



The Forum

of the Chicago Society, Lodge 1450 PNA

Now in Our Second Century of Service

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NUMBER 8

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 16

General Meeting

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

Call to Order: 7 p.m.

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

(Reservation deadline
is Monday, Aug. 14)

* * *

Dear Chicago Society Members and Friends:

I hope everyone's summer has been very enjoyable. I can't believe that some schools are already starting classes, and others will start over the next couple of weeks! For those who are squeezing in some last-minute summer travel, I wish you safe travels and wonderful times.

Thank you to everyone who attended the annual golf outing. While I was not able to play this year, I heard that everyone had a wonderful time, and enjoyed the new location. Special thanks go out to Adam Konopka and his team, for putting in the many hours of prep time to make sure this event was a huge success. Mark your calendars for next year!

In breaking news: After an eight-month-long search, we now finally have a new interim Director of Social Activities! Please welcome Marta Almodovar as our new Director. Marta has already had an impact on our events this year, and I welcome her commitment to our organization. We are still looking for a Secretary; if you are interested, please reach out to anyone on the Board.

Plans for a summer picnic have not come to fruition; at this time, the event is cancelled for this year. Hopefully, we can revisit it for next year.

We do have couple of other events coming up. We are currently in the planning stages for a Candidates' Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner this fall. More information will come on this soon. Also, the annual Deserving Children's Christmas Party is set for Saturday, Dec. 9. Please reach out to Peter Dykas if you are able to donate to this event, or help out on the day of the event.

Also still a few months away is our annual "Evening of Elegance" event. We are still looking for someone to chair this event. Please reach out to Marta, our interim Director of Social Activities, if you are interested in helping out.

Fraternally,

Chris Grzadziel

President, Chicago Society PNA



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August Forum Highlights

- ◆ Sponsors Make Annual Golf Outing a Great Success!
- ◆ Taste of Polonia Coming Up on Labor Day Weekend
- ◆ Actress from 'Power Rangers' Receives Kulze Scholarship; Tells of Her Plans to Help Cure Physical and Mental Illnesses

—Ralph Modjeski Remembered in Alaska Ceremony

—Poland Holds Largest Military Parade in Decades

Remember the Chicago Society's address:

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

***If you can serve as Secretary
for the remainder of 2023,
please let us know: your help will
certainly be appreciated!***

PRCUA Planning Oct. 1 Celebration for Its 150th Anniversary

The 150th anniversary of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America is on Oct. 3, and this milestone will be marked locally by a gala celebration, to be held on Sunday, Oct. 1. A special Mass will be said at 9 a.m. at Holy Trinity Parish, 111 S. Cass Ave., Westmont, to be followed by a Jubilee Brunch at nearby Drury Lane Theatre and Events, 100 Drury Lane (near Roosevelt and Butterfield Roads), in Oakbrook Terrace.

Anyone wishing to make reservations for this event can call the PRCUA at 773-782-2603, or email anna.grabowski@prcua.org. The PRCUA, headed by President James Robaczewski, sells life insurance and annuities, and provides numerous benefits to members, such as Polish language and dance schools, sports tournaments, and scholarships and educational loans.

Thanks to Everyone Who Helped Make Our Annual Golf Outing a Great Success

Despite extreme temperatures, the golf outing proceeded on Friday, July 28 [at The Bridges of Poplar Creek in Hoffman Estates], and was a great success—thanks to the attendees, sponsors and volunteers. The most gratifying part of the outing for me is always seeing a great group come together to do something special, and that is what happened. Thank you to all who donated their time—Rick Wiermanski, Andy Hasztrakiewicz, Chester Konopka, Frank Czaja, Jim Sadowski, Peter Dykas and Judge Diann Marsalek; those who donated money and/or raffle prizes—Harley Davidson, Robert Clark of the Chicago White Sox, Robert Damrat, Phil Cunningham and family, Juan Leyva, Don Barnett, John Fitzgerald, and Ken Stellan of Trend North. Special thanks go to the Marsalek family for creating and donating the golf gift bags; the Czaja family for their raffle donations; and the Plachta, Sadowski and Wasilewski families for their donations. This doesn't happen without our sponsors, and I need to recognize the generosity of our host sponsors—Dynamic Safety, Trend North, FPG and Agile; event sponsors—PNA, Legion of Young Polish Women, Mark Mikina of Home Smart, Ania Kozera at Guaranteed Rate, and B&M Auto Collision; beverage cart sponsors—Link Logistics, and Mayor Barrett Pedersen of Franklin Park; and hole sponsors—PAPA, Matt Thomas, the Czaja family, the Ciesla family, the Polish Museum of America, PRCUA, PACC, and the Wayback Inn. Please visit our website to see these sponsors, and support them—as they have supported us in our mission. Thanks again to everyone—and looking forward to next year!

—Adam Konopka



Taste of Polonia Returns, Bigger and Better Than Ever, on Labor Day Weekend

If summer is quickly nearing its end, and Labor Day weekend is just around the corner, that means it's time once again for the annual Taste of Polonia at the Copernicus Center on Chicago's Northwest Side. This year, a wide-ranging variety of activities are taking place on four stages during the celebration's four-day run, from Friday, Sept. 1 to Monday, Sept. 4 (Labor Day) at the center, at 5216 W. Lawrence Ave., between Milwaukee Avenue and the Kennedy Expressway.

The gates will open at 5 p.m. on Friday and at 12 noon on Saturday, Sunday and Monday; the festival will run until 10:30 p.m. on the first three days, and to 9:30 p.m. on Labor Day. Over 30 vendors will be at the event, and a craft beer tent, exhibits, carnival games and rides, and cooking and tasting classes will be held—along with a casino featuring Texas Hold'Em and blackjack inside the Center. For the kids, there will also be bounce inflatables, a climbing wall, clowns and face painting.

There will be four stages running throughout the event—the Tribute Stage, World Music Stage, Kids Stage, and Theatre Stage (inside the Center). Musical entertainment will of course include many Polish offerings—including The Polkaholics, Polka Generations, the Eddie Wojcik Tribute Band, Keith Stras and Polka Confetti, and performers like Lombard, Grzegorz Hyzy and Munieki Przyjaciele. But there will also be groups on hand playing other types of ethnic music, including El Bandolero, the Donnybrooks, Disco Circus and the Trippin' Billies. There will also be tribute bands such as American English (the Beatles), Hot Rocks Band (Rolling Stones), Reely Dan (Steely Dan) and Think Floyd USA (Pink Floyd). The Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra and the Chicago Chopin Society will also perform in the theatre; a Mass will also be said there at 11 a.m. on Sunday.

Four categories of tickets are available for purchase: a Weekend Pass, which is valid for all four days; a One Day Entry Pass, good for general admission on any single day; a Friday Only pass, good for that day; and a Copernicus Foundation Member Pass, valid for entry on any day. For a complete listing of activities and times, and to purchase tickets online, visit: www.topchicago.org.

Lira Ensemble Music Available at Special Price through Aug. 31

Fans of the Lira Ensemble have till August 31 to purchase downloads of the group's music (except "Chopin Songs") for \$13 per album, as part of the group's Summer Sale. Visit the Lira website, liraensemble.org/lira-store, to view the selection of music that's available.

Oktoberfest Coming to Royalty West on Oct. 15

Eddie Blazonczyk's New Phaze will be performing at the Oktoberfest celebration scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 15 from 1-5 p.m. at Royalty West Banquets, 8675 S. Archer Ave. in Willow Springs. Tickets are \$13 each. For more information, call Bel-Aire Enterprises at 708-594-5182.

2023 Kulze Scholarships:

‘Power Rangers’ Actress is Now Pursuing Studies in Psychobiology, Mental Health

EDITOR’S NOTE: *This month, we present the last 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 earlier this year. Jacqueline Scislowski, who has been an actress in ‘Power Rangers’ (where she portrayed Zoey Reeves, the Yellow Ranger), explains how she is using her own experiences to explore the links between physical and mental health.*

The preparation I’ve done going into Psychobiology has been one that’s stemmed from birth. I have always been fascinated by people and the psychological question, “Why are they the way that they are?”— a question that, growing up as an actress, was my job to answer with a cognitive approach. Coincidentally, it was also acting that introduced me to a biological approach to that question, which exposed me to the world of “gut health.” An acting job on Power Rangers required me to defer [school] for two years—which is when my own stomach issues and mental health struggles really escalated. These two years spent balancing a professional work environment with a debilitating illness is really what has prepared me, not just for my major, but for succeeding in school. I learned resilience, and how to take matters into my own hands.

There was little time for visits to doctors, and the few I did speak to offered no answers. I developed a thirst for learning about the gut, and how it relates to our brains. I was determined to make sense of what was happening to me. My thirst eventually led me to discover my own diagnosis: SIBO [small intestine bacterial overgrowth]. No doctor had mentioned this illness, nor suggested that I be tested. Upon getting the test, surely enough, I was diagnosed with SIBO—and moreover, one of the rarest versions of it. From conversations with my family and friends, I discovered that nearly everyone was dealing with some level of gut health, or mental health issues that could be rooted in their gut dysfunction. This discovery has fueled me within my first two years of college to start more conversations among my classmates, which has led to a captivating collaboration on new perspectives on the gut-brain connection.

In my current upper division psychology class, I have even asked my professor for permission to utilize certain assignments given, as an opportunity to further my research on this topic in relation to subject matters in class. Through this, and the discussions with my psychology professors, I have found so much more information and theories than I ever could have imagined. I am determined to acquire the knowledge necessary, and be challenged by my classes that are still to come, so that I may be best equipped to get to the bottom of the gut dysfunction problem within our society, and how it can help lessen the prevalence of mental health disease.

Throughout this challenging journey of taking my medical issues into my own hands, what kept me grounded and resilient was seeking comfort in my Polish heritage. On days when I felt very ill, I found comfort in making one of my favorite Polish dishes, pierogi, and sharing it with all of my co-workers. I was the first Polish actress to play a Power Ranger, and I felt immensely proud to promote that.

(Continued on page 6)

Monument to Bridge Builder Ralph Modjeski Unveiled at Ceremony in Nenana, Alaska

On Saturday, July 15, in Nenana, Alaska, a monument was unveiled honoring Polish-born civil engineer Ralph Modjeski, to mark the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Mears Memorial Bridge, which he built over the Tanana River to complete the Alaska Railroad in 1923.

Nenana is about 50 miles south of Fairbanks, and was founded in the years 1915-20, when the railroad line connecting Fairbanks with Seward, on the Pacific coast, was under construction. Modjeski's bridge, which was the last link in the railroad, is still among the largest simple truss-type bridges in the world, at 700 feet. President Warren Harding came to Nenana to drive a golden spike into the northern abutment of the bridge; he was the first president ever to visit Alaska (which the U.S. purchased from Russia in 1867)—Harding died just 18 days later.

A large group of Polish and Polish American engineers participated in the ceremony on July 15. among those present were the president and vice president of the Mining and Metallurgical Academy (known as AGH) in Krakow. Also there was Maria Kaszynska, president of the Organization of Civil Engineers in Szczecin, Poland; and Marek Gotowski, sponsor and donator of the Modjeski plaque, from Bydgoszcz, Poland, accompanied by his wife and daughter. Also in attendance were a large group of engineers representing the Council of Polish Engineers in North America, and its president, Andrew Nowak.

The unveiling of the monument was done by Nenana Mayor Josh Verhagen; Michael Britt, president of the Chicago firm of Modjeski and Masters; and Gotowski and Nowak. Also present were Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy, Senators Dan Sullivan and Scott Kawasaki; and the Alaska Railroad Administration Board Chairman, John Shively.

The group received a very cordial and friendly reception from the people of Nenana, and there was great interest in the life and career of Ralph Modjeski.

—Submitted by Jan Plachta

2023 Kulze Scholarships—

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I keep in active contact via social media with my fans from all around the world, but especially those in Poland. I was fortunate enough to have a couple of Polish fans send me their Power Rangers comic books, and I decided to do a live reading/translation of the Polish comics for all my fans to see. I was pleased to see the amount of love and interest all the fans had in learning more about my Polish roots, and what cultural traditions I partake in.

Thanks to social media, and having such a large following from the show, I was able to share many videos about our family traditions, such as Wigilia and the sharing of oplatki, and compare with fans from other regions of the world what their traditions are, and what they consist of. Maintaining my traditions even while being halfway around the world in New Zealand [where Power Rangers was filmed] is what helped me through these difficult times, and it filled me with pride to share my culture with all of those whom I worked with. I plan to continue spreading my culture within the acting industry and while in school.

Jacqueline Scislowski

3/2/2023

*** Current Events ***

Poland Holds Its Largest Military Parade in Decades, Displaying New Equipment

WARSAW, August 15 (AP)—Poland staged a massive military parade on Tuesday to showcase its state-of-the-art weapons and defense systems as war rages on in neighboring Ukraine, and ahead of Polish parliamentary elections on October 15.

President Andrzej Duda, who is chief commander of Poland's armed forces, said in his opening speech that the protection of Poland's eastern border is a key element of state policy. He also noted that Poland is supporting Ukraine in its struggle against Russia's aggression of almost 18 months.

"The defense of our eastern border, the border of the European Union and of NATO, is today a key element of Poland's state interest," Duda said.

Crowds waving national white-and-red flags gathered in scorching temperatures that reached as high as 95 degrees F. (35 C.), to see U.S.-made Abrams tanks, HIMARS mobile artillery systems, and Patriot missile systems. Also on display were F-16 fighter planes, South Korean FA-50 fighters, and K-9 howitzers.

A U.S. Air Force F-35 roared overhead, in a sign that Poland was also purchasing these advanced fighter planes. Polish-made equipment, including Krab tracked gun howitzers and Rosomak armored transporters, were also featured.

Some 2,000 troops, 200 vehicles and almost 100 aircraft took part in the parade. Poland's armed forces have more than 175,000 troops, up from some 100,000 eight years ago, Duda said. Since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Poland's government has focused on strengthening the armed forces and has spent more than \$16 billion on tanks, missile interceptor systems and fighter jets, many purchased from the U.S. and South Korea.

Duda said Poland's defense budget this year will be a record 137 billion zloty (\$34 billion US), or some 4 percent of its gross domestic product—the highest proportion in all of NATO. "The goal of this huge modernization is to equip Poland's armed forces and create such a defense system that no one ever dares attack us, that Polish soldiers will never need to fight," Duda said, in voicing his respect for the military.

Responding to criticism that Poland, a nation of some 37 million, was taking out huge loans to make the purchases, Duda said, "We cannot afford to be idle—this is why we are strengthening our armed forces here and now.

"The security of Poles is priceless," he said.

—Reporting: *Monika Scislowska*



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