

FORUM

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POLISH-AMERICAN



John Paul II

CULTURAL CENTER

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PACCJPII Membership Meeting 2020



BORD OF DIRECTORS OF PACC

During the PACCJPII annual membership meeting, on Sunday, February 23, 2020, Darek Wojno was introduced as the new Executive Director of the Center. The following is his acceptance speech:

“Thank you, Gene, for your trust, and thank you Board of Directors for choosing me to be the next Executive Director. It is a great honor and challenge for me.

Before I say anything about my vision, I want to share some of my reflections. A few days ago, I was reading the first Forum from 2002. That was the time you were looking for a piano for our Center and renovating the Center’s building. I read how you enjoyed buying a second building where you planned to have a museum and a library. I don’t remember it because I wasn’t here yet. I have been a member of the Center only for the last 12 years; but many of you know every little piece of wood in this building, every detail that is important to you. And, I promise it will be important to me too. Sometimes I hear words of

criticism that this is too small of a building, and its location is not the best. But Polish-American Cultural Center is the strongest polish organization in Cleveland with its own building, museum, library and newspaper. And I will always be there to defend what you have created. I will take care of the Center, and especially of our community, and will not let your work to be destroyed. Under Gene’s leadership, you created something from nothing, something that was your dream. You created a Polish Home. I hope that this year we will be able to prepare a proper celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Center to bring back the memories of the beginning and thank those who created the Polish-American Cultural Center.



Gene, we give you those flowers because you have been our director for 20 years, but it's just a symbol of our appreciation. In your case, the position does not matter. You managed the Center very well. Don’t take the back seat, but sit next to me in the front. If you will see that I'm going the wrong way take the steering wheel from me and show me the way, because you proved that you can drive well.

Thank you.”

Andrew Bajda

My Polish Adventure Continues

I had no idea! When I politely said my good byes after the fireworks celebration at my cousin's wedding, explaining that we had to get an early start to arrange a ride to Zakopane, the last thing I expected were looks of shock and angst. After all, it was getting late and we were running on fumes. Little sleep over several days and with the promise of much more to come. Surely, they would understand. My world momentarily stopped as animated words spoken in Polish dominated the table and I feared that I had unwittingly offended all of my family members in attendance. The burly husband of a young cousin finally walked over, smiling as he put a hand on my shoulder and simply said, "Andrew, this is a Polish wedding. The party is just getting started."

At first, I was a bit confused. I've been to Polish weddings before. Growing up in the Polish community of Elyria, we often attended Polish weddings. I recall receptions held at the local Polish Club, very reminiscent of the wedding scene from *The Deer Hunter* movie. Those wedding receptions at the Polish Club had a well-deserved reputation for being lively and fun, typically more colorful than other weddings I attended back home. Sure, those receptions didn't have snow-capped mountains beyond spacious window openings framed in lace, food carvings artfully displayed in the center of the hall, or an oversized fire pit where flames shot up to an opening in the high rustic ceiling. But what I viewed next truly reminded me that I was not back home. Applause filled the room as a troupe of musicians entered the hall, fiddlers and dancers all dressed in colorful Highlander attire.

So, what do you do when in Rome? Or in this case in the mountain resort near Wadowice? Why, of course you continue the party. A welcome surge of energy burst through my veins when my personal guest Zhen (Sugar) pulled me aside and suggested that I should stay and enjoy the time with my family. Despite a celebration that began at noon, we all danced into the night and well into the morning. I was still wide awake as I slogged through the snow and back to our room, and amazed to awake a few hours later with a clear head. That's when I appreciated another Polish wedding custom that makes so much sense. Throughout the evening (and morning), empty glasses were continually filled with shots of superb Polish vodka. I lost count of the times I said, "this is the last one." Fortunately, the only other beverages available at each table were pitchers of water and fresh juice, which the attentive waitresses made sure were always filled to the brim. The mix of nutritious food and energizing beverages with moving music and lively

conversation created a buzz of electricity that now gives me new meaning to the term "Polish wedding."

Another surprise awaited us in Zakopane. I've been there twice. Both times in the summer and under threatening clouds or pouring rain. I quietly wondered what was the attraction as I recall fighting crowds of people seeking shelter from the drenched street. But my cousin Michal, whose wedding I had just attended, insisted that it was the perfect place to visit in winter and the crowds should be more manageable after the holidays. His words proved prophetic. Zakopane at that time of year can indeed be described as a Winter Wonderland.

The first thing that struck me were the mountains. Where previous trips offered only hints of nearby mountains peeking through ominous clouds, now I was surrounded by a striking vista. Mountains nearby appeared so close that it seemed you could simply reach out and touch them. And those in the distance blended in the clear sky with a bluish hue that resembled the ocean.



For those who enjoy a city walk, there may be none more enjoyable than a stroll down Krupowki Street to reach the funicular connecting the city to the top of Gubalowka Mountain. The street scene was alive with color and energy, rustic chalets, young lovers perhaps some on their honeymoon, families with parents pulling children on sleds, local musicians entertaining with simple homemade instruments, and merchants selling all sorts of colorful items, from exotic wood carvings to tasty treats that "you can only get in the Tatras." Time and time again Sugar ran off to view up close an endless array of sights and smells that aroused her curiosity. Of particular interest were the rows of sausages hanging in open kitchens and a juicy pork with glazed skin that she HAD to taste.

However, no trip to Zakopane is complete without a hike in the Mountains. The breathtaking views from Gubalowka certainly whet our appetite, so we were determined to spend a day atop one of those dramatic peaks. After learning our objectives for the day, a friendly taxi driver drove us the short distance to Kasprowy Wierch. "You will find no better views on a

clear day like this, and it's only minutes away." It was an excellent choice. Few words were spoken among the crowd of visitors who spread out along the sloping trails as if coming to the sudden realization that we were standing on top of the world. We climbed to reach the highest point because it seemed the thing to do, before settling on a landing that offered equally striking views and without the brisk winds. Sunlight reflecting off the snow warmed the body and cleansed the soul. I now understood Zakopane's attraction.

Throughout the bus trip back to Krakow, we admired the beauty of the region and the warmth of the people. And that character would once again reveal itself in a most profound manner.

A good Samaritan saved the trip. We had just enjoyed a memorable dinner on the square with family members who drove from Bochnia to meet us. Taking the train back to the airport hotel, we reminisced over the wonderful week in Poland, and it wasn't until I stepped in the hotel room that I realized I left my phone on the train. My cellphone! All my personal info, photos, boarding pass for a 6 am flight. Panicked, I sprinted back to an empty station where I came to the grim realization that I'd likely never see that phone again.

Without getting into all the detail, the good Samaritan who found my phone set off a timely chain of events that miraculously brought my phone back to the airport station on the final run of the evening and into my waiting hands. It was sad to know that I would soon be leaving Poland, but at least I had my phone back and I viewed two messages that sleepless night that further brightened my outlook. The first was from Channel 3 WKYC. They wanted to bring my father and me back on the show, a new program titled: It's About You. The other was a message from Anna Maria Anders. They were planning events to honor the 50-year anniversary of her father's death, and she wished for my father and me to join her in the celebration.

To be continued



JESZCZE POLSKA (nie?) ZGINĘŁA

We, of a certain age, can all remember the most beautiful and elegant balls and events at the Alliance of Poles ballroom, the events at the Polish Women's Association auditorium, the Cleveland Society of Poles debutante balls, Good Joe events, clambakes, symphony orchestra trips, golf outings and sporting events, the PLAV Post 13 marching band and nearly 300 young Polish children marching in white and red uniforms - the Plavettes. We had young Polish children practicing gymnastics at the Sokol Hall and Polish Falcons, the Polish-American Congress advocating in politics for issues affecting Poles, Polonia and Poland, Harmonia Chopin and the Polish Singers Alliance, the Polish Medical Association, the National Advocates Society, the Polish Welfare Association, Porada, the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the Polish Americans Inc. vetting politicians and granting endorsements affecting us all, and so many more.

Our Great Grandparents, Grandparents and Parents formed these Organizations to meet, socialize, connect, and receive news, created fraternal benefits such as higher interest savings, lower rate loans and insurance. They built our churches, held picnics and events to allow them and their prodigy to share the rich Polish history, customs and traditions. They encouraged networking and support of Polish operated business and professionals. Poles supporting Poles.

Meanwhile, in late 1988-89 Poland broke the fist of communism, which then led to freedom in other Eastern European Countries.

Since 1999, the per capita income of Poles went from just under 5,000.00 to now over 25,000.00. The gross national product outproduced the worlds economies and is the envy of all of Europe. Poles have rebuilt Poland into a major tourist attraction and Poland now has more immigration than emigration. Poles nowadays travel to the USA mostly for shopping.

Although it is clear that Poland "nie zginęła", many of our Polish organizations and institutions "zginęły" or are facing closures. It is a sad testament to our Forefathers, that we have allowed this onslaught on our cultural institutions

It is time for the Polish Leadership to form a working commission to address what is needed to survive. Consider mergers, consider one home for all the organizations working together to have the necessary facilities not only for organizational meetings but a place where we can meet, socialize, bring our children, and have meaningful amenities for them such as swimming, tennis, baseball, football, basketball, soccer (Croats have an indoor soccer field?), camping, fishing, etc.

It is not too late. Have this leadership committee open its meetings to all Polonia for input and take your time, it must be done right and if it is, Polonia will rise once again with pride and fully supporting these efforts.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Teddy Sliwinski JD



Agata Wojno

Katastrofa helikoptera

Przychodzi taki moment, kiedy zastanawiam się po co to pisanie? Na co komu jest „ta polonijna chwila”? Kto i po co „to” czyta, co i komu „to” daje? Przychodzi taki moment, kiedy ogarnia mnie zwątpienie w sens działalności, a nawet w sens istnienia Forum. Ten moment pewnie ma związek z porą roku... Styczeń i luty to dla mnie najtrudniejsze miesiące do przetrwania, szczególnie w Cleveland. Brak słońca i szarówka dni powszednich doprowadza mnie do rozpacz. Literalnie. Nic nie działa. A mam tak dużo narzędzi do użycia... ćwiczenie, bieganie, modlitwa, joga, medytacja. I wciąż szaro... Przychodzi taki moment, że się nie chce. Nie chce się starać, osiągać, budować, wspinać do celu. To pewnie też ma związek z wiekiem... ha! Kiedyś miałam mniej zrozumienia (oj - zero zrozumienia) szczególnie dla kobiet, które w „pewnym wieku” poddawały się procesowi starzenia, albo przemijania – jeśli ktoś woli nie nazywać procesów bezpośrednio. Wydawało mi się, że to zawsze wybór, a nie konieczność, że nie trzeba tyć ani mieć „nosa na kwintę”, że można na zawsze zachować energię, świeżość, urodę i figurę. Tak myślałam; byłam pełna gorzkich osądów i nie dawałam żadnego kredytu ani tu ani tam.

Dziś... dziś wiem, że to ciężki wybór, który musi być dokonywany wciąż od nowa, z mozołem dzień za dniem. A czasami się wyczerpanie nie ma siły na dokonywanie takiego wyboru. Bo łatwiej zasiąść na kanapie i zająć się ciasteczkami popijając je winem.

Z tego „niechcenia się” wyrwała mnie szokująca informacja o katastrofie helikoptera, w której zginął legendarny gracz NBA – Kobe Bryant. Miał tylko 41 lat i wszystko to w życiu o czym inni nawet marzyć nie mogą: karierę, sławę, pieniądze. I co? Pomogło mu to ocalić życie? Czytając różne dywagacje i opinie na temat powodu rozbicia się helikoptera dumalam nad ulotnością życia. Nad tym jak nie doceniamy tego, co z mozołem budujemy przez lata, a co może runąć nieoczekiwanie z naszym udziałem, czy bez. Rozważania nad nieprzewidywalnością życia i rozwojem różnych życiowych wątków przerwał mi artykuł, który zamieszczam w tym Forum, mówiący o tym, że jak się Polonia nie obudzi i nie zacznie dbać o swoje organizacje, to Polonia zostanie sama na oceanie innych grup etnicznych w Stanach, którym może się bardziej chce niż Polonii budować jedność... Nonszalancja w odpuszczaniu sobie i bagatelizowaniu symptomów braku jedności to tak nie przymierzając jak katastrofa helikoptera, która w jednej chwili może przerwać coś pięknego. Dziesiątki tysięcy ulepionych i zjedzonych w centrum pierogów nie pomoże ocalić wspólnoty, kiedy nie uświadomimy sobie, że to jest Dom Polonii i że wszyscy jesteśmy w nim tak samo ważni.

Jestem pewna, że ludzie, których możemy traktować jako ikony naszej polonijnej stabilizacji, też mieli i miewają swoje momenty zwątpienia. Na przykład Pan Eugeniusz Bąk, którego podziwiamy, od którego się uczymy i któremu jesteśmy jako społeczność wdzięczni za wszystko, co dla Polonii w Cleveland poświęcił, co zbudował. Jestem przekonana, że i on i jego żona

Basia, miewali swoje chwile zwątpienia. A jednak podnosili się i szli do przodu, bo widział Pan Bąk „bigger picture”, a nie zatrzymywał się na drobiazgach.

Trzymam w ręku drugi numer miesięcznika FORUM z lutego 2002. Rozmyślałam o tym, jak długą drogę ten nasz „helikopter–Centrum” przeleciał i jak od początku towarzyszyło mu Forum. Trzymam w ręku to Forum sprzed 18 lat i czytam, co ówczesny Redaktor Naczelny miesięcznika, Henryk Łapczyński pisze:

„(...) FORUM należy do tzw. pism etnicznych, których jest wiele w tym kraju. Warto zwrócić uwagę na stan New York, w którym one szczególnie obfitują. Badacze i obserwatorzy zwracają uwagę na rolę, jaką te pisma odgrywają w życiu poszczególnych grup etnicznych oraz w życiu społeczeństwa amerykańskiego. Zauważono, że życie społeczne tych grup skupia się wokół pism, a również pisma nadają kierunek i ton życiu społecznemu danej grupy. Jako klasyczny przykład podaje się małą grupkę z Dominikany, której działalność organu prasowego doprowadziła do uzyskania miejsc w parlamencie stanu.

Pisma te spełniając rolę integracyjną, dają równocześnie wgląd i możliwość oceny grup etnicznych władzom stanowym, federalnym, partiom politycznym i biznesowi. Pod tym kątem popatrzmy na naszą sytuację w metropolii clevelandzkiej. Starsi, pamiętamy, że w czasie, gdy wychodziły „Wiadomości Codzienne” znaczenie Polonii było tego rodzaju, że mówiło się o możliwości zdobycia stanowiska majora miasta. Po upadku dziennika pozostały na placu pisma związkowe, których aktywność była wewnętrzna, jako organów związkowych. Pisma likwidowały się jednocześnie ze związkami. Pozostał organ prasowy Związku Polaków, który posiada ozdobną kolorową szatę. Brak pisma ogólnego - całej Polonii metropolii clevelandzkiej - jest dotkliwy. Wpływy nasze i możliwości zmalały w porównaniu z przeszłością i innymi grupami etnicznymi dysponującymi swoimi pismami.

W tę sytuację marazmu i bezwładu wkracza nasz miesięcznik FORUM. W jakiej części potrafi on wypełnić pustkę pragnącego integracji społeczeństwa polonijnego? - Oto pytanie. Zadanie jest wielkie - zbudować organ prasowy, odpowiadający potrzebom Polonii. Pismo nadające kierunek działalności wynikający z potrzeb. (...) W rozwoju pisma, a co ważniejsze w procesie samopoznania i samookreślenia Polonii pierwszorzędną rolę ma do spełnienia dobrze prowadzona debata. Jesteśmy pismem całej Polonii i wszyscy mają prawo głosu. Pozytywne osiągnięcia CENTRUM, powstałe dzięki ofiarnej pracy i ofiarności wielu wartościowych jednostek, budują zaufanie i stanowią zachętę do współdziałania w debacie i aktywności CENTRUM.”

Tak pisał Henryk Łapczyński (którego już z nami nie ma) w 2002 roku w artykule „Oby FORUM było forum”. Rozpoczął swój artykuł od zacytowania Stanisława Wyspiańskiego: „Jest wiele sił w narodzie...”

A ja zakończę swój pytaniem: czy w nas jeszcze jest siła? By helikopter na którego pokładzie jest CENTRUM i FORUM leciał spokojnie nie rozbijając się we mgle?



Agata Wojno

The Helicopter Crash

There comes a moment when I think what's the point of writing? Who is reading "it" and why? How does the reader benefit? There comes a moment when I'm overwhelmed by doubt regarding my involvement and even the Forum's existence. I'm convinced, my anguish is connected to the time of the year. January and February are for me the hardest months to get through, especially in Cleveland. The lack of sun and the gray weekdays skies drive me to despair. Literally. Nothing helps, despite all the tools at my disposal: running, working out, yoga, meditation, and even prayer. It's still overcast... There comes a moment when I lose motivation. I don't want to seek, build or achieve. This state of mind surely has a connection with age... yes! In the past I had little understanding (no! zero understanding) of the women who at "certain age" surrendered to the aging process or passing - if someone doesn't want to name it directly. I imagined always dealing with choice, not inevitability, that you don't need to gain weight or keep on whining, that you can hang unto boundless energy, freshness, beauty, and figure. That's what I believed, full of bitter judgment and giving credit no one. Today... today I realize it's a difficult endeavor, which has to be undertaken daily with renewed effort and exertion. There are times, however, that we simply just do not have the strength or will to continue, so, we settle on a couch with a plate of cookies and some wine.

The news of the legendary basketball player Kobe Bryant's tragic death in a helicopter crash, snapped me back to reality. He was 41 years old and had it all: great career, salary, fame, and lifestyle that some can't even imagine. And what? Did that help to save his life? Reading about the various speculations and opinions regarding the cause of the accident my thoughts turned to the fleeting nature of life, how we don't duly appreciate it, and what we arduously accomplish through the years, may suddenly vanish with or without our involvement. My musings about life's unpredictability and the developments of various threads in life were interrupted by receiving an article you'll find in this issue, dealing with the future of Polonia, in which the author warns that if Polonia doesn't "wake up" and starts maintaining its organizations, it will be alone on the ocean of the

country's ethnic groups which may have more desire than us, to be stronger and united. This situation is not as trying the loss of life in the helicopter crash which brought to an instant end, something priceless, but nevertheless is a loss, albeit in slow motion. Tens of thousands of pierogies made and consumed at the Center will not save the community if we don't realize that it is the Polonia's Home and all of its members have equal status.

I'm certain that the iconic, community stabilizing individuals had their own moments of doubt. Take for example Eugene Bak whom we admire, from whom we have learned and to whom we are grateful as a society, for everything he devoted for the Polish community in Cleveland. I'm convinced that he and his wife Barbara had their own moments of doubt, but they overcame them and moved on, ignoring the small stuff, guided by Mr. Bak's "bigger picture" vision. I have faith that the helicopter - the Center - will continue its course and not crash in a fog.

The helicopter crash with Kobe Bryant and eight others onboard made me feel sentimental. I dug out old editions of Forum, reflecting... so many years on plain pieces of paper. Some editions better, some weaker... so many memories. I'm thinking about how long has the "helicopter-Center" flown and how the Forum has accompanied it from the beginning. I'm holding in my hand copy of an 18-year-old edition, and reading what the Chief Editor Henry Lapczynski writes about the role of ethnic groups' publications in general, and about the Cultural Center's monthly Forum. He observes that the social life of these groups coalesces around writings that set its tone and direction. As an example, he points to a small community of New York Dominicans who through the activity of their press, managed to get representatives elected to the legislature. Noting the diminishing of Polonia's influence, particularly as compared to other groups, in a climate of stagnation and inertia, the author wonders if Forum will be able to reverse the trend, as the publication evolves through the process of self-knowledge and self-determination, and well run discussions.

Henry Lapczynski, who is no longer with us, expressed these thoughts in a 2002 article: "May the Forum be forum" which began with Stanley Wyspianski's (1861-1907 Krakowian artist) quote: "There are many strengths in a nation..."

Translated by Julian Boryczewski



Kathleen Maciuszko

Folk Costumes of Poland

Polish folk costumes are a vibrant aspect of Poland's cultural scene. In earlier times, during the snowbound, cold winters, peasants created, with their toil-worn hands, these cultural and historical artifacts. They reflected their place in society, their geographic location, and their customs. Today, the richly decorated costumes are worn primarily for special events such as weddings.

Historically, the demise of serfdom was a catalyst for the rise in the development of folk costumes. An unparalleled variety and sophistication evolved. As the peasants gained in affluence and enhanced feelings of self-worth, the industrial production of textiles and goods needed for costumes became available. Ribbons, bands, beads, buttons, and sequins were incorporated into costumes along with colorful threads. Costume styles changed in line with tastes in fashion. They varied widely among parishes and villages.

A survey taken in 1974, revealed an estimated 50 basic types of costumes plus many subtypes.

Folk costumes can be divided into three groups: those made from homespun, undyed textiles plus wool, those homespun with colored textiles, and those created from factory-made materials. Southern and eastern Poland have continued to use undyed textiles and wool.

The embroidery used on the costumes enjoys a long history and encompasses a kaleidoscopic variety of patterns. On a visit to the Tatra Mountains in the Carpathians a few years ago, this writer had her first exposure to the folk costumes of the Highlanders (Górale). Not having seen such costumes, she was impressed with the elaborate embroidery work. The male trousers were made of white wool and decorated on the thighs with black and red "parzenice." The heart-shaped form of "parzenice" is representative of the mountaineers. The embroidery patterns designate a particular group and location.

The female costume is composed of a skirt, two aprons (one thrown over the shoulders), and a blouse. The addition of other elements such as elaborate embroidery and beads serves to versify styles. Hemline and apron lengths, skirt fabrics, sleeve widths, bodice styles, stitchery patterns, headdresses, and the choice of colors display the local character of costumes. The addition of a wide variety of trimmings, braids, lace, jewelry, and accessories enhance their beauty. For those interested in delving deeper into this topic, the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw has an extensive collection of folk costumes which can be viewed, in part, at its internet site.

One contemporary writer claims that most attention is being paid to the folk costumes from three regions: Tatra Highlands, Łowicz and Kraków. Why? It is likely due to their long history and popularity. Perhaps, in the minds of some, they are most representative of Poland. However, we must continue to remember the many other areas of Poland whose costumes represent the people who live there and who are a part of Poland's ethnographic landscape. Sadly, there are now areas of Poland where the traditional folk costume has vanished.

Next time, or maybe the first time, you visit our museum, you may want to include a stop at the folk arts room on the second floor. There you will find four costumed mannequins representing the dress of several regions. Additional costumes are pictured in the prints adorning the walls. The room also includes an extensive collection of costumed dolls.



Elżbieta Ulanowski

Leopold Tyrmand

- wspomnienie z okazji stulecia urodzin

Przypadająca rocznica urodzin Leopolda Tyrmanda, na pewno będzie miała bogaty scenariusz w mediach. Zapowiadany jest także film oparty na jego książce „Zły.” W opracowaniu moim postaram się przybliżyć Czytelnikom „Forum” tego oryginalnego prozaika polskiego drugiej połowy XX wieku, który w najtrudniejszych czasach zachował wymagającą odwagę i niezależność. „Nie pójdę na żadną służebność myśli, sumienia i egzystencji, nie poprawię sobie niczego w życiu za cenę tego, w co wierzę, co zdaje mi się słuszne i godne mej lojalności”. Słowa te można uznać za credo pisarza. Ale o tym za chwilę...

Urodził się w zasymilowanej, warszawskiej rodzinie żydowskiej. W latach 30 studiował architekturę w Paryżu. Wojna zastała go w Wilnie. Po zajęciu miasta przez hitlerowców, dobrowolnie zgłosił się na roboty do Niemiec. Tam wykonywał różne proste prace, aby przeżyć. W 1944 roku, w czasie nieudanej ucieczki do Szwecji został schwytyany i osadzony w obozie w Norwegii. Po zakończeniu wojny wrócił do kraju, gdzie rozpoczął karierę dziennikarską. Publikował dużo w kilku w dziennikach i tygodnikach. Między innymi jego tematem była muzyka jazzowa, którą pokochał będąc we Francji, a w Polsce stał się jej orędownikiem. Interesował się także sportem. Za skrytykowanie sowieckich sędziów stroniczo oceniających zawodników w turnieju bokserskim, został objęty zakazem publikowania. Jeszcze kilka lat pracował dla „Tygodnika Powszechnego,” który reżimowa władza zamknęła. Tyrmand stracił możliwość zarobkowania. Pomimo trudnej sytuacji, dosłownie głodowania, nie poszedł na ugodę z władzą. Wybrał emigrację wewnętrzną, a nie współpracę, jak robili to inni.

Właśnie z tego okresu, rok 1954, pochodzi jego „Dziennik”, pisany w ukryciu, przedstawiający w sposób dosłowny obraz komunistycznej rzeczywistości. Jak sam określił, treść codziennych zapisków posiadała taką siłę krytyki, że gdyby została podłożona pod gmach Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, budynek wyskoczyłby w powietrze, jak po eksplozji bomby zegarowej.

Dzięki stopniowej odwilży kulturalnej, po śmierci Stalina, Tyrmand odzyskał możliwość publikacji. Otrzymał wtedy zamówienie na powieść o powojennej Warszawie. W roku 1955 ukazuje się „Zły” gdzie autor przedstawił światek warszawskich gangsterów, chuliganów, drobnych biznesmenów oraz towarzyszących im kobiet różnej proveniencji. Jednak przede wszystkim jest to barwny i autentyczny opis stolicy sprowadzonej do poziomu gruzów i podnoszącej się do życia. Można było z książką w ręku iść ulicami miasta jak z drukowanym przewodnikiem i odnajdywać ocalałe budynki, ulice, parki, kina i stadiony. Spotykać stałych bywalców w mizernych kawiarniach, knajpach, czy bardziej ambitnych restauracjach. Oto co Witold Gombrowicz napisał o książce Tyrmanda: „Powieść kryminalna, romans brukowy,... romans z bruku z ruin i rozdołów. A jednak to łni, tryska, brzmi i śpiewa. Romantyczny księżyc unosi się nad ruiną miasta, a dochodzące z nor, jam zamków mordobicia stają się znowu! - poetyczne. Tyrmand jest najdoskonalszą kontynuacją naszej romantycznej poezji, on przejął jej pióropusz, on pisze jej ciąg dalszy.”

Liberalizacja kulturalna po roku 1956 pozwoliła Tyrmandowi rozwinąć skrzydła. Zdobył uznanie jako organizator festiwalu i koncertów jazzowych. Natomiast jego twórczość literacka napotykała ciągle restrykcje cenzorskie. Nie ukazała się jego powieść „Życie towarzyskie i uczuciowe”, demaskująca służalczą postawę wobec władzy, środowisk literackich i artystycznych lat 60. Tę książkę wydał później Paryski Instytut Literacki.

Zrezygnowany pisarz opuścił kraj w roku 1965. Po krótkim pobycie w Izraelu, gdzie spotkał się z matką, wyjechał do USA. Zostawił polskie dziennikarstwo, aby zaistnieć w prasie amerykańskiej. Publikował w znanych periodykach: „The New Yorker”, „New York Times” i „Commentary”. Prowadził również wykłady na NY State University i Columbii. Zajmował się głównie krytyką amerykańskich kręgów liberalnych. Jego motto z tego czasu brzmiało: „Przybyłem do Ameryki, aby bronić ją przed nią samą”. Nieco później rozpoczął pracę w Rockford Institute, był też współwydawcą miesięcznika „Chronicles of Culture”.

Tę twórczą prosperitę przerwała śmierć pisarza w 1985 roku, miał on 65 lat. Podobno nie stosował się do zaleceń lekarzy, którzy nakazywali mu zdrową dietę z unikaniem tłustych potraw.

Jego syn Matthew, który miał zaledwie 4 lata w chwili śmierci ojca, obecnie często odwiedza Polskę. Jego książka „Jestem Tyrmand, syn Leopolda”, wydana kilka lat temu, cieszy się popularnością. Jest też dumny z opinii powtarzanej o ojcu w Polsce, jako o wybitnym intelektualistcie, człowieku o żelaznych zasadach oraz wiernym kronikarzu odbudowującej się Warszawy.

W kwietniu ubiegłego roku, Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej uchwalił rok 2020 Rokiem Leopolda Tyrmanda.



Leopold Tyrmand

Photo: www.facebook.com



Stanislaw Kwiatkowski

SWIMMING POOL

I don't meet with my senior swimming pool acquaintance very often, but I've grown to enjoy our conversations, which for me and I suspect him as well, are one of few opportunities for serious discussions on significant topics of our times and the late stages of our lives.

Both of us are fully aware that we are in a midst of major transition in the human existence.

What follows is unknown, but we are not particularly optimistic. Mankind in its mass, is either unable or not interested in dealing with the quickly occurring changes in civilization and the insecurities coming with it, while the aware minority is too often powerless to act.

This time, upon leaving the pool's changing room, I was pleasantly surprised by the sight of an elderly gentleman sitting at a table and holding a cup of coffee. He greeted me with a smile while hand gesturing an invitation to take a seat.

— Well, I've been wanting to make the world better, although I don't have much strength to soak in the water anymore.

— I see that you are an optimist who believes that our talks have some importance, I replied.

— I don't quite believe it that much, but the fact that it's possible to have a meaningful conversation with someone brings me joy.

— Excuse me, can you wait a moment while I get a cup of coffee? Would you like me to refresh yours?

— No, thank you.

Returning to our table, I wondered about today's conversation subject matter, but even before I set down, my waiting companion was ready to unload from his swarming collection of topics, starting with his latest peeve - the case of measles outbreak.

— Thousands of sick children, with some instances of fatalities, all because someone's stupid claim that vaccination is harmful. Certainly, there are instances when it is inappropriate, but that decision is best made by a doctor, and not the ignorant parents. Admittedly, there are some complications, but only occur in minuscule numbers, out of the vaccinated millions. One cannot compare that with the thousands of sick individuals, some of them dying.

I recall my Polish days neighbors, who had two children - a boy and a girl. The 6-year-old boy became sick (I don't know the cause) and needed a blood

transfusion. The parents refused consent on the religious grounds, as they belonged to a sect that forbade such a procedure, resulting in the child's death. They mourned in despair, but if someone asked why they made such a decision, they responded with "it was God's will." They refused to acknowledge that the scriptures they sought for guidance, were written thousands of years ago, when medical knowledge was primitive and the concept of blood transfusion unimaginable.

My senior companion paused for a moment, his facial expression twisted with frustration and anger. He grabbed his cup and started sipping coffee, as his expression began to loosen up.

— Excuse me, he said between the sips, but I can't contain myself at the mention of such stupidity, for that's what it is. Sure, one could use more delicate terms aligned with the political correctness, but for me there is no excuse for endangering their and other children's lives by deceases that should have been eradicated long ago. Furthermore, talk of vaccination conspiracy is the pinnacle of stupidity.

— I understand, sir - I've interjected - I recall my Polish days of the forties and fifties when I've entered the elementary school. It was the time the Heine-Medina childhood paralysis epidemic, known here as polio. President F.D. Roosevelt was the most famous victim of it when he contracted the virus at the age of 39 and was never able to walk again on his own. At that time there was no cure, with the most common outcome being life-long disability. FDR spearheaded an initiative called the March of Dimes to raise funds for the cure research culminating with the 1954 vaccine discovery. At the start of epidemic the population was panic-stricken, for there was not much information regarding prevention, but I remember the fifties, being 12, maybe 13 years old when the cure news broke out. It was lightning fast, broadcast on the radio, in the print media and through our mothers, standing in the store lines for everything, in the early morning hours: *There is a vaccine and before long, the children will be vaccinated.*

The decease disappeared, stopping its curse effect on the children and their parents with whom they had to live. It became a part of history, but not completely, as I read about a resurgence.

— We only mentioned here - interrupted the old man - two diseases, but there is a pile and more of them. Not too long ago millions have perished and what... Should that not have some effect on the vaccine deniers psyche?...

My interlocutor paused for a moment taking a deep slow breath.

— I need to settle down. Talking with you is very unsettling, but I like the important topics we cover and you sir have the ability to comprehend what I'm talking about. Till next time...

See you, I said, looking at the senior citizen with admiration and respect.

REWELACJA!!!! ABSOLUTNA REWELACJA.

Coś na co cała Polonia w Cleveland czekała przez lata.

Po wielu pertraktacjach UDAŁO SIĘ!

Z inicjatywy Moniki Sochecki i Agaty Wojno i przy zaangażowaniu Polsko Amerykańskiego Centrum Kultury, Cleveland dołącza do innych wielkich miast w USA i Kanadzie, gdzie w kinach regularnie grane są najnowsze polskie filmy.

Tak i u nas w Ceder Lee Theatre raz w miesiącu będą się odbywały polskie seanse i będziemy mieli okazję oglądać najnowsze polskie produkcje. To co wchodzi do kin w Polsce, w tym samym czasie będzie dostępne dla nas. Na początek tylko raz w miesiącu, żeby zobaczyć jak licznie cała nasza clevelandzka Polonia zareaguje na takie zjawisko.

Już na początku kwietnia 2020 zapraszamy na pierwszą projekcję i zaczynamy od głośnego filmu, na który czekało wiele osób - „PSY 3. W imię zasad”.

Proszę czekać na szczegółowe informacje, które dostępne będą na FB Centrum, stronie internetowej i w kolejnym wydaniu Forum.

REVELATION!!!! ABSOLUTELY EXCELLENT.

Something that the entire Polish community in Cleveland has been waiting for years.

After many negotiations, WE HAVE IT!

On the initiative of Monika Sochecki and Agata Wojno and with the involvement of the Polish-American Cultural Center, Cleveland joins other major cities in the USA and Canada, where the latest Polish films are regularly played in cinemas.

Yes, here at Ceder Lee Theater, Polish screenings will take place once a month and we will have the opportunity to watch the latest Polish productions. What enters cinemas in Poland will be available to us at the same time. At the beginning only once a month to see how many of our entire Cleveland Polonia will react to such a phenomenon.

Already at the beginning of April 2020 we invite you to the first screening and we start with a loud film, which many people have been waiting for - "DOGS 3. In the name of the rules".

Please wait for detailed information which will be available on FB Centrum, website and in the next issue of the Forum.

MEET OUR MEMBERS

Alina Stepien

My name is Alina Stepien. Since January of 2019, I have been the Secretary of the Polish-American Cultural Center. Prior to this role, I have always been a part of the Center, volunteering at various events like the reverse raffles, Polish Constitution Day Parade, and our annual Polish Picnic in July. I was a member of the "Piaś" Polish Folk Song and Dance Ensemble for four years. I won the title of "Miss Polonia" of Cleveland, OH in 2012. I have been technical engineer for the Polish Radio Hour on WCPN 90.3 FM Ideastream, where I have developed interpersonal skills and public communications skills while working with program guests and making public service announcements. I graduated from John Carroll University in 2018 with my undergraduate degree in Business Administration, and minor in Spanish language. Subsequently, I decided to continue my education and get my MBA – master's in Business Administration, as a part of the 5-year MBA program at JCU. Upon completing the program, I accepted a position as a Marketing Coordinator. I plan to continue to be involved in the Polish Community in Cleveland, OH, and I look forward to making a difference in our community, and help make the world a little better too.



Social and Cultural Events at the Center & Slavic Village

Sat. March 14, 5:30 PM

Reverse Raffle

Sun. April 5, 1 PM

Święconka at the Center

Cleveland Polish Film Festival, sponsored by Embassy of Poland in Washington DC, Cleveland State University, and Polish American Cultural Center designed and led by well-known Polish film critic Sebastian Smoliński:

April 16-19 at Cleveland State University, at the Center, and Institute of Art Cinematheque. Currently mr. Smoliński lectures about Polish cinematography at CSU.

Detailed information in the next issue and on FB.

Spotkanie autorskie z redaktorem Witoldem Gadowskim i Małgorzatą Fechner Puternicką, 17 marca o godz. 6:30 PM w Centrum. W programie: relacja z Marszu Polonii i Polaków do Oświęcimia, zwiastun filmu „Święci z Doliny Niniwy”

Chats about the culture over coffee and cake - The Editorial Board of the Forum invites you to a social meeting on March 21 at 6 PM and discussions about the book, film, what makes us happy, what fascinates us. The meeting will take place downstairs in the Center cafe.

Information meeting and lecture: "How to be healthier, save money and reduce waste?"

Sunday, March 22 at the Center at 1.30 pm.

The lecture will be conducted by Patrycja Mucha, a young, energetic film critic and blogger from Poland who is currently in Cleveland, is writing a doctorate and is passionate about environmental protection and a healthy lifestyle.

Flavor of Poland

A new series called "Flavor of Poland" began airing in January on PBS on Saturday mornings at 9:30 am. It is an entertaining and informative program that combines history, culture, and cooking in Poland. Each week a different locale is highlighted. Recent ones included Krakow, Warszawa, Rzeszow, Gdansk/Sopot/Gdynia, Katowice, and Wroclaw. The host is Aleksandra August who, at the end of each program, returns to her TV kitchen to prepare new and traditional dishes from the highlighted locale. She is a Polish-American from Chicago, born in Poland in a small town east of Krakow. Her family moved to Chicago when she was 3. She is fluent in Polish and well-versed in Polish culture and cuisine. She is a graduate of Northwestern University with a degree in theatre.

"Requiem" by Gabriel Fauré, Sunday March 8 at 4:00 PM

The concert will be performed by the 70-person choir, which is made up of The Choir of Hope (Agnieszka Bieniek, director) and the Lithuanian Choir Exultate (Rita Cyvas-Kliorys, director), soloists (Gabriela Martinez- soprano, Nikola Budimir- baritone), and chamber orchestra.

In Part I you will hear compositions of Gabriel Fauré, Ola Gjeilo, and Claude Debussy, and in Part II, a beautiful "Requiem" by Gabriel Fauré.

The concert is free and open to the public.

A free will offering will be collected, with 100% going to support the Lake County Homeless Shelter - Project Hope for the Homeless.

Following the concert a small reception with Lithuanian specialties will be served in the narthex.

If you are not able to come to the concert, but would still like to support Lake County Homeless Shelter - Project Hope for the Homeless, you can give a monetary donation (check payable to St. Noel, in MEMO-Project Hope) or any items from the list below:

- gift cards to Giant Eagle, Walmart, and gas stations (\$5 and \$10 value only)
- large size shampoo, hair conditioner and body wash
- bath towels (new or gently used)
- 1 gallon zip-loc bags; 13 and 30 gallons garbage bags
- coffee (regular and decaf); 8-12 oz cold/hot cups

Donations will be accepted from 02-08 to 03-08 in the narthex of St. Noel church. For more information please contact Agnieszka (Aga) Bieniek at abieniek@stnoel.org

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www.theclevelandopera.org

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Polish Radio Program – Eugenia Stolarczyk – WERE 1490 AM, Sun. 9–10 AM

www.newstalkcleveland.com

WCPN – 90.3 FM, Sun. 9–10 PM

www.wcpn.org

*

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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