

Christmas Oplatek from 1

without having made peace with those gathered at the table. After the meal, pets and livestock were also fed oplatek to ensure their health and well-being in the coming year. According to legend, animals that have been given oplatek to eat on Christmas Eve will speak in human voices at midnight -- but only those who are pure in spirit will be able to hear them.

The tradition of oplatek goes back many hundreds of years, when a thin flatbread called "podplomyk" was held over an open fire and shared as the family gathered around the hearth on Christmas Eve. Patterns would be cut onto the bread to make breaking easier. This is why oplatki still have patterns on them today, usually of Nativity scenes. Poles all over the world share oplatek on Christmas Eve, repeating the age-old custom that is passed down from generation to generation, and when they send holiday greetings to loved ones who are far away, they will often include a piece of the wafer in the Christmas card. It just wouldn't be a Polish Christmas without oplatek! □

(Information from Polish Women's Alliance website.)

Asto Museum from 4

able to experience in LA a concert of *Emotionalists* renowned member Krzysztof Medyna and his music group. Currently, *KrakArt* poets are organizing a presentation of poems from their newly published collection *Whispers at Sunset*.

Next year the exhibition will be repeated in New York City. The curator will be Mr. Janusz Skowron, the coordinator of *Emotionalists*. One can realize how unusual it is, especially during our uncertain economic times that such an exchange of exhibitions does exist. Who knows, along the way, they might open new horizons for Asto Museum and for visual artists of both Coasts. □

Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year*Gene and Irene Kellner***Merry Christmas**

and a

Happy New Year*The Cepieliks
Gema, Jeff and Jason***Merry Christmas**

And a

Happy New Year*The Romeo Family
Mark, Molly and Rita***A Blessed
Merry Christmas**

and

**A Healthy
Prosperous
Happy New Year***From the Staff of the
News of Polonia
Betsy, Marty, and Bish***Wigilia Heritage from 1**

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 *kolędy* (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 *kolędy* are sung, is a fitting culmination to the most beautiful night of the year. □

Justyna Ball from 2

The Town does not provide a live "baby Jesus" although Heifer farm will for the event this coming weekend (and yes, we'll have a display there in the log cabin of how Christmas is celebrated in Poland.)

The Ye Olde Tavern (established in 1760) serves brick oven pizza now, and on that day, hosts a craft and jewelry sale as well as wine tasting from the local winery of the neighboring town of Hardwick. Apples for the cider come from the local orchards as we are so self efficient that we don't need any "apple" concentrate from China.

The Fire Department, library, Holistic Center, the Purple Onion gift shop, Post & Boot, Hometown Antiques - all celebrated by giving tours, serving refreshments and holding raffles.

All three churches with the Sacred Heart Church included, had a bake sale or some Christmas-related activities.

For \$5, I became the owner of the "silver" tray, souvenir from the Bed & Breakfast that went out of business and has been for sale for a couple of years now. Walking through the half empty house, old and dingy rooms where time stopped a century ago gave us an experience of how life was back then, before shopping malls and Christmas TV commercials. Before political correctness and before Christmas became one of many holidays of the Season.

As always, we enjoyed hot chocolate and live music at the Country Bank. Although this year, we decided not to enter the raffle at the Miriam Gilbert Public Library since we never won anything and spent way too much money trying.

And when the night fell, the Common in the heart of town gathered carolers near one of the largest trees for the Christmas tree lighting ceremony conducted by one of the town officials. A year before, in the freezing temperature, local farmers served roasted chestnuts and apple fritters there. It was when with crispy snow under our boots, wrapped in heavy coats, with ear muffs and woolen mittens, we felt like we were in one of Norman Rockwell's paintings, with only the sled being replaced by a hay ride and smoking

chimneys by satellite dishes now visible on the rooftops.

The evening ended with a concert at the ballroom of the Town Hall, a place that some decades ago was so shabby-looking that even the Boys Scouts abandoned it and evacuated themselves to the basement. After a \$1 million total building renovation, the ballroom regained its glory. The wall stenciling was done in the Old New England dyes and the ribbon that decorated wreaths hanged on enormous windows perfectly matched in color the stage curtain.

Someone actually dedicated time to design such a delightful background and I only report it.

Choir director Eric S. von Bleicken, with pianist Virginia Bailey (sounds like someone from a classic movie!) created a wonderful show! From "White Christmas" by Irving Berlin to the jazzy "Skating with my baby..." several songs between...

Each year adding a new element, this year it was reading by von Bleicken of "How the Grinch stole Christmas" by Dr Seuss with the presentation conducted by the local children. You think that it can't get any better than this until you hear "Christ Child Lullaby" played on the violin by our homegrown wonder Samantha Gillogly, followed by sing along to "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem," "The First Noel," the mandatory "Silent Night," ended with "Hallelujah Chorus", while standing. Spectacular!

We are doing something very essential here, restoring the Christian spirit. Now if we could only convert it into some action...

In the distance, the Salem Cross Inn, our famous restaurant, conducted its own inauguration of the Christmas Season, 1700s style.

As I was preparing a shopping gift list, for our friends, most are hard to shop for because they seem to have all the material things, in my view more than they need. Jacek recalled the time when he was working in the vineyard in Zell, Germany some twenty something years ago. There were some German women working on the hill with him. They were not working to support their families, trying to make ends meet. They just wanted to buy a... new microwave oven so they worked alongside with the Polish immigrants.

The Germans possessed much less of everything, than an average American, but the quality of their goods was better, and there was no need to buy the same shirt in every hue. I will never forget the picture of my uncle in Warsaw polishing his leather shoes as if they were the last shoes he would ever own. At the same time I will never forget the piles of shoes at my friends', who probably never paid with cash for any of them and treating them as if they were disposable after a single wear.

With economic crisis and our country in debt at \$12 trillion and still clicking, before new jobs are created some of us will approach Christmas the old fashioned way not because they want to but because that's the only way, at least for now...

My friend Trudy feels incredibly useful when she is helping girls in Africa, totally unaware that there are girls in Appalachia that may use some help, but then the trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains won't include a safari.

What if there are children in Appalachia or Detroit that would love to get coal for Christmas? You want to bet? Give them a thought...or helping hand...Make a difference...

Count Your Blessings!
Warmest Wishes to All! *Wesołych Świąt!*

Christopher Roach from 2

where the erstwhile Jewish victims of the Nazis (in recently donned and also threadbare Soviet uniforms) were also in some cases the victimizers of the Poles-Poles who were themselves also victimized by the Nazis alongside the Jews simultaneously during 1939-1944.

Chodakiewicz's crime is that he is speaking the truth. And that truth threatens the agenda of a certain kind of leftist, a leftist that hates Christianity, hates America, hates Europe, and hates the white race. Such leftism needs the Holocaust to have primacy over all other history because this viewpoint renders the Nazis as uniquely diabolical in history, the apotheosis of the genetically evil Western World. It is the same leftism that defames the Catholic Church, the Spanish conquistadors, the soldiers of the Confederacy, and the brave knights of the Crusades. The leftism comes first; facts and context are secondary.

As a result of leftist dominance in academia and the media, an unnuanced series of concepts about the Holocaust have become etched in stone as conventional wisdom. The most central such myth is that of a completely perfect victim sacrificed by a completely evil and irrational perpetrator. **As such, the official Holocaust of the Left becomes the mirror-image of the Christian Passion story: the perfect and blameless Lamb (then Jesus, but now the Jews) slaughtered by the hateful Jewish mob (Christian Nazis) with the acquiescence of the amoral Romans (Polish, Russian, French, and other Christian Europeans who did not do enough to stop the mass murder).** After all, what else was *Hitler's Pope* or *Hitler's Willing Executioners* all about?

Scholarship, such as Chodakiewicz's, that shows the perpetrators too sometimes were victims of evil, and that Jews too were sometimes bystanders, and that their cousins in NKVD uniforms killed even more people than the Nazis did in the Ukraine and Poland and Russia, would pull down the entire edifice of leftism which depends upon a very particular and quasi-religious Holocaust story, as summarized above.

The SPLC and its allies seek to suppress and marginalize scholarship such as Chodakiewicz's--rather than refute it--because his work teaches implicitly that all people everywhere may commit evil and mass murder in the name of modern ideology of one kind or another. In other words, his words may reveal that the Western World, far from being evil to the core, was in much better shape before it tasted modernism, ideology, secularism, and the various poisonous fruits of the Enlightenment.

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Legal - Mary a US Citizen from 3

are married by the time of your interview, you will either receive a two-year conditional green card or a ten-year permanent green card.

Two years after the granting of conditional permanent residence, a new application must be submitted to the immigration service, documenting that the marriage still exists. Generally, there is no interview with this application, however the Service does select a certain portion of applicants to be called in for another interview.

Any permanent resident must wait five years to apply for citizenship, unless they obtained permanent residency through marriage, in which case the waiting period is three years. If a divorce occurs after the granting of permanent residence but before citizenship, you must wait five years for citizenship. □