



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

Colonel Lenard Honored Grand Cross - Order of Merit



Marcin Krawczyk

PAC Washington D.C. July 17, 2007 – On July 15, 2007 Col. Casimir I. Lenard, AUS (RET.) the Executive Director of the Washington D.C. Office of the Polish American Congress was honored with the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland by Lech Kaczyński, President of the Republic of Poland.

Lenard received the award for his life's work in the cause for Poland in a ceremony at the Polish Embassy in Washington, hosted by His Excellency Janusz Reiter, Ambassador from the Republic of Poland.

Lenard was one of three Polish Americans presented with an Order of Merit award by Poland's Defense Minister Mr. Aleksander Szczygło. The other two were, retired architect, Julian Kulski – recognized with the Commander Cross with Star, and Professor Ryszard Michalski with the Officer Cross.

Lenard, born in Chicago, Illinois, was sent to Poland by his parents for studies and spent eight years in a Jesuit run old-classical Academy. In 1940 he joined the armed conflict in the defense of Poland's freedom. He "gratefully accepted the award not only in recognition of his efforts but mainly for the collective endeavors by members of the Polish American Congress."

Polish American Congress President Frank Spula flew in from Chicago to be present at the award ceremony for Lenard, who in 1994 and then in 2000, with his wife Myra, had received the Commander Cross and then the Commander Cross with Star bestowed upon them individually, by Poland's Presidents Lech Wałęsa and Aleksander Kwaśniewski, respectively.

"The Polish American Congress owes a great debt of gratitude to Cas' leadership and that of his late wife Myra" said President Spula. "We are pleased that the Polish government decided to recognize Cas, who is one of the pillars of Polonia and of better relations between the United States and the government and people of Poland."

Lenard was the Executive Director of the Washington D.C. Office from 1970 to 1974, and is currently since May 2000. It was mainly during Myra's tenure as Executive Director of the Washington Office from early 1980's to the time of her demise in May 2000, that great things were accomplished for the benefit of the people of Poland and the American Polonia through the teamwork of the Lenard's.

Other members of the Polish American Congress leadership present at the ceremony were Mr. Ludwik Wnękowicz, Vice President for Polish Agenda, Dr. Susanne Lotarski, President of the Washington Metropolitan Area Division, Dr. Barbara Borzuchowska Andersen, Director of Research at the Washington D.C. Office, and PAC National Directors Ava Polański, Adam Bak and Thaddeus Mirecki, former President of the Metro Division and recently elected President of the American Council of Polish Culture.

Among other distinguished representatives of the local Polish American community present were LT General (Ret.) Edward Równy and retired State Department diplomat Leonard Baldyga. □

NY Polish American Congress launches Long Island Chapter

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It's now official. The Downstate New York Division of the Polish American Congress announced its long-awaited Long Island Chapter covering the counties of Nassau and Suffolk will begin operations on September 1st with the Polish National Club of Hempstead as its home base.

"We first started planning such a chapter several years ago," said Frank Milewski who heads the Downstate N.Y. Division. "Now that we were able to get the right people to run it we're ready to go."

Heading the chapter will be Richard Brzozowski, presently the secretary of the Downstate Division which is domiciled at the Polish & Slavic Center in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

At this time, the chapter's executive committee will include Kazimierz Nietupski of the Polish Friends of Copiague; Michael Madejski of the Armia Krajowa Veterans Association; Margaret Gradzki of the Polish National Club of Hempstead and Zbigniew Koralewski of the Polish Singers Alliance.

When the Downstate N.Y. Division was formed at the end of World War II, most of the area's Polonia was situated within the City of New York. So were the N.Y. PAC's headquarters, even to this day.

"Now, with such a significant number of Polish Americans outside the city, we have to branch out to serve them there," said Milewski. "Once we get going on Long Island, we'll have to start planning to extend our presence to the northern suburbs as well."

As Polonia's national umbrella organization, the Polish American Congress intends to have its new chapter work closely with the American Polish Council of Long Island, the local umbrella organization there.

"We hope to be the place where the English-speaking and Polish-speaking components of our ethnic community will find a common ground and a common purpose in the multicultural and politically conscious society we live in," he said.

To build and expand membership, the chapter hopes to contact every Polish American organization and parish on Long Island with an invitation to join and participate in the latest effort to give the Polish American community a powerful and united voice. Throughout the United States, the Polish American Congress has an aggregate membership of over one million. Included are over 3,000 Polish American organizations consisting of fraternal, veteran, cultural and professional groups, religious societies and social associations. It also encompasses individual, corporate and associate memberships.

Through its 29 state divisions and 10 chapters, as well as its member organizations, the Polish American Congress promotes civic, educational and cultural programs designed to further not only the knowledge of Polish history, language and culture but also to stimulate Polish American involvement and accomplishment.

Much of the work of the Congress is delegated to standing committees which are involved in such issues as the American Agenda, Polish Affairs, Anti-Bigotry, Holocaust Documentation, Education, Polish American Heritage Month, Environment and Youth.

For more information about the Long Island Chapter, please call Richard Brzozowski at (516) 354-4349. □

Polish American Cultural Network

By: *Florence Beane*

The Polish American Cultural Network celebrated the 25th anniversary of its founding with a general meeting and a buffet luncheon. Invitations, nomination ballots and a letter that outlined existing problems that needed to be considered at the meeting had been sent to all members that were paid up for the fiscal year beginning June 26, 2006. Unfortunately, only two people mailed in their ballots while only 13 people: 4 members, 3 guests, 5 board members and a representative of Loyola Marymount University (where the meeting was held) actually came to the meeting.

There was a board meeting scheduled for an hour prior to the general meeting to take care of business and to discuss the continued poor response of the membership regarding attendance and voting. Board members discussed many ideas for the future of the PACN, however, with no one offering themselves for leadership or volunteer positions, the board members could not see any future for the organization.

At this point, the board invited all members present to join in the discussion. The general consensus was that with the passing of Arthur Zygmunt, and his tireless dedication to keeping the PACN Journal alive with his extensive reports on Polonian activities, news events, book reviews and his columns such as "Bigos", the "glue that held the PACN together" had been lost. Without the Journal, and with no one willing to take on the duties of keeping it up, there was no hope of rebuilding the PACN community. The end result of the discussions was a motion to dissolve the organization. The motion was seconded and then passed unanimously to the regret of all concerned.

The members present discussed the disposition of the funds in the PACN bank account and agreed to pursue the establishment of an Arthur and Gene Zygmunt Scholarship fund to be administered by the ACPC (American Council of Polish Culture), an essay competition for Intermediate and High School students, a joint project with PAHA (Polish American Historical Association), as well as giving some funds to the Polish Millennium Library in Los Angeles, and to the Polish American Congress fund for a statue of Paderewski at the USC Polish Music Reference Center. Each of these items will be short-term rather than ongoing due to the small amount of funding available at this time. However, contributions will be accepted for the Arthur and Gene Zygmunt Scholarship Fund for the time being. Donations to the Zygmunt scholarship or essay contest in their memory should be sent to PACN c/o 445 Esther Place, Placentia, CA 92870.

The PACN has certainly provided the Polish American community with wonderful support, information and projects through the years. The Polish American Cultural Network Newsletter was created in the fall of 1982 as a direct response to the appeal of Polish-Americans who visited "The Invincible Polish Spirit" Exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry, December 7, 1979 – April 27, 1980. Under the

direction of Marek Bielski, AIA, the exhibit celebrated 1,000 years of Polish history, folklore, religion, music, literature art science, medicine, film, sports as well as Polish and Polish-American contributions to the United States in the above fields. It was the first large-scale presentation of Polish culture in the West and over 1,271,000 persons viewed this exhibit. One of the surprising outcomes of the show was the appeal of most of the Polish-American public who signed and commented in the guest book. They included Americans of first, second and third generation Polish backgrounds who hungered for more knowledge of Polish and Polish-American accomplishments as well as information on events in the Southern California area. Many were children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren living in the area without a full appreciation of their ancestral heritage. They were the impetus for the creation of the newsletter by the Board of Officers who were Halina Gawlinska, President, Chris Sierko Barkley, Co-Vice President, Gene Zygmunt, Co-Vice President and Master Calendar Coordinator, Wanda Moore, Treasurer, Arthur Zygmunt, Secretary and Newsletter Editor and Andrzej Rudnicki, Legal Counsel. The first issue of the newsletter was a modest seven pages and detailed summer concerts at the Hollywood Bowl by the Warsaw Philharmonic and Krystian Zimerman, the discount tickets available to the PACN, a Master Calendar from September 1982 to June 1983, a description of the KTTV-11 segment on the Polish community in a California People program, addresses of area Polish restaurants, delicatessens and book, record and crafts venues and fun trivia questions (ex. the six volume Dictionary of the Polish Language was completed between 1807-1814 using literary sources as examples of word meanings) and a biographical sketch of the first member to pay PACN dues, Richard Prusinski.

There have been many PACN members who contributed their time and expertise to the production of the newsletter: Akiko and George Cybulski, Gene and Stanley Stankiewicz, Gillian Olechno-Huszcza, Ellen Lee, Edward Kaminski, Wanda Wilk, Marta Szumanska, Cynthia Parker, Denis Smokowicz, Chris Sierko Barkley and, of course, Gene and Arthur Zygmunt, whose dedication and talent made the publication possible. A complete set of the PACN Newsletter is being assembled and will be donated to the Millennium Library, Loyola/Marymount University and USC.

Through the years the PACN had participated in many Southern California community events, supported musical and artistic endeavors by talented individuals, joined with other Polish organizations in celebrating the holidays, memorial days and special occasions imbedded in the hearts of the Polish-Americans and their ancestors. PACN supported a writing campaign and appeal to the California State Legislature in choosing the Modjeska House in Orange County as a State Historic Landmark. The site became a part of the National Register of Historic Places as well. After the death of Gene Zygmunt in December 1995, Arthur steadfastly continued as Editor of the

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Polish American Congress

Southern California Division

Invites you to attend our meeting

Sunday, September 23 - 12:30 P.M.

Pope John Paul Center

3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda

Non-members of the

Polish American Congress

are welcome to attend our meetings

to see the many projects we have achieved

and are working on for Polonia.

Information: (626) 577-9797