



POLISH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF GRAND RAPIDS

September 2020

Local Clubs Need Help, PHS Gives \$1,000 to Save the Halls



Teresa Sobie, co-owner of Sobie Meats, sports a 2020 Polka Vision button that raises money for Save the Halls

By Matthew Gryczan

With Pulaski Days canceled for the first time in its history, 14 Polish and Lithuanian halls and fraternal organizations in Grand Rapids are scrambling to make up lost

revenue that they depend on for their annual operating budgets.

As a gesture of solidarity with the clubs, the Polish Heritage Society is donating \$1,000 to the "Save the Halls" campaign

launched by the Pulaski Days Committee in late August to help them plug their revenue holes.

"The organizations that put on Pulaski Days are the most vibrant and visible examples of Polish/Lithuanian heritage in Grand Rapids -- the event drew more than 300,000 last year," PHS President Adam Porczynski said. "We feel that we are fulfilling our mission by supporting them during this emergency."

Michelle Kershner, chairperson of the Pulaski Days Committee, said the PHS gift is the single largest donation to the Save the Halls campaign at this

point, and she hopes it will serve as seed money to build further momentum of the \$200,000 fund drive.

The Pulaski Days Committee, the umbrella organization that coordinates the efforts of halls and fraternal organizations that fund and put on the celebration, is selling pins and apparel to raise money. People can buy pins at participating retailers such as Sobie Meats, 3450 Remembrance Rd NW and Lewandoski Meats, 1107 Walker Ave NW, and buy apparel online at <https://radco-savethehalls2020.itemorder.com/sale>.

As of last week, more than

Location of General Meeting of PHS Changed to Pinery Park in Wyoming

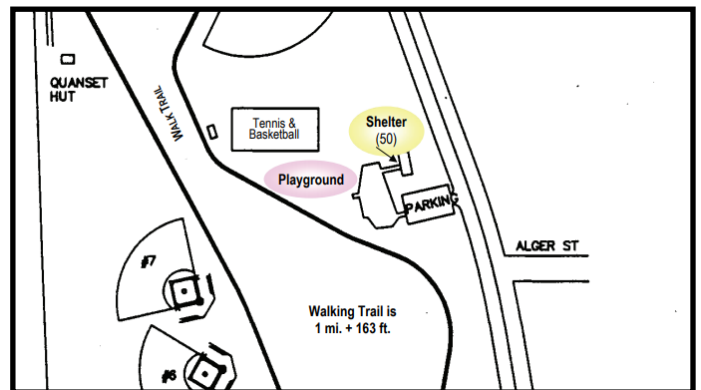
By Matthew Gryczan

The location of the general meeting of the Polish Heritage Society on Sept. 20 has been changed to the Shelter of Pinery Park, 2301 De Hoop Ave. in Wyoming due to restrictions of indoor meetings under a recent COVID bulletin.

Active or prospective members of the Polish Heritage Society are encouraged to attend the general meeting

at 2 p.m., where there will be short formal meeting of the board, time for public input, and an interesting presentation on Casimir Pulaski. Active members can also pick up their PHS lapel pins at the meeting.

PHS Director and history aficionado Richard Panek will be giving a lively presentation on Pulaski, who was a brigadier general in the American Continental Army credited with



General meeting to be held at Shelter of Pinery Park

saving the life of Gen. George Washington. "He was quite a figure in history, quite a swashbuckler," Panek said.

The general meeting was

scheduled to be held at Eastern Avenue Hall, but the location was changed due to new restrictions statewide on indoor meetings. Active members and anyone interested in

Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids

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polishheritagesociety.com](https://polishheritagesociety.com)

Email us at [phsgrandrap-
ids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com).

The Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids promotes an appreciation of the Polish and Lithuanian culture in the metro Grand Rapids. The Society publishes this newsletter monthly. We invite story ideas and content contributions. For more information, please contact Matthew Gryczan or Marilyn Lignell by writing to [phsgrandrap-
ids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com).

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Meeting Change

becoming a member are invited. Those who attend the meeting are encouraged to bring their own masks, but they are not required. Hand sanitizer will be available at the meeting.

Normally the society holds two general meeting annually, usually a picnic and a fall meeting. The picnic was not held due to the COVID pandemic

Mission: Save the Halls

\$3,000 was collected on the sales of Save the Halls apparel, which is scheduled to end on Sept. 21.

What may work to keep the halls above water will be a combination of drive-by dinners, small events in early October, sales and donations through the Save the Halls campaign, some belt-tightening – and crossed fingers.

“We are chipping away at the problem of lost revenue,” Kershner said. “It’s not going to be easy – it’s going to be downright tough for some of the halls.”

Pulaski Days -- the week-long celebration of Polish/Lithuanian culture held every fall in Grand Rapids since 1973 -- was cancelled this year due to concerns about the possibility that the event may spread COVID-19 virus among attendees and volunteers. This year’s event called “2020 Polka Vision” was scheduled to hit high gear on Oct. 2-4.

Some of the halls will be



(From left) Monsignor Edward Hankiewicz, PHS 2nd VP Anthony Zasuwa, former PHS President Marilyn Lignell, the current Busia Queen Judi Serba, Pulaski Days Queen Paige Rubleski, and Pulaski Days Court Member Ashley VanderMeulen were among those celebrating the crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Matka Boska Zielna on Aug. 14 at St. Isidore Catholic Church.

selling take-out Polish dinners in late September and early October. Other clubs such as Eastern Avenue Hall, Kosciuszko Hall, and American Legion Post 459 are considering smaller events that are independent of the Pulaski Days banner.

For example, Polish Falcons Hall at 957 Fulton St W announced that it will be holding “Falcon Fest” from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4., with activities and details will be based upon Michigan executive orders. At a minimum, the club will offer outdoor beverage service and Three Men And A Grill will be providing food service.

Kershner said The Holiday Bar, 801 5th St NW, and Bob’s Bar, 725 Michigan St NE, are gearing up to serve Polish dishes on Oct. 2-4 and donate a percentage of proceeds the Save the Halls campaign.

However, a number of activities such as a flag raising ceremony, parade,

coronation of the Pulaski Days queen, and kielbasa eating contest have been postponed until next year. The 27th Annual Pulaski Days golf outing will be held Sept. 26, and the event is sold out.

“Many of the halls have been in continuous operation for more than a century -- for instance, Diamond Avenue Hall was established in 1892,” Kershner said. “We have to make sure that they’ll remain strong for generations to come.”

All of the money collected under Save the hall will be split equally among all of the halls, she said. Contributions to Save the Halls can be made at the Grand Rapids branch of Credit Union ONE, 1609 Walker Ave. NW, and online by going to the Pulaski Days Committee website, <https://www.pulaskidays.org/>, where there is a PayPal button for the Save The Halls campaign.

PHS Member News

By Marilyn Lignell

The Polish Heritage Society would like to welcome new life member Emma Baranowski! Polish Heritage comes naturally for Emma because both of her parents are Polish!

On her mom's side, they came from Poland and lived in a small-town community that is rich with our heritage. "Heck, they even said mass in Polish at the church there until I was in college!" On her father's side, they came from Poland and ended up in the Grand Rapids area... and are still here today!

During COVID Emma has been spending time with her grandmother (who is 93 and in Pilgrim Manor) via Facetime once a week and learning more about her family, at least what her grandmother can remember, "... but there is also a lot she can't remember. I am doing what I can to learn more about our heritage and to be able to share that with the kids/grandkids in our family."

Emma joined Polish Heritage Society because she wants to keep learning more about her heritage and she wants to support a local organization that believes in that as well.

Also joining as a member is Kevin Groot. Kevin's mom brings the Polish heritage to his roots, having grandparents that initially were set to settle in Chicago, but ended up here in 1951. His grandfather was a member



(From left) Emma Baranowski, grandmother Virginia and father Jim.

of the Polish Veteran's Society, St. Adalbert Parish and some of the local halls. "My grandpa loved his

Polish heritage and participated in the Pulaski Days parade and celebrations." Kevin said it seemed both

understandable and daunting that his grandfather actually died on Pulaski Day. Kevin is married and has a 12 year old and a daughter at Michigan State. If you want to meet Kevin, you can simply stop into Rylee's Hardware on West Fulton to purchase something with your membership card and receive 5% off. He is currently running the store!

We have other new members in August who will be highlighted in the next issue

Meeting Minutes — July 20

By Dennis Ziomkowski

(Abbreviated for space) Attendance: Mary Ann Bergevin, Adam Porczynski, Dennis Ziomkowski, Anthony Zasuwa, John Theisen, Richard Panek, Michael Jasperse, Elena Chaidez.

Absent: Greg Rosloniec, Matt Gryczan, Teresa Bonham.

Minutes from the last meeting were approved as printed. Minutes were sent via e-mail to the board. Motion was made by John and seconded by Michael to accept. Motion passed.

Treasurer Report: The financial report was given. Approximate balance in the check book is \$47,000. Motion was made by Elena, seconded by John to accept the report. Motion passed.

Correspondence: The checks from renewals were given to Mary Ann for deposit. Member information is going to Marilyn. A couple of new members joined. The society received a complimentary copy of the Dyna Brass latest CD.

Old Business: 501(C) 3 update, we are waiting for a quote and answers from Hawkins & Company on being our accounting firm to handle our 501(C) 3 reports and other related accounting items.

The general membership meeting is still on for

September 20th. Possible locations are DA Blodgett or Eastern Avenue Hall. More to follow.

The Whitecaps game for September 3 is cancelled.

The society pins will be handed out at various meetings with Matt in charge. Marilyn is in charge of getting the cards out to our membership. Pins will be distributed to any active members at board meetings, PHS events and at participating retailers.

Festival lighting updating is being put on hold and will be looked at closer to our next festival.

New Business: Teaming up with Meijer Gardens for a Polish program is on hold for now.

Any other events will be put off for now due to the pandemic.

Matka Boska is on for Friday August 14th at Saint Isadore's Catholic Church. Those who are involved with coordinating the activities of the holy day include Marilyn, Anthony and Scott Ambutavicz.

Close meeting: Motion by John, second by Anthony. Meeting ended at 6:40 p.m. Motion carried. Next meeting is August 17, 6 p.m. at Polish Falcons Hall.

Join the Polish Heritage Society to receive our monthly newsletter and other benefits!

Annual Student Membership for full-time students through college \$5

Annual Adult Membership \$20

Annual Family or Business Membership \$35

Lifetime Membership \$150

ONLINE

You can join the Polish Heritage Society online by going to our website at <https://polishheritagesociety.com/>, filling out the Membership form and paying by using the PayPal Button.

MAIL

Fill out this form and send a personal check made out to the Polish Heritage Society to this address:

Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids

P.O. Box 1844

Grand Rapids MI 49501-1844

NAME _____

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