



The Forum

of the Chicago Society, Lodge 1450 PNA

Now in Our Second Century of Service

VOLUME 75

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NUMBER 5

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

General Meeting

**Sawa's Old Warsaw
Restaurant
9200 W. Cermak Rd.,
Broadview, IL**

Call to Order: 7 p.m.

Reservations:

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

**(Reservations needed
by Monday, May 15)**

Dear Chicago Society Members and Friends:

Witaj Maj! Trzeci Maj!

The first week of May was, as usual, full of many events celebrating the Polish Constitution. I attended the annual Polish flag-raising ceremony at the Daley Center. While the weather was a bit chilly, seeing the Polish flag flying high warmed my heart. I also had the pleasure of attending the annual Polish American Police Association dinner the night before the parade.

The final event held prior to the parade was the Chicago Society Pre-Parade Brunch, held at the Hilton Hotel downtown. There were well over 300 attendees, including many dignitaries from Poland—as well as city, county and state officials, and representatives of many Polish-American organizations. The event was chaired by Zenon Kurdziel and co-chaired by Marta Almodovar. They both did a spectacular job with planning this event. Thank you to all of our members who attended the brunch, as well as those who marched in the parade afterward, representing the Chicago Society.

At the brunch, the Chicago Society Foundation also presented four Kulze Scholarships to deserving recipients. The essays written by these young people will appear in the next few editions of the Forum. Also, it is not too early to mark your calendars for the next pre-parade brunch—on Saturday, May 4, 2024.

Our next major event will be our annual golf outing—information on this is included in this issue of the Forum. We also want to bring back the family picnic that the Chicago Society traditionally held towards the end of summer. Please let me know if you are interested in helping out with this; we are still trying to set up a date and a location.

Also, we are STILL in need of a Secretary and a Director of Social Activities for the remainder of 2023, almost halfway into the year! Please let me know if you can fill either of these positions! I look forward to seeing all of you at our next general meeting on Wednesday, May 17.

Chris Grzadziel President, Chicago Society PNA



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May Forum Highlights

- ◆ Polish Museum of America Holding Fundraiser June 9
- ◆ 'Back Home: Polish Chicago' Exhibit Starts May 20
- ◆ Local Library Hosting Presentation on Marie Curie
- ◆ Scholarship Recipient Tells How Mom's Struggle Inspired Her

Also in this edition:

— Russia, Poland Dispute Over 'Embassy School' in Warsaw

— Poland Says Russian City Should Have Polish Name!

Remember the Chicago Society's address:

Chicago Society PNA, Lodge #1450

333 Busse Highway, #973

Park Ridge, IL 60068-3285

Modjeski's Alaska Railroad Bridge to Mark 100th Anniversary

Engineers from the United States and Poland will gather in Alaska on July 15 to mark the 100th anniversary of the completion of the Mears Memorial Bridge, a 700-foot truss-style span across the Tanana River, designed by Ralph Modjeski, a Polish-born engineer from Chicago. The bridge was the last link in the Alaska Railroad, a 470-mile-long track that runs from Seward to Fairbanks, and also goes through Anchorage and Denali National Park.

On July 15, 1923, President Warren Harding drove a golden spike on the bridge to mark its completion. It marked the first time a president visited Alaska, and Harding died just 18 days later. The Council of Polish Engineers in North America will unveil a plaque at the depot in nearby Nenana, Alaska, in July, which will be the first to honor Modjeski (1861-1940) as the designer of the span—which is still among the world's longest truss-style bridges.

*** It's Finally Arrived: Golf Season! ***

Outing Planned in Hoffman Estates on July 28

The Chicago Society PNA is currently planning to hold its summer golf outing at the Bridges of Poplar Creek course in Hoffman Estates on Friday, July 28. Registration will start at noon, with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. Beer will be provided on the course; following golf will be an open bar, happy hour and dinner, as well as presentation of awards and various prizes. The price will be \$165 per golfer. For more detailed information on this event, please make sure to watch next month's Forum.

6th Annual Polonia Cup Is Set for May 19

The 6th annual Polonia Cup golf outing will be held on Friday, May 19 at the Heritage Oaks Golf Club in Northbrook, a virtually new course which opened in the summer of 2021. This will be an 18-hole scramble tournament benefiting the Polish American Chamber of Commerce and the Copernicus Center. According to the Copernicus Center website, although all of the golfing slots have now been filled, sponsorship opportunities are still available, with costs ranging from \$150 to \$400. Please contact the Copernicus Center, 5216 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago, IL 60630; or email to: director@copernicuscenter.org, if you are interested in this.

IF YOU CAN SERVE AS A SECRETARY, OR AS A DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2023—LET US KNOW!



Polish Museum of America Holding Its 43rd Annual Summer Gala on June 9th

The Polish Museum of America will hold its 43rd annual Summer Gala fundraiser on Friday, June 9 at Allegra Banquets, 5035 N. River Rd., Schiller Park. The Summer Gala this year marks both the 150th anniversary of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America and the 230th anniversary of the birth of Aleksander Fredro, a Polish playwright, poet and author who was active in the period of Polish romanticism, during the era when Poland was partitioned in the 19th Century.

During the event, the Polish Spirit Award will be presented to both the Kosciuszko Foundation and to Halina and Stanislaw Urbaniak. A silent auction will also be held, and music for dancing will be performed by the Anthony Kawalkowski Orchestra. All proceeds will benefit the Polish Museum of America, located at 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, in the same building as the PRCUA offices.

Cocktail hour begins at 7 p.m., with dinner served at 8 p.m.; a choice of beef, fish or vegetarian is available for dinner. Please note that there is a black tie dress code for this event. Tickets are \$200 each, with an RSVP required by June 1. All checks should be made payable to the Polish Museum of America. For more information, contact Mary Jane Robles at 773-782-2605, or email: mary-jane-robles@prcua.org.

‘Back Home: Polish Chicago’ Opens on May 20

The Chicago History Museum reminds everyone that its exhibit, “Back Home: Polish Chicago,” detailing the development of Chicago’s Polish communities from the mid-1800’s to the present, is opening on Saturday, May 20 at the museum, 1601 N. Clark St. (corner of North Avenue). The exhibit will feature more than 90 artifacts and documents, as well as more than 100 reproduced photographs to document the stories of Chicago’s vibrant Polish communities. Those attending will have the opportunity to explore many personal narratives, musical pieces and other aspects of community involvement, along with artistic presentations from five local artists of Polish heritage.

There will also be a special concert presented by the Lira Singers Quartet in the Chicago Room of the Museum at 1 p.m. on May 20; admission to this event is included in admission to the Museum. For more information on the concert, call Lira Ensemble at 773-505-8731.

The exhibit is a collaborative effort between the Chicago History Museum, the Polish History Museum in Warsaw, the Polish Museum of America in Chicago and the Loyola University Polish Studies Program. Guided tours are available for groups of 10 or more persons; for more information on this, and for ticket prices, visit: chicagohistory.org/grouptours.

Des Plaines Library to Host Program on Marie Curie

The Des Plaines Public Library will host a presentation on the life of the Polish-born scientist Marie Curie, the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, on Saturday, May 20 at 10:30 a.m. Storyteller Lynn Ramarz will give a dramatic portrayal of Curie’s childhood in Poland (as Maria Skłodowska), where she had an early curiosity about

science, to her years as a determined student in Paris, where she met and married the physicist Pierre Curie, and conducted pioneering research on radioactivity. Pre-registration for the event is requested at the library’s information desk, or by going online at: dppl.org/events. The program is free of charge.

2023 Kulze Scholarships:

Recipient Tells How Her Mother's Struggle Against Cancer Inspired Her Career Choice

EDITOR'S NOTE: Alexandra Szul is one of four recipients of Kulze Scholarships, awarded to deserving young people of Polish heritage by the Chicago Society PNA. This is the essay she submitted to explain how her mother's struggle with cancer inspired her to pursue a career in healthcare. We will feature the essays of the other three recipients in upcoming Forums.

It was a Sunday morning when my siblings and I came home from church, and I was making food as my Dad returned with my aunt from the hospital. I told my Dad I could drive my brother to soccer practice. He took a moment and hesitated to say that he won't need a ride. When I asked why, my aunt turned away from me, and my Dad turned white. I thought he was going to repeat what he had been saying for the past few months—that Mom is really sick, and we need to pray for a miracle. As his arms opened for us, he told us that my Mom had passed away. My body froze. All I heard was deafening silence. I saw my youngest sister screaming—but I could not hear her. I saw tears stream down my brother's face—but my eyes were dry. I saw my mother's sister wrap her arms around my Dad—but I just stood there, paralyzed. While my heart shattered into pieces, my brain tried to process the fact that the fighter I knew had lost her battle. I thought: my Dad had paid a fortune for the best doctors, and that all those trips to the Mayo Clinic and to Lake Tahoe were to receive the best medical treatment in the nation. But cancer isn't something that money can solve. Cancer roams with an unnecessary toxic purpose of changing lives and making all other problems nonexistent and irrelevant. With this knowledge and experience, I grew a passion to change lives for the better.

My Mom put everyone's needs ahead of hers. While my Dad ran his business, she took care of the bills, doctor appointments, school registrations, helped with English and Polish school homework, drove us everywhere, and held our family together. At the age of 16, I was put into her shoes, as I became a motherly figure to my three younger siblings and took on responsibilities that my friends didn't even know existed. In four years, I changed immensely—I became selfless instead of selfish; grateful instead of jealous; forgiving instead of resentful; mature instead of careless. Most significantly, I changed by becoming compassionate. Prior to my Mom's illness, I did not find myself caring about others, and I admit I was selfish. After taking on tasks to assist and support my father, who was struggling emotionally and financially, I naturally changed and grew for the better. I poured myself into my family so we could get through this hardship. My compassion grew as I was putting everyone in front of myself—and extending it beyond my family, as I felt it with friends and even strangers. I began to go the extra mile for people who would not for me. I learned not to look at what I could get in return; rather, I felt happiness when I made someone's day better, or their life a little easier.

I love this about physical therapy—that the end goal is always to improve the patient's quality of life. This is only achieved if the therapist is compassionate and committed to be present and supportive of the patient throughout the entire healing journey. I witnessed firsthand how my Mom was healed by "trusted professionals" who lacked the basic characteristics of medical personnel—or even caring human beings. My Mom was given medication to calm her stress—but ironically, the stress was oftentimes induced by the nurse, who blatantly stated that "she is dying" in front of my family.

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2023 Kulze Scholarships—

(Continued from page 5)

After making a complaint, the doctor responded, “Sorry, I forgot Poland was in there!”—stereotyping Polish people as too sensitive. The doctor was not open to foreign cultures, and did not understand how to speak to patients and families of different backgrounds. As a physical therapist with immigrant parents, I want to prevent such behavior and provide empathy and understanding of patients’ physical pain and emotions. I have the awareness that certain actions can be interpreted differently in other cultures, and I do not wish to let anyone feel the way my Mom did when interacting with healthcare professionals. My multilingualism and multiculturalism can also contribute to my work with patients, as I can foster a space of kindness, compassion and most importantly, understanding. It would be a privilege to work with individuals of all cultural backgrounds and honor their backgrounds in our work. Being fluent in English, Polish and Spanish, I believe I possess skills that would allow me to connect with individuals and families of all backgrounds.

So why physical therapy? That Sunday morning was the most painful moment I have ever experienced. I have turned my anger and frustration into determination to become someone who my Mom would be proud of; someone who treats all patients with dignity, empathy and an acceptance of diversity. Rather than being limited to brief visits, physical therapists have the opportunity to spend hours with patients, multiple times a week, allowing them to form relationships and to be by their patients’ side. They can monitor and witness the patients’ progress and growth every step of the way, until they reach their end goal. I aim to form authentic connections with patients to ensure they can feel understood, trust me in their process of healing, and know that their well-being is of utmost importance to me as I work to create personalized plans for each of my patients. I am fascinated by the human body’s ability to heal itself with the help of a hands-on approach. Instead of simply prescribing Ibuprofen, physical therapists find the root cause of the problem and empower patients to know they have some control in healing themselves. I look forward to having an active career that integrates creativity into exercises to foster engaging and exciting healing treatments. Contrary to its name, physical therapy is not just physical healing, but also mental healing.

I will always encourage patients to have hope that their treatment will make a difference while simultaneously tending to and helping them manage their pain. Whether it is to return to greater mobility after chemotherapy, playing sports, or gardening, I aim to become a physical therapist for the gratification of truly making a difference in someone’s life—and for the humbling feeling after witnessing their first steps out of a wheelchair, and knowing that I was a part of their journey.

Alex Szul — 3/14/2023

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with Chicago Society PNA
on Facebook and LinkedIn?**

*** Current Events ***

Russia Calls Seizure of Embassy School in Warsaw ‘Illegal’; Poland Says, ‘It’s Ours’

WARSAW, April 29 [Reuters] —Russia has promised it would respond “harshly” to what it said was Poland’s “illegal seizure” of its embassy school in Warsaw, an act it called “a flagrant violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.”

The Polish state-run channel TVP Info reported that police showed up outside the Russian Embassy School, at 45 Kielecka Street in Warsaw, on the morning of April 29. When asked about the incident, a Polish foreign ministry spokesman said the building housing the embassy school belonged to the Polish state.

Russia’s foreign ministry said in a statement that Polish authorities had burst onto the embassy school’s grounds with the aim of seizing it. “We regard this latest hostile act by the Polish authorities as a blatant violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention...and as an encroachment on Russian diplomatic property in Poland,” the Russian ministry said. “Such an insolent step by Warsaw, which goes beyond the framework of civilized inter-state relations, will not remain without a harsh reaction and consequences for the Polish authorities and Polish interests in Russia.”

Lukasz Jasina, a Polish foreign ministry spokesman, said it was Russia’s right to protest, but that “Poland was acting within the law. Our opinion, which has been confirmed by the courts, is that this property belongs to the Polish state and was taken by Russia illegally,” he said.

Sergei Andreyev, Moscow’s ambassador to Poland, had earlier told Russian state news agencies that the building housing the embassy school was a diplomatic one, which Polish authorities “had no right to seize.”

The two countries already-fraught relations have soured even further over the war in Ukraine, with Warsaw positioning itself as one of Kyiv’s strongest allies, playing a leading role in persuading other allies to provide it with heavy weaponry.

You Call It Kaliningrad; We Call It Krolewiec

MOSCOW, May 10 [Reuters] — Kremlin officials have said that Poland’s decision to rename the Russian city and exclave of Kaliningrad in its official documents is “a hostile act,” as bilateral ties continue to fray over the war in Ukraine. Kaliningrad was known by the German name of Königsberg until after World War II, when the Soviet Union annexed it from East Prussia and renamed it in honor of a Soviet politician, Mikhail Kalinin. Polish officials said on May 9 that Kalinin had a connection to the 1940 Katyn massacre of thousands of Polish military officers by Soviet forces, so the name has “negative connotations,” and they will instead refer to the city/exclave as Krolewiec—its name when it was ruled by the Kingdom of Poland in the 15th and 16th centuries. [It also has a fourth, Lithuanian name, Karaliaucius—the exclave is cut off from the rest of Russia by Poland and Lithuania.] “The current Russian name of this city is an artificial baptism unrelated to either the city or the region,” said a statement from Poland’s committee on geographical standardization. A Kremlin spokesman, Dmitri Peskov, said the decision “borders on madness. We know that throughout history, Poland has slipped from time to time into this madness of hatred toward Russians,” he told a daily news briefing.



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