

National Polish Center Elects Jack Pinkowski New Chairman



The National Polish Center in Washington DC announced Jack Pinkowski, Ph.D. was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors for 2008 at its annual meeting on November 14, 2007. Pinkowski succeeds Al Koproski, one of the original founders of the Center, who remains on the board. Other officers elected for 2008 are Ben Stefański, II of Cleveland, Ohio, Vice Chairman, and Richard M. Gabryś of Detroit, Michigan, treasurer. The members of the Board of Directors are: Zbigniew Adam Cymerman of Fort Washington, PA; Alexander R. Koproski and Patricia Koproski of Stamford, CT; Julian E. Kulski of Washington, DC; Jane Morse from Lanham, MD; Edward Pinkowski of Cooper City, FL; and Ed Rudziński of Washington, DC. Monika Krol, Ph.D., is the executive director of the Center and Patryk Drescher continues to serve as legal counsel.

The organization was founded in 1985 and incorporated in Washington DC as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization in 1989. The motivating aspiration behind the Center's establishment was to ensure that the contributions of Polish-Americans to this country would neither go unnoticed nor be forgotten by future generations. The American Center of Polish Culture, Inc. adopted the trade name The National Polish Center two years ago to eliminate misunderstandings with other organizations with similar names. By virtue of contributions and financial pledges from prominent members of Polonia from across the United States, including organizations and individuals, in 1991 the Center purchased a building in Washington DC near Dupont Circle at 2025 "O" Street. It was intended to serve as a showcase for Poland's art and culture in the nation's capital. Today, the National Polish Center has an extensive collection of original artwork, Polish and Polonia posters, books and manuscripts, as well as sculptures that highlight Polish creativity and artistic expression. The organization hosts activities in its private art gallery exhibiting the works of Polish and Polish-American artists. In the attractive Victorian main salon the Center offers seminars, musical concerts, educational programs, and lectures that are open to the public. The Center has nearly 1,000 members across the United States and relies on voluntary donations, memberships, and gifts to sustain operations and provide outreach. Communication with its many members is through its quarterly publication, Center Line, and by email notices. The Center's Website is www.polishcenterdc.org.

The National Polish Center serves as a national voice to communicate the rich legacy of the Polish people that is a source of pride to every Polish-American. The organization expresses its mission simply as "To promote, perpetuate, and preserve the appreciation of Polish culture in America." Jack Pinkowski, the incoming chairman of the Board of Directors, sees this year as a continuation of "Together a New Beginning" theme. He said "we will continue to expand our collaborations with other organizations in Polonia and thereby serve our mutual interests. At this time, we

have a really great board of talented and creative individuals who sincerely desire to make a difference." Major goals for the coming year include: securing the honorary citizenship status for Casimir Pulaski; and repeating the practice established in 2007 of paying tribute to Pulaski at the U.S. Capitol on his actual birth date March 6. In addition they plan to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Poles to America in September 1608. At the same time the Center plans to enhance efforts that serve commercial development in Poland and mutual trade between our countries. The entire Board of Directors and staff will be meeting for a weekend-long retreat and professional strategic planning meeting during the winter.

Pinkowski is the son of noted Polish historian Edward Pinkowski. Jack lives in Plantation Florida, a suburb of Fort Lauderdale, along with his wife of 38 years, Kathleen (nee Kruszewski) originally of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, and their adult son Marcel Pinkowski. Professor Pinkowski is a fulltime faculty member at the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). NSU is the sixth largest private, nonprofit university in the United States where Pinkowski teaches government and nonprofit management as well as international economics on the master's and doctoral levels. He received his Ph.D. in public administration from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida and a master's degree in Public Administration from Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. Originally from Philadelphia, he earned a bachelor's degree from Temple University. His major published works include: editor, along with Ali Farazmand, of the Handbook of Globalization, Governance, and Public Administration; editor of the Disaster Management Handbook; and editor of the Homeland Security Handbook.

He is also active in the business community as a commercial real estate investor and property manager in Florida. Professor Pinkowski is very involved in local economic development and has been appointed to a number of economic development and smart growth committees in addition to a community-wide visioning project where he served as the principal director of the enterprise. He is a member of numerous professional organizations concerning governmental relations, political science, public finance and taxation, and international economics. Jack has received many awards and recognition for his volunteer contributions and leadership of community organizations. □

Polonia's Wigilia heritage

By: *Robert Strybel*,

As you all well know, a great way to cultivate our Polish heritage is to promote interest in genealogy, heraldry, immigrant history and other forms of ancestral root-tracing. Others have bonded with their ethnic legacy by traveling to Poland or signing up for Polish language courses in America. And for many others, it is traditional Polish foods, crafts, customs and celebrations that have enabled them to touch base with their cultural heritage. Of all existing Polish customs, none are richer, more beautiful, solemn and inspiring than those pertaining to Wigilia, Christmas Eve. Over the years, that conclusion has been arrived at not only by Polish Americans rediscovering the Christmas legacy of their immigrant forebears. It has also been widely reaffirmed by many Americans of Irish, Italian, English, German, Scandinavian and other ethnic backgrounds that have married into Polonian families.

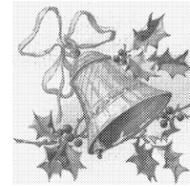
The reason: few other nationalities have Christmas celebrations that are so special and out of the ordinary. Wigilia is more than just another festive family gathering. It is a certain spirit, a frame of mind, and to Poles and Polish-minded people everywhere -- the single most important day of the year. That is probably because it brings together the things our compatriots have always held most dear: God, country and family. Some points to remember:

★ According to tradition "how you are on Christmas Eve, you will be the whole year". If a child should have to be spanked on Christmas Eve for misbehaving, that's what he/she can expect all year long. Grown-ups are also on their best behavior, refrain from arguments go out of their way to be nice to each another.

★ The house should be spotlessly clean and decorated with evergreen branches, garlands and a (preferably real) Christmas tree. Family members are dressed in their holiday best and the family's best company crockery, crystal and cutlery should be used to accentuate the special nature of Christmas Eve.

★ The oplatek (Christmas wafer) should be placed on an heirloom crystal, silver or china dish or tray, flanked by an evergreen sprig and (optional) a little bundle of hay tied with a ribbon.

★ A handful of hay is strewn on the bare table top (in memory of Jesus' humble manger bed) and then covered with a preferably pure-white table-cloth. An extra empty place-setting is customarily provided



Please accept
our best wishes for Christmas
and the New Year.
May your dreams come true,
may your plans and desires be
fulfilled
and may the peace and comfort
reign both in the USA
and
in the Old Country

Paulina Kapuścińska
Consul General
Republic of Poland
Los Angeles

in memory of some dearly departed family member, but it may be offered to some lonely traveler who happens by or a neighbor who would otherwise have to spend this special evening in solitude.

★ The appearance of the evening's first star in the sky is the signal for the festivities to begin. The job of standing in a window and watching for it was usually assigned to young children -- a great way to keep them from under foot when so many last-minute tasks had to be performed.

★ The head of the household leads grace, then takes the oplatek, makes the Sign of the Cross over it and shares it with the next in line, wishing them good health and God's abundant blessings. It is a time of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, when all past grudges are forgotten. Only after all have shared bits of oplatek, exchanged wishes and made their peace with everyone else, does the festive supper begin.

★ The fact that Wieczera Wigilijna (Wigilia Supper) is totally meatless and includes many once-a-year dishes, of which there are either an odd number or 12 (traditions vary!), also sets this meal apart. Typical foods include fish, mushrooms, vegetables, grain and pasta dishes and various sweet concoctions incorporating nuts, raisins, poppy seeds and honey.

★ According to tradition, everyone must sample at least a bit of all the different foods laid out on the table, otherwise they may experience poverty in the year ahead. After the meal, it is customary to sing koledy (carols). In a Polish-American setting it may be advisable to have song sheets available and sing along with a recording or a live accompaniment.

★ Gifts are exchanged. Someone may play the kindly bishop Święty Mikołaj (St. Nick). Polish-American youngsters are fortunate to get their presents on December 24th. Their non-Polish playmates have to wait till the following morning.

★ Pasterka (Shepherds Mass at midnight), especially at a parish where Polish koledy are sung, is a fitting culmination to the most beautiful night of the year. □



*Wesołych Świąt
Bożego Narodzenia*

Merry Christmas

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