



POLISH-AMERICAN ARTS ASSOCIATION

of Washington, DC.

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2013

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

**PAAA to host the 65th annual convention of the
American Council for Polish Culture
Baltimore, MD July 31 - August 4, 2013**



Katyn Memorial, Baltimore



Message from the President



Greetings to all dear members! Our year ended with a splendid Wigilia celebration at a new venue, the National Cathedral School for Girls Hall in Washington DC. We were delightfully entertained and well-fed in honoring this great tradition. In March our focus was on the annual Chopin Concert, which had a nice twist to differentiate it from previous Chopin piano concerts. We thank our sponsors, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland for opening their beautiful venue and making available Paderewski's Steinway piano, to Drs. Wanda and Jim Trefil for sponsoring the appearance of the artists, and to the American Council for Polish Culture for their additional support. Events like this gather funds for scholarships for our highly deserving young Polish-American college students. So we appreciate all the attendees at our Chopin concert in March, as well as the well-wishing contributions and donors. The awarding of the 2013 PAAA Scholarship Grants will be at our annual Election and Scholarship Award Meeting on May 19th at the Knights of Columbus on Wisconsin Ave. in Washington.

This year we have a special privilege of hosting the annual American Council for Polish Culture convention on July 31 – August 3 in our neighboring Baltimore, a city rich in Polish heritage. If you have never been to an ACPC national convention, this is your chance to learn about the vibrant Polonia activities in many cities. You will be steeped in your Polish heritage and you will love it! Please make an effort to attend.

It has been said that "Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul." We have many members who are the core of this organization who are enjoying their golden years. We owe a great debt of gratitude to those pioneers in the Polish-American community who have been supporting this organization for many years and still have not lost their enthusiasm. I want to commend one of our loyal PAAA Board members, Ed Pawlowski, who has made a significant impact on our organization. Ed was recently honored with a special award by the Polish American Congress, and he continues to offer sage advice and direction to the Board of the PAAA.

But, we can always use new and younger blood in our organization to take the reins as our older ones slow down. This year we made a special effort to reach out to the college students of the university Polish Clubs around the DC area. Let us all make an effort to introduce new members to our organization. And, if you personally have the desire to get involved in organizing our activities, do not be deterred by self-doubt. Everyone has special talents that can contribute richly to our organization's progress and success. I look forward to seeing many of you at Wianki by the Lincoln Memorial on June 22, 2013.

Thomas Payne, President

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
Marya Pickering

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ben Filipczyk

Richard Wiermanski

Dr. Richard Okreglak

Dr. Ed Pawlowski

Celia Larkin

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

**Reprints are permitted, provided credit is given to PAAA Newsletter,
and a copy is provided to the editor**

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

Proofreading: Thomas Payne



Polish Costumes at PAAA Wianki Festivals

We invite you to Wianki on June 22, 2013 at the Lincoln Memorial

In June of each year in Washington, several Polish American dance groups perform on the mall during the PAAA Wianki Festival. This year the Wianki Festival will be on June 22nd at the Lincoln Memorial. The event is free, and will be your opportunity to enjoy these authentic costumes, all handmade in Poland by skilled craftsmen. Below are a few examples of these costumes, worn by the *Maki*, *Michaś* and *Ojczyzna* dance groups at the 2012 PAAA Wianki Festival.



Maki dancers wear **Strój Szlachecki** or Kontusz – the dress of the Polish Nobility, consisting of elaborate brocades and velvets trimmed in fur, lace, and gold or silver buttons. The men's costume has a high-collared brocade undercoat called Żupan, and an open collared overcoat known as Kontusz. The men also wear large sashes woven with gold and silver threads. The woman's costume consists of a velvet coat trimmed in fur which is worn over a full skirt.

The *Ojczyzna* dancers are in **Krakowski** costumes from the region of Cracow. The men's braided and tasseled jacket, called Kaftan, has its origin in military dress dating from the 16th Century. The sleeveless long blue jacket with standing collar is decorated with embroidery, red tassels, and brass studs or buttons. It is worn with red and white striped pants, white shirts, and studded leather belts and rows of jangling brass coins. A four cornered hat is trimmed in fur and adorned with peacock feathers and flowers. Black or red dyed leather boots are worn by both men and women. The women in Krakowski costume wear velvet vests that are accented with sequined patterns and silk tassels. The bright flowered skirt, a white blouse and an apron is adorned with embroidery and lace. The outfit is completed by a flower wreath, Wianek, with multicolored ribbons and several strands of red coral beads, korale.



The *Michaś* dancers wear handmade costumes from the **Podhale, or Goralski** region. The embroidered patterns are crafted by both men and women during the long winter months in the Tatry mountains. The man's costume, with its loosely fitting white shirt and brass studded leather belt is highlighted by a pair of felt wool trousers. The women's *Gorget*, or vest, is emblazoned with shining sequins in the shape of the flowering Mountain Laurel. The skirts are scattered with a patterns of roses, and range from burgundy to cherry red and forest green.

Marianna Eckel, Chair, Wianki
Photographs by Celia Larkin



**Andrzej Stec, lyrical tenor performs at Chopin and Friends
Embassy of the Republic of Poland, March 24, 2013**



Lyric tenor Andrzej Stec performs songs by Chopin with accompanist Jean-Eudes Vaillancourt



Artists with Minister Counselor Piotr Konowrocki and sponsors Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil and Dr. James Trefil

The festive ambience of the concert, held on Sunday afternoon, March 24th, 2013, was due in part to the fact that it was a homecoming to the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, thanks to the kind invitation of Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf and coordination by Minister Counselor Piotr Konowrocki. Dr. Andrzej Stec, 33 year old tenor, charmed his audience with songs by "Chopin and His Friends," accompanied by pianist Dr. Jean-Eudes Vaillancourt. The audience learned about the influences of contemporary composers, who were Chopin's mutual friends and admirers. Chopin is known as a composer of piano music, but Chopin loved opera, and the human voice was an inspiration for the lyricism of Chopin's well loved melodies. In addition to performing songs by Chopin, Stec sang songs by Bellini, Donizetti, Gounod, Liszt, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Moniuszko. The exhilarated audience rose to their feet with two standing ovations. After the concert, praise was heard often during the reception, and in the words of Co-Chair Ted Mirecki, the concert was "an artistic and social success."

Andrzej Stec is the embodiment of the "immigrant success story." Born in Stalowa Wola, Poland, he emigrated as a teen with his family and attended a very tough high school in Chicago. He worked his way through a Bachelor's degree by taking all his college classes on Monday, working Tuesday through Saturday, and doing his homework on Sunday. Stec's industry and talent were rewarded by scholarships for graduate degrees from Northwestern University and University of Montreal. An extensive biography printed in the program attests to international success through the many roles Stec sang in operas, as well as concert performances with orchestras and in recitals. Dr. Stec's performance was sponsored by Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil and Dr. James Trefil, who, coming from immigrant backgrounds themselves, were moved by the effort, determination, and personal charisma through which Andrzej Stec fulfilled the American dream.



Andrzej Stec with PAAA Scholarship winners and students from Polish Clubs at Georgetown, American, and George Washington Universities

The PAAA annual Chopin Concert is the principal fundraiser for the Scholarship Grants which PAAA awards each year. This year a special outreach was made to invite past scholarship winners. To assist in bringing Andrzej Stec to Washington and sharing his talents with these young people, the ACPC awarded its 2012 Affiliate Grant Award to PAAA. Stec can serve as a role model and inspiration to the Polish-American students of all ages. A sincere "Bóg Zapłać" to the attendees and donors to the PAAA Scholarship Fund. The 2013 Scholarship Winners will be announced on May 19, 2013 at the PAAA Annual Election and Scholarship Award meeting at the Knights of Columbus on Wisconsin Avenue in Washington DC.

Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Chopin Concert Chair

PAAA Wigilia Supper, December 9, 2012



Olek Skrypczuk, Celia Larkin, Stasia Skrypczuk, Alvin Smithson, PAAA President Tom Payne, Polish Cultural Attaché Małgorzata Szum, Wigilia Chairman, Marianna Eckel

In keeping with tradition, the Polish American Arts Association held its annual Wigilia dinner on 9 December 2012. The location for the event was the Hearst Hall auditorium on the beautiful grounds of the Washington National Cathedral. The magnificent cathedral building, all aglow in lights and visible through the soaring windows of the auditorium, provided inspiring background for the celebration of Polish Christmas traditions: the sharing of opłatek, the meatless dinner, the singing of kolędy and listening to the music.

The evening started with a Christmas punch and wine reception and began officially with a welcome greeting from the PAAA President, Thomas Payne, and Wigilia Chairman and PAAA 2nd Vice President, Marianna Eckel. Before dinner,

Rev. Canon Father Phillip Majka blessed the opłatek and spoke of its meaning and roots in the Polish Christmas Eve traditions. The guests then broke the wafer and shared it with each other while extending wishes for happy holidays and prosperity in the New Year. The Wigilia dinner, prepared by Bogdan and Dana Kanafel's Eastern European Catering, included traditional Polish dishes such as mushroom soup, herring in cream, baked fish, pierogi, sauerkraut, noodles with poppy seeds and piernik. As coffee and dessert were served, the guests settled to enjoy the musical program and participate in the singing of kolędy.

It was a very special treat for everyone to listen to the accomplished composer and pianist, Alvin Smithson, as he performed several pieces by Fryderyk Chopin, Franz Gruber's Silent Night, as well as some of his own compositions. Alvin then took up the Indian flute and, along with Olek Skrypczuk on the violin, played the touchingly wistful, kolęda góralska, *Oj maluśki, maluśki*, a traditional carol from the mountain region of Poland. This segued into the singing of kolędy by all gathered, led by Stasia Skrypczuk and accompanied by Olek and Alvin. Stasia moved among the tables in her beautiful Łowicz costume, involving everyone in the joyous singing.

Among those present at the Wigilia were two PAAA scholarship winners, Katherine Rivard and Natalie Trochimiuk. These young ladies are active in their university Polish Clubs at Georgetown and George Washington universities; they represent the new generation and the future of our Polonia. Also present were several representatives from the Polish Embassy, including the Charge d'Affaires, Maciej Pisarski, and Cultural Attaché, Małgorzata Szum.

The evening reflected months of detailed planning and preparations by the Wigilia Committee under the leadership of Chair Marianna Eckel, assisted by Celia Larkin, co-chair, Ted Mirecki and Sharon Brzostowski. Sharon organized the raffle featuring prizes donated by PAA Board members.



Pianist Alvin Smithson with illuminated view of the National Cathedral

The guests took home the Wigilia souvenir programs with texts of kolędy in Polish and English prepared by Celia, lace angel ornaments handmade by Sharon, and packets of opłatek for their own Wigilia celebrations.

Marianna Eckel, Wigilia Chair
Photographs by Celia Larkin



Singing of the Kolędy

Dr. Edward Pawlowski Honored by Polish American Congress



Dr. Edward Pawlowski
with daughter Edleen Bergelt



Susanne Lotarski, President PAC, Dr. Ed Pawlowski,
Edleen Bergelt, Ted Mirecki, Treasurer PAAA

Dr. Edward Jan Paul Pawlowski was honored and received the 2012 Service Award from the Polish American Congress Washington Metropolitan Area Division “in recognition of his many years of service to PAC, Polonia organizations, and our country.” Ed has served as President of the Polish American Arts Association, as a member of the Board, the Scholarship Committee, the Nominating Committee, as chair of Chopin Concerts, and as contributor to the Polonian Newsletters. Dr. Pawlowski was honored at the PAC annual Thanksgiving Dinner at the Kenwood Golf and Country Club on November 18, 2012 with a plaque presented by PAC President, Dr. Susanne Lotarski.

During his acceptance speech, Ed gave a moving account of how being Polish has influenced every part of his life. The youngest of five children of Polish emigrants, Ed grew up fluent in Polish and with a love of Poland. While attending high school during WWII, he wrote letters to the editors of Springfield, Mass. newspapers in support of the Polish Government in exile in London, at times criticizing the Soviet Union and FDR’s position. Ed received an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and a B.S. in Engineering in 1954. As a young officer, Ed earned an M.A. in Russian Language and Area Studies. Finally, in 1968, Ed completed his Ph.D. in Russian Area Studies at Georgetown University.

When Ted Mirecki introduced Dr. Pawlowski at the PAC award ceremony, he remarked that Ed’s life has had the intrigue and danger of 007, James Bond. Ed served in the military over 20 years with a wide variety of assignments. With the 502nd Airborne Battle Group in Munich, Ed was trained by Special Forces to parachute 50 miles behind enemy lines at night and reconnoiter enemy troop movements, using his Russian and German language skills. In 1966-68, Ed was assigned to the Washington-Moscow hotline, where he translated communications between President Lyndon Johnson and Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin. Lt. Col. Pawlowski’s final military assignment, before retiring from active duty in 1972, was with the Defense Intelligence Agency, where he headed a branch of Warsaw Pact defectors from the USSR, Poland, and East Germany, one of whom was the triple agent Nick Shadrin.

Pawlowski returned to Washington as a civilian to join the Central Intelligence Agency’s Soviet and East European Division. During this period he worked on the case of Polish Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. Pawlowski retired from his 20-year career in the CIA in 1994. Since retirement, Ed is weekly at the White House, where he volunteers in the Office of Presidential Correspondence. He also volunteers at St. Mark’s Catholic Church in Vienna as an usher and a Eucharistic minister for shut-ins. And, of course, he gives generously of his time and talents to the Washington DC area’s Polish American organizations. **Dr. Susanne Lotarski, President, Polish American Congress**

In Memoriam: Irena Mirecki

Irena Mirecki. Wife of PAAA Treasurer, Ted Mirecki, passed away suddenly on Thursday December 13, 2012 at her home in McLean, Virginia. Irena is known through the Washington DC Polonia as Chairwoman of the Parish Council at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish, for her roles on the Board of Directors of the American Council for Polish Culture, and for her service as Corresponding Secretary and Membership Chair of the Polish American Congress, Washington Metropolitan Area Division.



Irena Mirecki 1944-2012

Irena was a two-term president of the Washington Chapter of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, as well as doing volunteer office work for the Polish Apostolate section of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Irena was born on December 11, 1944 in Austria, in Mautthausen concentration camp after her pregnant mother was arrested by the German occupiers. After enduring years of hardships in post-war Communist Poland, her family immigrated to Chicago when she was 18.

Irena married Thaddeus Mirecki in October of 1967, and they raised their daughters steeped in the Polish community of the Chicago area. Her passions were the Catholic Church and advocacy of issues important to Polonia. She was active in a number of organizations, such as the Polish Scouting Organization, in which she met Ted, and the Emilia Plater Polish School in the Chicago suburbs, where she was President of the Parents Association. Upon moving to Washington with her husband and daughter Marta in 1987, Irena continued to work in advancing Polish causes.

The fall of communism in Poland presented her with new opportunities to help the people there, by involvement with social programs initiated by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, such as Breast Cancer Awareness Program for Poland, and ABC XXI, a program promoting parents reading to their children. She was a founding member and Vice President of the Stefan Korbonski Foundation, an organization dedicated to publishing works combating falsehoods about wartime and postwar Polish history.

Irena was known as an energetic advocate for Polish culture abroad, and widely recognized for her leadership. Her awards included: Cavalier's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland awarded by the President of Poland, the Order Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice from Pope John Paul II, the Award for Exceptional Service from the Polish American Congress, a Certificate of Civic Achievement from the Polish American Historical Society, the Medal of Merit for Faithful Service and Manifesting the Kingdom Award, both from the Archdiocese of Washington DC.

She is buried in Our Lady of Czestochowa Cemetery in Doylestown, PA, and is survived by her loving husband Ted, two daughters Joanna (Richard) Millunchick of Ann Arbor, Michigan and Marta (Mark Kane) of the District of Columbia, four grandchildren Benjamin, Ava, Teresa, and Cyprian, as well as two brothers and a sister of Mundelein, Illinois. Her Loving Husband, Ted Mirecki

In Memoriam Concert for Irena Mirecki

The Embassy Series and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland

Wednesday, April 17, 2013 7:30 pm

Rafał Bartmiński, tenor George Peachey, piano

Works of Schubert, Strauss, Marchewski, Mozart, Verdi, Neapolitan songs. Reception follows.

www.embassyseries.org Tickets \$85 Order online or call 202-625-2361



"Star Spangled"

AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR POLISH CULTURE 65th Annual Convention • July 31- August 4, 2013

The Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland
Home of Our National Anthem
Hosted by **The Polish American Arts Association, Washington DC**



Hotel Reservation

Make room reservations directly with the Hotel on or before **July 1, 2013** for the Convention rate of
\$129.00 + tax Single or Double
\$149.00 + tax Triple
\$169.00 + tax Quad

Use the reservation code **ACPC**

Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel
300 South Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210
410-962-8300 (800) 325-3535

For further information contact:
Tom Payne 703-354-5457
or: **Richard M. Wiermanski 410-798-7512**

Costs:

Arrive Wednesday _____ \$450.00
Arrive Thursday after lunch ____ \$400.00
Arrive Friday after lunch _____ \$350.00
Guest Banquet Ticket _____ \$100.00

Please remit full amount or deposit of \$200.00 per person by **July 1, 2013**
Balance due upon arrival
Please **NO** credit cards

Make checks payable to:
Polish American Arts Association
Mail to: **Ted Mirecki, ACPC Convention**
4041 41st Street,
McLean, VA 22101

AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR POLISH CULTURE 65TH CONVENTION REGISTRATION

ACPC Convention Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Member Club Affiliation: _____



"Star Spangled"

AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR POLISH CULTURE 65th Annual Convention • July 31- August 4, 2013

Hosted by The Polish American Arts Association, Washington DC

The Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland

Program Schedule

Wednesday, July 31, 2013

1:00 - 4:00 PM	Registration
4:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Board meeting
7:00 - 8:30 PM	Reception
Hours to be posted	Boutique

Thursday, August 1, 2013

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Registration
Hours to be posted	Boutique
9:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Opening Ceremonies
	Presidents' Address, Deborah M. Majka
	Welcome, Tom Payne, Pres. PAAA
	Invocation - Rev. Canon Philip S. Majka
	Introduction of Dignitaries
	Keynote Address
	Business Session
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Lunch with Speaker
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Business Session
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Dinner (Cash Bar)
8:00 PM	Marcella Sembrich Concert

Friday, August 2, 2013

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Registration
	Attendees must be registered by noon in order to vote
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Business Session
12:00 PM	Board buses to Holy Rosary Church
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	Lunch at Holy Rosary
2:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Board bus for tour of Baltimore, Katyn Monument, Ft. McHenry, Patterson Park, Pulaski Monument, Mt. Vernon, Washington Monument
6:00 PM	Balance of evening FREE

Saturday, August 3, 2013

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Registration and Boutique open
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Business Session & Elections
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Board Meeting/Working Lunch
5:00 PM	Mass
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Cocktails - Cash Bar
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	Banquet (Dinner with Wine)
8:30 PM - 9:30 PM	Awards presentation and Installation of newly elected officers
9:30 PM	Dance group performance

Sunday, August 4, 2013

Check out

Upcoming PAAA Events

Annual Election and Scholarship Award Meeting - May 19, 2013, 2:00 pm.

Presenter: Dr. Laura Kafka — *The Music of Szymanowski*

Knights of Columbus Hall

5034 Wisconsin Ave. NW Washington DC

Plenty of free parking Refreshments provided

Wianki - June 22, 2013 Lincoln Memorial

Polish folk dancing performances, Live band, Public dancing, Wreath making,

Bring a picnic Free to the public

ACPC 65th Convention - July 31—Aug 4, 2013

Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland

Hosted by the Polish American Arts Association

Polish-American Arts Association

P.O. Box 9442

Washington, DC 20016

