

## American Council for Polish Culture Spring Board Meeting in Cleveland, Ohio



Debbie Majka, President of The American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) opened the Spring Board Meeting, April 20-21, in Cleveland, Ohio. Members were absolutely delighted by the extensive activities and food extravaganzas, which were hosted by Ben S. Stefański II, President of the Polish American Cultural Center – John Paul II. Contributions made by Thad Cooke, founder of the Jamestown Colony of Poles in Cleveland and George Sobieraj, President of the Cleveland Society of Poles were also deeply appreciated.

During the business sessions, a number of committee chairs reported on the status and progress being made with various Council programs. Peter Obst dedicated great effort in arranging for the design, purchase and placement of an official Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission marker at the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia crediting the designer and chief engineer for this longest suspension bridge ever built during that time, Polish American Ralph Modjeski. The application, accompanied by extensive documentation was filed in Dec. 2006, and after a torturous review process was approved on April 10, 2007. Joseph Zazyczny, a member of the Committee, has undertaken the task of securing permission and assistance in placing the Modjeski marker. The costs of casting and mounting this Ralph Modjeski plaque are being absorbed by Swift Mailing, Inc., operated by Edward Jr., Allen, Paul, John and Walter in fond remembrance of their father, Edward Szyszko. Pres. Debbie Majka has set a tentative date of Saturday, Sept. 15, 2007, for the plaque dedication ceremony.

Following the Friday business sessions, the ACPC board members were invited to attend a testimonial reception honoring Eugene Bak, who is a devoted activist in the Cleveland Polonia community. Mr. Bak is the Executive Director of the Polish American Cultural Center and was instrumental in reconstructing that facility to house cultural activities. Additionally, a Polish Heritage Museum was added to the Cultural Center in 2005 in order to promulgate Polish History and Polish Arts at a higher and stronger level. At the time of Mr. Bak's retirement he was serving as the President and Chief Operating Officer of the Mooney-Kokkola Chemical Plant. The audience was enchanted by the many testimonials honoring Gene Bak and by the charm and wit conveyed by this tall distinguished-looking honoree. The reception hall was jam-packed, clear evidence of the Polonia's high regard for Mr. Bak and appreciation for his exemplary work in promoting Polish culture and heritage. The event was highlighted by the presentation of the Knights Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland to Mr. Bak by Polish Consul General, Krzysztof Kasprzyk. In addition to a table laden with delectable hors d'oeuvres that was constantly replenished, the guests were treated to a splendid musical interlude by pianist Jacek Sobieski and singer Dorota Sobieski who presented Moniuszko's "Znasz ten kraj" and a lilting Mazurka by Chopin. Sto lat, Eugene Bak!

After a morning of extensive committee reports revealing excellent progress and successes in the many programs and functions of the Council, the members were treated to a buffet of a variety of sandwiches, salads and desserts, which constituted a very tasty working lunch. The meeting terminated in time for the members to attend the Saturday 5:00 o'clock Mass at the beautiful St. Stanislaus Church. Everyone had the opportunity to pay homage and pray before the newly installed icon depicting St. Stanislaus and Pope John Paul II.

That evening the Board members were wined and dined at the Cultural Center where a delectable Polish cuisine dinner was served. The after dinner speaker, Dr. Thaddeus Radziłowski, Founder and President of the Piast Institute – Hamtramck, MI, stirred the listeners' intellectual faculties with his interesting, provocative and well-researched talk on Polish American culture in the U.S. as it relates to the culture and customs in Poland. It was fascinating to learn that a number of Polonia customs in the U.S. such as grinding and preparing horseradish at Easter time, is not universally practiced in Poland. In Poland, such customs are practiced only in some small towns. Influenced by their immigrant parents, U.S. Poles established their own traditions. Dr. Radziłowski also pointed out the significant influence that the Polish Catholic parishes have on the maintenance of Polish customs. Private conversations following the program revealed that ACPC members admire Dr. Radziłowski's stimulating books and articles and view him as one of the outstanding intellectuals and leaders in Polonia today.

A vigorous and spirited "Bóg Zapłać" goes to handsome, articulate and debonair Ben Stefański who was the perfect host. He planned and arranged a thoroughly enjoyable and informative weekend for the visiting ACPC Board. Very hearty thanks are also extended to Thad Cooke for his important role in assisting with the arrangements for this highly successful meeting. Members are always intrigued by Thad's passion for Polish and Polish-American books and marvel at his infallible memory, which enables him to recall dates, names and the minutest details of history and events.

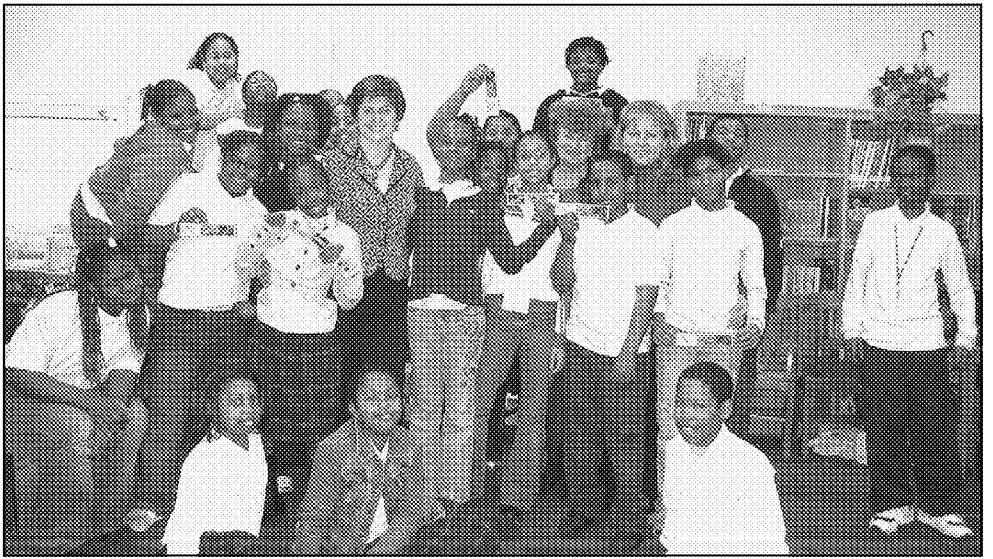
Council members are also most grateful for the gift of books and pamphlets, which Mrs. Thad Cooke assembled in parting gift packages. The books were generously donated by Mr. George Sobieraj, President of the Cleveland Society of Poles – *Podhale* by Jan Guft Mostowy, *Steel Will* by Wanda Sendzimir; and *Cracow: An Illustrated History* by Zdzisław Zygułski, Jr. In reading these books, our members will once again raise their voices in praise for such wise and dedicated Polish American leaders as are found in the Cleveland Community.

The Council was very pleased to welcome to the Board Dr. Maria Winnicka, the new President of the Polish Arts Club, Elmira NY, an ACPC Affiliate organization, who was accompanied by the Immediate Past President Mrs. Christine Markiewicz, a long time dear friend of the Council. A further delight was to learn from Dr. Winnicka that her Club is inviting the Council to hold its Fall 2007 Board Meeting in Elmira.

The 59<sup>th</sup> Annual ACPC Convention, hosted by the Friends of Polish Art – Detroit, (FPA) will take place July 10-14 at the Dearborn Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dearborn, MI. Convention Co-Chairs Mary Ellen Tyszka & Carol Surma and the FPA Convention Committee promise an interesting, exciting convention. Please join us! You will enjoy excellent Polish hospitality, good food, excellent music and friendly camaraderie. For registration information, contact Janet Franczek, 17238 Bentler, Detroit, MI 48219-1234. □

## Learning about Poland

By: Dr. Monika Krol director@polishcenterdc.org



L. - Monika Król, Hanna Reiter, Hanna Bondarewska

On May 29, 2007, in Washington DC, both at Anne Beers Elementary School and at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, a year of learning about Poland by twenty-four Washington DC public school sixth graders will culminate in Polish dance and drama performances by the students and in an exhibition of their art work.

You are invited to attend either or both of the children's presentations. One will be at 1:00 PM in the school, at 3600 Alabama Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20020; the other will be at the Embassy, located at 2640 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009, at 6:00 PM.

Many DC public school students this year are now studying one of fifty different countries thanks to a program jointly administered by the District of Columbia public schools and the Washington Performing Arts Society. This is the Embassy Adoption Program, which has enriched public education in the District for over thirty years. Under this program, each participating embassy has been paired with a DC public elementary school, so that appropriate staff members and outside cultural experts have given instruction to selected sixth (and occasionally fifth) graders. Working closely with the Embassies and the schools have been Njambi, the coordinator of the Embassy Adoption Program, and Ms. Charlotte Cameron Marshall of the Washington Performing Arts Society's Women's Committee. Susan Niedenfuhr, also of the WPAS Women's Committee, has served as a liaison for the Polish program at Anne Beers.

The Polish program was organized for the Anne Beers Elementary School under the leadership of Ms. Hanna Reiter, wife of the Polish ambassador, Hon. Janusz Reiter. Dr. Monika Krol, Executive Director of the National Polish Center (American Center of Polish Culture dba) has introduced the students to Polish history, culture, and politics via lectures, slides, and films, subsequently reviewing with the students what they have learned. Ms. Hanna Bondarewska, an actress, dancer, and teacher of the performing arts, is teaching twelve of the students the polonaise; and the other twelve, under her direction, are preparing a skit to be performed on the May 29 program. The dancers of the polonaise will be wearing costumes manufactured in Poland by the Arlen Company and donated on the company's behalf by its president, Andrzej Tabaczynski.

In addition, all the students, a group selected from the sixth-grade classes of Ms. Valyncia Lindsey and Mr. Rhone Jones, are learning painting on plexiglas and water colors, using such subjects as older Polish town architecture. Art objects created by the students will be on display at the embassy during the May 29 reception. The contribution of the art teacher, artist Inna Slutskaya, whom Mrs. Reiter and Dr. Krol invited to join the program, is especially helpful because it fills a gap in the students' curriculum. Like many other jurisdictions the District has had to cut back on arts education for lack of funds, and these sixth-graders have no other visual arts instruction.

Another component of the program will be a mini-"United Nations" meeting to be held on Wednesday, May 9, at the Marie Reed Learning Center in Washington DC, in which three of the students studying Poland will participate. The three are receiving special instruction to prepare for this event, and one of them will go to New York to visit the United Nations itself during the following month.

The program and exhibition at the elementary school and the embassy will represent the best kind of international cooperation. It can be hoped that the participating students are broadening their experience in ways that will be of benefit to them all their lives.

Caption for the attached picture Feb15SchoolVisit2.jpg:

From left to right: Mrs. Hanna Reiter, wife of the Polish ambassador, Hon. Janusz Reiter; Ms. Hanna Bondarewska; Dr. Monika Krol, Executive Director of the National Polish Center; with students during a visit to Anne Beers Elementary School. □

## The Polish University Club

### 60th Anniversary Celebration

JOIN US IN RECOGNIZING 60 YEARS  
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Our Lady of the Bright Mount Polish Parish  
3424 West Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018

**Sunday - June 17th, 2007**

12: PM celebratory mass in church

1: PM luncheon/scholarship presentations in parish hall

**Cost per person \$50.00**

(includes traditional homemade lunch, commemorative program,  
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Polish University Club, 1845 E. Merced Ave., West Covina, CA 91791.

For more information please contact Anna Prejna at (626) 919-2006  
or visit our website at [www.pucla.org](http://www.pucla.org).

Deadline for all submissions/reservations is June 1st

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