



POLISH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF GRAND RAPIDS

February 2021



Marge Wilson with sample paczki at Marge's Donut Den

Local Bakeries Gear Up for Paczki Frenzy Next Week on Fat Tuesday

By Matthew Gryczan

Come Sunday morning, bakers at Sandy's Donut House on Leonard Street will begin their non-stop, 3-day marathon of making paczki for ravenous customers who want to satisfy their sweet tooth before Lent begins.

About 11 miles away at Marge's Donut Den in Wyoming, staff will start preparing for the Tuesday morning onslaught of paczki customers snaking around the inside of the building and out the door, all the while being serenaded by singer Kevin Cavanaugh and live

music of the Silver Tones.

Other bakeries and grocery stores throughout metro Grand Rapids will offer boxes of paczki, the Polish version for what originally meant a prune-filled bismark that since has expanded into more flavored fillings. "Grandmas getting ready for Lent wanted to use up their lard and sugar in preparation for fasting, so they made Paczki before Ash Wednesday," said Marge Wilson, owner of Marge's Donut Den. "But they found that kids didn't like the prune filling, so they used other flavored

PHS Board Seat Opens, Looking for Help with Newsletter, Website

A board seat will become vacant for the May election of officers for the Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids, and the PHS is looking for assistance in maintaining its website, publication of its newsletter and marketing activities.

Those who are interested in helping with the website, newsletter or marketing do not have to be members of the Society board.

PHS Director Matthew Gryczan has decided not to run for reelection to another 2-year term, opening up a vacancy on the board. He was responsible for creating the new PHS website in 2019 and for refreshing the format and content of the newsletter last year, but he will not continue in those activities.

Gryczan and PHS Membership Chairperson Marilyn Lignell also are requesting assistance with maintaining membership rolls, sending cards of encouragement to members, identifying local businesses that agree to extend discounts to purchases made by members, and maintaining a list of complementary newsletters to non-members to acquaint them with the organization.

The number one requirement is enthusiasm to help

a few hours a month – be it writing cards to a shut-in, writing a blog for the website, working behind the scenes on the newsletter or asking a business to join in the discount program.

The new PHS website is fully operational, so it only needs maintenance of adding blogs and photos, updating information and coordinating with PHS Corresponding Secretary Elena Chaidez, who edits the PHS Facebook page. The PHS website is built on the GoDaddy Website Builder platform, so it can be learned easily.

"Working on the PHS website would be an ideal opportunity for someone who wants to ease into learning how to create and maintain websites," Gryczan said. "GoDaddy makes it easy to change information, create new pages and add features."

The PHS also uses Google Analytics to keep track of how the content on its website resonates with its members and the general public. The website drew more than 3,100 users last year.

The PHS website and system of writing blogs is an excellent way for people to learn the ropes of digital marketing, coupled with

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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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jellies.”

While Polish immigrants have made pączki since they arrived in Grand Rapids well over 100 years ago, the pastry’s widespread popularity really took off here with the help from some American-style marketing by retail bakeries.

Wilson said she started baking pączki for customers in the early 1980s when she served as the national donut director and Michigan regional director of the Retail Bakers of America, a not-for-profit trade association founded in 1918 to foster success of the retail baking industry. She credits Carl Richardson, an officer of the association from Detroit, with promoting pączki as a new product based on the demand in his region. Wilson and Richardson developed and shared recipes with bakeries as to

Time to Apply for PHS Scholarships

The PHS is encouraging college-bound students of Polish/Lithuanian descent to apply for financial aid offered by the society.

The deadline for applications is March 15, so students should contact their high school or college counselors to start the application process.

To view the scholarship guidelines and application form, visit the PHS website at [https://
polishheritagesociety.com/
scholarships](https://polishheritagesociety.com/scholarships).

how pączki are made and educated businesses on how to market the new pastry.

“By now, just about every bakery has its own special way of making pączki,” she said. “Along with our special fillings, we like to put powdered sugar on ours.”

Lindsay Hoezee, part-owner of Sandy’s, said the bakery is introducing cherry-flavored filling for this first time this year, in addition

to its other offerings.

She said Sandy’s has been making pączki for at least 40 years, so “it’s a real tradition.” Sandy’s started stocking shelves with paczki on Feb. 6 to meet customer demands, and the bakery will continue to offer them through Feb. 20.

But the real crunch will come on Sunday through Tuesday, with non-stop baking. “It’s a relief when its over, but it’s fun too,”

PHS: Help with Website, Newsletter

GoDaddy’s Websites+Marketing program, Gryczan said. “The PHS newsletter is another great opportunity for people to learn how to create and publish newsletters digitally.” Documents are generated in Microsoft Word and photos are edited using Paint, which are both commonplace software programs. The organization uses Publisher to layout pages and create Adobe PDF files that are sent to the printer for publication.

The newsletter is also a perfect outlet for people who like to write about local topics related to Polish heritage. “We’re always looking for writers with local stories,” he said. “While we are a humble organization that can’t pay for stories, we give writers a byline and voice to a very receptive audience.”

For those who aren’t interested in websites, publishing or writing, there are

plenty of other volunteer opportunities.

Since Gryczan is not running for reelection, there will be a vacancy on the PHS Board for a director with a 2-year term.

Those submitting their names for consideration must be active members who are current with annual dues or who have lifetime memberships. There are certain requirements for an individual to be placed on the slate of officers up for election in May, so those interested should contact PHS Recording Secretary Dennis Ziolkowski at dziolkow@att.net or write a general letter of inquiry to [phsgrandrap-
ids@gmail.com](mailto:phsgrandrapids@gmail.com).

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my time on the board,” Gryczan said. “I’ve undertaken a large, long-term writing project, but I hope to circle back in a year or two to the PHS to lend a hand again.”

PHS Member News

By Marilyn Lignell

If you haven't done so already, please take a minute to fill out the form on the back of this newsletter and send in your 2021 dues or pay online conveniently on our website using PayPal. Your membership dues are what keeps this newsletter coming. Thank you for your support!

The Polish Heritage Society welcomes Tom Sanocki as a life member!

"I feel that our Polish heritage needs to be preserved



and kept very much alive in our lives," Tom said. "I come from Polish and Czechoslovakian heritage, where my parents spoke the languages and tried their best to keep customs and traditions well within our family."

Tom has played in polka bands since he was 13 years old. "I also have 25 years under my belt producing and broadcasting The Polka Melodies Radio Show on WKBZ AM 1090 in Muskegon since 1996."

The "Doctor of Polkaology" is what many refer to Tom as on the weekly radio

show, which broadcasts on Saturday and Sunday mornings up until noon on the weekends, and rebroadcasts every Saturday and Sunday evenings up until midnight on iHeartRadio. The Polka Melodies is a very well-known staple of Polish heritage every weekend for the past 25 years.

If you ever had the opportunity to visit The Muskegon Polish Festival on Labor Day weekend in Muskegon, you will find Tom volunteering his time. He has been president and held other posts at the festival since its origination. "We have a fantastic group of individuals, both Board Members and a slew

of volunteers that feel the same way....to keep our Polish Heritage very well known in the West Michigan area. Our Board Members and Volunteers help so much to keep these traditions alive and well. I thank them every chance I get."

We asked PHS members what they are planning for Fat Tuesday and here are a few responses:

Jarek Kozal: I always smile when I see this. In Poland we celebrate Tłusty Czwartek or Fat (Greasy) Thursday. I will be making homemade pączki filled with rose jam, plum, apricot jam, and czarny bez

(similar to black currant). Can't wait!!

Andy Budnick: With a dozen prune pączki from Schnitz Bakery!

Scott Ambutavicz: I'll celebrate however in Poland they celebrate Fat Thursday (Tłusty Czwartek.) It's the Thursday before Ash Wednesday.

Stephanie Kovitz: I'll be eating a prune filled pączki from Sandy's.

Laura Szczepanek: I think I'm going to make a batch of Paczki and reminisce about our flash of fame with Taylor Hicks.

Jacky Schmidt: I'll be cooking and serving food at Eastern Hall.

MINUTES FOR November 16, 2020

A meeting of the Polish Heritage Society was held on November 16, 2020 via Zoom due to new covid restrictions. President Adam Porczynski called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Roll Call: Quorum Present? YES

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

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

Treasurer Report: The financial report was given. Approx. balance in the checkbook is 46,900.00 Motion was made by Theresa seconded by Matt to accept the report. Motion passed.

Correspondence: The checks from renewals were given to Mary Ann for deposit. Member information is going to Marilyn. Not much going on. Renewed with West Michigan Trav-

el.

Old Business: Logo/Branding tabled till January. Szopka webinar is 20 to 30 minutes in length. Polish traditions. Theresa showed her personal Szopka. In person Szopka building, hopefully donations to build one large community Szopka. Follow up in January's meeting.

New Business: Laura's food orders, motion by Matt, seconded by Richard to table her request until January's meeting. Could be a timing issue with holidays. Motion passed. Busia Queen, motion by Matt, second by Michael to continue her reign till next festival. Someone needs to ask her if she wants to. Motion carried. Discussion on purchasing cards be mailed to members for death's, birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Motion by Anthony, second by Richard. Motion passed. Matt to check with John on the status of a new PHS logo that may be printed on cards.

Close meeting: Motion by Matt, second by Michael. Meeting ended at 6:52pm. Motion carried Next meeting is January 18, 2021 6pm location TBA

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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