



# The Forum

## of the Chicago Society, Lodge 1450 PNA

Our Second Century of Brotherhood and Service

VOLUME 75

February 2023

NUMBER 2

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### WEDNESDAY, FEB. 15

**General Meeting  
and SLEDZ**

**Allegra Banquets  
5035 N. River Road,  
Schiller Park  
Call to Order 7 p.m.**

**Reservations:  
Andy Haszlakiewicz**

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

**Reserve by  
Sunday, Feb. 12  
Cost: \$40 per person  
(pay at door)**

**Spouses/guests  
are invited!**

Chicago Society Members and Friends:

We are off and running in this new year with a whirlwind of events. A couple of weeks ago, we had our annual Evening of Elegance at the Park Ridge Country Club. Many thanks go out to Adam Konopka, who chaired the event. The turnout was wonderful, as it doubled from last year. The evening was full of memorable events, including the first-ever Ro Matuszczak Member of the Year Award, presented to Rich Ciesla, and the presentation of the annual Honoree Award to the Legion of Young Polish Women. A full recap of the event is included in this edition of the FORUM.

As we move into February, we are not slowing down one bit. The annual Sledz will be held along with our monthly general meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 15 at Allegra Banquets in Schiller Park. Come join us for a great dinner, pageant, St. Joseph selection and music by a Dixieland band. More information on this event is also in the FORUM. Please RSVP as soon as possible; the cutoff date is Sunday, Feb. 12.

As you will also see in this FORUM, we have several new member applications. They will be inducted into membership in the coming months. Do you know anyone who is interested in becoming a member? The membership application has been updated, and is online at the Chicago Society website.

Looking forward, please mark your calendars for the pre-parade brunch on Saturday, May 6. Zenon Kurdziel is chairing this event, and anyone interested in helping out should reach out to him.

I will end my February message with a snippet from my speech at the Evening of Elegance: The Chicago Society mission is simple, yet complex...so how do we accomplish our mission? The only way is with a strong membership. Thank you to the current members, some of whom have been with us for decades, for all the work you do at our events and meetings. Your dedication to the organization and to Polonia is what motivates me to continue the mission of the Chicago Society. I welcome our new members as well, and I encourage past members to rejoin us, and help us continue the mission. Come join us at our events. Come join us at our meetings. Come and help us make a difference!

*Chris Grzadziel* President, Chicago Society PNA



## CHICAGO SOCIETY FORUM

### Board of Directors

#### President

Chris Grzadziel

#### 1st Vice President

Zenon Kurdziel

#### 2nd Vice President

Andy Haszlakiewicz

#### Secretary

(Position Available)

#### Financial Secretary

Jan Plachta

#### Treasurer

Ray Golenia

#### Senior Director

Adam Konopka

#### Director, Social Activities

(Position Available)

#### Editor, FORUM

Terry Przybylski

## February Forum Highlights

- ◆ General Meeting and Sledz Combined on Feb. 15
  - ◆ Recapping the Evening of Elegance!
  - ◆ White and Red Ball Coming Up on March 4
  - ◆ Casimir Pulaski Day Program on March 6
- and, last but not least, 5 New Applications for Membership in the Chicago Society!

Remember the Chicago Society's address:

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

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## We're Still Seeking New Secretary and Director of Social Activities

A reminder to all of our members that we are still looking for candidates to fill two officers' roles for 2023—Secretary, and Director of Social Activities. Both of these positions remain open, and anyone who is interested is strongly encouraged to let President Chris Grzadziel or any of our other Board members know as soon as possible, so that we can fill these important roles for 2023.

The Secretary takes the official minutes of both General Meetings and Board Meetings each month, and forwards this information to all our members. The Director of Social Activities is responsible for overseeing the many different activities that are sponsored by the Chicago Society throughout the year. If you think you are qualified to do either of these tasks, your help will be greatly appreciated!

## Reserve Your Place Now for Combined General Meeting & Sledz on Feb. 15

It's time once again for the Chicago Society PNA's annual Sledz—a Polish take on Mardi Gras festivities, and one last chance to party before the beginning of Lent! This year, the Sledz will be combined with the February general meeting, to be held on Wednesday, Feb. 15 at Allegra Banquets, 5035 N. River Road in Schiller Park. And, unlike other general meetings, friends and family members are encouraged to attend!

A cocktail hour will start at 6 p.m., to be followed by a family-style dinner at 7 p.m. There will also be live music by a Dixieland band and a Mardi Gras pageant, as well as a cash bar and raffle prizes. As is traditional, the Chicago Society's St. Joseph for the coming year will also be chosen at the Sledz.

Everyone is encouraged to bring along not just wives or girlfriends, but also other family members, friends and neighbors—the more the merrier! Everyone is also encouraged to wear their most colorful Mardi Gras outfits—plus hats, masks, beads, etc.

The cost for this special event is \$40 per person (including Chicago Society members), with payment at the door. The last day to make reservations is Sunday, Feb. 12. Please RSVP to Br. Andy Haszlkiewicz at: [andyh9946@gmail.com](mailto:andyh9946@gmail.com), or call 847-341-1068.



## A SUCCESSFUL START TO A NEW YEAR: RECAPPING THE EVENING OF ELEGANCE

We celebrated our annual “Evening of Elegance” on Saturday, Jan. 28, held for the second consecutive year at the Park Ridge Country Club. Our annual induction of officers was held, which this year include: President, Christopher T. Grzadziel; 1st Vice President, Zenon Kurdziel; 2nd Vice President, Andrew Haszlakiewicz; Financial Secretary, Jan Plachta; Treasurer, Ray Golenia; Senior Director, Adam Konopka; and FORUM Editor, Terry Przybylski. Swearing in the new officers was Judge Ed Wasilewski.

The program included the presentation of the first-ever Romuald Matuszczak Member of the Year Award, to Br. Richard Ciesla. This award is given to the member whose work in support of the Society in the prior year most exemplified the spirit of our late brother, ‘Ro’ Matuszczak, who was an active member of the Society for 66 years and a 7-time President, prior to his passing away last year at age 97. As a tribute to Br. Ro and his family (who were in attendance), a Polonia Song and Dance Ensemble performed two songs.

This year’s Member of the Year Award recipient, despite not being on the Board, attended all Board meetings, and carried out the duties of the Financial Secretary despite not holding that title. In addition to stepping in to help with that vacant position, he served as a critical member of the golf outing committee, and took an active part in all the club’s events and volunteer opportunities. Although not attending the event in person, Br. Ciesla was able to receive his award via a ZOOM link, with his family accepting it in person from the Matuszczak family.

The Society then honored the Legion of Young Polish Women for their contributions to Polonia, and presented them with a \$2,000 donation. The program concluded with a wonderful performance by the Lechici Dancers of the Polish Scouting organization. While they donated their performance, the Society surprised them with a \$500 donation from the Youth Fund. Following the performance, the group led the audience in a Polonez, and the Anthony Kawalkowski Orchestra (led by another brother member) kept the dance floor full well into the evening. It was a truly wonderful event!

Special thanks go to the Society members who supported us, especially those from the Polish American Police Association (PAPA). Thanks also to the volunteers, Br. Ted Makarewicz, Br. Peter Dykas and the new President, Br. Chris Grzadziel, who helped so much to make this event a success. And congratulations to the incoming Board!

*Adam Konopka* Senior Director

**SAVE THE DATE—THE POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY PARADE IN CHICAGO  
AND THE PRE-PARADE BRUNCH WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, MAY 6!**

## Rich Ciesla, the First Recipient of the Ro Matuszczak Award, Offers His Thanks

I am very pleased that the Chicago Society, PNA, has decided to honor the memory of Romuald Matuszczak, one of our most dedicated and respected members, by establishing this award. I truly respected the work and advocacy that Ro dedicated to the Chicago Society. Since I joined the Society, in 1969, Ro had been on the Board or chairing one of the Society's events for 53 years. Ro was a member since 1956, so that most of us with a history in the Chicago Society know exactly who Ro was. His iconic and gracious greetings to all new and senior members will always be a part of the Chicago Society.

The first I learned of the Chicago Society was in 1967, when the Chicago Intercollegiate Council was invited to dance the Polonez at their Wigilia dinner, held in the Andrew House, located at Division Street and Western Avenue. In fact, that was the first date for me and my wife Maria! The President that year was Ro Matuszczak, serving his first term. It wasn't too long after, actually in 1969, that I became a member, sponsored by John Kalin and Larry Sprengel. In 1971, Ro and a few other members asked me to run in the upcoming election for the Recording Secretary position. Ever since then, I was very active in the Society and in many of the events, developing a long history with the Chicago Society. A few of us members have been President for two separate terms—but Brother Ro had been President for four separate terms, and a total of seven years, a record that I'm sure will never be broken!

On a personal note: Ro was like an older brother to me, and Maria. He and his late wife Halina, and then Chris, were very kind to us in inviting us to celebrate their many family events over the years—including Ro's and Chris' July 4th wedding. He introduced us to so many friends, many no longer here. He assisted us on a number of travels, especially to Poland; and he will forever be "Uncle Ro" to our kids. In our last conversation and visit with Ro, he provided information regarding any future trips to Poland. We definitely miss our calls and conversations, and I am sure that he is looking down on us with approval tonight.

I am very honored and humbled to be the first honoree of this award, and to be honored by an organization to which I have belonged, and worked for, in helping to make it more dedicated and representative of Chicago Polonia. It is a privilege to work toward the Society's established and new philanthropic endeavors. I thank the committee for this honor, and I thank Ro for his friendship, support and encouragement over our many years of service in the Society. And a most gracious "thank you" to all present here tonight—and finally, as Ro always said, "Thanks for Coming!"

Sincerely, *Rich Ciesla*

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## Deadline Fast Approaching on Kulze Scholarships for 2023

A reminder that Wednesday, March 1 is the deadline for college students to make initial applications for the four Kulze Scholarships offered by the Chicago Society Foundation, affiliated with Chicago Society PNA Lodge #1450. One of the scholarships is for \$7,500, and the other three for \$5,000 each. Selections of the four winners among the applicants will be made in April, for the fall 2023 semester. Former Chicago Society President Jim Kulze and his wife, Lillian, endowed the fund to support worthy students of Polish descent who are U.S. citizens and currently pursuing studies in college, or in graduate or professional schools. For more information, see the web address: <https://www.chicagosocietypna.org/foundation-kulze-scholarship>.

## Legion of Young Polish Women's White and Red Ball Coming on March 4

The Legion of Young Polish Women is holding its 83rd Annual White and Red Ball, one of the highlights of the local social calendar every year, on Saturday evening, March 4, at the Hilton Hotel, 720 S. Michigan Ave. in downtown Chicago. For anyone wishing to attend, there is still time to purchase tickets for this event, the LYPW's main fundraiser, which makes it possible for them to support charitable, cultural and educational activities throughout the year. The LYPW was honored at the Chicago Society's Evening of Elegance on January 28 for their history of good works, and also were awarded a \$2,000 donation by the Society.

There are 11 debutantes taking part in this year's ball: Katie Bozek, Veronica Chudoba, Julie Chyzynski, Natalia Czernecka, Emilia Dubiel, Eliza Incedon, Veronica Marganska, Emilia Radlinski, Elisabeth Skorupa, Ania Smetek, and Kamila Wojdyla.

The receiving line begins at 5:30 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. There is a choice of halibut, filet mignon or vegetarian for both adult and teen dinners (age 13-20); there is also a child's entree for age 12 and under. Ticket prices, which include dinner, are: Regular, \$200; Teen Ticket (ages 13-20), \$180; and Child's Ticket (12 and under), \$100. Tickets can be ordered at the LYPW website: [www.lypw.org](http://www.lypw.org). Hotel reservations can also be made online at <https://book/passkey.com/go/LYPWWhiteandRedBall>; or call 877-865-5320.

Remember that there is a strictly enforced dress code for this event: formal attire is required, with men wearing tuxedos or tails, and ladies wearing floor-length gowns or ball gowns.

## Casimir Pulaski Day Celebration Planned in Niles on March 6

The annual celebration of Casimir Pulaski Day is coming up on Monday, March 6, and the Illinois Divisions of the Polish American Foundation and the Polish American Congress are hosting an event to mark the holiday on that day at the Lone Tree Manor, 7730 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Niles. A cocktail hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., with the program starting at 6 p.m. and dinner at 6:45 p.m.

The holiday honors the contributions of General Kazimierz Pulaski (the original spelling of his name), who fought alongside George Washington during the Revolutionary War, and was known as the "father of the American cavalry." He was credited with saving Washington's life at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777, and was killed two years later during the Battle of Savannah (Georgia) while leading a cavalry charge against British forces. Pulaski Day has been a legal holiday in Illinois since 1986, celebrated on the first Monday in March. In 2009, a joint resolution of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, signed by President Obama, made Pulaski an honorary U.S. citizen.

The program in Niles on March 6 will also honor surviving Polish veterans of World War II, who fought for the freedom of Poland as well as ours. Tickets for the event are \$50 per person. Those wishing to attend can call Wanda at 773-895-0278; checks should be made payable to the Polish American Foundation.

## 5 New Prospective Members Are Applying to Join the Chicago Society—and 1 to Rejoin!

Applicant: Honorable Diann K. Marsalek  
 Address (business): 50 W. Washington, #400, Chicago  
 Birthdate: January 8, 1961  
 Birthplace: Chicago  
 Occupation: Judge, State of Illinois  
 Education: DePaul Univ., B.A. Political Science, M.A., Sociology; J.D., Northern Illinois Univ. College of Law  
 Telephone (business): (312) 607-6639  
 Email: marsalek722@gmail.com  
 Hobbies: Reading, gardening  
 Sponsors: Adam Konopka, Ronald Topczewski

Applicant: Darlene Feret Czaja  
 Address: 5744 W. 99th Street, Oak Lawn  
 Birthdate: September 21, 1947  
 Birthplace: Chicago  
 Occupation: Drama and English teacher (retired)  
 Education: B.A., Univ. of Illinois, teaching of English; M.A., Chicago State Univ., 17th century English literature  
 Telephone: (708) 425-6144  
 Email: frankcz@usa.net  
 Hobbies: Reading mysteries, crafts, sewing, travel, theatre arts & presentation, theology  
 Sponsors: Frank Czaja, William Sufranski

Applicant: Renee A. Robinson  
 Address: 1248 Old Timber Lane, Hoffman Estates  
 Birthdate: September 28, 1969  
 Birthplace: Chicago  
 Occupation: Bilingual Lead Teacher, Palmer Elementary School, Chicago  
 Education: B.S. in Elementary Education, M.A. in Counseling  
 Telephone: (847) 722-8217  
 Email: bretree@comcast.net  
 Hobbies: Travel, reading, hiking  
 Sponsors: Rich Ciesla, Adam Konopka

Applicant: Beata Baranska  
 Address: 2511 W. Moffat Street, Chicago  
 Birthdate: May 31, 1972  
 Birthplace: Poland (now U.S. citizen)  
 Occupation: Officer manager, Dunning Electrical Services Inc., Chicago  
 Education: Harper College  
 Telephone: (773) 956-9635  
 Email: beatabaranski@gmail.com  
 Sponsors: William Sufranski, Frank Czaja

Applicant: Agnieszka Bastryk  
 Address: 3043 North 77th Court, Elmwood Park  
 Birthdate: April 13, 1986  
 Birthplace: Chicago  
 Occupation: Secretary-Treasurer, Polish Roman Catholic Union of America  
 Education: Bachelor's degree  
 Telephone: (773) 366-2283  
 Email: bastryk.agnes@gmail.com  
 Sponsors: James Robaczewski, Peter Dykas

### APPLICATION TO REJOIN

Applicant: David L. Laske  
 Address: 6951 Cleveland Street, Niles  
 Birthdate: April 19, 1945  
 Birthplace: Chicago  
 Occupation: Retired  
 Education: Northeastern Illinois Univ., Chicago State Univ., Loyola U.; Ph.D., Univ. of Illinois  
 Telephone: (847) 967-8213  
 Email: dlaske@yahoo.com

**NOTE: It was recently decided by the board that the minutes of our general meetings and board meetings will no longer be published in the FORUM.**



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