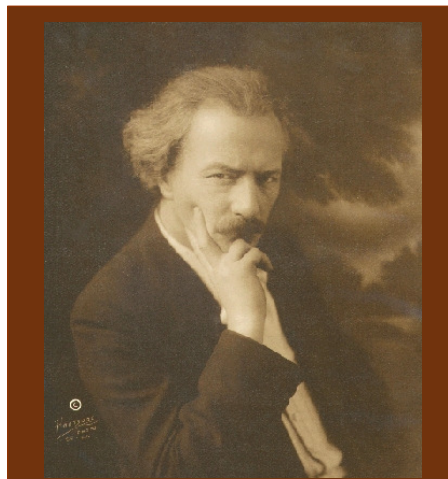
To most of us, centennials are a somewhat nebulous concept. Very few living persons can reach back in memory for 100 years. Yet, this centennial of Poland regaining independence has, for me, a very personal significance.

My father was born in 1910, in what was then the Austrian-occupied part of partitioned Poland known as Galicia, in the southeastern Polish territory extending from Kraków to Lwów. He told me the story that, at the age of nine or ten, while swimming one summer day in the river in his small town, he heard the sound of an approaching automobile. Now at that time, automobiles were a great rarity, especially in rural Poland, so all of the young lads ran out of the river, naked (they didn't wear bathing suits then), to see what was going on. It was a caravan of an American emissary of Herbert Hoover (who was then Commerce Secretary and head of the American committee for assistance to Europe) bringing aid to the newly re-established nation of Poland.

Poland had been an independent united nation since the 10th century, much longer than Germany, Italy or Russia, but had been divided up by its neighbors in the late 18th century, just at the time when the United States was being formed.

And so, my father was a witness to the rebirth of the Polish nation, of which this year we celebrate the 100th anniversary.

Fast forward to Washington, DC, in 1993. My father walked up the stairs of the Polish Embassy, to be greeted by Ambassador Jerzy Koźmiński of the newly-independent state of Poland. It is



Ignacy Jan Paderewski, pianist and statesman, influenced President Woodrow Wilson to insist on restoration of a free Polish state;

Lech Wałęsa, leader of the Solidarity movement which brought about the liberation from communist rule in Poland and Central Europe.



truly amazing that, in the course of one lifetime, he had the opportunity to witness TWO resurrections of a free Polish state.

What is even more amazing is that the first resurrection took so long – 123 years – and the second came so soon. In the nineteenth century, there were several opportunities when liberation seemed imminent – The Kościuszko uprising of 1794, the Napoleonic Wars of 1812, the November Uprising of 1831, the Spring of Peoples in 1848, the January Uprising of 1863, the first Russian revolution of 1907 – yet the partitions persisted.

But in World War I, a miracle occurred: the partitioning powers were on opposite sides of the war, Germany and Austria on one side, Russia on the other with France, Britain and the US. Yet, all three of them lost the war! That was an outcome boldly predicted by Józef Piłsudski, who at first sided with Germany against Russia, but in the end refused to swear allegiance to the Kaiser. His initial fealty created a reason why France, and especially Lloyd George of Great Britain, opposed the creation of a free Polish state at the Treaty of Versailles after the war. It was the insistence of American President Woodrow Wilson, under the influence of his friend Ignacy Jan Paderewski, and the skilled statesmanship of Polish politician Roman Dmowski, that prevailed, and gained the re-establishment of a free Polish state with access to the Baltic Sea.

Continued on page 3



Message from the President

Dear fellow PAAA members and friends,

It was truly wonderful to see all those young children on stage at our fall membership meeting and to hear them recite poetry in flawless Polish and well enunciated English. They obviously received good

preparation from Laura Kafka-Price, founder and director of the Children's Rhymes Project in which they were participating and from the director of the Polish Drama Club Dorota Ponikiewska who has been training young as well as older actors for quite a few years now. It was also obvious that the children are receiving good instruction at home to learn the Polish language and to use it with ease and confidence. Not every child in the group was Polish but it's heartening to see that they are learning about Polish poetry and music. This is why the PAAA encourages everyone to join us in supporting the efforts of people like Laura and Dorota.

As I look back at the year 2018, I think we should be proud of the part we play in our area's Polonia activities with our own events as well as participation in and support to those organized by others. Our next and last event this year is the Wigilia at the Arts Club on December 9. Like last year, we will welcome families with children to celebrate with us. Many of us have non-Polish extended families and at times we need to share our holidays where our own traditions are not necessarily up in front. The Polish Wigilia at the Arts Club has become the annual tradition for many of us, as well as for the club's staff. They have learned to put on a splendid Polish feast with all the traditional details. Special prices are offered for children and those five and under are welcome free of charge. So please bring your family or join ours. Whether you bring the little ones and their grandparents or come by yourself, you will be welcomed in the home-like atmosphere in a true Polish spirit.

It is now five years since we started holding many of our events at the Arts Club of Washington on I Street. This year, we marked our association by acquiring a brick with our name in the club's courtyard. We invite you to go see it the next time you attend a PAAA or other event there.

Those of you whose membership is expiring this year will soon receive renewal letters for 2019. As you fill out the payment form, please consider adding a year-end tax deductible donation to support the PAAA activities and those of others who help us with our mission of promoting Polish culture.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and much joy in the New Year.

Wesołych Świąt i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku.

Cecilia Larkin

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Contact

paaanewsletter@gmail.com

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Reflections on Poland's Resurrection

Continued from page 1

Although we celebrate this year the 100th anniversary of the re-establishment, the independent Polish state did not last over the past 100 years. Fifty of those years, or half of that time, were again under foreign occupation. Nazi Germany invaded in 1939 and occupied Poland for 6 years, then the Soviet Union “liberated” the country and occupied it for another 40 plus years.

The second resurrection from that occupation was due primarily to the efforts of three persons: Pope John Paul II, President Ronald Reagan, and Lech Wałęsa – two of the three being Polish. It is sometimes said that Mikhail Gorbachov was a player in the collapse of communism, but that is confusing cause with effect - like saying that the swaying of trees causes the wind.

I remember as a young child, as we as a family said our evening prayers, we ended them with a plea “Dear God, may uncle so-and-so and aunt such-and-such be released from prison, and may we return to Poland.” That was in France, where we had settled after escaping from the communist regime in Poland. My parents, both in high commanding positions in the Resistance (my father was decorated with the order *Virtuti Militari*), had survived the German occupation. They were hunted by the Germans because they were Polish patriots and enemies of the German Reich, which was true. After the war, they were hunted by the communists because they were “enemies of the Polish people,” which was a lie. That proved to be more of a threat than the Germans.

In 1950, we moved to Canada. I asked if that was closer to Poland than was France, and was disappointed to learn that it was farther. Just after landing there, we learned of the war in Korea. My father said that soon we’ll be going back to Poland, because America will vanquish the communists. Well, that didn’t happen. But we continued praying for a return. At that point, we resigned ourselves to the reality that politics, being the

art of the possible, made it impossible for Poland to be free in any foreseeable time frame. Just the opposite of what the Great Emigration of the nineteenth century experienced – they expected Poland’s rebirth at any time, which did not happen.

In the second half of the twentieth century, there were several hopeful signs – the above-mentioned Korean War, Berlin riots of 1953, Hungarian Uprising of 1956, Prague Spring of 1968, food price riots in Poland in 1970, 1976 and 1980 – but in all these cases, the might of the Soviet Union crushed the voices crying for freedom, and Soviet domination continued. We were prepared to endure it for the foreseeable future, and expected that the postwar status quo would last for many lifetimes. Again, it did not happen.

Last September, I was in Warsaw at a convention of *Rada Polonii Świata*, the Worldwide Council of Polonia which unites Polonian organizations in over 40 countries around the world, in North and South America, Western and Eastern Europe and West Asia. At the plenary meeting in the chamber of the Polish Parliament, Bożena Kamińska, Vice President for Polish Affairs of the Polish American Congress, the largest organization of Polonians in the world, gave a stirring speech outlining the role of American Polonia in both national resurrections in this century – in 1918 and 1989. As mentioned, 100 years ago it was Paderewski’s influence on Woodrow Wilson, and in the 1980s, Polish-American financial and moral support, and President Reagan’s actions, which were instrumental in the restoration of a truly sovereign Polish state.

It is indeed an indication of the turbulent history of Poland that we can celebrate the dual restoration of freedom in the short period, in historical timeframes, of a single century. It is our sincere hope that never again, in our lifetime or in any foreseeable future, Poland will need to see another resurrection.



At left: statues of Ronald Reagan and Pope St. John Paul II in Ronald Reagan Park in Gdańsk, Poland.

At right: the author's father Kazimierz Mirecki witnessed twice the rebirth of Poland



Young Polish Cellists Perform at the Arts Club of Washington

On October 5, 2018, we had the occasion to hear two wonderfully talented young Polish musicians perform at the regular Friday Noon Concert at the Arts Club of Washington. Last March, Krzysztof Michalski and Michał Balas were named first place winners in the cello category of the prestigious Johansen International Competition for Young String Players. They were invited to come back from Poland to perform in a concert of first place winners on October 7 at the Church of the Annunciation in Washington, DC. The additional recital for the Polish cellists was arranged through the collaboration of the Arts Club, the JIC and the Polish American Arts Association.

Both cellists performed brilliantly. Michał Balas played compositions by Franz Schubert and Pablo de Sarasate and Krzysztof Michalski performed an all Chopin program. Both were accompanied by pianist Frank Conlon, known to us from his performance at the PAAA Chopin Concert and appearances at the Polish Embassy.

Several PAAA members attended the recital and afterwards had the opportunity to meet the artists and congratulate them on their accomplishments. We hope to hear these outstanding young musicians again in our area and we will follow their progress with interest.



Standing: PAAA President Celia Larkin, cellist Krzysztof Michalski, Arts Club President Judith Nordin, cellist Michał Balas, JIC Steering Committee Chair Judith Silverman.
Seated: JIC Administrative Director Harriet Kaplan and pianist Frank Conlon

Three of Our Own Honored in Minneapolis



ACPC awardees: Richard Poremski, Carla Tomaszewski, Judi Tompkins and Tom Payne

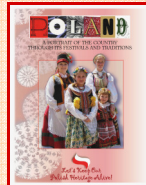
Tom Payne, President of the American Council for Polish Culture received the organization's Founders Award at the Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. True to his own motto, "We are the leaders whom we have been waiting for," Tom readily takes on tasks whenever a need for leadership and diligent work arises for the good of Polonia and in the service of promoting culture, heritage and history of the land of his ancestors. The PAAA has availed itself of his leadership for many years and we are proud that he has been our president for three terms and continues his service as 1st Vice President.

Also receiving the Founders Award was ACPC treasurer Judi Tompkins. Although she lives in Michigan where she is active in Detroit's Friends of Polish Art, Judi is familiar to many in our area. She often visits her daughter and three grandchildren in Maryland and at times takes the opportunity to attend some of the PAAA's events.

Richard Poremski from nearby Baltimore, Chairman of the National Katyń Memorial, received the ACPC's Distinguished Service Award. He regularly writes for the monthly Polish American Journal, representing the Washington and Baltimore bureaus. He is a member of many Polish-American local and national organizations, including the PAAA.

The recipient of this year's ACPC Cultural Achievement Award was artist and author Carla Tomaszewski. Her achievements as an artist, and one who promotes Polish artistic tradition, are too extensive to list here. In 2015, the PAAA undertook to sponsor the publication of the book for children *POLAND - a Portrait of the Country Through Its Festivals and Traditions*, which was written and illustrated by Carla. The Children's Book Project has been a great success and distributed all over the world. The book's second edition is almost exhausted and there are plans to do another printing and perhaps have it translated into Polish. We are proud that Carla's many achievements were recognized by the ACPC.

A wonderful gift for Christmas and beyond



POLAND - a Portrait of the Country Through Its Festivals and Traditions, a children's book published by the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC

To order your copy, please write to:

Mrs. Cecilia Glembocki
911 Saddleback Ct, McLean, VA 22102
Email: polandchildrensbook@gmail.com

Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/PolandChildrensBook/>

Dear PAAA members:

Those of you whose membership is expiring this year will soon receive renewal letters for 2019. 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.

PAAA membership applications can be found at:
www.paaa.us/org/membership.htm

To receive a colorful PAAA brochure, write to:
paanewsletter@gmail.com

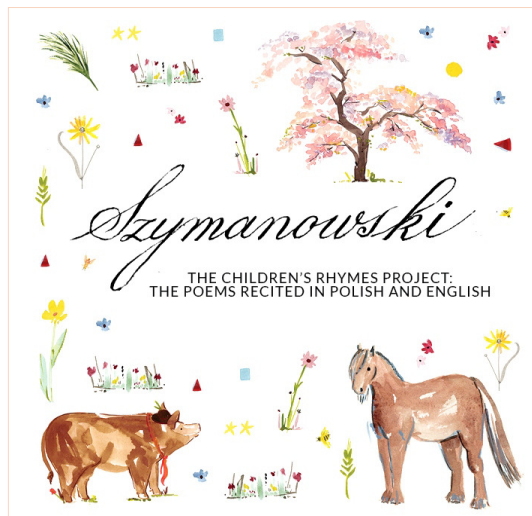
PAAA Welcomes Children's Rhymes Project at Fall Meeting

The Polish American Arts Association Fall General Meeting was held on October 28, 2018, at the Arts Club of Washington. As opposed to the ones in May when we have elections, scholarship awards and annual reports, fall meetings focus more on artistic programs and presentations. Part of this meeting's program was an inspiring reflection by Ted Mirecki on the 100th anniversary of Poland's regaining of independence. Ted's lecture is presented in its entirety as a feature article in this issue.

The second and longer part of the program was an artistic presentation put together by our member Laura Kafka-Price, PhD, who serves on the PAAA Scholarship Committee and the Artistic Advisory Board. The subject was the Children's Rhymes Project (ChiRP) that Laura has been working on for the past several years, centered on the song cycle *Rymy Dziecięce*, Op. 49 by Karol Szymanowski with words by the Polish poet Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna. We were first introduced to the project at a PAAA membership meeting over five years ago (see the Fall 2013 Newsletter at <http://www.paaa.us/NewsLet/>). The project is supported by a number of organizations and individuals, including the PAAA, American Council for Polish Culture, Kosciuszko Foundation and The Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University.



Performers in the Children's Rhymes Project artistic program on stage at the Arts Club of Washington. Standing left to right: Bruno Zielinski, pianist Eileen Cornett, Nina Ligan, Agata Dolińska, Konrad Loreth, Julita Loreth, Rosalinda Sherman, Alessandra Brown, McKenzie Cook, Addison Giannini-Cook, project founder and director Laura Kafka-Price and PAAA President Celia Larkin. Polish Drama Club Director Dorota Ponikiewska is seated in front. The children hold copies of the PAAA book on Poland's customs and traditions that they received along with certificates and treats of Polish candy.



Cover designed by Patti Pogodzinski for the CD used in presentations at professional music conferences and at www.childrens-rhymes-project.com.

Laura, who wrote a doctoral dissertation on the opera *Król Roger* (*King Roger*), recognizes that although Szymanowski is regarded as a first-class composer, his song repertoire remains relatively unknown outside of Poland in large part due to the difficulty for non-Polish speakers to sing in the Polish language. Singers have great demands put upon them to learn a repertoire in at least eight languages (Italian, German, French, Russian, Czech, Spanish, Latin, and English), so adding one more makes the task of learning and performing songs even more time-consuming and challenging. Laura has undertaken to make Szymanowski's Op. 49 songs available in English. Working with former PAAA scholarship recipient, pianist Tomasz Robak (presently on a Fulbright Scholarship in Poland), she has recorded the *Rymy Dziecięce* song cycle in Polish and in her English translation. An accompanying teaching package will be released along with the recording guiding advanced high school singers, college voice majors, and professional singers who wish to learn to sing the song cycle in Polish. The package will include a recording of the poetry spoken in Polish, a word-by-word translation and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) guide for each song, as well as the piano accompaniment. Laura and Celia Larkin have spent countless hours editing the English version of the song translations that will be published as a piano-vocal music score with Szymanowski's music. In addition, a children's book is being written by Laura about Karol Szymanowski with a focus on the song cycle. Soon children everywhere will be invited to submit artwork for each of the poems and the winning illustrations will become part of the book.

About a dozen display boards prepared by former PAAA scholarship recipient Patti Patrycja Pogodziński, illustrating the ChiRP project were set in the Arts Club galleries. The displays included Patti's original artwork designed for the two compact disc recordings that have been used by Laura at presentations at professional music conferences and at www.childrens-rhymes-project.com.

Following an update on the status of the project, Laura was joined on stage by children participating in ChiRP, including those from the Polish Drama Club (Dorota Ponikiewska, Director), who recited a selection of Iłakowiczówna's poems in flawless Polish and English while Laura sang them accompanied by pianist Eileen Cornett. All were rewarded with enthusiastic applause and praises during the reception that followed the program.

Remembrance

Richard Wiermanski - a Life of Service to Polish Community and Polish Culture

For most of his life, Richard Wiermanski lived in service to the Polish community and Polish culture. At the time of his death on September 17 of this year, he was serving as President of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation; he was Past President of the American Council for Polish Culture; served on the Board of the Polish American Congress; was past Grand Knight and Faithful Navigator of Knights of Columbus.

Both Richard and his late wife, Bernadette, were devoted to the Polish American Arts Association. Shortly after they moved to the Washington area from Chicago, Bernadette became president in 1981-82, and ten years later, Richard took the organization's helm. In between and for many years to come, they served on the PAAA Board, by election and by virtue of being past presidents. They served on many committees and were a constant presence at most of the PAAA events. In 2001, Richard and Bernadette received the Founders Award from the American Council for Polish Culture. Because of all the many years supporting Polish events here and in Poland, they were each awarded the Cavalier Cross from the President of Poland.

Even though he was struggling with failing health in recent years, he continued to regularly attend meetings and events. He traveled to Toronto in the summer of 2017 to attend the ACPC Convention, was at the Arts Club for the PAAA Wigilia last December, and this past May, at the celebration of



the birthday of Saint John Paul II at the Army-Navy Club, where he made his last speech. His daughter Mary writes of his dedication: "When it became time to give up his car (in his mind he never stopped driving and carried his driver's license), friends and his driver, Tony, helped get him where he wanted to go. He wasn't going to sit home. And he wanted to go to board meetings, conventions and events related to Polish culture and his love of Saint John Paul II, his Polish Pope. If he didn't answer the phone when we called, we eventually found out that he was at a meeting. His involvement gave him purpose and wonderful friendships."

Richard and Bernadette were high school sweethearts and perfectly matched in every way. They shared friends and interests, and were best friends. They were married for 62 years and were the parents of Mary (Tim) Kauper of Bloomfield Hills, MI, Rick (Cyndie) of Darien, IL, Ann (Joseph) Sidenberg of Sarasota, FL, Kathy Ercolano of Randleman, NC and David (Beth) of Fairfax, VA. They also had eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

A Memorial Mass was held for Richard Wiermanski on Saturday, November 10th at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. He will be buried at St. Adalbert's Cemetery in Niles, Illinois. Memorial donations may be made in his honor to the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Inc., 300 Kent Street, Falls Church, VA 22046. *Cześć Jego pamięci.*

Jan de Rosen Monument Fund

Jan de Rosen, was a great Polish artist and patriot, well known for his murals and mosaic works which can be seen in churches and shrines throughout the United States and in other countries, including the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, St. Matthew's Cathedral and The National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. A monument in his honor, designed by sculptor Gordon Kray, stands on the Avenue of the Meritorious at the Czestochowa Shrine in Doylestown, PA.

Now, the Polish American Arts Association has undertaken to place a smaller version of the monument at de Rosen's actual grave at the Columbia Gardens Cemetery in Arlington, VA, where he is buried according to his wishes. We need funds to complete and erect the monument. To contribute, please send your check made out to PAAA, with a note that it is for the

Jan de Rosen Fund, to: Ted Mirecki,
900 N. Taylor St., No. 617, Arlington, VA 22203.

Literary Corner by Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka



Polish-born poet Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka is the author, translator, and editor of several books of poems in English and Polish, including the recent *Szklana góra/Glass Mountain* (2017) which features Lidia Kosk's poem in 22 languages. Her book *Oblige the Light* won the fifth national Clarinda Harriss Poetry Prize. She has translated poems by several Polish, as well as American and Catalan poets. Danuta is co-editor of the literary journal *Loch Raven Review*. She holds a PhD in biochemistry; her scientific career encompasses professorships at the University of Maryland and The Johns Hopkins University. To learn more about Kosk-Kosicka, please visit her website: <https://danutakk.wordpress.com>

Anna Świrszczyńska (also known as Anna Swir) was a Polish poet whose works deal with themes including her experiences during World War II, motherhood, the female body, and sensuality. Born in Warsaw in 1909, she grew up in poverty as the daughter of an artist. She began publishing her poems in the 1930s. During World War II, Anna joined the Polish resistance as a front-line nurse in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising that saw the city leveled and 250,000 Poles die. She came within an hour of being executed. Czesław Miłosz writes of knowing her during this time and has translated a volume of her work. After the war Swir wrote poetry as well as plays for children, and directed a children's theater. She lived in Krakow until her death from cancer in 1984.

STRZELAĆ W OCZY CZŁOWIEKA
pamięci Wieska Rosińskiego

Miał piętnaście lat,
był najlepszym uczniem z polskiego.
Biegł z pistoletem
na wroga.

Zobaczył oczy człowieka,
powinien był strzelić w te oczy.
Zawahał się.
Leży na bruku.

Nie nauczyli go
na lekcjach polskiego
strzelać w oczy człowieka.

CZTERNASTOLETNI
SANITARIUSZKA MYŚLI ZASYPIAJĄC

Żeby wszystkie kule na świecie
trafiły we mnie,
to by już nie mogły trafić w nikogo.

I żebym umarła tyle razy,
ile jest ludzi na świecie,
żeby oni nie musieli już umierać,
nawet Niemcy.

I żeby ludzie wcale nie wiedzieli,
że ja umarłam za nich,
żeby nie było im smutno.

TO SHOOT INTO THE EYES OF A MAN
i.m. Wiesiek Rosiński

He was fifteen,
the best student of Polish.
He ran at the enemy
with a pistol.

Then he saw the eyes of a man,
and should've fired into those eyes.
He hesitated.
He's lying on the pavement.

They didn't teach him
in Polish class
to shoot into the eyes of a man.

THOUGHTS
OF A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD NURSE

If all the bullets in the world
hit me,
then they couldn't hit anybody else.

And let me die as many times
as there are people in the world,
so that they wouldn't have to die,
even the Germans.

And let nobody know
that I died for them,
so that they wouldn't be sad.

From the collection *Building the Barricade and other poems of Anna Swir*. Translated by Piotr Florczyk. CALYPSO EDITIONS, 2011

Piotr Florczyk is a poet, essayist, and translator of Polish poetry. His most recent books are *East & West*, a volume of poems from Lost Horse Press, and two volumes of translations published by Tavern Books, *My People & Other Poems* by Wojciech Bonowicz, and *Building the Barricade* by Anna Świrszczyńska, which won the 2017 Found in Translation Award and the 2017 Harold Morton Landon Translation Award. Florczyk, a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California, resides in Los Angeles. For more info, please visit: www.piotrflorczyk.com



PAAA Wigilia

Sunday, December 9, 2018 at 4:00 PM

Arts Club of Washington
2017 I Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

Please join us for a celebration of Polish Christmas food, traditions, kolędy singing and the age-old custom of sharing opłatek with family and friends. Bring your family or join ours. Special prices for students and children.

Details at: www.paaa.us

Please remember to renew your PAAA Membership

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

