



# Alliance News

Toledo-Poznań Alliance quarterly newsletter – Winter 2014-2015

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## Wigilia

### Christmas Eve in Poland

Wigilia, a Latin word *vigilare* which means “to await” is Polish for Christmas Eve dinner. There are many beliefs and customs in Poland, one is that when the first star appears in the sky, the Christmas tree is lit and the dinner begins. The table is covered with a white tablecloth and there is always an additional place setting for an unexpected guest who especially that night should not be turned away. The Wigilia starts with a prayer and sharing of the *Oplątek* (similar to the wafer used during Holy Communion in Catholic Churches). When we share the *Oplątek* we exchange wishes with everyone around the table. The wishes are usually good health, peace, successes at work and in life, fulfillment of dreams. The dinner is traditionally meatless consisting of mushroom soup with noodles, borsch with *uszka* (miniature pierogi), marinated herring in sour cream, baked or fried carp, sauerkraut with mushrooms, noodles with poppy seeds, pierogi traditionally with kraut and mushrooms, as well as with cheese, dried-fruit compote, *Babka*, a Polish coffee cake, poppy seed cake, and other desserts depending on the region of Poland. After dinner old stories would be told, Christmas Carols would be sung. The climax especially for children would come right after dinner when Santa Claus would come carrying a big bag on his back. Walking to church for the *Pasterka*, the Midnight Mass, was a family tradition in my family. There is something magical experienced on the way to midnight Mass, as the stars are shining and the bells are ringing. The snow would whiten the way, and sometimes the sleighs would be heard. After the Mass, everyone returns home for some *Babka* and hot compote or tea and coffee.

**Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia!**

## Dożynki 2014

Dożynki was a success with almost one hundred guests attending. The music of Tom Szor added to the pre dinner enjoyment; the silent auction was a success with all items spoken for; the harvest table prepared by Tom Sorosiak with polish captions on the fruits and vegetables was a delight to the eye and educational as well; a visiting author signed books at the event; table decorations were raffled along with the coffee cakes at the end; a running set of pictures capturing the visit of the Dixie Company Jazz band from Poznań gave the attendees a chance to enjoy the visit; Sister Jane Mary Sorosiak, Tom's cousin, gave a remarkable account of her work as a noted ceramic artist and provided a beautiful view of her works of art scattered around the country; the food by Malczewski was excellent as always; the raffle tickets sold well. Announcements of our next year 25th anniversary of Dożynki were made; Marcy Kaptur spoke of her passion of remembering those who lost their lives in WWII; all board members were active in planning and implementing this Dożynki with wonderful results; Father Paul was able to bless the food despite a foot injury and assisted by his friends. On following pages you will see a few pictures of the Dożynki, as captured by Stan Machosky.

*by Sr. Ann Francis*

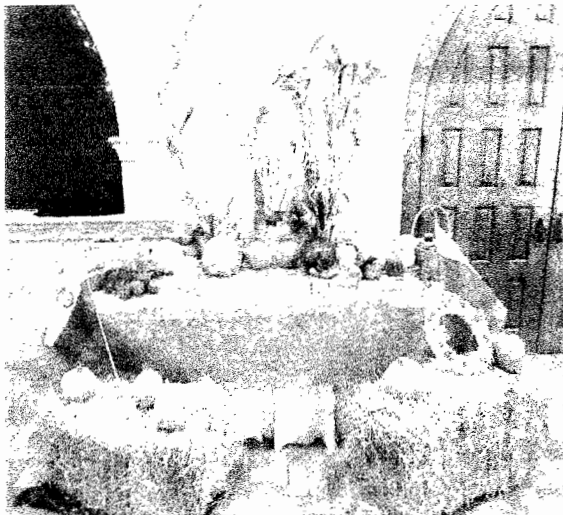




Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur with scholarship winner, William DuPuis and his Mother Carol Dupuis



Dozynki procession



Harvest table arranged by Tom Sorosiak, all from his farm



Members of Echoes of Poland participated in the procession



Silent auction item, one of many



Jim Szafarowicz and wife Karen, and (?)

## **Thank you.....**

Thank you to everyone who bid on items at this year's Silent Auction. There was a great competition over Sister Jane Mary's Holy Family plaque, Bolesławiec pottery, the amber necklace and the straw painting of the vase with flowers. TPA made \$627 on 20 items. Thank you to our donors: All Good Things Gift Shop, The Andersons, Kathy Grabel, Sister Ann Francis Klimkowski, Patricia Konwinski, Isabell Kreft, Kroger, Walter Palicki, Sister Jane Mary Sorosiak, Thomas Sorosiak and Edward Zoltanski. A special thank you to Susan Falkowski Duff and Nancy Falkowski Norman for helping on Dożynki day.

*By Jackie Konwinski*

## **Save the Date**

Toledo Poznań Alliance will hold its annual meeting in the afternoon on Sunday, March 22 in the board room of the Franciscan Center. All members are encouraged to attend to offer ideas and ask questions about their organization. Two important items on the agenda are the election of officers and selection of board members. If you would like to run for office or if you would like to nominate someone for office, please come to the meeting. TPA also needs dedicated and hard working board members to plan and implement Dożynki and other activities. Some board members have served for many years, and it is time for new board members to continue TPA's mission to the greater Toledo community and to Poznan, Poland. As always, excellent refreshments will be served.

## **Renew your membership**

**All members are encouraged to renew their membership for 2015. Your membership fee keeps this organization going. However small the fee, we count on you so that we may continue our efforts and keep TPA alive. And please encourage your family and friends to join as well and learn all about our activities such as trips to Poland, holiday customs and traditions, hosting groups from Poland, supporting an orphanage in Poznan, our annual harvest dinner and much more.**

**Please use the application on the back of the last page where membership fees are listed.**



## **This year's trip to Poland**

It was a 15 day tour in mid September with fantastic weather until we got to the Baltic Sea. There we had cold and high winds coming from the North but at least some of us put our feet in the water just to be able to say, we have been in the Baltic Sea. Our group from Toledo joined several other small groups from Buffalo, Toronto, Detroit and Wisconsin so we had a group of 24 of us that traveled together on a very comfortable tour bus. Warsaw was amazing, every time we visit there is something new and fascinating. On a Sunday, we were invited to a Chopin Concert in Warsaw, and during the intermission, the hosts gave us a glass of champagne. It was very classy. After two days in Warsaw, our tour bus took us to Krakow, Czestochowa, Wadowice and Wieliczka. Every day we had fabulous buffet breakfast, outstanding dinners, and everybody could not have been any nicer and more accommodating to us. Especially our tour guide Adam. In Zakopane we went on a rafting trip. Not white water rafting, but rather a leisurely trip down Dunajec River which divides Poland and the Czech Republic with beautiful mountains on both sides. The scenery was breathtaking. Wroclaw and its Renaissance architecture has been compared to Venice of Italy, but in Poland it is known as Venice of the North. It has many canals and bridges. In Rydzyna we stayed in a beautiful castle and had a couple of outstanding meals there. Also in Rydzyna we toured a single painting along the interior walls of a rotunda as one unbroken circle that is viewed from an elevated central balcony. The picture represents the battle in 1794 between Polish army led by Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Russian troops. I've never seen anything so real and fascinating. Torun, the home of Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus) has an impressive 13<sup>th</sup> century Town Hall, churches and streets. We had a brief stop in Poznan, then on to Gdansk, Gdynia, Sopot the tri-city resort towns beautifully situated near the Baltic Sea. On the way back to Warsaw we toured Malbork, the home of the largest Tutonic Knights Castle in Europe. Then we drove through very scenic towns of Olsztyn, Olsztynek and Łowicz, typical Mazovian towns famous for folk art, and in Łowicz we had a wonderful dinner in a former Łowicz Castle, now owned privately by a husband and wife, who right now live in a cottage at the foot of the former Łowicz Castle where they host tourists such as us. They

cooked and baked the entire three-course meal themselves in an effort to raise funds for rebuilding the castle. Upon return to Warsaw we had a wonderful farewell dinner, as we said good-bye to all our new friends, and had to pack for a return flight back to the States the next morning. Until the next time, keep dreaming where in Poland would you like to go next.

## **Polish Community Center**

The Polish American Community of Toledo (PACT), is announcing that they have a goal and a dream to build a Polish Community Center right here in Toledo. This Center will provide a place where kids can play in various athletic activities, you can have dinner there, various groups and organizations can have a meeting place, where Polish weddings can take place, where you can attend events, there will be a game room, and also there will be a chapel. PACT wants to bring back the vibrant Polish culture and activities that once existed but are now disappearing. Their goal is to raise \$1 million dollars to build and develop a Polish-American Community Center. Every dollar that is raised will go to the purchase and development of the Community Center building. If they do not reach their goal, the money raised will be used for the purchase or lease option of the building and the partial conversion of the interior. How can you help? You can donate any amount and send a check payable to Polish-American Community of Toledo, P.O. Box 1033, Sylvania, OH 43560. Or, if using the computer is easier for you, you can go to PACT website: [www.polishcommunity.org](http://www.polishcommunity.org) and click on the Donate link at the top of the page.

*By Stan Machosky*

## **Wigilia**

See insert in this newsletter for information on Wigilia hosted by PACT on December 14, 2014.

