



**POLISH-AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION**

of Washington, DC.

# ***NEWSLETTER***

Spring Issue 2012

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

## **FESTIVAL OF WREATHS - "WIANKI"**

**Saturday, June 23, 2012 6:00 - 10:00 PM**

**At the Constitution Gardens**

**Near Constitution Ave between Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument**



**Come picnic, make and float a wreath to the one you love, enjoy Polish folk dancing, and dance to a live band. Free and open to everyone!**

# *Message from the President*



Wiosna! Time to say goodbye to old man winter and peel off the warm clothes! My term as president of the PAAA is almost completed, and it has been a whirlwind of activity and discovery for me. I have a better appreciation for the responsibilities and accomplishments of our past presidents, so I am very glad that we could honor all of them, living and deceased, at our successful and entertaining 2010 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala. Likewise I have appreciated all of the support of my lovely and talented fellow Board members -- I can categorically say that they have a fantastic collective body of knowledge regarding Polonia governmental affairs and protocol, history, arts and literature, language and culture. And of course I have an appreciation for all of you fellow PAAA members who give us moral and financial support in

our activities. I sincerely hope that this organization is giving something valuable back to you in the form of activities and information, especially regarding our flagship activity of raising money to advance the future prospects of bright young Polish Americans through the Scholarship Program.

It has also been a pleasure to attend meetings and events of our fellow Polonia organizations such as American Council for Polish Culture, Friends of John Paul II, Polish American Congress, and Polish National Alliance. Due to my membership on the ACPC Board, I was blessed with the assignment of securing the approval for installation of a historical marker in Jamestown commemorating the arrival of the first Poles in America. As someone who was once completely outside this cultural circle, I have proudly concluded that Polish Americans as a group are extremely smart, artistically accomplished, caring, and very patriotic. This is not braggadocio; it is based on visible and palpable evidence. Finally, the Polish Embassy has been behind us 100% with their support.

Due to space limitations, I cannot provide the names behind all of the above-cited, but I will make it my business to personally thank all whom I meet before my term expires. I have not had to "rule" as president, but rather I have "presided" over a talented and industrious Board that has made my job much easier. And even PAAA regular non-Board members have contributed suggestions that have improved our focus.

So thank you once again for your support and encouragement. The next President will inherit a program that is financially sound, well-organized, and cooperatively managed. I hope that you are delighted and better informed by the articles in this issue of the Polish American Arts Association Newsletter.

**Tom Payne, President**

**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](http://www.paaa.us)**

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

**Proofreading: Tom Payne**



## *PAAA Wigilia December 18, 2011*

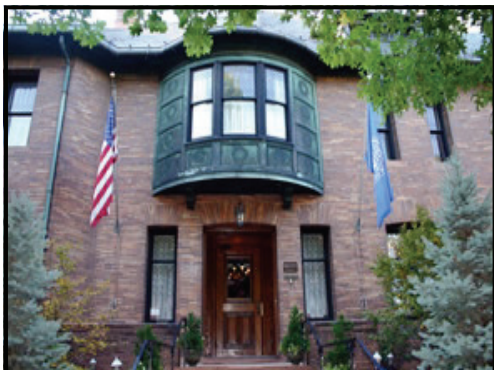


100 participants celebrated Wigilia with Polish food, kolędy led by Józef Surowiec and Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, and Chopin performed by Wen-Ye Ho.

The historic, elegant Whittemore House turned out to be an excellent venue for the 2011 Wigilia celebration. The building is the center for the Women's National Democratic Club in Washington DC, and guests were able to tour the room where Eleanor Roosevelt recorded her radio shows during the 1940s. The preparations by the staff of the Whittemore House were impeccable, with rich moiré tablecloths on each table as well as red and green napkins. In the Polish tradition, the centerpieces contained a bit of traditional "sianko," hay from Christ's manger.

After a social cocktail hour, the 100 attendees listened to Rev. Philip Majka bless the opłatek and sought each other out to exchange best wishes. The warm, family closeness continued into the sumptuous Wigilia supper, consisting of traditional mushroom soup, herring, salmon, pierogi, kutia, veggies, and deserts. Caterers Bogdan and Danuta Konefał of Creative European Cooking prepared the buffet and served the guests. Ben Filipczyk held an entertaining drawing to identify the lucky winners of raffle prizes, donated by the PAAA Board of Directors to benefit the PAAA Scholarship Fund.

After dinner, the dinner guests departed from the Stevenson Room and entered the Hamlin Room in which a Steinway Grand Piano and concert seating awaited them. Pianist Wen-Ye Ho performed a short recital of Chopin's piano music, including the famous "Fantaisie Impromptu" and several Mazurkas. Dr. Ho is a former professor of French from Harvard and Rutgers Universities, who in her retirement is competing in the international amateur piano competition circuit with great success. Wen-Ye donated her trip from Boston and her performance as her contribution to the PAAA Scholarship Fund.



The Whittemore House

The Chopin concert was followed by the singing of kolędy, Polish carols, with baritone Józef Surowiec leading the chorus of 100 voices, and Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil accompanying on the piano. Each carol was sung in Polish and in English to ensure the participation of all. The Chair thanks the PAAA Board for making this a truly wonderful evening.



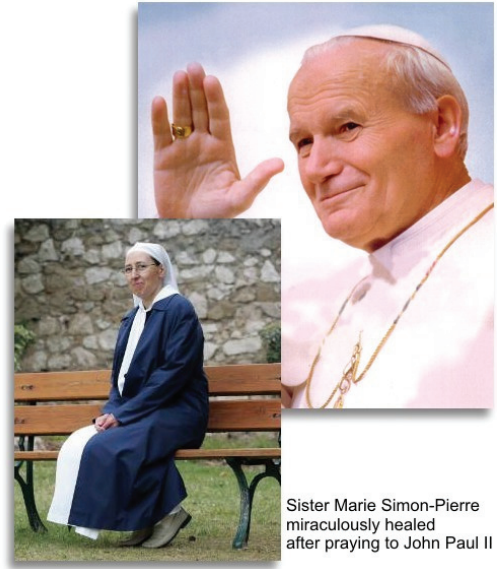
Rev. Fr. Majka blesses opłatek

**Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Wigilia Chair**

## ***Beatification of John Paul II and Steps Toward Canonization***

Polish Catholics look forward to the day that Pope John Paul II will be proclaimed a saint of the Roman Catholic Church. To date, John Paul II has been beatified, and as Blessed John Paul II, he has been proclaimed a holy man who can be publicly venerated. The feast day for Blessed John Paul II has been set as October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the anniversary date that commemorates when Karol Wojtyła was installed as the Pope in 1978. John Paul II is a treasure of Polish culture, having influenced enormous social movements that led Poland and the world into the third millennium. To help our members understand the process of beatification and canonization, the PAAA Board invited Rev. Canon Father Philip S. Majka to speak at the PAAA General Membership Meeting on October 2, 2011.

There are some basic differences between beatification and canonization to sainthood. Beatification is a local process, done where the person lived, usually by the local bishop or archbishop. The beatification must be approved by the Pope, but is not an infallible pronouncement done “ex cathedra.” On the other hand, canonization is done in Rome by the Pope who does act “ex cathedra,” and makes a world wide pronouncement which mandates that the holy person be internationally venerated as a saint. Two miracles are usually needed for beatification, however in the case of John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI gave a dispensation to accept just one miracle for his beatification. Nevertheless, a second miracle will be necessary before John Paul II can be canonized to sainthood.



1969 Cardinal Karol Wojtyła with Father Philip Majka in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington DC.

The miracle accepted for beatification of John Paul II concerned the healing of a French nun, Sister Marie Simon-Pierre of the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood. She suffered from Parkinson’s disease so severe that it made writing, walking, and driving almost impossible. Sister Marie prayed to John Paul II, who also suffered from Parkinson’s, and she was cured from the disease. Her case was heavily investigated, including psychiatric and neurological screenings. Her sudden remission was pronounced miraculous and she returned to work in the maternity hospital run by her order.

The PAAA thanks Rev. Father Majka for speaking at the General Membership Meeting on these interesting subjects. Please plan to attend the Annual General Election Meeting on May 20, 2012 at 2:00 at the Knights of Columbus, 5034 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC. In addition to elections of officers and scholarship awards, another interesting and informative speaker will be scheduled.

**Wanda O’Brien-Trefil, Ph.D.**

## **Francis Conlon plays Chopin Concert to benefit PAAA Scholarship Fund**



Professor Conlyn performs Chopin in the intimate setting of the Whittemore House

The annual PAAA Chopin Concert was held in the intimate salon setting of the Whittemore House on March 4th, 2011. The elegant ambiance duplicated the authentic settings in which Chopin performed his music in the 19th century salons of Parisian homes. After a brief social time, the audience closely surrounded the Steinway grand piano, prepared to be filled with the beauty and thunder of the music which they loved. Pianist Francis Conlon selected an ambitious program. In addition to his career as an accomplished soloist, Conlon is Professor of Piano at George Washington University and Director of Music at the Church of the Annunciation in Washington.

The program began and ended with a polonaise – two of the most famous ones: A Major (“Military”) to open, A-flat Major (“Heroic”) to close. Both were given bravura performances which emitted “bravo” from the exuberant audience. Of the three waltzes, the G-flat Major, Op. 70 no. 1 was the most impressive. It is a rapid spray of notes, more in the nature of an “oberek” (fast mazurka) than a waltz. The middle section, on the other hand, is a slow and delicate “kujawiak” (slow mazurka). The selected nocturnes contrasted with each other. Nocturne in B Major, Op. 32 no. 1 is a soft, delicate piece, while the second Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48 no. 1 has a middle section that is definitely of the “dark and stormy night” variety.

The highlights of the program were the two scherzos. Each presents wide-ranging emotions within a single work, with violent, powerful outer sections and tender centers. In the B Minor Scherzo, Op. 20, the center is a quotation of the Polish Christmas carol “Lulajże Jezuniu.” With no coincidence, Chopin finished this scherzo at the time of his first Christmas outside of Poland. The transition from the carol to the return of the tempestuous opening theme is a masterpiece of aural painting. The B-flat Minor Scherzo, Op. 31 presents a dialogue between a questioning theme and an apparent answer. The word “scherzo” is Italian for joke, and was used by as a name for a light-hearted movement of a sonata or symphony. Chopin was the first to create stand-alone works named Scherzos, but there is nothing funny about them – they climb the heights of dramatic passion and plumb the depths of tender emotion. Following the standing ovation, Prof. Conlon played the Mazurka in A-Minor, Op. 7 no. 2, saying that a Chopin program without a mazurka was “criminal.”

The performances were very satisfying. President Tom Payne presented to Professor Conlon a plaque commemorating the “generosity of spirit” with which he donated this concert to benefit the PAAA Scholarship Fund. The President also thanked Malgorzata Szum, Cultural Attache for the monetary support and co-sponsorship of the Polish Embassy. The audience transferred to the dining room, where they enjoyed delicious bigos, pierogi, kabanosy, ham, and cheesecake, sitting with friends amid a very congenial supper atmosphere.



Ted Mirecki thanks Cultural Attache, Malgorzata Szum for support of the benefit concert by the Polish Embassy, Washington DC

**Ted Mirecki, Chopin Concert Chair**

## ***First Poles Arrive” Marker to be installed in Jamestown***



**Marker Approved:** March 17, 2011

**Dedication:** scheduled for July 20, 2012 in connection with the American Council for Polish Culture 64th Annual Convention

**Geographic Location:** James City County, Tidewater Region

**Physical Description of Proposed Location:** VA 31 Smith/Jamestown Road in the vicinity of existing markers WT-1 First Africans in English America and WT-2 First Germans at Jamestown.

The unveiling of a historical marker commemorating the arrival of the First Poles in America in October 1608 will take place in Jamestown, VA on July 20, 2012. The festivities will be held as a part of the 64<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) to be held July 18-22, 2012 in Williamsburg, VA. In view of the significant contributions that Polish Americans have made to American society since that time, it is fitting and long due that we have a marker that will instill pride among Polish Americans as well as enlighten non-Poles to our place in American history.

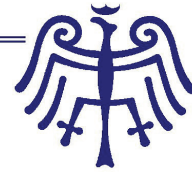
The new colony at Jamestown had a need for skilled craftsmen, and Captain John Smith, learning of the skill of the Polish craftsmen, invited them to travel to Virginia. The land was swampy, fresh water was lacking, and relations with the indigenous natives were tense. The new arrivals immediately contributed to the public welfare by digging a well to provide fresh drinking water, a severe need. Despite hardships, a glass factory was established, the first such factory in America. The Polish settlers excelled in producing glass, pitch and tar (vital to shipbuilding) and these products became the first exports to England.

On June 30, 1619, when the Jamestown Legislative Assembly instituted a representative form of government, rules stated that only colonists of English descent would be given the right to vote. This denied Poles the right to governmental representation in a colony they helped to develop and sustain. So these Poles conducted what many historians consider to be the first labor strike in America, not for better wages, but for democratic voting rights. Undoubtedly recognizing the worth of these Polish craftsmen, the Virginia Assembly granted full voting rights to them. So Poles were instrumental in peacefully winning the democratic rights that we hold so dear. The example of their industrious work ethic and their efforts to gain and retain their own individual freedom provided a model for generations of later colonists and Americans.

Williamsburg is a lovely place to visit with much history, so if possible, plan a trip to Williamsburg and witness the exciting unveiling of this testimony to Polonia's special place in American history. In addition to the unveiling of the Jamestown marker, there will be many more activities arranged by the ACPC to partake in. Dignitaries will be arriving from across the nation to witness this special event. Keep in touch with the program ahead by going to the ACPC website <http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/>.

**Tom Payne, Sponsor of the Jamestown Marker**

*American Council  
for Polish Culture*



[www.polishcultureacpc.org](http://www.polishcultureacpc.org)

## **YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

WASHINGTON, DC

**JUNE 18-22, 2012**

A week-long program in which young persons of Polish descent meet persons of Polish descent in leadership positions in:

politics · business · media · academia · science · arts

Application deadline May 1, 2012

For more information, visit our website:

[www.polishcultureacpc.org/ylc](http://www.polishcultureacpc.org/ylc)

Irena Mirecki, YLC Chair

[irena@mirecki.us](mailto:irena@mirecki.us)

## **American Council for Polish Culture**

64th Annual Convention

**Celebrating Our Polish-American Heritage**

**July 18-21, 2012**



**Woodlands Convention Center, Williamsburg, Virginia**

Unveiling and dedication of Historical Marker  
commemorating the arrival of the first Poles in America

Awards Banquet; Detailed information will be posted on [www.polishcultureacpc.org](http://www.polishcultureacpc.org)

## ***Marie Curie Skłodowska, A Woman Ahead of Her Time***

With the exception of Nicolas Copernicus, Marie Skłodowska Curie (1876-1934) is clearly the most famous Polish scientist who ever lived. Her scientific achievements are prodigious, but when I look at her life, another question occurs to me. Here was a Polish woman who did her most important work in France, yet she is an icon of feminism in the United States, a country to which she paid only two short visits. She is known as one of the founders of nuclear physics, but also as a woman far ahead of her time.

Marie was born in Warsaw. To help her sister through medical school, Marie took a position as governess with distant relatives. There she fell in love with their son, Kazimierz Zorawski, who later became a prominent mathematician. He was unable to withstand his parent's objections to his marrying a poor relative, and Marie eventually left for Paris. According to legend, as an old man, Kazimierz used to sit in a Warsaw square and look at a statue of her that had been erected there. Served him right!

In Paris, Marie entered the Sorbonne, working her way through college as a tutor, while she earned her degree in physics. Upon graduation, she was denied a position at Krakow University because she was a woman. Returning to Paris, she eventually married a Sorbonne professor, Pierre Curie. In their Sorbonne lab, she and Pierre worked on what we now call radioactive materials—she actually coined the term 'radioactivity'-- eventually isolating a new element they named Polonium in honor of Poland. In 1903 the two of them were awarded a Nobel Prize in Physics, making Marie the first woman to be so honored. After Pierre's death in 1906, Marie carried on their work. In 1911 she was awarded a second Nobel Prize, this time in Chemistry. She remains the only person to receive two Nobel Prizes in two different sciences.

Marie made two trips to the United States, in 1921 and 1929, and was welcomed as a heroine. School children collected pennies to buy radium for her to use in her research. She died in 1934, and is interred along with Pierre in the Pantheon in Paris. Marie and Pierre had two daughters, Irene and Eve. An outstanding mother, Marie was succeeded by an outstanding daughter; Irene Joliot-Curie won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1935.

I'll close this article with my favorite story about this extraordinary woman. Before being awarded her second Nobel Prize, Marie had an affair with Paul Langevin (a former student of Pierre's and a Nobel Laureate). Langevin was married, though separated from his wife. In Paris, the tabloids had a field day with the situation. Despite her accomplishment and their selection, the Nobel committee was brazen enough to ask if, in light of the scandal, she shouldn't stay at home rather than travel to Stockholm to collect her award. Her reply to the all-male committee was strong: "My private life is my own business, and I'm coming!" What a woman!

**James Trefil, Ph.D.**

**Clarence J Robinson Professor of Physics, George Mason University**



Marie with daughters Irene and Eve.







### **PAAA Coming Events ...**

**PAAA General Election and Scholarship Award Meeting - May 20 at 2:00 pm.**

**Knights of Columbus, 5034 Wisconsin Ave. NW,  
Washington, DC.**

**Wianki—Saturday, June 23, '12 6:00-10:00 pm**

**Constitution Gardens, Washington DC. Wreaths,  
Polish folk dances, Live band, Public dancing, Free**

### **Look for announcements of the 2012-2013 PAAA Season...**

**General Meeting...October**

**Wigilia...December**

**Chopin Concert to benefit the  
PAAA Scholarship Fund...  
February-March, 2013**

**Polish-American Arts Association  
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