

Detroit Polonia Bus Trip Planned for April 5th is a Hot Ticket

By Richard Panek

The Holiday Motorcoach is reserved, the Polish Village Café is booked and the Polish Institute for Culture and Research at Orchard Lake (PICROL) is ready to host our group for an educational tour of their facilities. All this plus an opportunity to spend time at Hamtramck's Polish Art Center, Srodek's Polish Market and the Hamtramck Historical Museum is available on the Detroit Polonia Bus Trip on April 5, 2025. Tickets are selling steadily and if you haven't reserved your seat, do so today by using the registration form on page 3.

The highlight of the tour at PICROL will be the exhibition *Biography, Art, History: Polish-American Memories of Great Men and Women*. This art exhibition, which runs from February 28 to May 18, 2025, has examples of art featuring the historical figures Nicolas Copernicus, St. John Paul II, Klara

Swieczkowska, Jozef Pilsudski, Helena Modrzejewska, Kazimierz Pulaski, Henry Ford and Tadeusz Kosciuszko.

According to PICROL Associate Director of Polonia Affairs, Ania Bieciuk, the PHS visit comes at an ideal time. "The Institute's recently remodeled Galleria is the ideal venue for historical exhibitions. PHS visitors will enjoy the current art exhibition as well as visiting Hamtramck", Bieciuk said. "Of course, we encourage PHS members to return for future exhibitions as well."

According to a description of the current exhibit, examples of portraiture will give insight to the various ways notable persons have risen to embody Polish-American experiences and values of freedom, self-determination, generosity, bravery and the pursuit of truth. In addition to paintings, the exhibition will include medals, posters, tapestries, sculptures, photographs and arti-

facts which tell the story of these historical figures.

After the PICROL visit, the bus will proceed to Hamtramck and the Polish Village Café where PHS Board member Angela Walejewski-Zasuwa has arranged a hearty traditional Polish lunch

for everyone. After lunch, the motorcoach will drop off participants in the Hamtramck business district where there will be 'on your own' time to window shop. One of the key points to visit will be the

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Polish Heritage Society Rozmowa Club Hits the Ground Running

By Richard Panek

The first meeting of the PHS sponsored Rozmowa Club, organized by board members Eric Tetsworth and Thaddeus Broda, took place at the Polish Falcons February 25th and attracted nearly 30 people.

Tetsworth and Broda provided club participants with a list of common Polish phrases to learn their pronunciation,



Rozmowa Club Meeting

meaning and customary use in communication.

Many in attendance were 2nd or 3rd generation Polish-

Americans who remembered grand parents speaking the language so some phrases were familiar. Others, new to Polish, found the unique pronunciations as well as consonant combinations intriguing.

PHS treasurer Michael Jasperse, though not of Polish descent, spent some years doing business in Poland and has functional fluency in the language. He helped with pronunciation and

contributed by clarifying the proper use of some of the social greetings covered in the session.

Participant Mike Preston recounted that his father knew some Polish but that he never had the chance to learn. As is common with immigrant groups, among Polish-Americans the use of the

(Continued on page 2)

Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids

**PO Box 1844
Grand Rapids MI
49501-1844**

<https://polishheritagesociety.com>

Email us at phsgrandrapids@gmail.com.

The Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids promotes Polish/Lithuanian culture in the metro Grand Rapids. The Society meets on the 3rd Monday of every month except for December and general meetings in June and October. The society publishes this newsletter monthly. We invite story ideas and content contributions. For more information, please contact Richard Panek or Marilyn Lignell by writing to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com.

President
Teresa Bonham

1st VP
John Theisen

2nd VP

Treasurer
Michael Jasperse

Corresponding Secretary
Susan Ulanowicz

Recording Secretary
Matthew Gryczan

Director
Rosemary Maciejewski

Director
Angela Walejewski-Zasuwa

Director
Thaddeus Broda

Director
Eric Tetsworth

Director

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Polish Art Center which bills itself as a "Treasury of Polish Heritage".

When you walk in the Polish Art Center you will be surrounded by folk art, Baltic Amber, stoneware, books, wooden articles, and crystal. They also have an array of authentic folk dolls, Christmas ornaments, pisanki and egg decorating supplies as well. The store is impressive and if they don't have what you are looking for they can probably order it for you from Poland.

Another possible shopping stop could be the Polish-American owned Tekla Vintage for clothing, household items and décor.

If you love Polish food, Srodek's Campau Quality Sausage on the

next block will be your go-to for those grocery items you can't find in Grand Rapids. Consider bringing a small cooler if you want to take home some sausage or fine deli meats. They also have bags of dried mushrooms (called borowiki or Polish porcini).

The New Palace Bakery is also a short walk to some of the nicest Polish style breads, pastries and cakes for your enjoyment.

A stop in the Hamtramck Historical Society will be of interest to those seeking an exhibition on changing Polish-American urban demographics.

Get together with your friends for a fun road trip and register today.



Some of the items available at the Polish Art Center in Hamtramck

April 15 Deadline for PHS Board Elections and Scholarship Applications Coming Up

That date marks the cutoff for submission of names for candidates who want to run for office on the PHS board and for students who wish to be considered for PHS scholarships.

Those who are interested in submitting their names for consideration for a seat on the 11-member board must be active members who are current with annual dues or who have lifetime memberships. The names of individuals running for office will be published in the May

newsletter before the election takes place on May 19.

Nominations for officer and director positions on the 11-member board will close on April 15, and individuals interested in serving on the board can submit their names by writing an email to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com before the deadline.

Regarding scholarships, the society annually gives out scholarships to students of Polish descent attending insti-

(Rozmowa continued from page 1)

language is lost with assimilation of succeeding generations. Preston said he enjoyed participating in Rozmowa and thought it was a great activity for PHS members. He will continue exploring the language via learning and translation apps in anticipation of an upcoming trip to Poland. He said, "It will be nice to learn some of the language before we go".

Whether you want to learn some Polish phrases before you visit the old country, or sing the "Sto Lat" birthday song for the kids or grandkids, or just like to practice your Polish so you don't get rusty, come to the next meeting.

PHS members can join for free, and dues for non-PHS members is \$20 – which includes an annual PHS membership.

The get-togethers will be one hour starting at 7 p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month at Polish Falcons Hall, 957 W. Fulton St. Snacks will be provided, and there will be a cash bar for participants. The meetings will usually run about an hour.

tutions of higher learning as a way of supporting Polish heritage.

Applications are available online at <https://polishheritagesociety.com> or from the counseling offices at high schools or post high school institutions. Completed applications can be emailed to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com or physically mailed to Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids, PO Box 1844, Grand Rapids MI 49501.



PHS Detroit Polonia Bus Trip

Saturday, April 5, 2025

8 a.m. -- Depart East Beltline and I-96 Park & Ride Lot via Motorcoach to Orchard Lake, MI

10:30 a.m. -- Arrive at Polish Institute of Culture and Research for tour of exhibits.

1:00 to 2:30 p.m. - Hearty family style lunch at Polish Village Café in Hamtramck

2:30 to 4:30 pm.-- Tour of Hamtramck Historical Museum, then shop at Polish Art Center,

Srodek's Polish Market, Tekla Vintage Shop

7 p.m. EST -- Arrival back in Grand Rapids

TOUR COST INCLUDES MUSEUM ADMISSION, LUNCH, AND TRANSPORTATION



Polish Institute of Culture and Research Galleria



Lunch Stop in Hamtramck

*****Reservation Deadline Thursday March 20, 2025*****

Make Check payable to: *Polish Heritage Society*

mail to Richard Panek 6620 Knockadoon Drive NE, Rockford, MI 49341

Call Richard with questions at (616) 490-3231 or email rwpanek@gmail.com

Name_____

Phone #_____

of Tickets @ \$80.00 each_____

Amount Enclosed_____

Email_____

Polish Heritage Society January Board Meeting Report

By Richard Panek

The PHS Board voted to resume publishing a report of board activities in the Echo Newsletter during their January meeting. The intent is to update membership on programming, future planning of activities and stimulate greater engagement of PHS members in the work of the society. Board meetings are the third Monday of the month and are open to all members.

The Board of the Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids met on Monday January 27th, 2025 at 6 p.m. at the Polish Falcons hall. Attending were President Teresa Bonham, 1st Vice President John Theisen, Treasurer Michael Jasperse, Recording Secretary Matthew Gryczan, Corresponding Secretary Susan Ulanowicz, Director Rosemary Maciejewski, Director Eric Tetsworth, Director Thaddeus Broda, and Director Angela Walejewski-Zasuwa. Non-board members attending were Sarah Sharpe, Rich Panek, and Judi Serba

Treasurer Jasperse presented the financial report which was approved by the board without changes. Jasperse said he would like to put together a yearly budget and would have more details at the February meeting. Early financial planning as well as venue confirmations for Dozynki are under way.

President Bonham reported that she had sent a thank you card to Jeffrey Portko for his contribution of the St Nicholas costume for Wigilia.

Recording secretary Gryczan reported that the Society received funds to support the

Stanley Ketchel gravesite restoration project, and he asked that the treasurer create a sub account so that donations could be tracked. He made a motion that the society donate \$250 toward the restoration which was passed unanimously.

Griffins Night report by Director Zasuwa noted that she had met with representatives of the Griffins to confirm that the Busia Queen would be riding the Zamboni. The PRCUA Malbork dancers were scheduled to perform in the lobby of Van Andel Arena at 6 p.m. Total ticket sales are projected to be around 100. The PHS receives a portion of the ticket sales.

PHS Student Scholarship forms have been distributed to area school districts.

The Grant Committee of the Polish Heritage Society now has two individuals who have agreed to serve as members: Marilyn Preston and Mary Ann Manciewicz. Board members were asked to suggest anyone to be the third General membership person on the committee.

Open Board positions for the May 19th election were as follows: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Recording Secretary, Director, Director for Broda, Director for Maciejewski. Gryczan said he would not be running for re-election in May. A person can only run for one position and if a board member runs for a position other than the one that she/he currently holds, that person is essentially resigning his/her seat. The deadline for nominations is April 15.

Cultural and Fine Arts program-

ing report presented by Richard Panek gave an event budget and estimated income for a Chopin and Paderewski piano recital by Cezary Karwowski to take place June 7th at St. Cecilia Music Center. It was recommended that the PHS approach sponsors to underwrite much of the cost of the event, concentrating on sponsors that currently do not support Dozynki. The society will implement an electronic ticketing system for use at this and other future events. The aim is to facilitate sales via the website and social media links. Since this is new programming for the PHS, the aim is to at least break even and advance the visibility of the PHS among the public interested in the fine arts. A Cultural Events Committee was then named which included Panek, Jasperse, Bonham, Zasuwa, Sharpe and Serba.

Polish cooking classes put on by Marzana Butryn at Sons & Daughters Club are supported by the PHS. Bonham suggested that the society help by paying for the kitchen rentals. The goal is to gain more members by passing out applications at the classes. A motion was made to

fund three months of classes, which passed unanimously.

Bus Trip planning for a visit to Detroit is proceeding for around 50 people to visit Hamtramck on April 5, with lunch at the Polish Village Cafe. Panek said one possible stop would be the Polish Institute of Culture and Research at Orchard Lake. Total estimated expenses for bus, lunch and museum admission should be covered by ticket sales.

Rozmowa Polish Language Club is being organized by Directors Tetsworth and Broda. The club has \$100 for snacks approved from a prior meeting, and the PHS Echo Newsletter as well as website and Facebook will be used to publicize the launch.

Member Sarah Sharpe gave the board a summary of her background and her interest in the PHS. Gryczan recommended that the PHS find a local person to manage the website and social media for the society. The Board directed the editor of the Echo Newsletter to also publish a report summarizing the minutes of board meetings for the general membership each month as a regular newsletter column.



Paczki Cooking Class at Son's and Daughter's Club



Pianist Cezary Karwowski

Be a 2025 Polish Fine Arts Programming Supporter!

The Polish Heritage Society is presenting Polish Pianist Cezary Karwowski for a performance of the music of the famous Polish Artists Chopin, Paderewski and others. A native of Poland, Karwowski has presented programs and lead workshops at the Chopin Foundation of the United States. This event is scheduled for the evening of Saturday, June 7, 2025, at Saint Cecilia Music Center. *General ticket sales start in April.*

The PHS is offering underwriting opportunities to businesses and individuals:

- ☐ ***Presenting Sponsorship of \$3,000*** includes presenting sponsor listing in the event program and flyers, acknowledgment from the main stage, prime seating for 4 in the Royce Auditorium of St. Cecilia Music Center as well as recognition in the PHS website and PHS Echo Newsletter. (two sponsorships available)
- ☐ ***Virtuoso Sponsorship of \$1,500*** includes recognition in the event program after the presenting sponsorship, prime seating for 2 in the Royce Auditorium of St. Cecilia Music Center as well as recognition in the PHS Echo newsletter. (two sponsorships available)
- ☐ ***Patron of Polish Fine Arts Sponsorship of \$500*** includes 2 tickets and recognition in the event program
- ☐ ***Scholar of Polish Fine Arts Sponsorship of \$200*** includes 1 ticket and recognition in the event program

Sponsor (organization or individual name), exactly as it should appear in print:

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please mail form with check payable to Polish Heritage Society by May 1st, 2025 to PO BOX 1844 GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49501

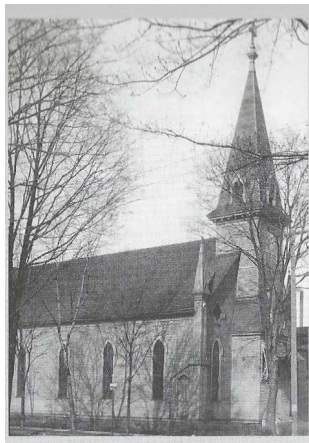
Questions: Richard Panek 616-490-3231 rwpanek@gmail.com or PHSgrandrapids@gmail.com

History of a Saint Adalbert Connection to a Rural Polish Parish

By Richard Panek

Polish settlement in the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan was well established by the end of the 1800's. North of town, Polish farmers had settled in the Belmont and Comstock Park areas as well. These hardy souls faced a 10-mile trip each way along West River Road every week to attend Sunday Mass at Saint Adalbert's Church in Grand Rapids.

The growing Catholic community from this rural area eventually asked the diocese for permission to build a Catholic Church in Belmont. With the blessing of Bishop Henry Richter, Father Kazimierz Skory, Pastor of St. Adalberts convened a meeting with the group. They met at Joe Gryka's house in Belmont on July 27, 1913. Those attending, representing 50 families, decided to establish a church in Belmont. A committee was formed consisting of Edward Oblinski, Vincent Prawdzik, Wacław Szulc and Joseph Polega. It was decided to purchase the old wooden Saint Adalbert's Church and reassemble it in Belmont.



The original St. Adalbert Church

At the time, Saint Adalbert's had just completed the con-

struction of their new Church (now a Basilica) on Davis Street. The new structure was right next to the original wooden Saint Adalbert church built in 1881. On August 10th, 1913, the congregation at Saint Adalbert unanimously decided to donate the vacant church to the future Belmont congregation.

An architect was hired to draw up plans to dismantle and repurpose the old wooden church. The structure was originally built in a rectangle but later enlarged so there was plenty of material for the new congregation to work with.

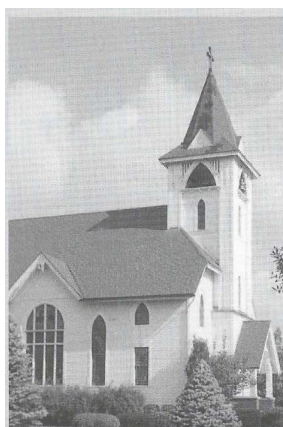
The church was dismantled with large, intact sections and structural beams transferred to railroad flat cars on the nearby Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad line. These sections then were shipped by rail up to Belmont on the right of way which is now the White Pine Trail.

The remaining sections and windows were hauled by fellow parishioners by horse and wagon. Vincent Prawdzik along with others from Belmont brought the stained-glass windows on a separate horse drawn wagon. The story goes that not one window was broken and the group was awarded a gallon of cider for their trouble.

Once all the pieces were transferred to Belmont by the end of the fall, the basement excavation was started. The local contracting company of Henry & Rice planned to start structural work in the early spring. Many in the future congregation (mostly farmers) provided volunteer labor and wanted to start before the next planting season. During construction, Bishop Richter decided that the

Name of the congregation would be the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Construction resumed in the Spring of 1914 with the laying of the cornerstone on May 31, 1914.

At the time of the laying of the cornerstone, Bishop Richter was in Rome so the honor of presiding over the ceremony fell to the Vicar General of the Diocese, Rev. M. J. Gallagher. A special train ran from Grand Rapids at 8:30 that morning to convey Polish Catholics from the city to attend the dedication, enjoy the celebration and return at six in the evening.



Assumption Church Circa 1940

Priests from St. Adalbert's served the parish as a mission church until Casimir Szyper was assigned as the first pastor in 1925. By that time the parish reportedly had 45 registered families 70% of which were Polish. A number of pastors of Polish descent continued to lead the Assumption parish until the 1970's. Those include the Reverends James Czachorski, Anthony Arszulowicz, Joseph Godzisz, Joseph Podhajski and James Cusack.

The church building served Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Mary Parish for 75 years before being replaced by the present modern church in 1988.



Original St. Adalbert's window which was reinstalled a third time in the present ABVM Chapel

Before the old Assumption church was demolished, the 100-year-old stained glass windows from the original Saint Adalberts were removed once again to be installed in the new church. These original windows stand in the Narthex, Sanctuary and Chapel of the Church located on Belmont Road.

Today this parish serves over 700 families. Some of these Assumption parishioners are second and third generation Polish-American descendants of those who started the congregation all the way back in 1914. *(Special thanks to James Wisniewski for his contributions to this article)*

PHS Membership News

By Marilyn Lignell

Hello members! Just a final reminder that membership dues should have been paid by February 28. We are preparing membership cards to be mailed with bulk mail in your April issue of the newsletter. If you have not paid your dues, please do it now so you will receive a membership card.

We are excited to welcome new members Ewa and Caleb Williams, Lucy Bolter, Jeff Okkonen, Norman Czurak, Michelle Seguin and Greg Meyer. Also joining as a lifetime member is Juli Wright.



Juli Wright

Juli shared that her maternal grandfather immigrated from Poland and encouraged their children to Americanize, so Polish was only spoken briefly in the home. "Now three generations later we are trying to connect with our heritage," Juli said. Juli went on to say that she met some wonderful people at the cooking class at Sons and Daughters and is now planning on the April bus trip. "We are very excited to plug into this community."

We offer our deepest condolences to the following families and friends of members that have died this month. Ray-

mond D. Tusch has been a longstanding member of the PHS. Ray was preceded in death by Mary, his wife of 65 years. He leaves behind his sons Gregory and Brian and daughters Christine and Linda. His full obituary can be found in legacy.com.



Ray Tusch

The PHS also grieves the loss of lifetime member Paul Palaszek. Paul is survived by his wife Barb. Paul and his extended family volunteered every year at the Dozynki Polish Festival.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, former PHS President Jeff Portko's beloved wife died on October 23, 2024. "Lynnette Kruchow-Portko touched the lives of many peo-



Lynnette Kruchow-Portko

ple and she would do anything for anyone." Lynn's full obituary can be found at www.obits.mlive.com.

On a more happy note, PHS members Richard and Mary Panek had a second granddaughter born 10 days after their first. Their Son Mitchell and Wife Katey had Halina Jayne on January 30th (mentioned in last month's membership news) and then on February 9th, their daughter Genevieve delivered Teresa Michelle Kuchinsky. All moms and babies are doing well. Mitch lives on the West Side of GR while Genevieve is in Milwaukee so the Paneks have been on the road a bit the last few weeks. Congratulations!



Teresa Michelle Kuchinsky

Experience the Majesty of Polish Ballet Heritage

The Polish Institute at Orchard Lake is proud to partner with the European Royal Classical Ballet (ERCB) as they bring Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" to West Bloomfield as part of their Inaugural U.S. Tour. Tuesday, April 8, 2025 Berman Center for Performing Arts. Tickets available at: <https://tickets.thejdetroit.org/european-royal-classical-ballet-presents-tchaikovskys-swan-lake>

This is a remarkable opportunity to celebrate Poland's deep ballet heritage, as the ERCB is an expansion of the Polish Royal Ballet. After years of touring Poland and Europe, they now bring their artistry and world-class talent to American audiences.



Scan the QR code to order tickets and use code PICROL20 at checkout for a discount



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

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