



# The Forum

## of the Chicago Society, Lodge 1450 PNA

Now in Our Second Century of Service

VOLUME 75

July 2023

NUMBER 7

### UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

General Meeting

The Great Escape  
9540 W. Irving Park Rd.,  
Schiller Park, IL

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m.

Reservations:

Andy Haszlakiewicz  
andyh9946@gmail.com  
or call: 847-341-1068

(Reservations needed  
by Monday, July 17)

\* \* \*

Annual Golf Outing  
Friday, July 28,  
starting at 12 noon,  
Bridges of Poplar Creek,  
Hoffman Estates

Dear Chicago Society Members and Friends:

I hope that everyone is having a great summer. For those who are traveling near or far, I wish you safe travels and a wonderful trip full of unforgettable memories.

This message will be short and sweet—our next event will be our annual golf outing, on Friday, July 28, at the Bridges of Poplar Creek in Hoffman Estates. More information can be found on this inside the FORUM. It may be a new place for us, but it should still be a great event! Even if you are not golfing, please consider helping out in some way during the event.

Looking forward to the second half of the year...we have plans to resurrect the Candidates' Dinner which we held for many years in the past. More information on that will be coming out soon. While it is nice and hot now, plans are also already in full swing for our annual Deserving Childrens' Christmas Party, which we hold every December. And while it is still several months away, we also need to start planning for the 2024 Evening of Elegance. Please reach out to me or to anyone else on the board if you are able to help with any of these events.

Also, please let me know if you are willing to be a Secretary or Director of Social Activities—both of these positions *still* remain open to anyone who is willing and able to serve!

Fraternally,

*Chris Grzadziel* President, Chicago Society PNA

## It's Official: Copernicus Foundation Teaming Up with Pickwick

The Copernicus Foundation, one of the Chicago area's best-known Polish American cultural institutions, has officially teamed up with another local cultural landmark—Park Ridge's famed Pickwick Theatre. The Copernicus Foundation will operate the theatre and make it a venue for live theatrical performances as well as movies, it was announced last week.

Hubert Cioromski, the chairman of the board of the Copernicus Foundation, will act as the property manager for the Pickwick building, while the staff of the Copernicus Center will organize programs for the main theatre auditorium. The four movie theatres in the rear part of the building will also continue to operate.

*(Continued on page 4)*



## CHICAGO SOCIETY FORUM

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## July Forum Highlights

- ◆ Don't Forget: Golf Outing in Hoffman Estates Is on July 28!
- ◆ Two New Applicants for Chicago Society Membership!
- ◆ Kulze Scholarship Recipient Tells of Her Ph.D. Studies Comparing Polish and Latin American Literature

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Remember the Chicago Society's address:

**Chicago Society PNA, Lodge #1450  
333 Busse Highway, #973  
Park Ridge, IL 60068-3285**

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**If you can serve either as Board Secretary, or as Director of Social Activities, for the rest of 2023, please let us know—your help will definitely be appreciated!**

## Legion of Young Polish Women Plan Elegance Event for Aug. 6

The Legion of Young Polish Women is busily planning its summer 'Sunday of Elegance' event, "A Cup of Tea with Legion," which will be held on Sunday, August 6 from 1-5 p.m. at the Park Ridge Country Club, 636 N. Prospect Ave. There is still time to make an RSVP for this afternoon tea and fashion show; the deadline is Sunday, July 30. All who are interested can call Mira at 847-209-7420, or the website: [www.lypw.org](http://www.lypw.org)

Those who attend the event will also be able to purchase either a tea hat or a pocket square to accentuate their cocktail attire. The Legion of Young Polish Women also holds the White and Red Ball for debutantes in the early part of each year, and the monies raised through its activities are used to fund the many charitable activities in which these young women are involved each year.

## Chicago Society's Annual Golf Outing— It's Coming to Hoffman Estates on July 28!

The Chicago Society PNA's annual Golf Outing is almost here! The event will be held on Friday, July 28 at the Bridges of Poplar Creek, 1400 Poplar Creek Drive, in Hoffman Estates. (This is just northeast of the intersection of Golf and Barrington Roads.) Registration is at 12 noon, with the Shotgun Start at 1 p.m. (with lunch and beer provided on the course), and dinner at 6:30 p.m. The cost for 18 holes of golf and dinner is \$165 per golfer, or \$660 per foursome. For those unable to golf in the afternoon, but wanting to come only for dinner (and an open bar), the cost is \$65 each.

There are four levels of sponsorship available: \$1,500 for a Host Sponsor gets golf for a foursome with VIP hospitality bags, tee box signage, name and logo on the registration and dinner table, and a banner at the registration sign in the VIP Sponsor Area. \$750 for an Event Sponsor gets a tee sign at the hole, name and logo on registration and dinner table, and a sign in the VIP Sponsor area. \$500 for a Beverage Cart Sponsor gets tee box signage, and beverage cart and beer station signage. All three of these levels of sponsorship also get a name and logo on the Chicago Society PNA, and on the Website for June and July. A \$100 Hole Sponsor gets tee box signage only. Cash or raffle prize donations are also welcome.

For more information, contact event chairman Adam Konopka at (773) 220-1891, or email: [akonopka@chartwelllaw.com](mailto:akonopka@chartwelllaw.com). Checks and registration forms can also be mailed to Adam at: 10 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 875, Chicago, IL 60606.



# New Applicants for Chicago Society Membership

Applicant: Adam Czyszczon  
 Address: 5812 N. Oketo Ave.,  
 Chicago, IL 60631  
 Occupation: Civil Engineer (retired)  
 Cellphone: 773-858-9925  
 Email: adamcyszczon25@gmail.com  
 Sponsors: Jan Plachta, Andrzej Czyszczon

YOU CAN USE TWITTER,  
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 CHICAGO SOCIETY PNA!

Applicant: Richard Olejniczak  
 Address: 1314 W. Watling St., Arlington Hts.,  
 IL 60004  
 Birthdate: July 4, 1969  
 Birthplace: Chicago  
 Occupation: SVP, Data Programs, Wintrust  
 Financial, Rosemont  
 Business Phone: 847-268-1886  
 Email: Richole@ameritech.net  
 Education: BS, Mechanical Engineering;  
 MS, Engineering Management;  
 Master of Business Administration (MBA)  
 Spouse's Name: Agnes  
 Hobbies/Interests: Woodworking/Classic Cars  
 Insurance Member: Yes  
 Sponsors: Peter Dykas, Chris Grzadziel

## Letters, We Get Letters...

*Dear Mr. Grzadziel:*

*The Polish Museum of America would like to express its gratitude to you for your generous support of the 2023 PMA Gala [held June 9]. In acknowledgement of your donation, your name is listed in the commemorative Gala Program Book. All funds raised from the Gala will help sustain our continued efforts in ensuring the PMA as a heritage landmark today—and for future generations. We thank you for sharing your pride and commitment to the PMA. During these difficult times for all cultural institutions, the kindness and generosity of donors, sponsors and supporters such as yourself make the Polish Museum of America the treasure of Polonia. On behalf of the board of directors, staff members and volunteers, thank you for your dedication, and for your support of the Polish Museum of America!*

*Richard Owsiany, President*

*Malgorzata Palka and Sharon Orlowski, 2023 Summer Gala Co-Chairs*

## A Report on the 2023 Meeting of the Chicago Society's Sarasota Branch!

This year's meeting was held on Tuesday, July 11 at the Anna Maria Oyster Bar in Sarasota, FL. The usual crowd was there, consisting of member Rick Wiermanski and his spouse, Cyndie, and member Tony Kawalkowski and his wife, Bozena. Both members will be reaching 40 years of membership before this year is over! As usual, good conversation and food were present. No pictures were taken this year to protect the innocent!

## Copernicus, Pickwick

*(Continued from page 1)*

The Copernicus Center, located on Lawrence Avenue between Milwaukee Avenue and the Kennedy Expressway in the Jefferson Park neighborhood of Chicago, operated in the former Gateway Theatre as a center of Polish cultural programming for many years. More recently, it has been hosting a variety of musical and cultural programs, including those of more general interest. It has also been the site of the annual Taste of Polonia celebration on Labor Day weekend; the Chicago Society PNA also held its monthly meetings there in the past.

## 2023 Kulze Scholarships:

# Recipient Pursuing Ph.D. in Literature That Compares Polish, Latin American Experiences

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This month we present the third in a series of four essays written by local Polish-American students who were chosen as recipients of the Chicago Society PNA's Kulze Scholarships, by a student who is pursuing a Ph.D. degree in comparative literature of Poland and two countries in South America—Chile and Argentina. The final essay will appear in the August edition of the Forum.*

*I, Marta Iwona Lasota, am applying to the James and Lillian Kulze Scholarship Program as an incoming Ph.D. student in Comparative Literature. As a doctoral student, I aim to study 20th and 21st Century Polish, Chilean and Argentinian literature that engages with the experiences of trauma and spirituality. In terms of my career goals, I would love to become a professor of Polish and Latin American literature. However, because the academic job market can be unpredictable, I also have goals of becoming trained as a Polish translator. Lastly, I also have a profound commitment to producing creative writing alongside academic articles. While my Ph.D. program will give me rigorous training as a comparativist literary scholar and critical theorist, I hope to one day publish my creative essays—and perhaps, whenever it is ready, a novel.*

*A primary question guiding my research is: how does literature speak the unspeakable? In the face of unfathomable violence, language can crumble, failing to fully capture the immense pain that was experienced. Like terror, spiritual experiences can also be a great unspeakability, lying beyond the limits of language. Both the traumatic and the spiritual can result from what Georges Bataille calls "limit experiences." These are intense events that, due to their paradoxical qualities, cause a subject to approach the edges of living and selfhood. Inspired by Bataille's notion that "the sacred world depends on limited acts of transgression," (1), I am interested in what literary texts reveal about the spiritual—a subjective state that is distinct from the religious—in their attempt to transgress "limit experiences" through literary language. My research considers three sites of limit experiences serving as the bedrock for spiritual encounters: the catastrophic, the quotidian and the liminal. While catastrophic events, such as genocide and war, are typically read as loci of limit experiences, they can also occur in the quotidian—or through ordinary human ordeals, like love, that act as portals for the extraordinary. This includes both transitory and sustained experiences, from epiphanies and mystical moments of ecstasy to the consistent forms of banal oppression characterizing modern life. Lastly, periods of luminality, such as political upheaval, can also spur new conceptions of the spiritual.*

*Because poets are especially attuned to the bounds of language, as a Ph.D. student I hope to turn to poetry to investigate post-secular redefinitions of the sacred. I can envision part of my doctoral research focusing on Polish, Chilean and Argentinian poetries of witness that document the horrors of World War II and the Southern Cone's military dictatorships. Although a strong poetic tradition of witness is found in all three countries, no extensive comparative work has been done to examine how these post-catastrophic poetries explore divinity.*

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## 2023 Kulze Scholarships—

(Continued from page 5)

Large waves of Eastern Europeans immigrated to Argentina and Chile preceding and following World War II, including thousands of Poles, and Polish Jews—and many Latin American writers actually turn to writings from the Holocaust to understand their own trauma, post-dictatorship. (2) I thus connect these regions in order to connect a gap I see in trauma studies—namely, why do some texts dealing with violence turn from terror to the divine? How does this shift happen, and why does it matter as a literary and political move? Pertinent to my investigation will be poets Zbigniew Herbert (POL), Raul Zurita (CHL) and Juan Gelman (ARG). Although their memorial landscapes differ—the concentration camp vs. the empty space of “los desaparecidos”—all seek to understand the absence of God among the ruins of human annihilation. I would like to additionally analyze how apolitical and mystical postwar poets like Alejandra Pizarnik (ARG) and Halina Poswiatowska (POL) scrutinize the sacred via eroticism rather than political violence. By attending to the spiritual dimensions in the works of the above-mentioned Christian and Jewish poets, I hope to open new avenues for comparison between Poland, Chile and Argentina—all traditionally Catholic countries with large Jewish minorities—that a nationalist lens may not capture.

As an undergraduate at Harvard, I primarily focused on violence, examining Polish Holocaust poetry, and later, with my senior thesis, contemporary American human rights poetry. This led me to my graduate studies at the University of Chicago, where I explored post-secular fiction dealing with political violence, and where I began researching the subjective turn in religion (3), or how literature captures private and interior religious experiences. My M.A. thesis focuses on Tadeusz Konwicki’s “The Polish Complex” (1977), a ruminatory novel that takes place on Christmas Eve in the Communist-controlled Polish People’s Republic. In it, the narrator spends all day waiting in a queue, as he also waits for a miracle. Engaging with Walter Benjamin’s conception of “Messianic Time” and Soren Kierkegaard’s philosophy of “the leap of faith,” I investigated the novel’s portrayal of faith as an ontological condition with a revolutionary potential. Overall, my thesis offered a new, post-secular reading of Konwicki’s novel, which previously has been interpreted only as a political satire. As an M.A. student, I have also been working towards fluency in Spanish and Polish while building my competence in the national literatures of Poland, Chile and Argentina. In my Ph.D. studies, I am eager to integrate my interests in violence and spirituality within a larger comparative project. It would be an honor to receive the James and Lillian Kulze Scholarship, and I hope you consider my application.

**Marta Iwona Lasota     March 9, 2023**

1 Georges Bataille, *Eroticism, Death and Sensuality*; translated by Mary Delwood, San Francisco, City Light Books, 1986, 68.

2 For example, Argentinian-Jewish writer Nora Strejilevich, a “desaparacida” who survived torture, opens “El Lugar del Testigo” with reflections on the writings of concentration camp survivors Primo Levi and Jorge Semprun.

3 I trace the subjective turn in religion to Leo Tolstoy’s autobiographical “A Confession,” which strives toward religious understanding through personal reflection rather than divine revelation, and to William James’ “Varieties of Religious Experience,” which investigates the private realm of religion through individual experience.

## \*\*\* Current Events \*\*\*

# Russia Says It Will Shut Down Polish Mission Looking After Katyn, Smolensk Crash Memorials

(Reuters, July 14) — Russian officials said they would shut a Polish diplomatic mission looking after memorials to Polish officers massacred by the former Soviet Union and a 2010 airliner crash in Smolensk that killed then-Polish President Lech Kaczynski, his wife and several members of the Polish Parliament (Sejm), in retaliation for Poland's "aggressive line" toward Russia.

The war in Ukraine has brought tense relations between Warsaw and Moscow to new lows. Poland is accusing Russia of trying to destabilize the country with disinformation campaigns and espionage. Moscow condemns what it sees as Warsaw's hostile stance toward it.

The Russian foreign ministry said the Polish ambassador to Russia had been summoned and informed of the decision to close Poland's "consular agency" in Smolensk, in Russia's far west. The Polish diplomatic mission looks after two memorials: a cemetery for the Soviet Union's mass execution of thousands of Polish army officers during World War II (the Katyn massacre), as well as the site of the April 10, 2010 airliner disaster that killed Kaczynski and other Polish officials who were flying to Smolensk to commemorate the massacre. A total of 96 people died in the crash.

"Warsaw has been pursuing a hostile policy towards Russia in recent years," the Russian foreign ministry said in a statement. "The atmosphere of unbridled Russophobia prevailing in Poland precludes the demonstration of any 'goodwill gestures' on our part."

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said Poland would give an equal response if Russia closed down its diplomatic missions. "We regularly receive information about aggressive diplomatic actions from Russia," Morawiecki told a press conference. "If in the end, it comes to it that Russia starts to liquidate our offices, we will respond in kind."

## Krakow Man Has Walked Every Street in the City

A resident of Krakow this week completed a quest to walk all 3,000 streets in the city. Kamil Babel, who was joined by family, friends and local residents for the final leg of his journey, said the experience "has given him a new perspective on the city" where he lives.

The project, which took almost four years to complete and involved walking a total of 2,800 km (1,736 miles), finished—appropriately—on a road named "Last Street" (ulica Ostatnia), located in northeastern Krakow.

Babel, who works as a project manager for the Poland Business Run Foundation, a charity, said he has long sought different adventures in his spare time—including running the Krakow Marathon backwards. He said he was inspired by the story of a New York man, Matt Green, who spent years walking every street in that city. "I realized that I didn't even know what is at the end of the street where I live," Babel remarked.

Babel, who tracked his progress in walking Krakow's streets by using GPS and Google Maps, said he hoped his achievement would also encourage other people to "get out of the house more."

—Notes from Poland



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