



TRUMPETER

QUARTERLY - MAY, 2025

POLISH HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND

*We are proud to present the winners of the
Polish Heritage Association of Maryland Scholarships for the 2025-2026 school year.*

Each award is a \$2,000.00 grant paid directly to each recipient. This year we are pleased to increase our awards to a total of six scholarships. The Jean Puła Memorial Scholarship Reception will be held on Sunday, May 18th, 2:00 pm at the Polish Home Club. I wish all the recipients a heartfelt congratulations! -- Joseph Solynski, PHAM



The Polish Heritage Founders' Award

AGATA DOLINSKA brings a rich cultural heritage to her academic achievements, having recently been named to the Penn State University Dean's List (2024) and honored with the PHAM Scholarship Award (2024). Her bilingual proficiency was formally recognized with the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy (2023).

With deep Polish roots, Agata's education extends beyond traditional academics — she attended the Polish Saturday School of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland (2012-2019), participated in The Children's Rhymes Project with The Peabody Conservatory and the Kosciuszko Foundation (2017-2018), and was active in the Polish Drama Club in Rockville, MD (2016-2019).

Born in America to Polish parents, Agata maintains a strong connection to her heritage through annual visits to her ancestral homeland. Agata's participation in cultural initiatives like the Peabody Conservatory project featuring Karol Szymanowski's music and Kazimiera Illakowiczowna's poetry reflects her commitment to preserving her cultural identity. Agata exemplifies how embracing one's heritage can enrich academic pursuits and personal development.

The Polish Heritage Founders' Award

MYKA MOTOVIDLAK'S academic excellence and athletic leadership are evidenced by her consistent academic honors — Minds in Motion (9-12 grade), Honor Roll (9-11 grade), and Principal's Honor Roll (12 grade) — alongside her athletics as Field Hockey MVP, Impact Player of the Season, and Captain of both Varsity Lacrosse and Field Hockey teams. Her service and leadership is demonstrated through her involvement in multiple organizations including National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, Debate Club, Student Government Association, and various other clubs.



The Edward J. Yurkowski Award

RYAN KRUK is continuing his schooling at Ursinus College, where he studies Business with minors in psychology and coaching — aligning perfectly with his career aspirations in sports management. His athletic background includes four years of high school football and also as basketball team manager, including participation in track and field during his junior and senior years. Beyond school athletics, he has gained valuable experience both as a youth soccer referee and as a server's assistant at a Texas Roadhouse restaurant.



Ryan's Polish heritage runs deep on both sides of his family. The Kruk family name is derived from the Polish word "kruk" meaning "raven," which he finds particularly meaningful as a Maryland Ravens fan. Ryan has been inspired to learn more about his roots and seek opportunities to connect with his heritage. Looking forward, he hopes to contribute to the Polish community once established in his career, potentially funding scholarships for other young Polish-Americans and joining heritage organizations to deepen his connection to his ancestral culture.

Drawing strength from her Polish heritage, she embodies the community's characteristic strong work ethic and family-oriented values. Inspired by her Polish grandfather, a waterman, and her father, who demonstrates unwavering dedication to his work, Myka balances athletics, academics, and extracurricular activities, with holding a weekend waitressing position. With grandparents close by, her cultural identity is reinforced and drives her ambition to learn the Polish language and deepen her connection to her ancestral heritage through future involvement in Polish-related organizations and communities.

continued on page 2

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The Polish Heritage Association of Maryland Undergraduate Scholarship Awards



The Skurzynski Award

ANNA WILSON demonstrates academic excellence as a Dean's List recipient in the Clark School of Engineering at the University of Maryland (Spring 2024), building on her impressive high school career at The Catholic High School of Baltimore where she maintained Gold Honors (2019-2023) and received the Director's Choice

for Orchestra award (2023). Her talents extend beyond academics to athletics, having been recognized as an "All Conference Athlete" in Varsity Swimming by the IAAM in 2020. Her array of activities includes performing with the University of Maryland Orchestra, participating in Women in Aeronautics and Astronautics (WIAA) and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), swimming, and mastering multiple instruments including violin, viola, cello, and piano.

With deep pride in her Polish heritage, Ms. Wilson has been studying the language since 2016 through both formal education – three years of online Polish courses at The Catholic High School of Baltimore – and continued self-study. Her connection to her roots was strengthened during a family trip to Poland in 2023 where she met relatives, and she regularly participates in Polish festivals, events, and traditions. Inspired by her grandfather, an electrical engineer who worked on NASA's Gemini missions, she is pursuing a degree in Aerospace Engineering with plans for graduate studies, while also serving as a music teacher at Mike's Music in Elliott City. Drawing inspiration from Polish leaders like Marie Curie, she aspires to embody the strong character of her Polish ancestry as she works toward making a meaningful impact on the world.

The PHAM President's Award

LAUREN ZAMZOW brings impressive academic credentials and professional dedication to her work in behavioral health, having graduated Summa Cum Laude with an AAS in Human Services Behavioral Health Counseling from CCBC in 2022 and earning Dean's List recognition at UMGC in Fall 2024. While working full-time as an adolescent substance use counselor at her local health department, Lauren provides vital community services including Narcan trainings and overdose prevention education. She attends UMGC full-time pursuing a BS in Psychology with plans to continue to an MS in Clinical Psychology, all while having recently assumed full-time caregiving responsibilities for her school-aged nephew, following her younger brother's sudden passing.



The PHAM President's Award

ASHLYN ZAMZOW demonstrates remarkable resilience and dedication to her education despite facing significant personal challenges this past year, While maintaining a 3.0 GPA at Parkville High School, she has simultaneously pursued college coursework at the Community

College of Baltimore County, earning an A in English 101. She will be attending Essex Community College full time this coming fall, studying communications and digital media—a testament to her academic commitment and passion for learning.

Ashlyn's Polish heritage has taken on deeper significance following her father's passing, serving as a meaningful connection to her roots and providing a sense of belonging during difficult times. She has actively participated in the Polish Heritage Association of Maryland (PHAM) through volunteer work at various events, including award ceremonies, event prep, and food service, helping to maintain cultural traditions that honor her father's memory. These experiences have strengthened her appreciation for Polish culture and values, which she sees as important not only for her present identity but also for future generations.

Lauren actively preserves her Polish heritage through participation in cultural family traditions such as Wigilia and the folk-art craft of pisanki. As a human services professional, she aims to develop specialized resources addressing cultural competence in clinical treatment settings – an often-overlooked aspect of mental health and behavioral health services. Lauren plans to contribute to the Polish community through volunteer work with local Polish organizations, helping with event coordination and historical preservation,

while also ensuring intergenerational cultural transmission by educating younger family members about their Polish history and traditions. Through her education and professional practice, she intends to strengthen Polish-American partnerships and serve as a reliable resource for Maryland's Polish community.



UPDATE



MARYLAND POLONIA PRESERVATION PROJECT

PHAM's Maryland Polonia Preservation Project team (see February's *Trumpeter*) met on January 31, 2025 with Tracy Thompson, the director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Digital Maryland Department, to kick off the digitization and preservation effort. Ms. Thompson came to the home of committee member Edith Pula, meeting with her, Carla Hazard Tomaszewski, and Claire Pula to review the content we have already assembled.

Ms. Thompson reviewed newsletters, newspaper articles, photographs, organization event booklets, festival posters, church anniversary programs, and other pieces that have been gathered and are being sorted and cataloged.

Each artifact to be digitized must be evaluated, then individually identified using a standard format ("metadata", or a set of data that describes and gives information about other data). The metadata includes a title, creator, detailed description, date, and format (photo, booklet, etc.). The artifacts and the metadata will be given to Digital Maryland where it will be given a unique file name identifier, digitized using state-of-the-art electronic equipment, and then made available online. We have started by cataloging back editions of PHAM's newsletter, *the Trumpeter*, and we hope

to continue with church information, like Holy Rosary's *Rosarian* newspaper, various anniversary programs and history, and other Polonia organizational ephemera.

While Ms. Thompson was impressed with the amount and kind of material already gathered, we assured her that "this is just the tip of the iceberg!"

Your help is now needed to get the rest of that iceberg. Please continue to look for stories, photos, documents, programs, booklets, posters, business records and advertisements, newspaper articles, films of your immigrant forebears, and Polish church and organizational activities of all types. Include your family stories, and collect and identify photographs and documents (e.g., immigration records, naturalization papers, letters to and from Poland). We will gladly return anything you wish to have back. Please be sure to identify persons and places in photographs, if you can. Person and place names will be searchable online, making research easy and gratifying.

Please come help us with the cataloging. It is rewarding, interesting, and fun work. **Contact us at phaofmd@gmail.com to lend or donate materials and we'll be in touch to collect your treasures for all to cherish.**

FILM DISCUSSION EVENT RECAP

THE PEASANTS FILM: DISCUSSION OF "A VISUAL MASTERPIECE"

As a follow up to our September 2024 screening of the 2023 Polish film *The Peasants (Chłopi)*, PHAM held an in-person and virtual discussion on the film on March 22, 2025 at the Towson Unitarian Universalist Church. The film is based on Wladyslaw Reymont's 1924 Nobel Prize-winning novel *Chłopi*.

PHAM President Joseph Solinsky introduced the event and Dr. Kevin Wisniewski of the University of Maryland at College Park gave insight as emcee and discussion moderator. Dr. Dorothy Pula Strohecker, who had led a PHAM Book Club examination of the novel, spoke about why she had wanted to consider that work; then three experts in Polish culture virtually presented information about the book and the movie.

Translator Anna Zaranko opened by animatedly addressing who Wladyslaw Reymont was and why he wrote this novel, the place of the story in Polish literary heritage and in Polish culture more broadly. Dr. Michał Wilczewski, of Northwestern University, gave vigorous and informative remarks about this film within Polish cinematic heritage and how it is influenced by and goes beyond the tradition of animation in Poland. Dr. Katarzyna Zechenter of University College London presented thoughtful and detailed content about how this film compares with other experts in Polish culture virtually presented information about the book and the movie.

Dr. Wisniewski



continued on page 12

A BALTIMORE POLISH FAMILY'S SAGA
~ OF SURVIVAL & SACRIFICE ~

ESCAPE FROM NAZI TERROR

PART 2

In our most recent *Trumpeter*, we learned about the Baltimore ministry, return to Poland, and subsequent murder at Katyń of Jan Potocki. We now continue his family's story, as they found different routes of escape back home to Baltimore, even as the Nazis and Soviets overran the country. The family consisted of his daughters from his first marriage, Isabelle and Mira, his second wife Marya (Mania) Grzegorzak Potocka and their infant son, Jan. Visiting at the time of the invasion was Mania's niece from Baltimore, Cecilia Mecińska.

Cecilia, a 1936 Seton High School graduate, stayed in the Potocki family's brick villa in the center of Warszawa. She had come to study and to give English lessons. As the threat of a German invasion loomed, the family received gas masks, including one for the baby. Cecilia rolled up her sleeves with the rest of the city's women as they dug defensive ditches. Her uncle Jan Potocki, a Protestant chaplain and major in the Polish Army, hoped that Hitler would invade because "he, like other army officers, were convinced the Polish troops would beat the Nazis and maybe regain East Prussia." (quoted in *The Sun*, October 6, 1939)



Cecilia Mecinska

After receiving a telegram from her mother in Baltimore, Bronisława Grzegorzak

Mecińska, and following advice from the American Embassy to leave Poland immediately, Cecilia began her journey home. She had three hours to make arrangements and to pack a suitcase, leaving behind her trunk and gifts bought for American family and friends. She heeded the consul's advice to take the early afternoon train for Riga, Latvia. The later train she had originally planned to take was bombed by Nazi aircraft. Many of the passengers died and were buried near the debris. A series of slow train rides landed her in Sweden, where she booked passage on an ocean liner



for home. During the hazardous crossing, it was rumored that a German spy had been arrested on board.

Meanwhile, Jan Potocki's older daughter, Isabelle, a graduate of Eastern High School in Baltimore, was teaching English in Torun when the invasion began. Along with other refugees, she set out on foot for Warszawa with the retreating Polish Army. They subsisted on raw turnips and occasional food from the army kitchen and nearby peasant huts. She was alone but made friends among the hundreds of other refugees. Sleeping in fields and potato mounds, they made the month-long trek to the capital

city, only to be told to return to their respective towns for registration. Isabelle walked back to Torun, then started again for Warszawa, this time by freight train. Back in the capital, an uncle paid her fare to Italy, after a three-week wait for a German travel permit. In Trieste, she waited for money to be sent from Baltimore, and at last she sailed for New York. She was jubilantly welcomed home by her grandmother and a host of family and friends after her four-month ordeal. Now the family redoubled their efforts to locate and repatriate Isabelle's fourteen-year-old sister, Mira.



Mania and son Jan

Mira, along with the sisters' stepmother and baby brother, had fled Warszawa within the first week of the Nazi bombing. Mania drove the family car at night, with no headlights, as Mira held her brother in the back seat. A teenaged cousin and a servant accompanied them, and the cousin stood on the running board watching for obstacles in the road. During the day they rested in forests and sometimes managed to sleep. Enemy planes droned overhead, and Mania later recalled, "We were just waiting to

be hit and die, and hoping that when we were hit we would all die together.” (quoted in *The Sun*, May 1, 1940) Mania was still nursing her child—any other nourishment for the family was hard to find.

They stayed with relatives in Chełm for a week. When the enemy arrived they fled in two cars. Mania had two little American flags and pasted them on the cars' windshields. At a small town near the Russian border, the cars were impounded by the Russian army. Since the Soviets had taken all the food from the stores, Mania had to beg for milk. Fortunately, she found a kind-hearted Russian captain who spoke English. He gave them passes to return to Chełm and provided gasoline and food.



Mira Potocki

Back in Chelm, the Germans confiscated the cars. Mania told them “The Russians had respected American citizens, but they said they didn’t care.” By November the trains were again running in Poland, and Mania, Mira, and little Jan returned to Warszawa. Through that winter, they ventured out only when necessary, since the streets were constantly patrolled. One day, the Germans roped off their street searching for an escaped prisoner. By the time they were finished, twenty neighbors had been injured and four were killed. Mania made sure that Mira always carried her American passport. Both Mira and Mania endured frostbite of the hands and feet.



Wedding of Jan Potocki and Marya (Mania) Grzegorzak

At last, Isabelle was able to contact her family through the American Red Cross, and she arranged for their return to Baltimore. In late April of 1940, they were home. Mira was reunited with Isabelle at their maternal grandmother's home on South Chester Street. Mania and baby Jan went to the Belair Road home of her sister Bronisława.

Safe at last, Mania told the **Sun** reporter that “Over there, people are hoping and praying something will happen, so they won’t have to go through another winter like the last one.” Poland would endure five more brutal winters before the war ended. It would be even longer before the full story of those thousands of deaths at Katyń would be known. Among the martyred was Jan Potocki, their husband and father.

Sources: various **Baltimore Sun** papers articles- "Baltimore Girl Escapes German Raiders In Poland" (September 2, 1939); "Two Girls Tell Of Trip Abroad" (October 6, 1939); "Baltimorean Tells Of War in Poland" (also October 6, 1939); "Arrival Of Polish Refugee Awaited" (February 9, 1940); "Refugee From Poland Asks First For Chicken Dinner" (February 11, 1940); "Learns Father, Believed Dead, Lives In Concentration Camp" (May 1, 1940); Grzegorzak family lore

Author: Claire Puła
Research Assistant: Carl Wilton

For more information about the Katyn Massacre go to www.katynbaltimore.org.

HERE, THERE, PHAM is Everywhere !!

PISANKI WORKSHOP Nearly 70 Pisanki workshop participants over two sessions created beautiful dyed eggs, learned about this treasured cultural folk art, and just had a great time. Thanks to PNA Council 21 Baltimore for hosting, **Krystyna Osowski for her amazing teaching talents**, and the volunteers that made this possible. We are grateful to the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA) and the City of Baltimore for awarding us a Creative Baltimore grant that allowed us to offer a very affordable, family-friendly price that let so many participate. It was especially gratifying to see many children able to attend and express themselves through art with their families.

This was our first grant-enabled event of 2025. Keep watching our website and FB page for more exciting cultural events throughout the year.



Coming Together ~ Sharing Our Heritage

COMMUNITY



Polish Heritage Association of Maryland was represented by Judi Zamzow, Claire Pula and Ania Wilton at St. Stephen's Parish Polish Festival, March 23rd

MUSIC

Several members of PHAM gathered to enjoy a recent **concert at An Die Musik** featuring celebrated Polish duo, pianist Adam Makowicz and Saxophonist Krzysztof Medyna. (Pictured with Adam Makowicz, left, are Mary Rybczynski, Tom Rybczynski, and Patricia Skurzynski.)



Important Note:

Right before Easter, PHAM Board member, Patricia Skurzynski (on right in photo), suffered a serious accident requiring surgery. A long recovery period is expected. If you would like to send Patricia a card or note of encouragement, please contact us at phaofmd@gmail.com, and we will provide you with her contact information.



Instructor,
MaryAnn Chorabik

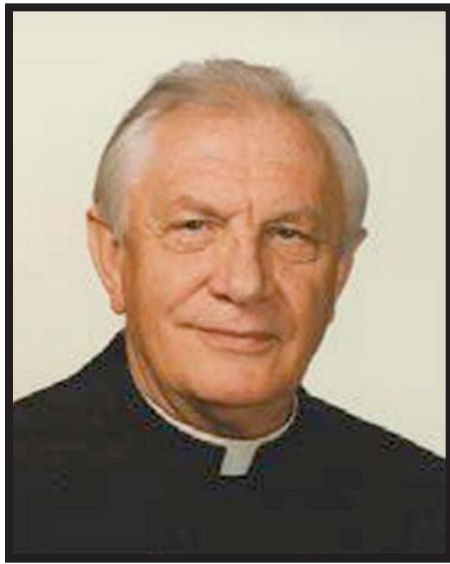
PALM WEAVING WORKSHOP

PALMS IN A POD: Just in time for Palm Sunday, PHAM members found each other at the palm weaving workshop at St. Kazimierz Church hall in Canton.

Ania Wilton, Judi Zamzow, Eve Prietz, Claire Pula, Krystyna Osowska



Remembering Fr. Franciszek Okroy...



UPON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP, APRIL 23, 1945

The following article was originally published in the December 2006 issue of the Trumpeter. Fr. Okroy was a PHAM founder and its chaplain for over 30 years, so we feel that it is fitting to honor him as a witness for his faith, for his love of Poland, and as a pastoral leader for his people.

In Memoriam - Rev. Franciszek Okroy, S. Ch. On September 15th [2006] PHA lost our beloved Chaplain, Father Franciszek Okroy. He was a founding member and served the organization for over 30 years with much enthusiasm. To honor the memory of Father Okroy we are reprinting with permission of the **Catholic Review** the following article that appeared in the May 6, 1983 issue.

FR. OKROY OVERCAME OBSTACLES TO REALIZE HIS DREAM

World War II internment in Dachau Concentration Camp and 25 years as an administrator in Rome all stood in the way of Fr. Franciszek Okroy's dream, but he has accomplished it at Holy Rosary Parish in Baltimore.

The associate pastor is a member of the Society of Christ, a Polish missionary order dedicated to the pastoral care of Polish emigrants around the world. The 68-year-old priest, born just south of the Baltic port city of Gdansk, always wanted to serve his people in an ethnic overseas parish.

His order was founded in 1932 in Poland by the late Cardinal August Hlond of Warsaw with the approval of Pope Pius XI. In 1976 the order had some 103 priests active in Poland as well as another 61 brothers, 78 seminarians and 22 novices. Abroad, the order sustained another 120 priests and world-wide cared for more than half a million souls, said Father Okroy.

Today the Society of Christ is engaged in pastoral work with Polish immigrants in Australia, Brazil, England,

France, East and West Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Argentina, Holland and Estonia, the priest said. The order has 28 priests in the U.S. and Canada, he added.

Recalling his own career, Father Okroy said he had some college work and reserve officer training in Poland before deciding to enter the society's seminary. When the war began he left the seminary to fight with a marine unit. After his capture by the Germans, because he was a seminarian, he was sent to Dachau concentration camp near Munich instead of to a prisoner of war camp - a violation of international law, he said.

He recalled entering the camp with its motto "Arbeit macht frei" (work makes you free) on the gates the same day that Paris fell in 1940. He was released by American soldiers four years and ten months later on April 23, 1945.

Dachau inmates were told they had no rights, they could be killed at any time; all they had to do was work, he said. Father Okroy estimated there were some 2,000 priests imprisoned at Dachau, including Poles, French and Germans. He also recalled a French bishop and a Polish bishop imprisoned there as well as some 20 seminarians.

The Holy Rosary associate said priests at Dachau were treated more harshly than other prisoners. One punishment for priests was to tie their hands behind them and then hang them by their hands from the shower room wall for an hour, a very painful experience. One of the guards' favorite day for this was

Good Friday, he said. He said some priests died from this treatment because they were so weakened "and others died from humiliation." He recalled one German priest and former German army colonel who had run a military academy during World War I as an example of the latter. The priests were also used for medical experiments, he recalled, noting that some 800 of them died in the camp.

Father Okroy said the Dachau population was kept constant at about 20,000 prisoners. He noted, however, that toward the end of the war some inmates had camp numbers in the 300,000 range and represented most of the countries of Europe. His own number was 13,262.

The priest recalled seeing Jews in the camp for only the first couple of months during his stay. He remembered too, an influx of 5,000 Russian prisoners of war who were systematically executed in groups of 100 per day. The sick and weak of the camp were taken and gassed, he said.

When the American army was approaching, a rumor circulated that the guards would kill all of the inmates before they arrived, said Father Okroy. To prevent this a group of prisoners escaped, made contact with the

"You can be in prison and you can be free at the same time."



Dachau prisoners cheer to their American liberators

"A hard life and sacrifice makes good Christians."

Americans and enjoined them to hurry to Dachau. A small detachment did, terminating the camp's operation.

How did Father Okroy survive in the camp? The priest said that, considering the wartime situation and all the lives being lost at the front, he viewed the camp as a big monastery. The hard work and lack of food took on the nature of monastic mortification for the young seminarian. "You can be in prison and you can be free at the same time," he said.

The wood strips in the windows separating the glass panes were crosses to Father Okroy. Everytime he looked out a window he was reminded of the sign of redemption. A daily routine meant to humiliate the prisoners, by which they had to doff their caps before the guards on the way to work, was turned into a spiritual exercise by the priest and others for whom it signified tipping their hats to Our Lord's Eucharistic presence in the nearest Catholic church.

The priest said he felt he was in Dachau because it was the will of God and consequently felt a certain peace. On the other hand, he noted, many new inmates were understandably full of fear and stress when they arrived at the camp. This contributed to their short survival time, he said.

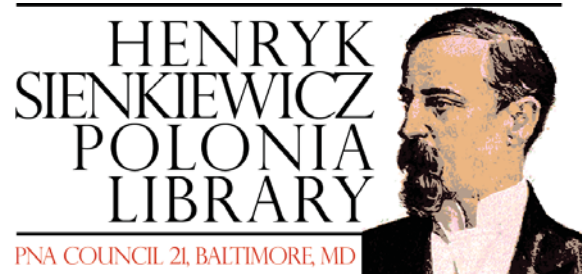
Father Okroy said when he first arrived in the camp, inmates were given a third of a loaf of bread each day. He said that no matter how little food came his way he made a point to conserve it so that he was eating three times a day. He said it had a good psychological effect to know that he would eat each morning before work. He recalled others who had already consumed their ration complaining about whether or not they could survive the day.

The German priests imprisoned in Dachau had the privilege of celebrating Mass, Father Okroy said. Because of this and the large number of priests interned, he was able to receive Communion daily and have his confession heard whenever he wished.

continued on page 11

PAGES/STRONY: PHAM BOOK CLUB NOTES

AT THE



You are invited to the next meeting of The Polish Heritage Book Club, on **Saturday June 14, 2-4 pm**. We will discuss the contemporary nonfiction work *How to Feed a Dictator: Saddam Hussein, Idi Amin, Enver Hoxha, Fidel Castro, and Pol Pot Through the Eyes of Their Cooks* (2020), by journalist Witold Szablowski. According to the publisher, Penguin Books, "Dishy, deliciously readable, and dead serious, *How to Feed a Dictator* provides a knife's-edge view of life under tyranny." It should be an interesting read that prompts ready discussion.

To participate live, visit the Henryk Sienkiewicz Polonia Library on the second floor of the PNA Building, at 1627 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore MD 21231, where your host is librarian Adam Mazurek, First Vice President of PHAM. **To join the meeting virtually, email Dot Tassone at dstassone@gmail.com for the online Zoom link.**

We have enjoyed a very varied selection of titles for the 2024-2025 reading season. For September, we read and discussed *Mrs. Mohr Goes Missing*, a mystery story set in 19th century Krakow. In October, we considered the absurdist play *The Card Index*. During both our November and January meetings, we addressed the classic novel *Victory*, and then we saw a movie version of the story in February. On March 8, we discussed *The Journal of Countess Francoise Krasinska*, a fictional diary about a historical Polish woman. And in April,

for Lent, we read a philosophical essay called "The Priest and the Jester." Most recently, earlier in May, we discussed *Testaments: Two Novellas of Emigration and Exile*, about the Polish immigrant experience in Baltimore, Maryland.

The June 14 meeting of the Book Club will be the last one before our summer break during July and August. We expect to circulate a list of titles on which to vote for our summer reading, and possibly another list to nominate some titles for the next reading season, from September 2025 through June 2026. We hope that you will join us!



The founder and moderator of the Book Club, Dr. Dorothy Pula Strohecker, is a Conrad scholar, having both written her dissertation on this author and presented at many conferences about him. Book Club members read a wide variety of works related to Poland and Polonia.



...HAPPY 95TH, DOROTHY!

OUR
INDOMITABLE
DR. DOROTHY
PULA STROHECKER
CELEBRATED HER
NINETY-FIFTH
BIRTHDAY ON
MARCH 21, 2025.
WSZYSTKIEGO
NAJLEPSZEGO
AND STO LAT!



~MEMBERSHIP~

PHAM welcomes all people, from all backgrounds, young and old, who wish to share in this cultural legacy and to learn more about Polish culture, history and traditions.

Interested in Poland? Love your Polish Heritage?

Enjoy ...

- ~ Cultural & educational programs in history, music, art & film
- ~ Learning about Polish Americans' contributions to America
- ~ Meetings followed by good food & fellowship where you can hear and speak the Polish language
- ~ Monthly Book Club get-togethers
- ~ Receiving the Association's newsletter, *the Trumpeter*

Your membership is a vote for our mission to promote Polish culture, arts, music, literature, traditions, and more. It's called "Polskość" ("Polishness") - all the things that make us proud to be Polish and Polish-American.

Membership type:

- Individual - \$35
- Couple - \$60
- Family (includes children under 21) - \$75
- Full Time Student - \$20
- Emerita/Emeritus (over 80) - Free!

Please Sign up Online at phaofmd.org

Remembering Fr. Okroy... continued from page 9

"This was my calling and I am fulfilling it."

From a religious point of view, the Holy Rosary associate pastor said he "never felt so close to God" as in Dachau where he witnessed such terrible suffering. "A hard life and sacrifice makes good Christians," he explained.

After the war Father Okroy continued his studies in Rome, at the Gregorian University. He was ordained in 1948 and soon became secretary to Archbishop Joseph Jawlina, a Polish Bishop of military chaplains who was made protector of all Polish immigrants worldwide by Pope Pius XII.

Between 1963 and 1970 he served as a Second Vicar General for members of the Society of Christ outside of Poland, a position that developed from Polish government travel restrictions. From 1970-73 he served as provincial superior for the order in Canada and the United States.

Witamy!

Polish Heritage Association of Maryland is pleased to welcome new members.

Elizabeth Lipinski
Daniel Schiavone
Leonardo Schiavone
Konstanty Schiavone
Gretchen Tome
Laurel Matey
Nancy Novotny
Linda Renner
Susan Renner
Elizabeth Kusiak Dawson
Louanne Krawczewicz Myers
Alice Bukowski
Chester Kukwa
Gloria-Anne Bartas
Marjorie Och
Patricia Hoofnagle

We also welcome back many folks who have recently renewed their memberships.

After completing his first term as a provincial superior, he requested pastoral work in Baltimore, the type of work to which he had always aspired. Father Okroy told *The Review*, "A priest who doesn't work with people is like a married woman without children."

Except for a brief stay at St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, Wyandotte, Mich., in 1979-81 where he served first as associate and later as pastor, the priest has spent his entire pastoral life at Holy Rosary. Father Okroy told *The Review* that the Polish language Masses, prayers, hymns and sermons at Holy Rosary provide a great consolation to local Polish immigrants who have separated themselves from homeland and family.

The priest says he likes Baltimore and Holy Rosary parish and hopes to remain indefinitely. "This was my calling and I am fulfilling it," he said.

Ed's Note: Father was buried in Holy Rosary Cemetery on September 22nd, following a funeral Mass at Holy Rosary Church. Members of PHA attended as a group, wearing their PHA insignia adorned with a black ribbon. He had laid in State in the Church the preceding day.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

-- **Scholarship Award Luncheon: Sunday, May 18, 2025;** 2-4:30 pm, Polish Home Club, Lower Hall, 512 South Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231.

-- **Maryland's Polish Community: When and Why We Came** As part of our ongoing community outreach, PHAM is very excited to make a presentation for the summer program at the Wise and Well Resource Center at Keswick on **Friday, August 29 at 1:00 pm.**

-- **An Evening with Lech Walesa:** Former President of Poland, Solidarity leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner will be in BALTIMORE on **September 27.** There is no D.C. date. Polish Heritage Association is working on getting group tickets with a discount. **Contact phaofmd@gmail.com BEFORE the end of May** to commit to tickets for this once in a lifetime opportunity. See the event details here: <https://historyexplorer.com/>.

--**Workshops Planned:** Looking ahead, we hope to hold a wycinanki workshop in early fall and a genealogy workshop in late fall. Details to be announced at a later date.

The Peasants Film Discussion... continued from page 3

Translator Anna Zaanko opened by animatedly addressing who Wladyslaw Reymont was and why he wrote this novel, and the place of the story of Polish literary heritage and in Polish culture more broadly. Dr. Michał Wilczewski, of Northwestern University gave vigorous and informative remarks about the place of this film within Polish cinematic heritage and how it is influenced by and goes beyond the tradition of animation in Poland. Dr. Katarzyna Zechenter of University College London presented thoughtful and detailed content about how this film compares with other films of Reymont's work (especially films of *The Peasants*), and given that there are already other films of this work, what makes the Welchmans' (writer/directors') interpretation unique.

Attendee comments included that because the film can be seen to focus on the story of Jagna, to the exclusion of other novel elements and characters, perhaps it should be called *Jagna's Story* instead of *The Peasants*. Another

acknowledged the time limitation imposed when adapting an epic book to film and suggested that it might be better serialized to explore sub-plots and nuances of theme [Editor's note: *The Peasants* was serialized on Polish television in 1973]. Another asked what might have been added to the movie that was not in the book; one answer was more emphasis on Jagna's beautiful wycinanki art (Polish papercuts) as a way to present her as more fully realized.

A post-event questionnaire garnered these comments: "*The program itself was impressive -- great choices for panelists! I'm so glad I attended*" "*... a fantastic panel of varied presenters who were highly knowledgeable and engaging... makes me want to re-watch the movie and read the books!*" "*Excellent program with top tier presenters who brought their valuable insights into the movie as well as the book. Please do more events like this.*"

A videorecording of the introductions and presentations of this event is available through YouTube -- <https://youtu.be/8tZc-XZfH7w>

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!..

The Polish Heritage Association of Maryland is on track to expand our programming while growing our membership in 2025, reviving awareness of the Polish Diaspora in Baltimore and throughout Maryland, with events that are accessible and appealing to the public. In order to expand the scope of existing events, and add in new ones, we need your help.

Your donation of some time to help us out in the months ahead would be greatly appreciated. Even just a few hours can make a big difference.

Please email phaofmd@gmail.com with the subject VOLUNTEERS.



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