



# POLISH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF GRAND RAPIDS

NEWSLETTER

August 2021

## 50th Anniversary of Matka Boska Zielna

By Msgr. Edward Hankiewicz



On Wednesday, 23 June 1971, John Arsulowicz, then President of the Polish Heritage Society, responded to an invitation I presented to the Society by the then Pastor of St. Isidore Parish, Msgr. Joseph Podhajski, to sponsor a Mass in August of that year.

Msgr. wanted to revive an old Polish custom of honoring the Mother of Jesus on the Solemnity of her Assumption into heaven. With the approval of the Board and membership, plans went ahead for the Mass.

My mother, Stella (nee Walenga) Hankiewicz, already a member of the Society, became the head of a committee that was to work on publicity for the event.

She sent out invitations, which included inviting all the local Polish surnamed priests to the Mass.

She threw herself into the task. My mother loved her Polish heritage and was excited to help bring that Mass and a celebration of Polish culture into the public eye. I believe she continued to do that kind of basic ground-work for several years.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of that spiritual & cultural event. Over the years, this Mass has come to be designated as the Matka Boska Zielna Mass (Translation: Mother of God [and Our Lady of] the Harvest.

From the beginning, the August Mass was to move from one Polish parish to another in the city. Some things have changed, but since coming back to St. Isidore in 2016, I've tried to keep this celebration of Our Blessed Mother going here in this parish. I've done this as a commitment to my personal Polish Catholic heritage, in partnership with the Polish Heritage Society, and in some way to continue what my mother, Stella, and other members of the Society began 50 years ago.

Matka Boska this year will be Sunday August 15, at 6:00 pm at Saint Isidore Church. Please join us!

### Polish Festival at Calder Plaza

August 27-29, 2021

Activity Tents— Polish cooking demos as well as a Kids Tent

Polish Food vendors including Varsovia, Knight of Columbus, Lost Village Pierogi, Pronto Pups, Diamond Hall and others

Paczki Eating Contest & Busia Queen Contest

Pulaski Days Queen Pagaent— including Peoples Choice Award and Crowning on Saturday Night

Polka Bands— featuring Dave Sliwinski, Jerry Kaminski, Diddlestix, Bill Grusinski and Virgil Baker live as well as the Polka Pops DJ's for your listening and dancing enjoyment!

### Festival Volunteer Sign-up

The signup genius for Festival Volunteers is now up and running. Here is the link to sign up and share with your friends:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4DAFA922A5F8C07-polish>

Or <https://tinyurl.com/4z9hdh42>

We are looking for help with:

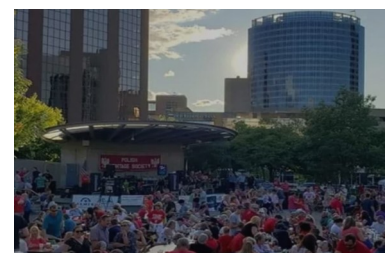
Set up Thursday

Token Tents

Runners

Cleanup

Take Down Sunday after 4pm



**Polish Heritage Society of  
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Grand Rapids MI  
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Email us at [phsgrandrapids@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 Richard Panek or Marilyn Lignell by writing to [phsgrandrapids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com).

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## PHS Member News

By Marilyn Lignell

Meet **Michael Jasperse**, Director on the Polish Heritage Society Board



I joined the Polish Heritage Society board because I wanted to continue to be involved with the Polish community in Grand Rapids. I served on the Grand Rapids Sister Cities board for a time, but left to put more efforts into the Polish Heritage Society. Although I am not Polish, I lived in Poland for a long time. I am a Dutch, CRC guy raised in West Michigan. When I landed in Poland, I learned the language and culture the best that I could. I made many good friends in Poland and felt like I was accepted and adopted by its people. I think Poland is Europe's underdog. I think they have so much that they have offered to the world and continue to offer, so much culture – even in the 20th century – modern classical music, cinema – with a major film school in Lodz, and they are the only central European block

country with enough size and power to actually make an imprint on Europe and European policy. I think people forget that here in the US, to be Polish means to come from so much more.

What I like most about PHS is the people, their dedication, and commitment to the organization and the mission. I joined when financially things were a little thin, it was hard to think about expanding programs, and now thanks to the last few years and a some very committed individuals, the organization is thriving like I have not seen it before. I am pleased to be a small part of that!

I like that the PHS brings a bit a Poland to the Grand Rapids area by maintaining some important traditions such as Matka Boska, Wigilia, and an amazing cultural display at the Polish Dozynki Festival. I think that can be part of the PHS mission, to bring all of Poland to people here, to help those of Polish descent see what has happened in Poland since their families left, there is always so much change. I think Polish Heritage Community is the mechanism for that.

I like to think that I do bring that aspect, the cultural side. I would love to see a film festival sometime in the future and maybe some more trips to Chicago or Detroit to appreciate where so many Polish people in our community originated from.

## PHS Member News

*Jasperse continued from pg. 2*

I also have an interest in the stories of different families that came to the US. I remember translating letters from Poland written in 1942 that Marilyn Lignell and I worked on together. That just brought it home for me how hard these decisions were – life was so hard in Poland, and it was the hope that any kind of life here was going to be better, but that was not always the case and people struggled just as hard in the United States. I believe that where we came from plays an integral part of our lives today.

### Meet Stephanie Haight



Stephanie is the daughter of David & Marilyn Stephens and grew up on the West Side of Grand Rapids. Her mom's grandma Adamina Teresko came from Poland in the early 1900's. As a little girl on the West Side Stephanie always loved the Pulaski Day Parade. I mean, what little girl doesn't

dream of being the Pulaski Queen? In 1989, that dream came true as she ran as an independent (no hall sponsor) and won the Pulaski Queen Contest. Today Stephanie loves her Polish Heritage and enjoys the holidays when all the family recipes get made. She has a husband of 29 years and 2 beautiful girls in their 20's who are both engaged." I moved from the West Side to Oceana County where there are no Polish Halls to enjoy but am

proud to be a member of the Oceana Eagles, the Grand Rapids Elks #48 and now the Polish Heritage Society".



## PHS – May 2021 Board Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Polish Heritage Society was held on May 17, 2021 via phone and in person at Polish Falcons Hall. President Adam Porczynski called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

Roll Call: Quorum Present? YES

Attendance: Mary Ann Bergevin, Adam Porczynski, Dennis Ziolkowski, Michael Jasperse, Matt Gryczan, Theresa Bonham, John Theisen, Elena Chaidez, Richard Panek, Anthony Zasuwa

Minutes from the last meeting were approved as printed with no corrections. 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. Motion was made by Michael seconded by Richard to accept the report. Motion passed.

Correspondence: The checks from renewals were given to Mary Ann for deposit. Member information is given to Marilyn. Received another thank you from one of our scholarship winners.

Old Business: Shirt vendors, more to come,

maybe print some around festival time.

Polish meal recap is: total income 1,050.00. Laura cost 369.00 Profit 681.00

Festival – Calder plaza for sure. Booking bands and vendors, lining up food people. Lots to come, stay tuned!

Elena is chairperson of election committee with Theresa and Michael to assist as needed. All people have to be an active paid up member.

Tabling putting ads in the newsletter till next year. No further action on life memberships. Leave as is. John will work with the Polka Pops radio show to place an ad advertising the society and our festival. Aprox. Cost is 100.00

New Business: Angela Zasuwa gave a little background and speech about herself and why she would like to be on board.

No scholarship given to anyone at Davenport College. Will wait one more year and relook at offering one there.

Motion by John, seconded by Michael to place an ad in the Pulaski Days Book, either business card or half page size. Motion passed.

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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