



NEWSLETTER

POLISH CULTURAL CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD, INC.

Established 1976

www.polishculturalclub.org

September 2013

An Affiliate of the American Council for Polish Culture

PCCGH PROGRAM

“From Hula Hoops to High Fashion:

G. Fox Co. in the 1950s”

*Relive the heyday of Connecticut’s
premier shopping destination*



**Guest Speakers: Elizabeth Abbe
of the Connecticut Historical Society**

Thursday, September 12, 2013

6:30 p.m.

Polish National Home

60 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT

The public is cordially invited to this event.

FREE Admission

Handicapped Accessible

Information: Joan Godlewski (860) 561-2839

The name “Fox’s” evokes images of a beautifully decorated department store on Main Street in Hartford filled with every imaginable garment, home furnishing, or domestic necessity dreamed of, as well as warm memories of shopping for back-to-school clothes, the Christmas marquee, and Connecticut Room. Elizabeth Abbe, Director of Public Outreach at the Connecticut Historical Society, will be our guide as we reminisce about Connecticut’s favorite department store. She will take you back in time, floor by floor, to the days when Fox’s was the largest privately-owned department store in the U.S. She will also provide some insight into Beatrice Fox Auerbach, the woman entrepreneur who was so integrally connected to this family enterprise. Bring your memories, along with any favorite G. Fox purchases. A display table will be available.

THE RESTORATION OF AN HISTORICAL BUILDING



We began, we continue, and the excitement does not cease! The Polish National Home (PNH), a cultural and social organization created more than 80 years ago to foster and promote the common welfare of the Polish American community in Hartford and environs, as well as being regarded one of the most beautiful Art Deco buildings in Connecticut, is undergoing a Three Phase Renovation in 2013/2014.

The decision to undertake a major renovation came about in 2012 when the Audit Committee of the PNH looked at declining sales and reflected on why this was occurring. Inspired by Mark Bruks, the newly elected PNH President, and with the support of Board members and a loyal group of volunteers, a plan evolved which would begin the process of making drastic changes in the physical maintenance of the building and improving the overall aesthetic appearance.

One specific event pushed the group to initiate Phase I on July 1, 2013 and to complete it as soon as possible—The Quo Vadis Conference—which brought the Ambassador of Poland, members of the Polish Parliament, a sitting United States Senator, and various CT State Officials to the Polish National Home on August 2, 2013. The core structure of this event was comprised of the Polish American Forum and Central Connecticut State University, and the opening ceremony was held at the Polish National Home. Cultural Club artifacts helped to adorn the Dining Room foyer and the Ballroom for the occasion.

Monetary donations made up 75% of the Phase I budget, with the balance drawn from a newly acquired bank line of credit. Phase I renovation included the bar area, dining room, plumbing, outside landscaping, cleaning up paintings, the upstairs bar, and the brass railing. The idea is to emphasize the PNH as a cultural center by enhancing the appearance of the public spaces, bringing Polishness and historical perspective to the forefront, and enticing the younger generation to “rediscover” the PNH as a gathering place. Phase II would be a year-long process and include how best to facilitate the use of the facility.

(continued on page 4)



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

Summer is not over yet and there is plenty of time to enjoy yourselves, but please keep in mind that our Club needs to continue its work in making plans for the coming months and passing along Polish culture and spirit.

We start by telling you that the Polish National Home restoration program is well underway and the bar area and dining room are now completed and look beautiful. If you have not been there recently, stop in for lunch and enjoy the bright warm comfort of the Home.

To further bring you to the PNH, our next cultural event is a program on September 12, 2013 called "From Hula Hoops to High Fashion: G. Fox in the 1950s." with speaker Elizabeth Abbe, Director of Public Outreach of the Connecticut Historical Society. Please refer to the flyer and newsletter for further information and plan to join us for a nostalgic trip to a Hartford institution of past years.

October, Polish Heritage Month, is fast approaching. It is also a reminder that it is time to prepare for pierogi making on Saturday, September 14 and October 5. Please notify Pat Archie if you plan to attend: (860) 289-8583. It is a lot of fun and a good way to socialize with fellow club members. We also look forward to our November Annual Meeting and Turkey Raffle, Szopka Festival held the first Sunday after Thanksgiving, and the beautiful Wigilia celebration which concludes our events for the calendar year. The latter is a particularly appropriate way to express thanks for what we have and to celebrate the friendship of our Club members as family.

So . . . there is a lot to prepare for and we need your assistance. Please support these functions, and keep the Polish spirit flying high! Thank you all.

Clifford Archie and Anna-Mae Maglaty, Co-Presidents

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Condolences to **Mary Mazurek Heslin** on the loss of her son, Thomas Heslin, in a tragic accident.

It is with great sadness that we bid a sorrowful farewell to **Irene Dylag** who passed away on May 15, 2013. Irene was a very effective worker in the vineyards of the PCCGH. She is especially remembered as Chair of the Boutique Room at the ACPC national convention held in Hartford in 2009. We will miss her. Rest in peace, Irene.

Get well wishes to **Mary Mazurek Heslin** who is recovering from a fall and subsequent surgery. She is doing well.

MEET OUR 2013 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



L. to R.: Magdalena Lenczewski, Felicia Woron, Matthew Wlaz.



Tyler Whitesell



Matthew Whitesell



Sylwia Danowski

On Thursday, June 20, 2013, the PCCGH presented six outstanding students with the Jennie Marconi-Javorski Scholarship Award of \$1,000.00 each. The recipients were:

Sylwia Danowski, daughter of Ewa Rosel of Vernon, a graduate of Rockville High School not able to be present, who will major in Animal Science at the University of Connecticut. Magdalena Lenczewski, daughter of Anna and Jan Lenczewski, a graduate of Northwest Catholic High School, who will attend the University of Vermont to major in Animal Science. Twin brothers Matthew and Tyler Whitesell, sons of Christina and David Whitesell and grandsons of Clifford and Patricia Archie, were not able to attend the event, but they created a video of acceptance and appreciation. Both are recent graduates of East Hartford High School. Matthew will major in Engineering at the University of Virginia and Tyler will major in Mathematics at Clark University. Matthew Wlaz, son of Teresa and Andrzej Wlaz, a graduate of Wethersfield High School, will attend the University of Connecticut majoring in Accounting. The sixth recipient, Felicia Woron, daughter of Julia and Thomas Woron of East Hartford, a graduate of Loomis Chaffee School, will attend the University of Chicago with an undecided major. Following the presentations, strawberry shortcake was enjoyed by all.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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**DO YOU KNOW . . . WHY THE KOSCIUSZKO SQUADRON 303 WAS SO SUCCESSFUL?**

That question is often asked about the famous squadron of Polish aviators that fought in the Battle of Britain. Squadron 303, the Kosciuszko Squadron, had the highest kill rate of any squadron in the RAF. Had it not been for the skill and daring of the Polish aviators, the Battle of Britain would almost certainly have been lost. As the BBC broadcast in the waning days of the epic struggle, "The Poles use the air for their gallant exploits, and we for telling the world of them. Long Live Poland."

But why were the Poles so good? Before the Battle of Britain, and even during its first few weeks, the commanders of the RAF were so dubious of the Poles that they kept them out of the fighting. It was not until casualties among the British aviators had mounted to alarming proportions that the Poles were sent into battle. And then, when the Poles' kill rate during their first week of combat exceeded all expectations, the British Station Commander, Stanley Vincent, refused to believe the numbers. He followed the Kosciuszko Squadron on their next sortie to see it for himself. Amazed at what he witnessed, Vincent later wrote, "The Polish pilots attacked from almost vertical trajectories with near suicidal impetus, scattering the enemy formations then picking them off one by one. It was so rapid, it was staggering."

One of the Polish aces, Miroslaw Feric, kept a diary throughout the battle that sheds some light on why the Poles were such superior combat aviators. Some of it had to do with the fact that they were older than their British counterparts and had combat experience in Poland and France. Unlike the British, these battle-hardened veterans were used to the ear-splitting clatter of machine guns, cockpits filling with smoke, and enemy planes attacking from all directions. After one battle in which they shot down 14 enemy planes in just fifteen minutes, Polish ace, Witold Urbanowicz, calmly described the skirmish as "Twelve hounds tearing apart a boar's body."

But much of their success was a direct result of their daring, aggressive tactics in the air, which can be traced back to their early training in Poland. Polish combat airplanes were so slow and obsolete that the aviators were trained to get close before opening fire, less than 200 yards, compared to the British who opened fire at over 600 yards. They were trained to be aggressive, to crowd and intimidate, and make the enemy flinch. British Air Wing Commander, Athol Forbes, after observing the Poles' tactics said, "When they go tearing into enemy bombers and fighters they get so close you think they're going to collide." In a similar vein, RAF Squadron Commander, Ronald Kellett, wrote, "The Poles seemed to transport their cavalry tactics, and certainly its élan, from the ground to the air."

Not only were the airplanes the Poles trained in before the war slow, they were also not equipped with sophisticated radio and radar equipment. Consequently, Polish aviators learned to use their eyes and to constantly move their heads about to spot enemy aircraft. Those skills served them well in the chaos of combat where they constantly scanned the skies to spot enemy aircraft and then peeled off to engage. Finally, it could also be argued that the Poles had something to prove after their defeat in 1939.

But regardless of the reasons for their success, the valor of the Polish aviators earned lasting admiration and respect from their British comrades-in-arms. As RAF Group Commander Thomas Gleave wrote, "They fought for English soil with an abandon tempered with skill and backed by an indomitable courage such that it could never have been surpassed had it been in defense of their own native land."

Source: Written by Douglas W. Jacobson and published in [The Polish American Journal](#), April 2011

Learn more about the Kosciuszko Squadron Exhibit by visiting the:

Bradley Air Museum, 36 Perimeter Road,
Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, CT.
Telephone: (860) 623-3305.

Hours: Open 7 Days a Week, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

(The PCCGH was a founding contributor of this Exhibit.)



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

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2013 7:00 p.m.

Movie: *"Tajemnica Westerplatte (1939 Battle of Westerplatte)"*
(in Polish with English subtitles)

CCSU—Torp Theatre, Davidson Hall **FREE**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013 6:30 p.m.

PCCGH Lecture: *"From Hula Hoops to High Fashion: G. Fox Co. in the 1950s"*

Presenter: Elizabeth Abbe, Connecticut Historical Society
Polish National Home, Hartford — Dining Room

Members and Guests Welcome **FREE**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2013 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

"Pierogi Making" for the Szopka Festival

SS. Cyril and Methodius School Cafeteria, 35 Groton Street, Hartford
Please help. No experience necessary. Call Pat Archie if you plan to attend: (860) 289-8583.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2013 7:00 p.m.

Movie: *"Układ Zamknięty (The Closed Circuit)"*

(in Polish with English subtitles)

CCSU—Torp Theatre, Davidson Hall **FREE**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2013 9:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

"Pierogi Making" for the Szopka Festival

SS. Cyril and Methodius School Cafeteria, 35 Groton Street, Hartford
Please help. No experience necessary. Call Pat Archie if you plan to attend: (860) 289-8583.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2013 7:00 p.m.

Movie: *"Mój Rower (My Father's Bike)"*

(in Polish with English subtitles)

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

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2013

"Grand Celebration at the Polish National Home"

An opportunity to view the renovations conducted over the summer of 2013. Detailed information to follow.



Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford,
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We're on the Web!

www.polishculturalclub.org

POLISH NATIONAL HOME RESTORATION PROJECT

(CONTINUED) FROM PAGE I

Thus, the plan:

Phase I: \$40,000

Increase revenue via overall improved appearance.

Phase II: \$40,000 to \$50,000

Ensure the overall integrity of the PNH as a cultural center.

Phase III: \$250,000

Undertake major mechanical work to increase the efficiency of the heating/air conditioning system and maximize the full potential of the interior of the building.

The Polish National Home remains anchored in its corner of Hartford while everything around it changes with urban development. It stands now, as it has from the beginning, as a pillar of stability in service to its community and friends.

On October 20, 2013, a Grand Celebration will be held at the Polish National Home to celebrate the 30 year milestone of being placed on the National Historical Register. You are cordially invited to attend to see first hand what has been accomplished thus far and to bask in the pride of how far the Home has come since its establishment in 1930.

As was stated in the opening sentence . . . we began and we will continue. People will be in awe of what has been completed by a very dedicated group of people in such a short period of time, especially in the bar area and dining room. Come in for a meal or drink and support the ongoing renaissance of a Hartford landmark of Polonia.



Guests at the 2009 ACPC Convention, hosted by the PCCGH, enjoyed a delicious Polish meal and warm hospitality at the Polish National Home.

Left to Right: Rudy Hartz, Mary Marek Hartz, Gini Pudlo, Conrad Miczko (from Chicago) and Ed Farley