



POLISH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF GRAND RAPIDS

July 2020

PHS Granted 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Status by IRS

By Matthew Gryczan

Last month the Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids was notified by the federal Internal Revenue Service that the organization has been granted tax exempt status, so donors can now deduct contributions on their federal taxes and the organization can receive tax deductible gifts and bequests.

“Getting our 501(c)(3) designation is a huge win for the PHS,” President Adam Porczynski said. “This is laying the foundation for the society to approach larger corporations and organizations that have

expressed interest in supporting our mission, but also have required us to be tax exempt.”

Porczynski said he received a letter from the federal Internal Revenue Service in June that stated the PHS now is considered tax exempt, effective January 6 of this year. In addition, the PHS may be exempt from paying state income, sales and employment taxes, enjoy reduced postal rates, and receive tax-exempt financing. The PHS relies on volunteers to operate and does not have any employees.

He said local attorney Martin Rogalski, former

PHS president Marilyn Lignell and others worked diligently for about 18 months to obtain the 501 (c)(3) designation. The

finished document submitted to the IRS was nearly ½-inch thick of pages detailing the mission, (See page 2)

Matka Boska Zielna Mass and Crowning Set for Aug. 14



Brody Sikkema holds the woven crown for Matka Boska

PAHA Appeals for Forgotten Items

By Matthew Gryczan

Not sure what to do with those old photos and letters from relatives who immigrated to the United States from Poland after World War II?

Dig them out of the closet and consider gifting them to a national organization that is trying to preserve the experience of Polish nationals during this post-war period.

“Documents about the

postwar Polish experience and immigration to the U.S. can easily be lost, especially as parents and/or grandparents and other relatives who went through these experiences die,” said PHS lifetime member Barbara Rylko-Bauer, who is also a member of the Polish American Historical Association (PAHA) that has launched a new "memoirs" project to help preserve the record of the post WWII Polish migration to the United States. (See page 2)

By Matthew Gryczan

COVID or no, one of the most beautiful religious ceremonies tied to Polish heritage in Grand Rapids will take place on Aug. 14

as it has for years: the Matka Boska Zielna Mass and crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Monsignor Edward Hankiewicz, pastor of (See page 2)

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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, Richard Panek or Marilyn Lignell by writing to phsgrandrapids@gmail.com

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Matka Boska: Our Lady of the Greens

(from Page 1) St. Isidore Catholic Church at 625 Spring Ave NE, announced last month that the service and ceremony celebrating the Assumption of Mary will take place 7 p.m. at his church, with appropriate measures being taken to protect participants from contracting COVID.

Hankiewicz said the service will maintain the hallmarks that has made it a traditional favorite for local Catholics: a Mass with a blessing of flowers and herbs, music sung in Polish, and a procession to and crowning of a statue of the Virgin Mary in the church courtyard. Last year more than 200 people attended Matka Boska Zielna and a reception with refreshments that followed the service.

PHS: New Tax Exempt Status

(from Page 1) history and finances of the society.

With the new designation comes new reporting responsibilities and obligations for the PHS, Porczynski said. The society must file annual returns with the IRS for tax exempt organizations at the end of the calendar year, keep ongoing accurate and detailed records of transactions for itself and its donors, and meet disclosure requirements.

The society has formed a committee with Porczynski,

In Poland, it is celebrated at the Feast of Our Lady of Greens, where herbs are blessed and then woven into wreaths that are hung near holy pictures and used as medicinal recipes as protection against illness and natural disasters.

Participants at this year's service are expected to wear face masks, and there will be social distancing in the pews. The crowning of the statue of Mary will take place, but unfortunately

PAHA: Lost Documents

(From Page 1) "This is particularly true for photos and other documents that the next generations may not be able to identify, read, or place in historical context -- especially if they

Director Michael Jasperse and 2nd Vice President Anthony Zasuwa to assess accounting software programs and local services to meet the new requirements.

"It's going to take some effort, to maintain our tax exempt status but it really is worth it," Porczynski said. "We hope to use the new tax status to expand our educational programs on the influence that the Polish and Lithuanian cultures have had on West Michigan."

there will not be a reception due to the logistics of gathering so many people in an enclosed area.

The Polish Heritage Society is an active sponsor of the celebration, providing flowers, herbs and the woven crown for Mary and refreshments at the reception. In past years, the Pulaski Queen and her Court and the Malbork Dance Ensemble of Grand Rapids have attended.

are discovered after the fact," she said.

The PAHA has put out a national appeal to families to provide "memoirs, diaries, letters, interviews, and photos" that document the experience of post war Polish immigrants. The project is in collaboration with Central Connecticut State University's Library and the Polish American Librarians' Association.

For more information about the project, interested readers can see: <https://polishamericanstudies.org/text/180/memoirs-.html>. They can also get information by contacting Dr. Ewa Barczyk at ewa@uwm.edu or at 414-412-6456. The local PHS may be interested in copies of materials provided to the national project.

PHS Member News

By Marilyn Lignell

The PHS would like to welcome Marge Grossenbacher! Marge's grandmother was born in Poland and the family eventually landed in Chicago. Marge's mom is actually 100% German. Marge said she wants to "dip her toes" into the PHS and see what we are all about.

It is with great sorrow that we have lost a faithful Polish Heritage Society supporter, Walt Peevy. Walt, 71, died suddenly on June 5, 2020. Though not actually a member himself,

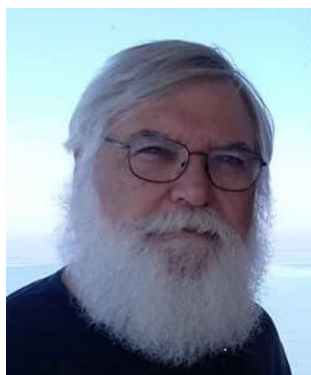


Walt and Penny

Walt was the life long companion of life member Pat Skrycki and stepfather to life members Patty and Penny Skrycki. Walt was a faithful Dozynki Polish Festival volunteer, initially at the bar and later selling tokens. "Walt loved to help out at festival, he looked forward to it every year," Penny said. "He has been a part of our lives for 35 years and he will be greatly missed." He participated in Wigilia and was always willing to lend a helping hand. His smile and welcoming personality was

contagious, you couldn't help but feel good after being around him. Rest in Peace Walt.

Just a reminder that membership dues can be paid via PayPal. Talking to Bob Zapolnik, he said it was an easy and convenient way to pay. Bob's interest in the PHS comes from his grandfathers' being born in Poland both on his father and mother's side. Bob said he doesn't speak much Polish, but did admit to knowing a



few swear words.

That probably didn't help him much when he went to Poland last year to meet a

distant relative he found on LinkedIn. "Most people speak English in Poland, so it wasn't a problem," Bob said. "After some correspondence back and forth, my wife and I went to Poland and met Magdalena Zapolnik. She showed us around Gdynia and then we made our way to Krakow on our own." Bob and his Irish/English wife Brenda have 3 children and 5 1/2 grandkids, as his daughter is expecting her third child.

Meeting Minutes — May 18

By Dennis Ziolkowski

(Abbreviated for space) President Adam Porczynski called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Attendance: Mary Ann Bergevin, Adam Porczynski, Dennis Ziolkowski, Elena Chaidez, Anthony Zasuwa, John Theisen, Matt Gryczan, Greg Rosloniec, Richard Panek, Michael Jasperse. Special guest: Marilyn Lignell

Treasurer Report: Mary Ann reported the approximate balance in the check book is \$47,900 and a new debit card was mailed to Adam. Motion was made by John, seconded by Greg to accept the report. Motion passed.

Correspondence: The checks from renewals are given to Mary Ann for deposit. Member information is going to Marilyn. Mary Ann read the three thank yous the society received from the scholarship winners.

Scholarship Update: All the scholarship checks have been sent to the respective colleges. Since no requests were entered from Davenport College, that money will be held till next year.

Election update on officers and terms.

President: Adam Porczynski until 2021; 1st VP: John Theisen until 2021; 2nd VP: Anthony Zasuwa until 2022; Treasurer: Mary Ann Bergevin until 2022; Corresponding Secretary: Elena Chaidez until 2022; Recording Secretary:

Dennis Ziolkowski until 2021; Director: Richard Panek until 2021; Director: Matthew Gryczan until 2021; Director: Michael Jasperse until 2022; Director: Theresa Bockheim until 2021; Director: Greg Rosloniec until 2022.

New Business: Motion made by Elena, seconded by John to purchase the accounting computer program within the next 3 months to get in line with the new requirements that we will need. Motion carried.

Motion made by Matt, seconded by Greg to donate the banner from St. Isadore's Parish to the Grand Rapids Public Museum on behalf of the Polish Heritage Society. Motion passed.

Discussion on absences was brought up. Three absences in a row will result in immediate removal, regardless of reason.

After much discussion, a motion was made by Richard, seconded by Elena to cancel this year's 2020 Polish Festival, due to issues that have risen with the current pandemic. Next year's tentative festival date is Aug. 27-29, 2021. Motion passed by a seven- to-two vote. Voting yes were Greg, Elena, Matt, Richard, Denny, Anthony, and Mary Ann. Voting no were John and Michael.

Meeting ended at 7:30 p.m., and the next meeting was set for June 15 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

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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