



# Alliance News

Toledo-Poznań Alliance quarterly newsletter – Winter 2019

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## NEWS from POLAND

By Jackie Konwinski

### Trzebnica – Oldest Prehuman Remains in Polish Territory

Just a bit north of the center of Trzebnica, archaeologists found a hunters' camp. They also found flint tools and the bones of hunted elk, deer, bison, rhinoceros and fish as they explored the layers in the former brickyard. Their study of wood fragments disclosed that elm and poplar trees had been growing in this part of Poland.

The biggest find was the remains of *Homo erectus*, or Upright man, who lived during most of the Pleistocene geologic epoch, that is, 2 million years ago until 250,000 years ago. *Homo erectus* weighed between 90 and 143 pounds and was between 4 feet, 8 inches tall and 6 feet, 1 inch tall. These prehumans were the first human ancestors with limb and torso proportions similar to those of modern people. They had protruding brows, large faces and no chins.

These discoveries were under a thick layer of glacial clays. This indicates that *Homo erectus* settlers were present before the glaciers. They lived in present day Trzebnica, but the world looked so different.

The hunters' camp is near the Sanctuary of Saint Hedwig, patron saint of Toledo Polonia's mother church. Trzebnica is in Dolnośląskie province in southwestern Poland.

Thank you to Denny Kutylowski and David Chelminski for finding this news.

Poland – Polish Parliamentary Elections of October 13, 2019

Polish parliamentary elections were held on 13 October 2019. Poland's Parliament consists of the Sejm or Lower House with 460 members and the Senate or Upper House with 100 members. The Law and Justice Party (PiS) kept its majority in the Sejm, but lost its majority in the Senate.

The population of Poland in January 2019 was 38, 645,240 people. Over 30 million people registered to vote, and 61.74% of those registered or 18, 678, 457 people voted. Partia Prawa i Sprawiedliwości (PiS), the conservative Christian democratic and right-wing populist party, got 8, 110, 193 votes or 44.56 % of the votes in the Senate for 48 seats. The Civic Coalition Party or Koalicja Obywatelska (KO) consists of the Civic Platform and Modern Parties together with the Greens and the Silesian Autonomy Movement. This liberal democratic and pro Europeanism party received 6,490, 306 votes or 35.66 % of the votes for 43 seats. PiS lost its majority in the Senate.

In the Sejm, PiS kept its majority with these results:

PiS Law and Justice	43.59% of votes	235 seats
KO Civic Coalition	27.40% of votes	134 seats
SLD The Left	12.96% of votes	49 seats
PSL Polish Coalition	8.5 % of votes	30 seats
KWN Confederation	6.81% of votes	11 seats
MN German Minority	.17% of votes	seat.

Mateusz Jakub Morawiecki, a Polish economist, historian, and politician, has been the Prime Minister of Poland since December 2017. Andrzej Sebastian Duda is the sixth and current President of Poland, holding the office since 6 August 2015.

### News from the PCC

The Polish Cultural Center (PCC) Advisory Board held their 2<sup>nd</sup> Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Brandywine Country Club on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November. The inductees were Edward Banachowski, Rosemary Chorzempa, Jacqueline Konwinski, Walter Palicki, Michael Pence, Jack Sparagowski, Marian and Wladyslaw Wojciechowski, and Joe Zychowicz. All the inductees went through an open nomination process. The induction ceremony was preceded by a delicious dinner and a casual hour of conversation. The ceremony was attended by 130 people. Many in attendance made donations towards the construction



of the PCC. Progress continues to be made towards a construction date to be announced in early 2020.

On display at this event was the recovered historical marker from LaGrange Street that explained the history of the Polonia on one side and information about St. Hedwig Church on the other side. The PCC Advisory Board continues to locate and/or recover artifacts that will be part of the Polish Cultural Center for all generations to see.

The PCC Advisory Board encourages members of the Polonia to make donations in honor of friends, relatives, and family to the PCC. Just a reminder that we have a matching fund for donations of \$500 to \$1,000 from a generous donor. So your contribution is doubled when made to the PCC. The mailing address is PCC, P.O. Box 291, Waterville, Ohio 43566.

## Dozynki 2019 – The Best Ever

On Sunday, October 13, 2019, the guests of the Toledo-Poznań Alliance enjoyed the best Dozynki ever, that is, to date. Almost 200 people celebrated the fall harvest in northwest Ohio reminiscent of the centuries-old Polish festival at the Franciscan Center on the campus of Lourdes University in Sylvania. The big crowd created a lot of conversation and laughter and excitement at the afternoon event. Co-chairs Kathy Grabel and Jackie Konwinski welcomed everyone in Polish and English.

Board member Pat Konwinski, wearing a crown of fruit, flowers and herbs made by Ruth Mahler and Monica Kirk led the procession. About 15 adults and children, carried red and white chrysanthemums and red, white and blue balloons. Father Thomas Extejt, pastor of Saints Adalbert and Hedwig Parishes, enthusiastically blessed the people and the food in both languages.

Honoree Catherine Katafiasz Macaro toasted Edward **Stanislaw Banachowski** from North Toledo and **Florence Grajewski** from Monroe, Michigan. At 93 years old, they were the oldest man and woman of the day. The toast was in remembrance of the lord of the manor toasting the oldest worker in the village. **Tom Szor** played beautiful Polish and American piano compositions during dinner catered by **Malczewski's Catering**. First course was chicken noodle soup or rich and creamy mushroom soup. Next came kielbasa and wedding chicken with all the trimmings followed by cream-filled white or chocolate cake.

TPA Secretary **Stan Machosky** began the program with the introduction of the PACT/TPA Scholarship winners –

**Lauren Mueller** from Owens Community College, **Colton Powaski** from Miami University, **J. T. Puszczewicz** from Blissfield High School and **Shannon Simon** from Otsego High School. **Walter Palicki** introduced **Katie Macaro**, the 2019 Honoree. She is an accomplished artist and author of many books, especially Polish activity books for children.

The best part of the afternoon for many people was the **Otsego High School Choir**. Directed by Mr. **Brien Sewell**, these twenty young men and women sang and danced to great applause. The audience particularly enjoyed and appreciated *Moja Droga*, *Ja Cie Kocham* (My Dear, I Love You) and *Hey, Sokolny* (Hey, Falcon) in Polish.

Throughout the afternoon, **Pat Konwinski, John and Marilyn Zielinski, Carol Cousino and Marge Stefanski** sold raffle tickets. Forty people took home a placek baked by **Sister Gretchen** or a mum from **Wenz Greenhouse**. Board member **Jane Susdorf**, assisted by **Sue Duff, Arnie and Yvonne Gates, Ruth Koons, Nancy Norman and Nancy Puszczewicz**, organized a popular Silent Auction filled with Boleslawiec pottery, hand blown Polish glassware, Polish linens, a lottery tree, a chocolate bouquet and Polish food and beverages. Lots and lots of bids made this the best silent auction ever.

Stan Machosky, Treasurer **Tom Sorosiak**, board member **Susie Nowak** and **Tom Pruss** gave a parting gift of Chopin vodka donated by Southern Glaziers Company in Dublin, Ohio. Pruss and **Clem Cybulski** photographed and videotaped Dozynki. Go to Toledo-PoznanAlliance on Facebook.

Thank you to all the volunteers and guests. TPA made a profit of \$3500 to fund the PACT/TPA Scholarships, the Saint Ludwika Special Education Center (Dom Dziecka) in Poznań and cultural events and projects in the Greater Toledo area.

## More News from Poland

By Denny Kutylowski

Christmas wishes do come true for the faithful who wait in anticipation. A short time ago Poles celebrated their Independence Day on November 11<sup>th</sup>. But, this year's celebration had an additional reason for jubilation. Finally, Poles can relish another long waited liberty as they were on the same day inducted into the United States Visa Waiver Program.

Now, Poles can spend up to 90 days in the US without a visa. Poland is the last Schengen country (an area comprising 26 European states that have officially abolished all passport and all other types of border control at their mutual borders) to qualify.



Speculation about when Poland would join the program had become something of a national pastime. Whereas my cousin Teresa in Warszawa speculated she would not see waivers in her lifetime, I had kept encouraging her to believe this year something special would be coming her way for the holidays.

Nearly 30 years ago after the fall of communism Poland abolished visa requirements for Americans. At the turn of the millennium with the US still not reciprocating, Polish politicians began to lobby the White House. In order to qualify for the waiver, the rate at which a country's citizens are refused a U.S. visa has to drop below three percent of applications. Ten years ago, Poland was still over 25 percent. Yet many felt that Poland's support for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars had earned for the nation the right to be treated the same as Washington's other European allies. The issue kept resurfacing in various political declarations and during bilateral talks without any success.

However, a beefed-up diplomatic push began two years ago. Refusals for visas had fallen only to 3.99 percent in 2018. This was due to the continuing problem of Poles illegally taking up work and overstaying their visas. Although great strides had been made crossing the elusive finish line seemed a daunting task.

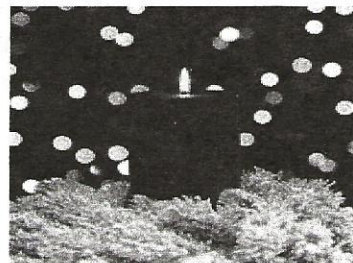
According to the executive director at the American Chamber of Commerce in Poland, Washington's recently appointed ambassador to Warsaw, Georgette Mosbacher, was instrumental in going to bat for the Poles.

### ***Christmas Traditions***

It is often a real shock to some Americans to learn that Polish children don't have to wait until Christmas morning to open their presents. This custom was preserved in many Polish-American homes in the U.S. wherever Polish immigrants used to settle. Christmas is still celebrated the same way by the last World War refugees and their children, grown by now. This centuries old tradition is repeated year after year. Same ceremonies and the same dishes appear on their tables. There is an excitement in the air when in early evening the children were asked to look out the window and find the first star. At which time the family is ready for breaking of the bread. The white communion wafer is a symbol of love, forgiveness and happiness. No one approaches the table without first forgiving and forgetting,

and without being able to wish everybody well with their whole heart. The supper that follows is a delicious display of traditional dishes. It is still meatless even though the Church doesn't require fasting on that day any more. The old tradition requires you to invite those who are lonely, unhappy or sick. It is customary to set an extra place, ready and waiting for any travelers who might be lonely or homeless. It is still customary to spread some hay under the tablecloth as a remembrance of the manger. The tablecloth used is always white to make this more festive. Twelve dishes were always served because of the twelve apostles. When the meal was finished, it was time for koledy (Christmas carols). Then, the highlight of the evening when St. Mikolaj (St. Nicholas) came with gifts. St. Mikolaj always came on Christmas Eve, carrying a large bag on his shoulder. With a lot of joy and anticipation, he gave us all gifts, wished us well, we gave him a shot of vodka to keep him warm (so we were told), and he was gone.

### ***Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia i Szczesliwego Nowego Roku !***



### **Save the Dates**

**Wigilia** (Christmas Eve Supper Polish style) Dec. 15, 2019, Olivet Lutheran Church Christian Life Center.  
**Kielbasa Cook-Off**, Feb. 23, 2020, St. Clement's Hall  
**Toledo-Poznan Alliance Annual Mtg**, all are welcome, March 22, 2020, Franciscan Ctr. 2-4 pm  
**Toledo Sister Cities Int'l Festival**, Sat. April 18, 2020, at Seagate Ctr.  
**Free Polish Film**, Spring 2020  
**Northwest Ohio Polish American Festival**, May 29-31  
**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Dozynki**, Oct. 4, 2020, Franciscan Ctr.