



Alliance News

Toledo-Poznań Alliance quarterly newsletter – Fall 2019

NEWS from POLAND

Sources: The Blade, New York Times, Chicago Tribune and Los Angeles Times

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – Washington, D. C., June, 2019



Polish President Andrzej Duda and President Donald Trump held a news conference in the White House Rose Garden. The United States will send 1,000 more troops to Poland's eastern border to join 4,500 troops.

The American soldiers would be transferred from Germany or other European countries. Mr. Duda said, "We would like Russia to be our friend, but unfortunately, Russia again is showing its very unkind, unpleasant imperial face." On the other hand, Mr. Trump said, "I hope Poland is going to have a great relationship with Russia, I think it's possible, I really do." NATO Secretary, President Andrzej Duda, General Jens Stoltenberg approved this commitment of troops.

President Trump plans to visit Poland for the second time in September of this year to observe the 80th anniversary of the invasion by Nazi Germany, which began World War II. He also might decide to allow Polish citizens to visit the US on business or vacation without a visa.

COMMEMORATIVE ART, Oswiecim, July 2019

For the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau at Oswiecim, Poland, artist and noted architect Daniel Libeskind installed an exhibit entitled "Through the Lens of Faith." Caryl Englander took photographs of 21 survivors who were interviewed by curator Henri Lustiger of the Amud Aish Memorial Museum on Brooklyn, New York. The exhibit is a series of three-meter high steel panels lining a path near the entrance to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.



Photo from Birkenau Museum on Bing

On one side are photographs of the survivors: 18 Jews, two Polish Roman Catholics and one Roma Sinti along with some of their words. Mirrors on the reverse reflect the surroundings and symbolize spiritual freedom. These 21 survivors kept their religious faith or found it after the war. Poles are struggling with the presentation of the Holocaust. They want people to learn about it and remember it while not blaming Poland for the atrocities committed by the Nazi Germans.

By Jackie Konwinski

Polish Cultural Center News

By Tom Sorosiak

A major step towards the construction of the Polish Cultural Center was achieved when the legal documentation of the land was signed by Tom Waniewski and Tom Sorosiak on the 26th of July at the Building Trades Headquarters. Prior to the signing, Sorosiak was present at the Toledo City Council meeting on the 16th of July to answer questions concerning the donation of 4 acres of land by the city to the PCC. The vote was taken on the 23rd by City Council and it was approved.

Major funding for the PCC is continuing to be explored, but at present donations and endowments

continue to be made by local Polish-Americans. The most notable has been a \$50,000 matching fund. With every donation of \$500 to \$1,000 (or more) a like amount will be matched. Thus, PCC will be able to add \$100,000 to its growing treasury balance.

A reminder that donations can be made in honor of a family or family member, in memory of a deceased person, or just show support for the PCC. It is hoped that donations can be observed being made to the PCC in obituaries of deceased friends and family.

The PCC will again be holding the 2nd Polish Hall of Fame induction on November 16th at Brandywine Country Club. Nominations are currently being accepted for any one of the four categories. You can access the form by going to the PCC website www.PolishCulturalCenter.org

Please join other members of the Polish community and show your financial support for this long awaited Polish Cultural Center. It will be the first of its kind in Toledo and many events are planned for the use of it.

The Auschwitz Volunteer

by Denny Kutylowski

While many of us know about the heroic deeds of Jan Karski gathering and smuggling out reports of Nazi atrocities in Poland during World War II, few have heard the incredible story of Witod Pilecki.

A new book published by Harper-Collins that is definitely worth reading is entitled "The Volunteer" written by Jack Fairweather. It explores the little known life and mission of World War II hero Captain Witold Pilecki who voluntarily had himself captured under false pretenses and sent to Auschwitz. Then he escaped to report on the conditions in a camp that was already marked as hell on earth by second hand, word of mouth accounts whispered among locals of Oswiecim.

In the fall of 1940, the Polish cavalry officer, intelligence agent, and resistance leader, or the rest of the world for that matter, didn't know precisely what was going on inside the infamous death camp, but he knew someone had to find out. Pilecki would spend two and a half years in the prison camp. Assigned to lug loads of SS officer uniforms to town for cleaning he was able to smuggle out word of the methods of interrogations and executions to secret Polish Home Army agents even though he was

accompanied by Nazi camp guards. Eventually he escaped and wrote his complete and detailed firsthand intelligence report on the camp.

To get a better understanding of a man that had sacrificed so much when he volunteered to go to Auschwitz, Fairweather wanted to follow in the Captain's footsteps, even though decades have gone by. To start he sped on foot across the same bridge before dawn that Pilecki had crossed in his escape and even sheltered in the forest as the escapee did after his prison break from the heavily guarded camp. For the rest of the war Pilecki traveled underground from place to place being sheltered, hidden and helped by Poles who would not betray him.

Retracing Pilecki's path and the locations he had been to combined with interviews of the few Auschwitz survivors still alive today who had known him, gives Fairweather the ability to write a story with great depth and feeling. The book is superbly written and breathtakingly researched.

Pilecki continued to fight in the Armia Krajowa (AK) after his escape. But after the war, he didn't have the chance to serve very long in the Armia Krajowa Obywatelska (AKO) because the new occupying regime -- the Soviets -- captured him gathering intelligence on how the communists were establishing themselves in post war Poland.

He was accused of espionage and unceremoniously shot.

Deniusz (Denny) Kutylowski
www.polishtoledo.com

Book review from Marja Lasek-Martin

Lilac Girls

By Martha Hall Kelly

New York: Ballantine Books 2016

The setting of the story takes place in Ravensbrück. The only concentration camp that almost exclusively was for women and held 40,000 Polish women. Many of whom endured medical experiments—mostly in their teens and members of the scouts who had joined the Resistance.

Martha Hall Kelly researched her book for ten years. She travelled to Poland where she visited the Muzeum Martyrologii pod Zegarem (Museum of Martyrdom Under the Clock) in Lublin. There she met the

museum director, Barbara Oratowska, who facilitated Kelly's research. Later, in Warsaw, she met and interviewed former Ravensbrück prisoners and survivors of the experiments, as well as historians of this era who assisted her in this undertaking.

While the book contains fictional details, it is about very real people, real historical events, and terrible crimes. Despite the grim subject matter, Martha Hall Kelly manages to write a story of hope, overcoming hardship and the power of the human spirit.



Walter's review of
a famous painting

The Lady with an Ermine

This famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci is at the Czartoryski Museum in Krakow, Poland.

Leonardo, as an artist-in-residence at Milan, was asked to paint the portrait of Duke Ludovico Sforza's chief mistress. Despite its relative ordinariness, this painting is full of fine touches that can only have been applied by a master's hand. The *Lady with an Ermine* succeeds wonderfully in making its subject appear beautiful, sensitive and fascinating – as by all accounts, she seems to have been. She was Cecilia Gallerani who became the Duke's favorite in 1481, when she was in her early teens. Leonardo's portrait of her was probably painted three or four years later. It had been questioned by experts as being a work by Leonardo, because repainting had been done in some parts along with the entire background. Eventually the experts agreed it was a Leonardo. Gallerani's pose, head and body angled in different directions, is rendered with such skill that we hardly notice the difficulty of its execution. The ermine, however is painted with such skillful technique. Its presence is symbolic as it was Ludovico's personal emblem. Leonardo makes it an entirely believable beast, twisted round on the girl's arm, utterly alert, and directing a look of fearsome ill will at some unwelcoming presence outside the picture.

If you plan on a trip to Poland that includes the city of Krakow, do visit the museum and this famous painting. It is Poland's national treasure.

Beginning with this issue the *Alliance News*, Kathy Grabel, the editor, will send the newsletter via email to all those with an email address. If you do not have an email address, or do not want to receive the newsletter via email, please contact Kathy at bokat@buckeye-express.com. If you prefer it to be sent by regular US postal service, no problem, just let Kathy know at 419-385-8516.

More info on this year's Dozynki, Tom Szor will entertain us with his piano recital of Chopin music, and Otsego High School Choir will perform as well.

Save the date

Dozynki 2019 – Sunday, October 13, 1:00 pm at the Franciscan Ctr.

PCC Hall of Fame Dinner – Saturday, Nov. 16 at Brandywine Country Club.

Wigilia 2019 - Sunday, Dec. 15, 5:00 pm at the Olivet Lutheran Church.

Pieraczki

Book review by Walter Palicki

Lisa Ludwinski is the owner of Sister Pie Bakery in Detroit and the author of the book *Sister Pie* and the creator of the culinary item Pieraczki. She made up the word to describe this hybrid made by combining pierogi and the Polish paczki into a savory potato mash-up.

The recipe is in her book *Sister Pie* and it is copy-righted so we cannot include it here. Ingredients include potato, farmer's cheese or another cheese substitute, buttermilk, sugar, apple cider vinegar, onion and more. You can buy them at her bakery at 8066 Kercheval, Detroit, MI for \$5 each.

The book contains 30 pie recipes, cookie recipes, salads with dressing recipes, scones and more. It includes recipes for Maple Coffee Cream Paczki and Grapefruit Hibiscus Paczki. The book is available at your local library or you can buy it from Amazon or any local bookstore. Try them, enjoy and let us know how delicious they are.

More news from Poland: Farmers have had a difficult harvest this year as draught was a problem, as yields are as much as 60% down, but to place a positive spin on things, the harvest festival is going on in a strong manor.