

FORUM

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POLISH-AMERICAN



John Paul II

CULTURAL CENTER

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Thirty pounds of velvet

Just like a real Parisian has never been on the top of the Eiffel Tower, I (born and raised in Poland) had never worn a Polish folk costume. I had to come to the USA to finally make one of my biggest dreams come true. I managed to do it by borrowing a gorgeous Łowicz costume. That stunning, albeit very heavy as it was over 30 lb, dress definitely made me appreciate Polish culture and people who dance wearing those costumes. I borrowed it from Ray Vargas, who is a dance instructor at Gorale Folk Assembly. Ray was also the Chairman of the May 3rd Polish Constitution Day Parade in Slavic Village.



I missed the last year's Parade, but I was ready for this one. For months, members of the Parade Committee and the PACC worked on organizing the event. They painstakingly prepared props, advertised the event, and made sure there was enough food for all hungry parade goers. Two Polish Schools (I. J. Paderewski and Konopnicka) and two folk assemblies (Górale and Piast) put together a beautiful program that was enjoyed by spectators gathered at the garden of the PACC. There were poems about the



Constitution Day and about spring. The folk dances were met with applause and admiration (I do not think I would be able to learn all the steps!). Everyone just loved the youngest and smallest performers who were simply adorable in their costumes. One of the biggest hits was Lajkonik, man dressed in Mongol attire, with a wooden horse around his waist, creature brought back from Polish folk tradition.



My favorite part of the Parade? Seeing Fleet Ave packed with people celebrating one of the most important days in Polish history. Not all participants were Polish or of Polish heritage, but on that day we were together, making me feel that Slavic Village can come back. And next year? I hope to wear a different costume!

Maria Sladewski



Ryszard Romaniuk

„Teściowo, ty stary rowerze”

Skąd się ta nasza miłość braterska bierze? Skąd te wspaniałe przysłowia polskie, o skorupce za młodu, patriotyzmie, winie i karze? Skąd te nawoływania do posłuszeństwa i protestu? Bo przecież bez pół litra tego pojąć się nie da! Miłuj bliźniego swego, jak siebie samego! Chyba tutaj jest ten biedny piesek pogrzebany. Alkohol to twój wróg, więc lej go w mordę! A jak już tak podlejesz mocno, to ta morda przestaje ci się podobać. I co zrobić, jak się szacunku do siebie nie ma? Gdy przez całe życie człowiek słyszy, że wszystko co robi, to źle i bez sensu, że jest za mały, za duży, garbaty albo za sztywny?

Z tej miłości bliźniego przychodzimy na wydarzenia polonijne, bo patriotycznie, swojsko, zapachy znane (te kuchenne znaczy się), w nowe ubrania można wejść, i opaleniznę pokazać. A jak bladeść na twarzy, to ponarzekać można. A w ogóle te wydarzenia to bez sensu przecież, jakieś takie niewydarzone, kto to widział? Jakby nas posłuchali, to może by to jakoś wyszło, a tak?

Ci Amerykanie z Cleveland to też bez sensu! Chodzą na piwo do Hofbräuhaus, jak karnawał, to Kurentowanie, jak na festyny, to do Greków. A do Św. Stanisława to nie łaska? I zobaczcie, co zrobili z Dyngusem?! Tyle mają świąt polskich, to wybrali sobie Dyngusa! Zamiast malować pisanki to robią jakieś wygłupy! A my tu robimy zebrania, umartwiamy się za naszą wolność i waszą, a oni się bawią! A polski biskup przestrzegął: "Chłopcy, przestańcie, bo się źle bawicie, dla was to igraszka, nam idzie o życie!"

Z tej miłości bliźniego chodzę do Centrum, do tego polskiego znaczy się, i tam oglądam i przysłuchuję się Polonii. I dowiaduję się, że ochotnicy w Centrum pracują dla pieniędzy, że się modlą albo nie modlą (już sam nie wiem, co gorsze), że wszystko co robią, to źle i nie polsku, że są za starzy albo za

młodzi, i życia nie znają, że są za Tuskiem albo przeciwko, że to masoneria albo wolnomularze, że są za swobodą obyczajów albo przeciw, za wolnością albo przeciw!

Wychowani w poczuciu winy, w taki sam sposób wychowują swoje dzieci. Zawstydzeni, zawstydzają innych. Zranieni, ranią innych. Gdy boli, znieczulają, alkoholem, hałasem... albo cierpią. I wtedy należy im się szacunek.

Nigdy nie rozumiałem narzekań na polski Romantyzm. Że trzyma nas w roli ofiary i męczennika narodów. A przecież najśłynniejszy polski romantyk mówił: „Przysiąż jej miłość, szacunek/I posłuszeństwo bez granic;/Złamiesz choć jeden warunek/Już cała ugoda za nic." To bajkopisarz, kpiarz i kabareciarz przecież!

Dla tych, którzy wychowani byli w miłości, w szacunku do siebie i innych, w ciekawości świata i zrozumienia dla przeszłości, tolerancji i akceptacji innych kultur, mam kilka interesujących wiadomości: Polonia potrzebuje Was, potrzebuje nowych artykułów do Forum, nowych wydarzeń, nowych zabaw i chwil namysłu, serdeczności i zdolności dawania dobra innym oraz chęci dzielenia się z innymi Waszą polskością. Niestety, Centrum ochotnikom nie płaci. W ogóle pieniądź jest słowem brzydkim, wulgarnym i tylko szeptem o nim można mówić. Z tego powodu kolejna wiadomość: Zapraszamy wszystkich, którzy chcą zarobić, zebrać pieniądze na różne akcje polonijne, na swoje pomysły i na zapłatę za swój czas i pracę. To, że my pieniędzy nie mamy, wcale nie znaczy, że się nimi brzydzimy. Tak, Centrum jest „non profit” – ale to wcale nie znaczy, że da sobie radę bez pieniędzy.

Każdy z nas ma inne wspomnienia, inną wiarę w domu rodzinnym, inną teściową, i innego sąsiada. Opowiedzcie nam o tym. Powiedzcie, co jest dla Was ważne, ciekawe, śmieszne czy też po prostu miłe. Potrzeba nam tego. Bo inaczej te żmieje, które nas pogryzą, wyzdychają.

Invisible Groups in the New Poland, 2018

Each year students from the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University travel to Poznań to visit different organizations that serve people who need community assistance. The name of this class is “Invisible Groups in the New Poland”. During their stay, students also meet with faculty from the Institute of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University, listen to lectures, and make presentations concerning their own interests. Polish friends show them the city with its cultural and artistic centers. After the students’ return to Cleveland they are asked to write reflection papers addressing the following questions:

1. Why did you decide to go to Poland?
2. What kinds of activities related to social welfare did you do while in Poland?
3. Thinking back on the experience, what was the biggest surprise?
4. What did you gain personally from the trip?
What did you learn about yourself because of this experience?
5. What did you gain professionally from the trip?
6. What experience was the most memorable? Most pleasant? Least pleasant?
7. How could the experience be enhanced for others in future courses?
8. Would you participate in such a project again?
Would you encourage others to participate in such a project?
9. Why do you think these types of opportunities are important?

And each year we ask them to share their papers with our *Forum* readers. Here are the papers of four students.

Daniel Kessler

Personal Reflection Paper

I knew I wanted to study abroad when I found out that spring break abroad courses can count towards the global diversity requirement for the undergraduate degree. I didn’t have any particular part of the world in mind when I went to the study abroad fair, but Richard convinced me that seeing social welfare in Poland

would be a great trip. In the weeks leading up to the trip, I was actually getting increasingly anxious about leaving the country. An eight-hour plane ride with jetlag included didn’t sound fun, and I was concerned about losing a lot of time to get ahead on work during spring break. Luckily, the pre-trip sessions helped allay my fears, and I went through with the trip.

While in Poland, we visited institutions that served groups in need. Many of the institutions catered towards individuals with mental disorders or drug problems. For example, we walked through the nursing home for children with intellectual disabilities, a career counselling center for youth, and more. The prevalence of the Catholic Church in running these programs surprised me. While the church was not involved with every organization, frequently they either ran the program, as in the youth home, or funded the program through Caritas. I’ve never had any firsthand interaction with institutions affiliated with a religion, but my experience in Poland was surprisingly refreshing.

When I chose to study math, I didn’t have a specific career in mind; part of the reason I chose the field is its wide variety of applications. The trip has made me consider either volunteering in social work, such as helping at a center for people with mental disorders, or finding work with applications in social work, such as financial analysis of the benefit of social programs.

For me, the most memorable experience was the tour of the nursing home for children with intellectual disabilities. The orderliness of the facilities and abundance of new technology was surprising to see, and the patience of the people that worked there astounded me. The most pleasant experience was enjoying the performance at the Dubliner and the karaoke on St. Patrick’s Day. The least pleasant experience was definitely having a migraine on the first day as we toured the city.

I don’t have any useful insight on how the experience could be enhanced. I didn’t come in with any expectations; I just wanted to come along for the ride, and the ride was great. I would

definitely participate in a course like this again. Ever since I was young, I hated travelling in general, and I still typically avoid it. I signed up for the trip anyway, despite my reservations, and I had a blast. Therefore, I would recommend others to participate in similar projects. If I enjoyed it, anyone would.

Opportunities to go abroad and learn about other countries help one grow as an individual. It helps others see that just because the U.S. does something one way, that doesn't mean there's only one way to do it. Furthermore, interacting with people of different nationalities helps travelers learn in two ways. For one, they get to hear an outside perspective about attitudes towards the U.S. Additionally, they can learn more about issues that are important in another country, and possibly draw similarities between the two.

Overall, the trip to Poland was an amazing experience, and I want to express my thanks to everyone involved, especially our Polish hosts.

Emily E. Davis

Poland Reflection Paper

Why did you decide to go to Poland?

As soon as I learned that the Mandel School offers study abroad opportunities, I knew I would be going on a trip with the school. The idea of merging two of my great passions, social work practice and travel, was truly a dream come true. I was told the Poland program would be a good fit for my interests. I had never been to the country or any other eastern European nation so I was excited for the opportunity. I have had some access to the culture since I grew up in Northeast Ohio where there is a Polish population. Notably, I had a vague understanding about the culture surrounding food and the strong religious ties within family systems. Going into the trip, I had much to learn.

What kinds of activities related to social welfare did you do while in Poland?

Each of our site visits had some element of discussion surrounding social welfare. On the first day, we attended a lecture at the university discussing the social economy in Poland. The lecture focused on ways Poland integrates its disadvantaged population into economic enterprises. Profit is not the primary

focus on these endeavors. Instead, the idea is to integrate disadvantaged individuals into society. A prime example of an organization that exists for the purpose of integrating members of society who are disadvantaged is a restaurant called Dobra. Dobra trains and employs individuals with developmental disabilities. We had the pleasure of having lunch at the cafe and saw firsthand how its employees operate. I really appreciate this form of social welfare. Dobra is providing an opportunity for these individuals to build skills, interact with other members of society, and find a sense of purpose in their day.

Thinking back on the experience, what was the biggest surprise?

I went into this trip thinking Poland is a vastly different country from the United States. Instead, I realized Poland and the United States are extremely similar in the problems we face as well as the origins of those problems. Specifically, stigma surrounding suicide. It is suspected that instances of suicide are under-reported in Poland because of the shame surrounding the event. Families might prefer to classify a family member's death as an accident instead of suicide. This certainly happens in the United States. In order for both countries to address suicide, they must first address the stigma surrounding it.

Another commonality is the issue of alcohol abuse. Our lecturer referred to the culture in Poland around drinking as if it is sport. Social drinking combined with a lack of emotional regulation often leads to alcohol dependence. Listening to this depiction of alcohol abuse felt as if I was listening to a description of the issues of alcohol abuse in the United States.

What did you gain personally from the trip? What did you learn about yourself?

The interaction with students and professors of Adam Mickiewicz University led to the most personal growth. I find when I am learning about other people, I come to know more about myself. Meeting individuals from cultures different than my own magnifies the experience. I gained a network of colleagues as well as friends through this trip.

What did you gain professionally from the trip?

Professionally, I gained new ideas. I really like the concept of intergenerational practice which was discussed during the Centrum presentation. The idea is an inspiration for my future social work practice. I will seek out opportunities which integrate the concept of bringing together individuals from different generations. Maybe one day, I will create a program which does that very thing.

What experience was the most memorable? Most pleasant? Least pleasant?

I found the monastery visit to be the most memorable because of the range of emotions I experienced during the visit. It was both pleasant and unpleasant. I was on the verge of both sad and happy tears throughout our visit. At first, I felt sad for the residents who are so severely limited because of their disabilities. I thought about all of the experiences these individuals will not be able to have. Then, we stepped into a room of residents and staff in a therapeutic session. The room smelled of lavender, sounds of birds and rain filled the room, and members of the staff were floating a parachute over the heads of the residents. The sensory experience was straight out of a dream. It was so moving to watch the staff taking such great efforts to create the experience for residents. I will never forget this site and the sense of hope and gratitude I felt.

How could the experience be enhanced for others in future courses?

I think it would have been helpful to take time at the end of the day to debrief as a group. It would be really enriching to discuss each of our different perspectives on the day. I would not propose a formal session, but more an informal gathering before dinner to share our thoughts as a group.

Would you participate in such a project again? Would you encourage others to participate in such a project?

I would absolutely participate in a study abroad trip like Poland again if given the chance. The trip provided unique access to organizations and the people that make up those organizations. For that reason, I will certainly encourage my peers to take advantage of the opportunity next year.

Why do you think these types of opportunities are important?

I think gaining insights into unique perspectives is integral to growing both professionally and personally. Experiencing another culture is a wonderful way to gain a new perspective. While we may face similar problems as other nations, there is much to be learned in the different ways we approach those problems. Also, drawing near to people who are unlike you helps to eliminate the fear of others you might harbor.

Geoff Auerbach

Why Poland?

My reasons for applying to this particular program were twofold. The first was that it sounded like a chance to engage in and learn about a unique group of disenfranchised and stigmatized populations in a location that interests me. Although I have traveled extensively I was never able to make it to Poland. The fact that the country is so recently removed from communism makes it a valuable source of information for their view on social services. There must be some holdover ideals that enable individuals in a broader sense than in the States.

The second reason was that my interest stems from my grandmother having been born and raised in Poland. I interviewed her about her life before she died, and she spoke fondly of the country and its people, but ultimately left to never return after fleeing the Nazis in 1939. Although she survived, her entire family was murdered in concentration camps. It is for these reasons that I feel there is an innate chunk of me that desires to see and learn firsthand about my heritage and this culture with links to my not-so-distant past.

Activities Related to Social Welfare

It seems every activity we participated in related to social welfare in some way. We visited over a dozen agencies over the course of four days and engaged in dialogue related to helping clients, communities, specific populations, and one another as social workers. These populations included orphans, individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, youth addicts in rehabilitation, refugees and asylum seekers, and high school students preparing for their future careers and continuing education.

The Biggest Surprise

There were a lot of surprises along the way, such as the high level of hospitality, the non-Americentric

view of the world, and the interest in collaborating on international projects that open both doors to learning and minds to new cultures. I think the biggest surprise of all however was finding out that communism wasn't a dirty word in Poland like it is in the States. Communism ended in 1989 so it is still fresh in people's minds. One of the communist holdovers is universal health care, which also translates into a massive amount of services for the disenfranchised and stigmatized populations. One thing we learned regarding these services is that the funding comes from a surprising source. The country is over 95% Catholic and as a pensioner you have the ability to automatically donate 1% of your tax return to an organization called Caritas, which distributes money to over 1,000 social service centers with over 100,000 volunteers (Poland, 2018). The intersection of charity, religion, and government welfare sustainability is a thriving venture that affords impressively dynamic and individualized services for the populations served.

Personal Gain

What I gained personally from this trip was a greater sense of openness. It's easy to judge others from the high castle of America based on stereotypes and perceptions. Poland isn't your typical hotbed of tourist activity, especially during spring break. I find that the mention of former communist and soviet bloc countries conjures up images of a bleak existence. What I was happy to find is that that notion was patently false and wholly misguided. Within myself I learned, as I have repeatedly throughout my life, to not make assumptions based on stereotypes. From others I learned that there is a whole global network of individuals with similar passions and different approaches to the same end as myself, and that we can learn from one another's successes and failures through open and honest dialogue. It was a great reminder to keep an open mind and to remain humble and that asking more questions than I answer allows me to grow as an individual.

Professional Gain

What I gained professionally from the trip were global contacts and an international sensibility. The individuals we met all had immeasurable worth in terms of their experiences, passions, and motivations. Some of our passions aligned, but for those that didn't we were still able to discuss social services in a greater sense in such a way as to progress thought rather than keep it

insular and stunted. The students from Georgia, Poland, and Ukraine all offered valuable perspectives based on their cultural ideals and societal concerns. These factors combined to broaden my own perspective of problems we face back home and ways in which they can be addressed.

Most Memorable Experience

I've thought hard about this and cannot seem to discern one experience from the next in terms of memorability. Every location and discussion offered something unique and valuable. There was truly nothing unpleasant other than the mental effort required at times, which is hardly something to complain about.

Enhancements for Future Trips and Encouragement

I have nothing constructive to offer in this regard. The contacts in Poland are able to move mountains for us and do so with seeming ease. We had great access to locations with nothing but open arms there to greet us, all with relevance to our topics of study.

I would 1,000% participate in this project again without question and would encourage anyone at the graduate level to embark on the journey. It wasn't easy, neither mentally nor physically, but it was ultimately worth every step of the way, every hour of lost sleep, and every heartstring pulled.

Importance of Opportunities and Final Comments

I think opportunities like this are important because, as the BBC reports, just over 40% of Americans have passports (Amos, 2018). With more than half the population unable to travel internationally in such a global-minded time in history we are bound to retain our blind nationalism based on the rhetoric of others rather than through firsthand experiences. Yet, of those that do travel, few will have the sort of access to individuals, organizations, institutions, and locals that a trip such as this affords. It is able to add a depth rarely offered to outsiders unless explicitly sought, which probably isn't often for the casual vacationer.

I've mentioned it often, but I think it bears repeating. I've traveled to over 34 countries now and I can count on one hand the types of cultural sharing and depth of experience I've experienced on this level.

About emotions...

I sit at a table and play with my Dearest a game of “remik.” I throw a card, she takes it and puts down her hand – remik! She is joyous, laughs, but I am angry at myself: how could I make this play? I throw the cards, almost get an apoplexy, and yet we play for no stakes. Where is this anger coming from? In a little while we start to laugh and continue to play like nothing ever happened.

I sit at the table and listen to a conversation, and actually to a violent discussion of two friends (about political issues). They call each other stupid and idiots, interrupt each other every moment and are almost ready to hit each other. Both friends are well educated and well-bred, but the emotions win. Why can't they converse peacefully, without name-calling? It is obvious that their arguments are not convincing enough. Maybe that is the reason they lose their cool? One would think that in this beautiful and wonderful world in which we live everybody has a right to his beliefs, religion, and opinions (unless it harms others). And yet, it would be better if they would think the way we think, because we are right and things should be according to our thinking (and to our wishes). OK, but what does this have to do with emotions?

When I was yet a child, my mom often reminded me to control my feelings (emotions). She did not explained why, it was supposed to be obvious for me. On the other hand, my instructors were teaching me as a student of music to perform with a lot of expression, because this is what listeners like. There are countless examples of how important emotions are in our lives: he wears his heart on his sleeve, he has a poker face (meaning one cannot read him), love your neighbor as yourself, he crushed his opponent without mercy, happy as a baby, and so on and on. Only, nobody taught me about emotions, which are good and which are bad, is it possible to control emotions, and how. Yes, I learned what are phlegmatic and cool-headed people, and sometimes later I also learned that genes affect my reactions, but the questions about emotions were left unanswered...

Some time ago I bought a book *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman because the title intrigued me – really, the intelligence of emotion? The book was resting on a shelf, because there were so many other, more interesting books that went through my hands...

Finally it was time to read this book. I found a lot of interesting information within this book. Among other things I learned that over two thousand years ago Aristotle asked himself the same questions I did. And, that there is nothing unusual about our limited knowledge regarding emotions, because only just recently technology has developed enough for us to peek into the human brain (alive). This led to discovery that brain can be divided into the emotional part, and into the intellectual part. Part of the brain deals with emotions, and the other part deals with reasoning and everything connected with it, such as analysis, synthesis, memory and inferences. These two parts cooperate with each other, but the emotional brain reacts much quicker, like lightning, because it is our primordial brain necessary to our survival. Most of the research was done on the part of brain that directs the emotion of fear. The brain circuitry dealing with fear was documented in detail. The scientists found from where and to where signals dealing with fear are going, and where the decisions regarding fear are made. Lesser known are the ways signals dealing with other emotions travel, but progress is being made. There are discussions among scientists on how to divide emotions into different groups. The most basic emotions are probably fear, anger, sadness and joy, because they are recognizable by all societies around the world. When the photographs of faces expressing these emotions were shown to the members of a primitive tribe from New Guinea they had no problem recognizing these emotions, even though the tribe is almost completely isolated from our civilization. According to the author, each of us receives through our genetic heritage several emotions which determine our temperament, but the brain circuitry is extraordinarily malleable and as children we can learn in home and in school to control our emotions. The author calls such control

of emotions emotional intelligence. To be more exact, emotional intelligence is the ability for self-control, zeal, persistence, and self-motivation. Being able to control one's impulses is the basis for strong will and character. The lack of such control leads to moral deficiencies.

The idea that emotions may and should be controlled was embraced by educators in the USA (and in other countries) and they started to implement in school curricula programs called "Social and Emotional Learning" (SEL). These programs help school children to minimize their problems by promoting character education, violence prevention, drug prevention, and school discipline. Research shows that these programs bring positive results. And so it turns out my mom was right, but at least I now know why.

Joseph Hart

Mali tropiciele dzikich zwierząt i nie tylko....

Szkoła Języka Polskiego im. I J. Paderewskiego ma w swoim dorobku wiele wycieczek, które służyły urozmaiceniu lekcji. Warto choćby przypomnieć wyprawę do barwnego Muzeum Sztuki, do słynnej *Public Library* w Cleveland, do malowniczego *Metroparku* w Valley View, do pełnego niespodzianek Muzeum Historii w Garfield Hts.

Ostatnio Szkoła wybrała się na wycieczkę do *Rainforest* w clevelandzkim zoo. Egzotyczna flora i fauna stały się znakomitym antidotum na wyjątkowo zimną pogodę za oknem. Uczniowie z rodzicami i nauczycielkami przeistoczyli się w grupy *traperów* i mieli znaleźć jak najwięcej ciekawostek na temat lasu tropikalnego oraz jego mieszkańców. Podstawowym zadaniem było oczywiście zbudowanie bogatego polskiego słownictwa.

Nic dziwnego, że tego dnia w *Rainforest* zrobiło się biało-czerwono za sprawą koszulek uczestników wycieczki, a tu i ówdzie dało się słyszeć podekscytowane okrzyki: *Patrz, jaki piękny czerwony ptak! Jak on się nazywa po polsku? Czy widzisz tego jaguara?! Czy on nas zje?! Ojej, to naprawdę jest mrówkojad?!*, itp.

Po wytropieniu tajemnic lasu tropikalnego pozostało tylko ochłonać w kafeterii, podzielić się wrażeniami i sprawdzić swą wiedzę, rozwiązując krzyżówkę. Takiej eskapady się nie zapomina!

Gosia Oleksy



P.S. Z najnowszych informacji: Utartym już zwyczajem, w ramach krzewienia patriotycznego ducha Szkoła z okazji obchodów Rocznicy Uchwalenia Konstytucji 3 Maja w czasie sobotnich lekcji przeniosła się do Centrum Kultury im. Jana Pawła II, aby ponownie odwiedzić Muzeum Dziedzictwa i usłyszeć kolejną porcję informacji o polskiej historii oraz współczesności. A w niedzielę, 28 kwietnia uczennice Szkoły – Ela i Ola uświetniły polonijną uroczystość piękną deklamacją wierszy.

Czuwająca nad wszystkim Dyrektorka Szkoły - Pani Grażyna Buczek już zaplanowała huczne zakończenie roku szkolnego. Wszyscy pójną na majówkę! Podczas tej rodzinnej biesiady nie umknie niczyjej pamięci Dzień Matki oraz 15-lecie istnienia Szkoły... Oj, będzie się działo!!!



Chemia życia

Nasze polsko-amerykańskie środowisko poniosło niepowetowaną stratę. Odeszła od nas **Elizabeth Dabrowski**, a mniej oficjalnie: Betty, Ela, Elżbieta... Kto Ją znał, wie, że nie przesadzam używając słów: *niepowetowana strata*.

Ta skromna, starsza pani z koczkiem, w przenikliwych, profesorskich okularach, uzbrojona w pokazną posturę i anielski uśmiech była nieodłączną częścią wielu akcji oraz spotkań. Nie bardzo pasował do niej stereotyp starej panny, chociaż nigdy nie wyszła za mąż. Skrzęta humorem, energiczna, otwarta na nowości techniczne i kulturalne wszędzie stawała się duszą towarzystwa. Uwielbiała ludzi. Znakomicie czuła się w Centrum Jana Pawła II, gdzie pełniła ważne funkcje w zarządzie organizacji. Podobnie było z Parafią św. Stanisława, do której miała szczególnie sentyment.

Niejednokrotnie Jej rozmówcy mogli usłyszeć dawne historie na temat parafialnej szkoły, polskich rodzin, księży, itd. Jednakże nigdy te opowieści nie przeradzały się w plotki. Ela posiadała szczególny dar wychwytywania w każdym człowieku łagodnych, słonecznych rysów. Poza tym potrafiła tak błyskotliwie wiązać indywidualne losy z historycznym nurtem, że powstawała z tego nie tylko kronika towarzyska, ale przede wszystkim kronika Polonii Amerykańskiej. Szkoda, że Ela nie zdążyła tego spisać w formę potraktowanego trochę z przymrużeniem oka polsko-amerykańskiego podręcznika/przewodnika po Cleveland.

Skoro mowa o podręczniku, to muszę podkreślić najważniejszą rolę pełnioną przez Elę - rolę nauczycielki chemii w Magnificat High School. Na pewno najwięcej na ten temat mogłyby powiedzieć uczennice i współpracownicy, ale sama wiem, jak bardzo Ela kochała tę szkołę i podopieczne. Nie zostało to niezauważone, bo tuż przed odejściem na emeryturę była uhonorowana prestiżową nagrodą w dziedzinie edukacji.

Nie ulega wątpliwości, że Ela miała wiele pasji. Chemia była największą. Ta znakomicie wykształcona nauczycielka nie obnosiła się ze swoją wiedzą, ale gdy czasem pojawiały się jakieś chemiczne dylematy, wychodziło sztydło z worka! Miałam nie raz okazję o tym przekonać się w klasie języka

polskiego dla dorosłych, oferowanej przez Szkołę I. J. Paderewskiego, do której niemal od początku jej powstania uczęszczała Ela, a w której jestem nauczycielką. Ela bez obaw siadała przed tablicą i wiele razy solidaryzowała się z własnymi uczennicami zwłaszcza, gdy zapomniała odrobić pracę domową!



I tu z pełną mocą pojawia się kolejna pasja – polskość. Ela była dumna ze swojego nazwiska i pochodzenia, kochała polskie tradycje i historię, a przy tym, wszędzie reklamowała naszą Szkołę! Nikt, kto przewinął się przez polską klasę dla dorosłych, nie zapomni Jej perfekcyjnej obecności na lekcjach i tego wiecznie młodego głodu wiedzy.

Niestety, w ciągu ostatnich lat Ela zaczęła gasnąć. Opuszczała coraz więcej lekcji, nie odpowiadała na e-maile (co nie było do Niej podobne), parę razy zasłabła w szkole... Baliśmy się o Nią. Potem usłyszeliśmy wyrok. Rak. Gdy odwiedzałam Ją w rehabilitacyjnym ośrodku jak zwykle sypała dowcipem i czekała na nowe wyzwania. Przyszła mi wtedy do głowy, jak się później okazało, podsumowująca naszą znajomość myśl: Ela najbardziej pasjonowała się chemią życia i zarażała nią innych. W Jej prywatnym wzorze na udaną egzystencję poczesne miejsce zajęła potrójna dawka humoru. Taki prosty wzór, a wart Nobla.

...W dniu swych urodzin Ela odeszła tam, gdzie wszystko, co ważne osiąga wyżyny perfekcji...

...Ktoś w czasie rozmowy o pogrzebie zapytał, czy Ela ma rodzinę. Marysia - nauczycielka w Szkole I. J. Paderewskiego bez chwili wahania odpowiedziała – Tak! Przecież ma nas!

Gosia Oleksy

P.S. Droga Elu! Będzie nam wszystkim bardzo brakowało Ciebie! Już brakuje...

Social and Cultural Events at the Center & Slavic Village

Thursday, June 14	Polonia Foundation Banquet
June 15 and 16	Polish Consul from New York will renew passports
Saturday, June 16	Cleveland Opera - Straszny Dwor at PlayhouseSquare
Saturday, July 21	Picnic

The Cleveland Opera

Presents a Polish opera **The Haunted Manor**

Straszny dwór by Stanisław Moniuszko
Saturday, **June 16**, 2018 at 7:30 pm
The Ohio Theatre, PlayhouseSquare
1511 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland OH 44115



Artwork by Jan Matejko (1838–1893), the foremost Polish artist of historical scenes, depicting Polish nobility in their late Renaissance vestments

In recognition of the 100th anniversary of regaining independence by Poland, The Cleveland Opera will create a new production of *The Haunted Manor* (*Straszny dwór*) by Stanisław Moniuszko, which will be presented in on June 16, 2018 at 7:30 pm at The Ohio Theater, PlayhouseSquare, downtown Cleveland at 1511 Euclid Avenue. This original production will be fully staged, sung in Polish with English translation projected, performed with **Cleveland Ballet** and **The Cleveland Opera Orchestra** under the baton of **Grzegorz Nowak**, Music Director at The Grand Opera in Warsaw, Principle Conductor at The Cleveland Opera, and Permanent Associate Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London. It will be a splendid event, demonstrating the best possible image of Polish culture to general public in the most prestigious theater complex in Cleveland and second largest in the United States after Lincoln Center.

Tickets \$25 – \$65 may be purchased online at playhousesquare.org or by calling 216-241-6000 or 866-546-1353. The Cleveland Opera offers 50% discount to children and students with promo code MANOR, to encourage cultivating Polish art and tradition among the new generation. For more information, please visit our website at theclevelandopera.org or call our info line at 216-816-1411. You can also contact E.K. Wright, Director of *The Haunted Manor Committee* at ekwright1@aol.com; or Jamie Thornburg, Audience Coordinator at jamie@theclevelandopera.org; or Dorota Sobieska, Executive Artistic Director at dorota@theclevelandopera.org

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WCPN – 90.3 FM, Sun. 9:00 – 10 PM

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Polish Radio Program – “Memories of Poland”, Anna Klik i Monika Sochecki

WCSB 89.3 FM, Sat. 12:30 – 2:00 PM

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