



The Forum

of the Chicago Society, Group 1450 PNA
Celebrating 100 Years of Brotherhood and Service

VOLUME 63

DECEMBER 2012

NUMBER 12

CHRISTMAS DINNER AND PARTY

WEDNESDAY

December 19, 2012

6:00 P.M.

Przybylo's White Eagle Banquets
6839 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Niles, Illinois

RESERVATIONS

By December 17

TO 847-635-0883 OR

meeting@chicagosocietypna.org

ARE MANDATORY

NEXT BOARD MEETING AND FORUM DEADLINE

Thursday, December 27, 7:00 P.M.
Folak's Lincoln Tavern

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, December 19, 2012—
Christmas Dinner
Przybylo's White Eagle Banquets

Saturday, January 19, 2013—
Inaugural Ball
Café la Cave

Tuesday, February 12, 2013—
Śledź
Przybylo's White Eagle Banquets

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Chicago Society Board of Directors cordially invites all members and members' widows to our annual Christmas Dinner and Meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, December 19, commencing at 6:00 p.m. at the Przybylo family's White Eagle Banquets and Restaurant, located at 6839 N. Milwaukee Ave., Niles, Illinois.

There will be a \$25 charge per member or widow for the party, and a \$25 charge for a member's or widow's one guest. For additional members' or widows' guests, the charge will be \$35 per person.

An open bar will be available one hour before and one hour after the dinner. The plated dinner will consist of a traditional soup, an upscale salad, Przybylo's especially prepared pork cutlet, shrimp kabob, oven roasted potatoes, green beans and carrots Polonaise, a special dessert, coffee/tea/milk. KBE Entertainment will provide the music for listening and dancing for the soiree and, as at the past Christmas parties, the Polonia Dance Ensemble will perform.

Reservations for the dinner are a must! Please make your reservations by contacting **Ro Matuszczak** at your earliest opportunity: Tel. 847-635-0883, email: cmatco@gmail.com. Payment and reservations may also be made via PayPal at our website.

The annual Christmas Party raffle will take place following our dinner. Our tradition is that members, their guests, and/or other generous friends, donate prizes for the raffle. Any item of merit will be appreciated and will be acknowledged in *The Forum*.



CELEBRATE THE SOCIETY'S SECOND CENTURY AT THE INAUGURAL BALL

January 19, 2013, is quickly coming upon us! That evening we will hold our greatly anticipated Inaugural Ball and kick off a second century of brotherhood and service for the Chicago Society. During the evening we will witness the installation of our newly elected president and board of directors, who will guide the Society over the first twelve months of our second century. On this night we will also honor our 2013's Man of the Year, Brother **Stanley Stawski**, an individual highly deserving of this award.

Chicago Society balls have long been well known throughout Chicago's *Polonia*.



Indeed, over the years we have established our own set of standards for this occasion and our January event will showcase this legacy. We have made every effort to ensure that the menu meets our guests' expectations, that the orchestra and its music selections reflect the tastes of both dancers and onlookers, and that the atmosphere created by the elegance of your company will encourage everyone to leave their worries behind and celebrate the evening.

The Ball will take place at Café La Cave (2777 Manheim Road, Des Plaines), the highly praised steak house featuring decor ideally suited to this type of occasion. Arriving guests will be greeted with champagne and hors d'oeuvres especially selected and prepared by our executive chef. An open bar serving fine spirits, wines and beers will be available throughout the evening. Guests are invited to pre-select their choice of

— Continued on page 3 —



CHICAGO SOCIETY Forum

A monthly news bulletin for the
Chicago Society PNA membership

Director of Publications
Ted Wiecek

editor@chicagosocietypna.org

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division of the AmeriPol Corporation

Visit Our Website At

www.chicagosocietypna.org

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DID YOU MAKE YOUR
MEETING RESERVATION?

Merry Christmas or *Wesołych Świąt!* I would like to take this time to wish all the members of the Chicago Society of the P.N.A. and their families a very joyous and healthy holiday season. Thanksgiving is behind us, and I hope everyone had a good and fulfilling holiday. But now, the rush is on for just the right tree and that perfect gift for someone special. But, do take some time for yourself. Enjoy the holiday parties, the hustle and bustle of the stores and the Christmas music. Also, take time to reflect upon the meaning of Christmas, and let us all try to have the Christmas spirit throughout the year. We should all truly enjoy these days and *Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia!*

I would like to congratulate all of the new officers and directors of the Chicago Society P.N.A. for the year 2013. Let us work together to have a strong and prosperous year for the Chicago Society as we start the celebration of our second 100 years.

A hearty "Thank you" goes out to Brother **Ro Matuszczak** for arranging an outstanding Thanksgiving dinner at the November election meeting. Thank you for an excellent job, Ro. A great time was had by all.

In addition, congratulations and thanks to Brother Ro Matuszczak for chairing and coordinating the Chicago Society's Deserving Children's Christmas Party for the 49th year. The party was held on Saturday, December 15, in the PNA building in Chicago. A special "Thank you" goes out to his wife Chris for all her time and effort in obtaining gifts for the children and wrapping them. "Thank you" also goes to all those who helped support the Children's party with donations and volunteering their time on Saturday.

I would also like to take this time to thank all the officers and directors of The Chicago Society for their dedication and time devoted to furthering the progress and goals of the Society. I would also like to thank all of the brother members for their support and participation in the activities of the board and for volunteering to help in our many functions. Thank you for being a fellow brother member and let us strive to make 2013 even better than ever. Remember: Dare to be different!

The Chicago Society will celebrate the beginning of our second hundred years in 2013. Start the year by attending the 2013 Inaugural Ball on January 19. It is sure to be an elegant and prestigious affair. Join your fellow brothers for an evening of camaraderie, fine dining, dancing and celebration, for we are the Chicago Society. Celebrate the past, the present and the future of our brotherhood. Mark the date on your calendar. Then prepare yourselves for the Easter season by attending the *Śledź*.

May God bless you and your families in this Christmas season.

Fraternally Yours,
Frank Czaja



Christmas—the most festive and joyful of holidays celebrated throughout the Christian world, celebrating the birth of Our Lord. The newborn child brought to this world a newfound sense of hope and sacrifice, improving lives of those who believe to this day.. This is a time to not only spend with our families and loved ones, but to also reach out and share the joy with those less fortunate than we are.

As John Romanowicz, secretary of the Chicago Society, said back in 1925, "Those who have the opportunity of helping their fellowmen and neglect it are not good, useful citizens." Let us all vow to be good citizens and help our fellowman at every opportunity, thereby furthering the ideal of service of the Society.

This is the 49th year that Brother **Ro Matuszczak** is chairing the Deserving Children's Christmas Party. What a selfless, loving gesture on his part and all of his "helpers." The smiles on those children's faces, the joy in their eyes as they welcome Santa Claus, is what the Christmas spirit is all about. And certainly this will be a Christmas they will long cherish, thanks to the devotion of our members. May that spirit of sacrifice and devotion last throughout the year.

If you have been reading the articles from our annals, you would have noted that

—Continued on page 3—

INAUGURAL BALL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

one of three entrées prepared by a team of professional chefs. The meal will open with a chicken consommé with julienne vegetables and pasta. Our salad will be composed of romaine lettuce, hearts of palm and mandarin oranges topped with basil vinaigrette. Entrée choices are: broiled filet mignon with Bordelaise sauce, filet of salmon with champagne tarragon sauce, or duet of chicken breast Jean Bart/madeira shitake. For dessert, we will indulge ourselves in a decadent fallen chocolate soufflé. Red and white wine will be served throughout the meal.

The popular violin virtuoso **Anthony Kawalkowski** and his strolling violinists will accompany this gourmet dinner. Following dinner and after the installation ceremony of the newly-elected president and board, this highly regarded orchestra, one of the best in the Midwest, will get everyone on their feet for a night of revelry. But before we hit the dance floor members of the *Polonia* dance ensemble will open the ball with a traditional Polonaise.

Each of us on the committee, as a member of the Society, is striving to create a beautiful, festive, light-hearted atmosphere at this black-tie optional event. Each of us should consider ourselves a co-chair of the ball—fully vested in its success. So let's all attend this gala event, not only with our significant others, but also in the company of our closest friends. We encourage you to select a Table Captain from among your party and reserve your table of up to 10 guests in advance.

We are pleased to announce that the ticket price for the 2013 Ball will remain at \$120 per person, the same as with the 2012 event. Kindly submit your reservations and appropriate payment by Friday, January 4, 2013. If you have not yet received your invitation, need extras for your guests, or have any questions at all, please contact our ball chairman, brother **Andrew Zapalski**, at 847-869-3627 (e-mail: zapandlor@att.net), or visit our web page at www.chicagosocietypna.org.

We look forward to your company and a spectacular evening at our Ball! *Do miłego zobaczenia!*

FROM THE EDITOR'S PEN (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

the history of the Society is full of such selfless acts for the good of others. That's what the Chicago Society is all about! In the new year, the Board of the Chicago Society will be putting into place a number of initiatives designed to increase the membership of the Society. Let the obligation of each member be to promote the Society to others and encourage good men to join the Society so that they may carry on this tradition of brotherhood and service of the Society.



Życzę wszystkim członkom, wdowom, i ich rodzinom Wesołych i Błogich Świąt Bożego Narodzenia, oraz aby Nowy 2013 Rok przyniósł zdrowia i pomyślności. Best wishes to all our members, widows, and their families for a Happy and Blessed Christmas, and may the new 2103 year bring health and success to all!

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◊ Brother **John J. Pikarski, Jr.**, Chicago zoning attorney, was recently awarded the 2012 Professional Achievement Award from Illinois Institute of Technology-Chicago Kent College of Law. Our congratulations to Brother John (pictured below).



◊ Brother **Richard Kula** has been elected treasurer of the Senior Polka Association North Chapter. The SPA is a not-for-profit organization formed as an educational and social organization to promote programs for its members. Brother **Dr. Robert Dutka** is also a member of the club.

◊ The Polish Arts Club held its Annual Christmas Luncheon on Sunday, December 9 at Przybylo's. Among those enjoying the festive and pleasant afternoon were President Brother **Frank Czaja** and his wife Darlene, Brothers **Ken Gill**, **T. Ron Jasinski-Herbert** (who is also President of the Polish Arts Club), **Edward Kuk**, **Ted Lipkowski**, **Ted Makarewicz**, **Paul Odrobina**, **Michael Schneider**, **Martin Weihing** and **Ted Wiecek**.

INVESTMENT IN POLAND

Poland's Mazowsze region is the most attractive Polish region in terms of investments, the daily *Puls Biznesu* [Business Pulse] says, citing a report of the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) for the state foreign investment agency (PAIIZ). Actually, all Polish regions look attractive compared with their European peers.

STANLEY STAWSKI—CHICAGO SOCIETY MAN OF THE YEAR

Born in Poland in 1924, **Stanley Stawski** survived the 1939 invasion of his country by the Germans. In 1944, he took part in the Warsaw Uprising as a member of the underground Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*). Captured and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp, Mr. Stawski headed to Italy after his camp was liberated, and joined the 2nd Polish Corps.



Two years after the war ended, the British sent his unit to England and when the British demobilized his unit in 1951, Mr. Stawski left for the United States. He had \$20 in his pocket. By 1954, Mr. Stawski was working as a liquor and wine salesman in Chicago. Six years later, he opened his own company, importing beers from Poland and Austria. As with any new business, the beginning years were difficult, especially in dealing with countries that were, at the time, run by socialist governments who distrusted anything American. Sales were appropriate for a small operation. The company now distributes to 35 states.

Mr. Stawski credits his success to "hard work and perseverance." His perseverance is now bearing fruit. His dealings with the state-run liquor monopolies of the Central European nations have given him product-knowledge and personal contacts to bring over the best and newest products.

FROM THE ANNALS OF THE CHICAGO SOCIETY

We are here to do our duty and to perform a mission on this earth, and our stay is limited, so that we know not from day to day how long we are to remain, we should utilize every hour of our lives. Those who have the opportunity of helping their fellowmen and neglect it are not good, useful citizens. Daily, in glancing about us we come in contact with people prone to selfishness, narrow-mindedness, jealousy, and many other shortcomings, who are swayed under the impression of carelessness, neglectfulness, and a lack of duty in the make-up of good citizens. Get the broad unselfish view and your growth in health, happiness and prosperity will know no bounds, and those whom you come in contact with will get the spirit and be happy too.

The objects of the organizers of the Chicago Society, founded in 1912, can rightfully be termed 100% American, and we as members of this organization may proudly proclaim our creed, viz: to promote more effectively a high regard for the principles of American citizenship; to insure a proper moral, intellectual and social development; and to keep alive the language, traditions and culture of Poland. The membership of the Chicago Society is endeavoring to do its share in promoting the welfare of the Americans of Polish descent, ... protecting their interests as American citizens.

John J. Romanowicz, Secretary

Excerpted from *Chicago Society News* (forerunner of *The Forum*)

Editor's Note: This is the final installment of a series of articles from the Society's history. I trust you our brother members found these articles informative and, perhaps even, inspirational, giving you a broader knowledge and an appreciation of the rich history and outstanding tradition of the Chicago Society. As our centennial year draws to a close, let us vow to allow that tradition to live on in future generations for the betterment of Polonia.

POLISH TRIVIA

What is the oldest known Polish *kolęda*? Send your response to the editor for a prize.

Answer to November's question. A total of 15 Poles, either by birth or by ethnicity, have been awarded the Nobel Prize since its inception on 1901.



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A festive banner with a blue and green striped background, decorated with colorful balloons (yellow, green, pink) and streamers. The banner is draped across the top of the page.

THE CHICAGO SOCIETY-PNA

presents the 2013

ŚLEDŹ

A Polish Style Mardi Gras

Tuesday, February 12, 2013
at White Eagle Banquets, Niles

Open Bar 6:00 p.m. ♦ Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Fun for the whole family!

Dinner Features:



Herring in Cream Sauce, Chubs, Rye Bread
Cucumber Salad



Bialy (White) Barszcz Soup

Potatoes and Pierogi



Kielbasa and Kapusta

Green Beans Almondine

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POLISH TRADITIONS IN DECEMBER

Christmas in Poland is about love, forgiveness, family reunions and leaving behind old hostilities. The festivity brings with it a magical atmosphere where animals are believed to talk and mysterious maidens are said to possess the power to predict the future. This tradition of fortune-telling began centuries ago and continues to be an integral part of Polish culture. Today, much of the urban population considers this tradition as just "a bit of fun" while the rural population, clinging to old beliefs, still puts a lot faith in the fortune tellers. The celebration of this holiday has changed considerably through the course of time. The original Pagan customs have been replaced by the ones introduced by the Catholic Church and have also been influenced considerably by the local culture. Christmas in Poland is certainly an interesting cultural melting pot showcasing its diverse influences.

Polish customs at Christmas time are both beautiful and meaningful. The preparations for Christmas begin four weeks before Dec. 24 with the start of Advent. Everywhere women are cleaning their homes in apartments and houses in preparation for Christmas. It is believed that if a house is dirty on Christmas Eve, it will remain dirty all next year.

Poles are famous for their hospitality, especially during Christmas. In Poland, an additional seat is kept for somebody unknown at the supper table. No one should be left alone at Christmas, so strangers are welcomed to the Christmas supper. This is to remind us that Mary and Joseph were also looking for shelter.

Traditionally, the Christmas tree is decorated on the *Wigilia* day - quite an event for children. The custom of having a Christmas tree was first introduced in Alsace (today a region of eastern France) at the end of the 15th century. Three centuries later, it was common around the world. The Christmas tree is adorned with apples, oranges, candies and small chocolates wrapped in colorful paper, nuts wrapped in aluminum foil, hand-blown glass ornaments, candles or lights, thin strips of clear paper (angel's hair), and home-made paper chains.

On the night of Christmas Eve, so important is the appearance of the first star in remembrance of the Star of Bethlehem, that it has been given an affectionate name of "the little star" or *Gwiazdka* (the female counterpart of St. Nicholas). On that evening, children watch the sky anxiously hoping to be the first to cry out, "The star has come!" Only after it appears, the family members sit down to the table. According to tradition, bits of hay are spread beneath the tablecloth as a reminder that Christ was born in a manger. The tablecloth is traditionally white, symbolizing the purity of the newborn Child. Some regions practice the superstition that an even number of people must be seated around the table.

One of the most beautiful and most revered Polish customs is the breaking of the *opłatek*. The custom of the Christmas wafer (*opłatek*) is observed by Poles all over the world. The *opłatek* is



a thin wafer made of flour and water. For table use, it is white. In Poland, colored wafers are used to make Christmas tree decorations. In the past, the wafers were baked by organists or by religious and were distributed from house to house in the parish during Advent. Today, they are

produced commercially and are sold in religious stores and houses. Often, an *opłatek* is sent in a greeting card to loved ones away from home.

The father or eldest member of the family takes the wafer, says a prayer, breaks it in half and gives one half to the mother. Then, each of them breaks a small part from each other's piece. They wish one another a long life, good health, joy and happiness, not only for the holiday season, but also for the New Year and for many years to come. This ceremony is repeated between the parents and their children as well as among the children; then, the wafer and good wishes are exchanged with all those present, including relatives and even strangers.

The dinner itself differs from other evening meals in that the number of courses is fixed at twelve, symbolizing the twelve apostles. According to myth, in no case must there be an odd number of people at the table, otherwise it is said that some of the feasters would not live to see another Christmas. A lighted candle in the windows symbolizes the hope that the Godchild, in the form of a stranger, may come to share *Wigilia* and an extra place is set at the table for any unexpected guest. This belief stems from the ancient Polish adage *Gość w dom, Bóg w dom* (A guest in the home is God in the home).

Wigilia is a meatless meal, no doubt the result of a long-time Church mandate that a strict fast and abstinence be observed on this day before Christmas. Items that would normally be included in a traditional *Wigilia* menu include mushroom soup, boiled potatoes, pickled herring (*śledzie*), fried fish, pierogi, beans and sauerkraut (*groch z kapustą*), a dried fruit compote, babka, assorted pastries, nuts and candies.

After the meal the members of the family sing *kolędy* while the children wait impatiently around the Christmas tree or *choinka* for the gifts to be exchanged. All wait until it is time for midnight Mass, *Pasterka* ("the Mass of the Shepherds").

Christmas Day, called the first holiday by the Poles, is spent with the family at home. No visiting, cleaning, nor cooking are allowed on that day; only previously cooked food is heated. This is a day of enjoyment, for Jesus was born.

St. Stephen's Day is known as the second holiday. This is a day for visiting and exchanging Christmas greetings. When night begins to fall, you can hear stamping and jingling, followed by Christmas carol singing outside. Carolers begin their wandering from home to home. *Herody*, a popular form of caroling, is a



live performance usually played by twelve young boys. Dressed in special costumes, they include King Herod, a field marshal, a knight, a soldier, an angel, a devil, death, a Jew, Mary, shepherds, and sometimes the Three Kings and an accordionist. They sing pastoral songs and carols, and when let into a house, perform scenes from King Herod's life. Oration and songs vary and depend upon to whom they are being addressed: the owner of the house, a young woman about to be married, a widow, etc. At the conclusion, the performers are offered refreshments and some money. Also popular is caroling with a crib (*szopka*) and with a star. Usually, those are items are carried by three caroling teenagers. They, too, are given money. The official Christmas season—"The Twelve Days of Christmas"—is brought to a close on January 6th, *Trzech Krolu*, the Day of the Three Kings.

Did you know? December in Polish is *grudzień*, which comes from the word *grud* meaning "frozen ground." *Jeśli w grudniu często dmucha, w marcu, kwietniu będzie plucha.* (If December is windy, March and April will bring bad weather.)

TEXAS HOLD'EM 2012

The Chicago Society held four Texas Hold'em Casino events during the year. Income from the events was shared by the following organizations whose members helped or volunteered: The Polish Museum of America, Polonia Dance Ensemble and Honor Flight Chicago. Honor Flight Chicago has been flying World War II Veterans to Washington, D.C. for the last four years. The Veterans have a chance to visit the Veterans Memorial, Arlington Cemetery and other historical sights.



A "thank you" goes to the Chicago Society members who gave their time and energy at these events. Participating in all four events were Chairman **Chuck Cwiakala**, Chief of Staff, and "pit boss" **Ro Matuszczak**, **Stanley Jendzejec**, **Tom Pawelko** and **John Wojciechowski**. The following members took part at the Casino games at various times: **Ken Gill**, **T. Ron Jasinski**, **Herbert**, **Ted Wiecek** and **Don Gutowski**.

A "job" well done by all!

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

The Chicago Society would like to congratulate the following brother members, who are celebrating the anniversary of their induction in December:

Ronald J. Olech	1972	40 Years
Ronald J. Olech, II	1992	20 Years

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

The Chicago Society would like to extend to the following brother members, who are celebrating their birthday in December, a warm wish of *Sto Lat!*

- 6 Walter Bialka
- 9 Frank Czaja
- 12 Jack Rohner
- 14 Charles Cwiakala
- 21 Thaddeus Dabrowski
- Dean Niedospial
- 21 Ronald Olech
- 23 Thomas Laskowski

NEWS BRIEFS

Prepared by the Polonia Media Network

Both Poland and Portugal have decided to pull out of the 2013 Eurovision Song Contest, blaming the economic crisis. Portugal's announcement follows Poland's decision in mid-November not to take part again. The countries said the financial situation meant they

could not afford to join in next year's event in Malmö, Sweden.

Polish scientist Miroslaw Grudzien built the infra-red detectors that NASA uses to explore Mars, but getting a business development loan nearly defeated him. His firm, which made sensors on the U.S. space agency's Mars rover Curiosity, sought financing from banks for a new production facility. Because the loan was to be partly paid back from European Union funds, the government had to sign off on it. In the end, Grudzien got his money, but it took a year, forcing his company, VIGO System, to delay the launch of a new range of high-technology sensors.

A unit of ten U.S. airmen arrived at an air base in Poland on November 9, 2012, for what is the first permanent U.S. military presence in the country. The troops arrived at the air base in Lask, central Poland, with two Air Force F-16 fighter jets and a Hercules transport plane. U.S. Ambassador Stephen D. Mull attended the ceremony, which also included a Polish military parade.

2013 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS CHICAGO SOCIETY PNA

Congratulations to the following for being elected to the 2013 Board of Directors of the Chicago Society:

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Recording Secretary: Marian Skawski
Financial Secretary: Richard Jadczyk

Treasurer: Donald Gutowski
Advocate: Ted Makarewicz
Senior Director: Frank Czaja
Social Activity Dir.: Romuald Matuszczak
Clubhouse Director: Charles Cwiakala

Directors-at-Large (5 positions): T. Ron Jasinski Herbert, Charles Komosa, Ted Wiecek, John Wojciechowski (1 director position is vacant.)



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