



## NEWSLETTER

**POLISH CULTURAL CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD, INC.**

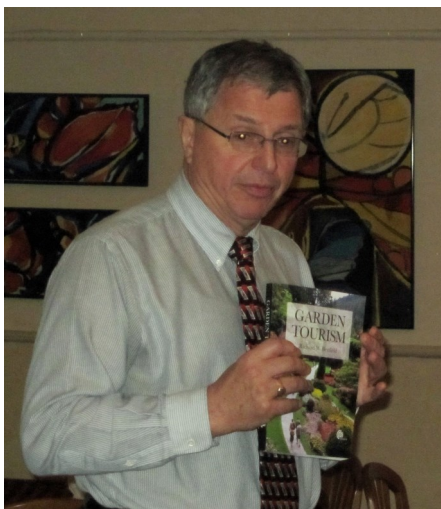
Established 1976

[www.polishculturalclub.org](http://www.polishculturalclub.org)

March/April 2016

An Affiliate of the American Council for Polish Culture

The Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc.  
is pleased to welcome back by popular demand . . . . .



Dr. Richard Benfield addressing the Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc. in March 2015

Free Admission and Parking  
Handicapped Accessible  
Refreshments

***Dr. Richard Benfield***  
Professor of Geography, CCSU  
Author of Garden Tourism

Lecture and Slide Show  
***“Gardens of the World”***

**Thursday, March 31, 2016**

**6:30 p.m. (brief meeting)**

**7:00 p.m. (lecture/slide show)**

**East Hartford Public Library  
(Raymond Library)**

**Meeting Room I —Lower Level Rear  
840 Main Street**

**East Hartford, CT 06108**

*(Enter parking lot from Central Avenue)*

For further information, please call (860) 568-2044.

Dr. Benfield teaches Human Geography, Russia, The European Union, and many of the courses in CCSU's Tourism track. His current research interests are in biogeography and particularly garden tourism, and the use of tourism as a conservation tool through the great botanic gardens of the world. He has also published extensively and spoken widely on the geography of Floriculture. As part of his research he has traveled in over 115 countries and seen the botanic gardens and other private gardens in just about all of them. In 2010, he traveled to the gardens of South Africa, the Middle East, China, and the Valley of Flowers, India where he researched the interaction of garden tourism and conservation. He recently returned from a speaking and research tour in South Korea and Australia. You won't want to miss this informative and intriguing lecture, presented by a captivating and charming speaker.



***Wesołego Alleluja! Happy Easter!***  
***From the Executive Board***  
***of the Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc.***





## CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

We are embarking on what will be a busy and exciting year.



Our first event of 2016, "Pączki na Karnawał" was held on February 7 at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church. With Ash Wednesday only days away, dozens of pączki were enjoyed as pre-Lenten treats. Next year's order will definitely have to be increased! Father Andrzej Porgorzelski took his order "to go."

On February 27, our Club was represented at "International Night" sponsored by the Foreign Language Department of Smith Middle School in Glastonbury. Our table exhibiting items and heritage of Poland was a big hit, and it was great fun to meet and share our culture with the enthusiastic students, parents, and teachers.



L to R: Gini Pudlo and Co-President Pattie Kaczynski

Please see the front page and enclosed flyer announcing our Spring Garden Slide Show/Lecture on March 31 with Dr. Richard Benfield. A popular and engaging speaker, he will update us on his recent travels to new gardens of the world, including some in Poland.

Information on our Jennie Marconi-Javorski scholarship, as well as three scholarships available from the ACPC, is attached. Please pass this information along to any students of Polish heritage who might be interested in applying.

Are you ready to celebrate our 40th Anniversary? The date is set for Saturday, October 22, 2016, with a gala banquet to be held at the Riverfront Community Center in Glastonbury. Our Club will be hosting the Fall Board Meeting of the ACPC that weekend, and we are pleased that the national Directors will be joining us as we mark this special milestone. Planning is already underway and we will share details in the coming months.

*Pattie Kaczynski and Fran Pudlo, Co-Presidents*

**WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK.** We have been sending electronic communications to those members who have e-mail. Is this working well? Are you satisfied with the process? Please send an e-mail to: [hopscoatch77@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hopscoatch77@sbcglobal.net) with any comments or suggestions. We will continue to send hard copies to those members who wish to receive mailings in that form. Please let us know your thoughts.

## POLISH DAY AT THE CAPITOL

In keeping with State of Connecticut tradition, Peter Tercyak, State Representative 26th Assembly District, extends a public invitation to join in the celebration of "Polish Day at the Capitol," to be held on:

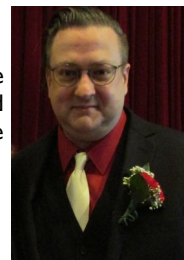
**Tuesday, May 3, 2016**

**11:00 a.m.**

**North Lobby of the Connecticut State Capitol  
210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT**

If attending, you are asked to enter the Legislative Office Building through the West (Main Entrance). All visitors and belongings will be screened through a metal detector and package scanner. You may then proceed through the concourse and up the escalator to the North Lobby of the Capitol Building. NOTE: The public can no longer use the skywalk entrance from the parking garage.


This annual event marks the observance of the 225th Anniversary of the Polish Constitution adopted on May 3, 1791, which is described by British historian, Norman Davies, as "the first Constitution of its type in Europe." Others have called it the world's second oldest codified national Constitution after the 1789 U.S. Constitution. This annual event honors individuals of Polish heritage for their contributions to Polonia in Connecticut. Please support "Polish Day at the Capitol."



We are proud to announce Marek Czarnecki, noted Scholar, will be one of the

that our member, Iconographer and honorees. Congratulations, Marek!

**LUNCH:** Following the ceremony, traditional Polish food will be available for purchase at the Polish National Home, 60 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford in addition to the Legislative Office Building.



**JENNIE MARCONI-JAVORSKI  
SCHOLARSHIP**

**Sponsored by the Polish Cultural Club of Greater  
Hartford, Inc.**

Scholarship applications, along with all requested materials, **must be received and postmarked no later than May 1, 2016.** An application has been inserted as part of this Newsletter. It can also be downloaded from the Club's website: [www.polishculturalclub.org](http://www.polishculturalclub.org).

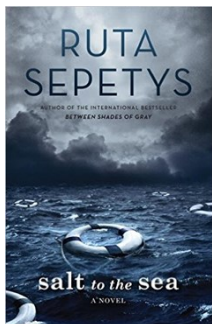
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<b>Staff:</b>	<b>Carol Bogon Phelan, Nancy Yiznitsky</b>



**DID YOU KNOW . . . That the Loss of Life in the Sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* was Greater than the *Titanic*?**

When asked to name the worst maritime disaster in history, most people will automatically think of the *Titanic*. Rarely will the German *Wilhelm Gustloff* be mentioned, when in fact, compared to the 1,500 lives lost on the *Titanic*, the torpedoing of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* by the Russian submarine S-13 during World War II resulted in over 9,000 tragic deaths. Estimates have indicated that up to half of the Baltic refugees who perished were children. Best-selling author, Ruta Sepetys, the daughter of a Lithuanian refugee, has just released a masterfully written portrait of this untold history called *SALT TO THE SEA*, published by Penguin Random House for young readers.



Told in alternate points of view, this haunting, harrowing, and heart-wrenching historical fiction chronicles the journey of four teenage refugees (Emilia, a 15 year old Pole; Joana, a repatriated Lithuanian; Florian, a secretive Prussian; and Alfred, a German Nazi sailor, each harboring secrets.) Their paths converge as they flee the cleansing of the Baltic States by the Soviet Army in the deadly winter of 1945. Their goal is to reach the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, a former cruise ship that promises salvation and a future just beyond the Baltic Sea. Forced by circumstances to unite, and with each step closer toward safety, their strength, courage, and trust in each other are tested. Yet, just when it seems that freedom is within their grasp, tragedy strikes. Neither country, nor culture, nor status matter as all ten thousand people aboard must fight for the same thing: survival.

Ruta Sepetys drew upon interviews with survivors, as well as notes and stories that had traveled in bottles across the sea during the war. She writes: “I traveled to half a dozen countries and spent years chasing down interviews and facts. As I wrote the novel, I was haunted by thoughts of the helpless children and teenagers—innocent victims of border shifts, ethnic cleansings, and vengeful regimes. Abandoned or separated from their family, they were forced to battle the beast of war on their own, left with an inheritance of heartache and responsibility for events they had no role in causing. The young adult narrative is what I chose to represent in the novel, seeing the war through the eyes of youths from different nations, forced to leave everything they loved behind. My father was one of those children. His cousin, Erika, was also one of those children. Erika had passage on the *Gustloff*. Fate intervened and she did not board. She begged me to write about the story.”

Background: Fleeing from a brutal Soviet Red Army onslaught, the *Wilhelm Gustloff* was ready to leave port jammed with over 10,000 German refugees, naval personnel, and wounded soldiers. The vessel was only designed to hold a maximum of 1,880 passengers and crew. Of the refugees, a staggering four thousand were infants, children, and youths on their way to hoped-for safety in the West. Minus 18 degrees Celsius (0 degrees Fahrenheit) weather gripped the Oxhoft Pier in Gotenhafen (Gdynia) on Tuesday, January 30, 1945. The ship sailed on. No one aboard the *Gustloff* was aware of the danger lurking in the darkness. Cheerful music piped through the ship’s speakers was interrupted some time after 8:00 p.m. Hitler, live on the radio, made an impassioned speech to commemorate the 12th anniversary of the Nazi rise to power. It echoed throughout the corridors of the ship. The Russian submarine S-13 captained by Alexander Marinesko and already on site could not have timed its attack more dramatically. Only minutes after the Fuhrer’s speech ended around 9:00 p.m., he gave the command to fire all four of the torpedoes nestled snug in the S-13’s tubes. As if to emphasize Soviet retribution, each torpedo had been painted with a dedication:

- Torpedo 1: FOR THE MOTHERLAND
- Torpedo 2: FOR STALIN
- Torpedo 3: FOR THE SOVIET PEOPLE
- Torpedo 4: FOR LENINGRAD

Seventy minutes after the first torpedo struck, the former glorious symbol of a crumbling empire slipped below the surface of the Baltic, taking with it thousands of trapped souls. Eerily, just before the *Gustloff* plunged to the depths, all of its lights came on in a final blaze of farewell. Wailing sirens drowned with the ship as it descended into the depths. Out of 10,000 souls aboard, only approximately 1,230 survived.

An interesting note: Rumors have persisted that when it became clear the Eastern Front was collapsing, the Nazis packed up the “Amber Room” and loaded the wooden crates onto the *Gustloff* before it departed on its fateful voyage. This famous Russian treasure had been plundered by the Nazis in 1941 outside of Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and moved to Königsberg (modern-day Kaliningrad). Since its sinking in 1945, the wreck of the *Gustloff* has been disturbed on the seabed, with much of its mid-section destroyed. This has fueled rumors that the Russians were looking for something, and later covered their tracks. The mystery has never been solved.

*Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys was published on February 2, 2016 by Philomel Books for young adults age 13 and older. It is well-written, absorbing, and touches the soul. Adults will also find it to be memorable and worth reading.

Sources: Book Press Release and information obtained on <http://wilhelmgustloff.com>

## Co? What? Gdzie? Where? Kiedy? When?

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2016** 7:00 p.m.  
Fiedorczyk-Wodarski Lecture "The Polish Heart: Antoni A. Paryski and the Polish Language Press in America"

Featuring Dr. Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann

CCSU, Vance Academic Center, Room 105 **FREE**

Contact: M. Jacques at (860) 832-3010 or jacquesm@ccsu.edu

**THURSDAY MARCH 31, 2016** 6:30 p.m.

PCCGH Lecture/Slide Show: "Gardens of the World"

Presented by Dr. Richard Benfield, Author and Professor at CCSU

East Hartford Library (Raymond Library) - Community Room I

Open to Members and General Public (Handicapped Accessible)

Information: Nancy at (860) 568-2044 **FREE**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2016** Dinner: 5:00 p.m. Dance: 7:00 p.m.

"Nostalgia Night Dance" with live music by "Kaz" Rhythm Band

Polish National Home, 60 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford

Dinner and Dance: \$45.00 Dance Only: \$20.00

Contact: Stephanie at (860) 742-1053 for ticket information

**THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2016** 7:00 p.m.

Book Reading and Signing with author John Guzowski

"The Unknown Face of the Holocaust"

CCSU, Founders Hall, Davidson Administration Bldg. **FREE**

Contact: M. Jacques at (860) 832-3010 or jacquesm@ccsu.edu

**FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2016** 7:00 p.m.

Concert: "Sounds of Sanctuary" presented by the CT Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra with pianist Yonjoon Yoon and Archdiocesan Youth Choir "Chorus Angelicus, CT Children's Chorus"

Contact: (860) 325-282 or info@thevirtuosi.org **Donation**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2016**

"Communion Brunch Buffet" SS. Cyril and Methodius Ladies Guild

10:00 a.m. Mass at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church

Followed by Brunch at the Polish National Home

Contact: Irene at (860) 561-2336 Members: \$28.00 Guests: \$30.00

**FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2016** 7:30 p.m.

"Rigoletto" by Giuseppe Verdi—Trinity-on-Main, New Britain, CT

Contact: www.ctlyricopera.org for tickets or (860) 351-3135

**SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016** 10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

"5th Annual Little Poland Festival" in New Britain, CT

Sponsored by Polonia Business Association, New Britain

Information: Lucian Pawlak at (860) 670-4955 **FREE**

**TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2016** — Polish Day at the Capitol (see page 2)



Polish Cultural Club of Greater  
Hartford, Inc.  
P.O. Box 380699  
East Hartford, CT 06138

We're on the Web!

[www.polishculturalclub.org](http://www.polishculturalclub.org)

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS



The members of the Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford mourn the passing of **Alexandria Szerejko**, one of the Founders of the Club. She died on March 2, 2016 in Hartford, CT and the celebration of her life was held at a Mass at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church on March 12. Alex was especially known for her artistic talent in designing and creating hand-made decorations for Christmas trees. In addition, together with **Alice Rogala** and **Anna-Mae Maglaty**, she planned and completed theme baskets yearly for raffles to add to the coffers of the Club. Rest in peace, dear Alex.

We also extend our deepest sympathy to **Krystyna Słowikowska Farley** on the loss of her brother, Thaddeus Stachowicz on November 30, 2015 and to **Helen Olejarsz** on the recent passing of her brother, George Olejarsz.

Another Founder in this month's news is **Krystyna Słowikowska Farley**. Her thirty-two folk costumes representing 32 regions of Poland have long been topics of conversation. It was her intent that they should be housed in a place of cultural significance. Therefore, Krystyna decided to donate them to the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning in Chicopee, MA. They are now part of the Museum and will remain in a room especially designed for the costumes. Krystyna's amber collection is equally exquisite. Once again, it was her desire that it be housed in a museum, and this, too, was donated to the Polish Center in Chicopee.

**Krystyna Farley** is receiving another honor. On May 7, 2016, she will be crowned Ms. Connecticut Senior America at the Holiday Inn in Enfield, CT. This event of celebration is for women 60 and up who have reached the "Age of Elegance." Club members are delighted for Krystyna.

Congratulations are extended to **Thomas Brodowicz**, the grandson of member **Maria Brodowicz** and the nephew of past president, **Ursula Brodowicz**. He is a fifth grade student at Highcrest School in Wethersfield, CT where he had the opportunity to take part in the National Geography Bee. Winning the school championship enabled him to take a test to advance further. His top score allowed him to compete statewide. Should Thomas win, he will move on to the national level in Washington, DC. We wish him well.

The Club adds two new members: **Michelle and Kenneth Mostello** of Carlisle, MA. Also, **Deborah Krawiec** of Newington decided to re-join. We welcome them.

The Membership Committee, consisting of Maria Bruks, Anna-Mae Maglaty, and Carol Bogon Phelan, thanks the members who renewed. Membership cards will be in the upcoming mail. Should a member not receive a card, please contact Anna-Mae at (860) 521-7621.

*Anna-Mae Maglaty, Membership Chair*

## CELEBRATE ŚMIGUS-DYNGUS (EASTER MONDAY)

Also known as *lany poniedziałek*, "Wet Monday," the day after Easter, is a day of joy. Everyone has fun sprinkling water over each other. *Dyngus* means ransom. In exchange for a promise not to throw water at them, girls give boys a ransom of Easter eggs or candies. People who get wet in this way are happy. It is supposed to bring luck and a good planting season. If a boy throws water at a girl, it means that he likes her!



Source: Poland—A Portrait of the Country Through Its Festivals and Traditions, an educational, non-profit publishing project of the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC. Cecilia Glembocki and Carla Hazard Tomaszewski