

Taste America from 10

bags also contained copies of each of the 12 handouts created for the event, and of course samples of Polish chocolate and other promotional items.

Naturally, all of this would not be possible without the generosity of sponsors who not only supported the effort financially, but who also provided the Office with a multitude of informational materials and helped with logistical aspects of the enterprise. We would like to express our thanks to:

- The American Council of Polish Culture for providing brochures For your Freedom and Ours summarizing the Polish presence during WWII.

- The American Institute of Polish Culture (Miami, FL) for providing several hundred pounds of great and beautifully published books (e.g. some leather-bound), brochures and CDs. The books included Conrad and his Contemporaries by J. H. Retinger (author), Feliks Topolski (illustrator); Polish Contributions in Latin American Culture by Edmund Urbański; and The Accomplished Senator by Lawrence (Wawrzyniec) Goźlicki, to name a few.

- The Embassy of the Republic of Poland (Washington, D.C.) for not only supplying the Office with a selection of materials on Polish-Jewish relations, tourist information on Poland, and numerous publications on Polish art, among other materials, but also for securing all transportation needs associated with the exhibit.

- The Cato Institute (Washington, D.C.) for providing several copies of a publication of the Declaration of Independence & Constitution of the United States of America.

- The Council for the Protection of Memory and Martyrdom (Warsaw, Poland) for furnishing the office with very informative and professionally designed books on the Katyń massacre.

- The National Katyń Memorial Foundation (Baltimore, MD) for supplying brochures and books on the Katyń massacre and Katyń Monument in Baltimore, MD.

- The Polish Museum of America (Chicago, IL) for providing several different types of workbooks and coloring books designed for younger audiences, some of which were about Casimir Pułaski, Ignacy Paderewski, and Polish cultural traditions.

- The Kielbasa Factory (Rockville, MD) for providing the Polish sweets and juices, and - Last, but not least, the Polish National Alliance (Chicago, IL), the Polish and Slavic Center (New York, NY), and the Polish and Slavic Federal Credit Union (NJ) for their vital and very much appreciated financial support.

Finally, we would like to express our great appreciation for the months of hard

work, research and design efforts of the Office's three Summer Associates: Agnieszka Maczuga (Dominican University, Chicago, IL), Sandra Malanowicz (American University, Washington, D.C.) and Olivia Burzyńska-Hernandez (University of Oregon, Eugene, OR).

From the very beginning of the PAC presence at Taste America, the office made every effort not only to have the display located in the same spot of the room but, most of all, to offer the best and most attractive display during the event. From what the crew has heard from visiting legislators, this goal had been accomplished yet again.

Below are reflections by Sandra Malanowicz, one of the Office's Summer Associates:

<<My summer internship began with an introduction to the Capitol Hill event, "Taste America." As the Legislative and Public Affairs branch of the Polish American Congress, our Washington, DC office as a rule does not organize culturally oriented events, with the exception for the Taste America reception, which the PAC office considers to be an invaluable opportunity to show the people in our capitol the significance of the Polish-American community in the United States. We would strive to impress the people of Congress not only with information about Polish history and traditions, but also with the profound connections between Poland and the United States: from the common values of democracy and freedom to the countless Polish-Americans who have contributed to health, safety, and innovation in the United States throughout its history.

Using this brief introduction to the purpose and goals of the Polish American Congress in Taste America, our team dove right into the brainstorming, research, planning, writing, editing, and organizing that went into preparations for the event. We had the freedom to take the theme this year, "Protect and Defend," and figure out the best way to present it to our audience: members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Then we would be responsible for creating a display that could include handouts of information, books, brochures, posters, foods, music, and anything else we could think of that would drive home the message of "protect and defend" from a Polish-American perspective. We decided, therefore, to adopt a broad understanding of the theme and focus not only on military activity, but also on health, culture, traditions, memory, truth, and values.

With each of these aspects of Polish American history and contributions to keep in mind, we began the huge amount of research that went into creating and compiling materials for the event. For me, this research was utterly fascinating, eye

opening, and sobering all at the same time. As a fully Americanized member of the Polish American community, I did not grow up hearing the praises of great individuals such as Thaddeus Kościuszko and Casimir Pułaski, or following the significant involvement of Poland in the Iraq War. I did not know that Polish Americans were responsible for the creation of the polio vaccine and vitamins, or that over 6,000 Poles have been recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations". However, I was most captivated by my investigation of the Katyń Massacre. As a student of international and Russian studies, I have taken numerous classes on World Politics and the history of Eurasia; although I had heard of the Katyń Massacre before this summer, I had not studied it extensively or thought about its repercussions for the people of Poland. These people, who saw the horrors of the Holocaust upon their soil, who risked their lives for the sake of their Jewish friends and neighbors, and who fought for freedom and democracy for centuries, were abruptly crushed by the Soviet Union. If anything, my experience researching the history and current developments of this tragic event has ignited a profound new interest in my studies.

Finally the day of the big event arrived, cloudy and hectic. After finishing some last minute folding and boxing of materials, we piled into the van and hustled over to the capitol building, full of excitement and expectation. The pouring rain and rolling thunder suppressed our enthusiasm for only a few minutes as we hurriedly moved our mountain of boxes into the Member's Dining Room at the south end of the building; soon we had unloaded our books, gift bags, pamphlets, brochures, handouts, posters, juices, candies, cookies, and yes, even coloring books onto our display tables and were poised to impart our accumulated knowledge upon members of Congress (and maybe eat some tasty food along the way!). As a rather quiet and reserved individual, my goal for the day was to truthfully present the information I had learned about Polish history and Poles in America to the people who came by our table. Little did I know that, beginning at 5 pm, our little display with abundant giveaways would face a growing cascade of people with questions, interest, and enthusiasm for what we had to say. In fact, I was completely shocked by the ease with which I fell into the role of presenter and educator! Although the quick pace and dynamic energy in the room overwhelmed me at times, I was able to engage each new visitor with enthusiasm throughout my three hours on the job (of course, the Polish candies and juices that I sampled throughout the night did a great deal to sustain me as well!). Donning expressions of astonishment, each guest seemed truly amazed to hear that Kościuszko, a Pole, designed the fortifications at West Point, or that over 20,000 Polish officers and intelligentsia were secretly exterminated in the forests of Katyń 70 years ago. Their interest paralleled my own fascination with such topics, and I believe that everyone (myself included) left the event enriched by mutual discovery and meaningful interaction. This, after all, seemed to be the ultimate goal of PAC at Taste America. □

ACPC YLC from 9

Gingrich's office, who had traveled to Poland to assist in creating the film, was present at the screening to provide background and answer questions. A copy of the film was included in each participant's handout materials, a gift from Ted & Irena Mirecki.

The day ended with a pleasant surprise: Mr. and Mrs. Stefański invited the group to their Northern Virginia home for a swimming pool and pizza party.

On Friday morning, the original schedule called for a trip to Baltimore, Maryland, to visit the National Katyń Memorial and meet with Richard Porembski, Chair of the National Katyń Memorial Foundation. However, given the near 100-degree heat, and the inadequate air conditioning in the van that was used for transportation, the trip was cancelled as it might have endangered the health of the participants. The morning was left free for individual visits to the many museums within walking distance.

In the afternoon, Paulina Migalska gave a repeat performance, presenting a talk and discussion entitled "Perspective on Poland: Legacies of 20th Century Changing Tides of History." A major topic in this presentation, and the discussion which followed, was the history of Polish-Jewish relations since WW II.

The Conference wishes to express its gratitude to the Kościuszko Foundation, which lent the use of its American Center of Polish Culture building in DC for several of the sessions: the keynote on Monday, Dr. Kulski's presentation on Wednesday, the screening of "Nine Days that Changed the World" on Thursday, and both presentations by Paulina Migalska on Thursday and Friday. Our sincere thanks to Alex Storożyński, President of the Foundation, and especially to Marta Gongora, Administrator of the Center, who acted as our hostess.

The closing event of the conference was a group dinner on the 17th floor of a hotel with a spectacular view of the Potomac River, Francis Scott Key Bridge and the Gothic spires of Georgetown University. ACPC President Debbie Majka was present, as were ACPC Executive Committee members Richard and Bernadette Wiermański, and Tom Payne, President of the ACPC Affiliate from the National Capital Area, the Polish American Arts Association.

We also wish to thank all the organizations which provided financial sponsorship to enable young people from their area to participate:

ACPC Affiliates – Polish American Arts Association of Washington, Polish Arts Club of Trenton, Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia; Washington Metropolitan Area Division of the Polish American Congress; Kościuszko Foundation, Philadelphia Chapter.

The Youth Leadership Conference 2010 provided young Polish American students from all parts of the U.S. to meet and discuss important matters with distinguished leaders of Polish descent in various fields in our society and also to enjoy social/educational events and activities over a week-long visit in Washington, DC. ACPC members are deeply pleased that for the past ten years these opportunities have been extended to many deserving students. Readers of this publication are warmly invited to join our tax-free, 501(c)(3) organization so as to share the pleasures in offering such rich educational opportunities including scholarships and grants to our outstanding young men and women. Annual dues are only \$10. For membership information, please contact Mrs. Anna-Mae Maglaty at 8 6 0 - 5 2 1 - 7 6 2 1 o r E / M annamae11@comcast.net. □

Polish American Congress**Southern California Division**

Invites you to attend our monthly meeting

Sunday, - August 8 - noon

Pope John Polish Center

3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda

Non-members are welcome to attend our meetings.

You can observe the projects we are working on for Polonia.

Some projects include: Poland Forever presentation, Year of Chopin events, Father Popieluszko Beatification, Pope John Paul II Beatification. .

The Polish American Congress has Divisions in 28 states.

If you would want to help achieve what is in the best interests of Polonia, Please come and visit us at our next meeting.

Get involved in Polonia...

To get a PAC Mission Statement please call:

Information: (323) 240-8525 OR (626) 577-9797

Your help is needed

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