

It's none-too-early to start thinking about Christmas Eve

Your Wigilia check list

BY ROBERT STRYBEL

Setting the mood: If you like the hustle and bustle of shop-till-you-drop Anglo-commercial holidays, then continue making a fuss about buying, wrapping, hiding, and opening presents. But if interested in the gentler, more family-friendly climate of our Polish heritage, you can set the proper mood by telling your kids about Wigilia. Let them know what it's all about and what part they can play in the preparations. Above all, make it clear that Christmas Eve is not just the day before the main event. **WIGILIA IS THE MAIN EVENT!**

Wigilia lore: How you are on Wigilia you will be the whole year, is one popular belief. Also tell your kids the legend of animals being able to speak and water in wells turning to wine at midnight. Such stories may help pique your youngsters' interest in and curiosity about this "magic Polish night."

Gifts on Wigilia: Although gifts and gadgets are not the true meaning of Christmas, youngsters are big on presents, so let them know they will get to open theirs right after Christmas Eve supper. In families which do not observe Wigilia, kids have to wait till the next day.

Meatless meal: Whether you are preparing everything from scratch, outsourcing or using a bit of both, it's good to give this some thought well in advance. The meatless supper centers on beet or mushroom soup, herring, other fish, pierogi, sauerkraut, noodles, and sweet dishes incorporating poppyseeds, honey, nuts, and raisins.

Recipes are found in this paper and on the net. Many of the items are available at Polish markets, groceries and delis in big and often mid-size northeastern and midwestern cities.

Table-top hay: Depending on where you live, getting a handful of hay to scatter on the bare table-top may be easy enough to find at a riding stable or livestock-feed store. If not, then some well dried lawn clippings will do.

Pure white table-cloth: The gaudy table-cloths spangled with reindeer, candy canes, Santas and poinsettias are OK for Christmas Day, if you like that sort of thing, but the Wigilia tradition requires a pure white one devoid of garish gimmickry. Look through your linen closet or pick one up at the mall.

Decorations: In addition to your Christmas tree and Christmas crib (nativity set) beneath it, consider sticking an evergreen sprig or branch behind hanging pictures and mirrors. They can also be displayed in

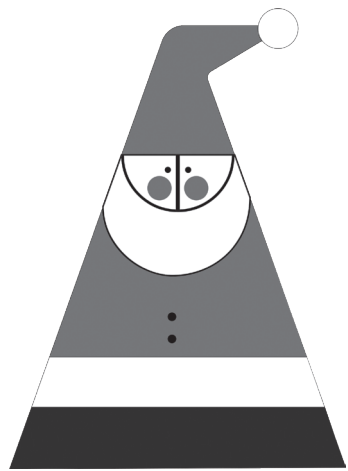
continued on p. 4

Have you been good this year? Saint Nicholas Day in Poland

BY EWELINA NURCZYK

Every opportunity is good when it comes to gift-giving, and if you have been a good boy or girl, you may expect small presents on December 6th – the official celebration of Saint Nicholas, also known as Santa Claus or Father Christmas. This means, that Polish children are visited by him twice every December.

In many Polish households, the morning of **December 6th**, in Polish referred to as *Mikolajki*, is a blissful moment. This is when children find **small gifts under their pillows, in their slippers** or (nowadays more and more often) **in a stocking** carefully hung out for that purpose the evening before. The gifts are usually tiny – small toys or sweets are the most popular option, since bigger presents are still yet to be given



on Christmas Eve, by the very same person – Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas or Santa Claus. So why does he visit Polish kids twice a year?

In the past, it was on the Saint Nicholas feast when the little ones received gifts, and Poles generally did not hand out presents on Christmas Eve.

With time, when the Western customs of giving major gifts around Christmas started to reach Poland, it became natural that *Mikolajki* is just a prelude to bigger celebrations starting on December 24th. In some parts of Poland it is easier to distinguish these two gift-giving occasions, as Saint Nicholas is so tired after his special day, that he is replaced by **Angel** or **Snowflake** around Christmas Day. Nonetheless, in general, most Polish children get to meet him twice a year.

Regardless of whether you celebrate Christmas or not, on December 6th it is always thoughtful to give a small gift to your little Polish friend, if you have one. In some workplaces it is around this day when co-workers play **Secret Santa** by drawing a colleague to give a small gift to, or gather for an **office Christmas party**. Just be jolly and let us know if you have found something special under your pillow this year!

Christmas Party 2019

This year PHS Christmas Party will be held on January 18, 2020 at the Aging Resource Center at 300 S. Adams Street in Green Bay. Like every year, we are starting at 11:30am with lunch being served at noon. We will be serving the meal potluck style. If your last name begins with A-J please bring appetizers, salads, vegetable, or fruit. If your last name begins with K-R, please bring a main dish. If your last name begins with S-Z, please bring a dessert. Polish sausage and opłatki will be provided.

The event is free to the members of our society and there is a charge of \$10/person for all the guests.

Please make your reservations by January 12th to Mike Wichowski at 920 217 7701. Please leave a message with your name and the number of people who will be attending. *Wesołych Świąt!*



Wesołych świąt
Bożego Narodzenia
oraz wszystkiego
najlepszego
w Nowym Roku

Merry Christmas
and All the Best in
the New Year

from PHS Board



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 17 & November 24, 3 PM and 5:30 PM – Polish Film Festival at UW-Madison
Union South Marquee Theater. Free to the public. Films are screened in the original language with English subtitles. <http://www.polishfilmfest.com/index.html>

November 17, 3 PM – Catholic University of Lublin Exhibition
Basilica of St Josaphat, 2333 South 6th St, Milwaukee, WI. Presentation by Sławomir Nowosad Professor and Dean of the Department of Theology. The Catholic University of Lublin (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski – KUL) was established soon after Poland regained its independence in 1918. It was also the first Polish university to reopen after the Second World War. During Communist times KUL was the only independent university in the Eastern Bloc. Despite government repression, the University maintained its identity and became an oasis of free thought. One of its professors was Karol Wojtyła, who became Pope John Paul II. Since the fall of Communism, KUL has diversified its academic programs, expanded its campus, and increased its student body. After the death of Pope John Paul II, the University's name was changed to the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. This exhibition tells the story of the Catholic University from 1918 until the present day.

December 1, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM – Holiday Bazaar & Champagne Brunch
Polish Center of Wisconsin, 6941 South 68th St, Franklin, WI.

December 1, 3:00 PM – Polish Mass
St Cecilia Catholic Church, 603 Oak St, Wisconsin Dells, WI. Phone: 608 254 8381.

December 12, 6:00 PM – PHS Board Meeting
NEW LOCATION at: Denny's, 2894 S Oneida, Green Bay, WI. Meetings are open to public.

December 14 – Annual PHC Madison Wigilia Celebration
Goodman Community Center, 149 Waubesa St, Madison, WI. By reservation only; phcwisconsin@gmail.com

January 9 – PHS Board Meeting
Denny's, 2894 S Oneida, Green Bay, WI. Meetings are open to public.

January 10 – Newspaper article deadline.
Submit articles to Małgosia Daugherty at malgosiaaugherty@yahoo.com

January 18 – 2019 Polish Heritage Society Christmas Party
Aging Resource Center at 300 S. Adams St, Green Bay, WI

January 20, 6:30 PM – Newspaper distribution meeting
255 Terraview Dr, Green Bay, WI.

Olga Tokarczuk is Poland's fifth Nobel laureate for Literature

Polish writer receives 2018 literary Nobel Prize

BY ROBERT STRYBEL

October this year, Olga Tokarczuk, 57, was awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize for Literature. The 2018 prize was de-



foto. Wikimedia Commons

layed by a year after a sexual assault scandal rocked the Swedish Academy which awards the prize.

Tokarczuk was honored "for a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life,"

the Academy said to justify its choice.

She began writing at the age of 17 while in high school. A graduate psychologist, she has said her educational background and work as a psycho-therapist with the mentally impaired have influenced her literature. She has been an essayist, poet, novelist, short-story author, and screenwriter.

Tokarczuk's biggest work is her nearly 1,000-page novel titled "The books of Jacob." It focuses on the vicissitudes of 18th-century Jewish mystic Jakub Lejbowicz Frank who claimed to be the reincarnation of a self-styled Messiah. Lejbowicz ultimately got excommunicated as a heretic by Poland's mainline Jewry.

The left-leaning writer has been called an "anti-Sienkiewicz." Poland's first Nobel Literary laureate Henryk Sienkiewicz wrote his historical novels to "uplift the hearts" of his downtrodden countrymen

chafing under foreign occupation since the late 1700s. Tokarczuk's writings are the antithesis of that approach.

"We (Poles) have thought of the history of Poland as a tolerant and open country. (...) In actuality, we have done terrible things as colonizers (of Ukraine), slave-owners and murderers of Jews." Tokarczuk said.

A declared feminist and backer of left-wing causes, Tokarczuk is the darling of leftists and liberals, but is often criticized by the patriotic right. The conservative government's Culture Minister Piotr Gliński was among the first to congratulate the Nobel laureate and diplomatically added: "This is good news for Polish culture. It is clear evidence that Polish literature is appreciated around the world."

Olga Tokarczuk was the fifth Pole to receive the Noble Prize for Literature. She was preceded by Henryk Sienkiewicz (1905), Władysław Reymont (1924), Czesław Miłosz (1980) and Wisława Szymborska (1996). Some include Polish-born Jewish writer Isaac Beshavis Singer who wrote in Yiddish and received the prize in 1978.

2019 Polish Film Festival

Marquee Theater, Union South, 1308 W Dayton St, Madison, WI
Free Admission, English Subtitles • <http://polishfilmfest.com/>

November 17, Sunday

3:00 pm *MISTER T. (2019) dir. Marcin Krzyształowicz, 103 min*
A comedy-drama that shows the struggle of the individual against the totalitarian system.

The action is set in Warsaw rising from the war rubble in 1953. The omnipresent uncertainty, denunciations, and the sense of constant surveillance are tamed with the help of vodka and good company. A renowned writer, Mister T. lives in a hotel for authors and makes a living by giving extra lessons. The pace of the protagonist's life quickens once the authorities begin to suspect him of an evil wish to blow up the biggest communist building in the city, and Secret Police agents start to watch every move he makes. It is hard to stay serious in this ridiculous reality.

5:30 pm *PLAYING HARD (2019) dir. Kinga Dębska, 88 min*

A stirring story of three women of different ages who have a drinking problem: a respected sixty year old child surgeon, a well-known prosecutor in her forties and a young professional who are at the top of their game and on the brink of collapse at the same time.

November 24, Sunday

3:00 pm *TAXING LOVE (2018) dir. Bartek Ignaciuk, 101 min*

Klara, devoted to her work as a tax inspector, becomes infatuated with the dashing but irresponsible and cynical man who is about to be charged with tax evasion. Witty dialogues, enjoyable suspense and great humor as in the best romantic comedies.

5:30 pm *CLERGY (2018) dir. Wojciech Smarzowski, 133 min*

Three Catholic priests meet to celebrate the anniversary of an event which could have taken their lives. Their experiences and motivations to serve as priests are extremely different, and soon each of them will have to face new challenges. "Controversial in its native Poland, this ambitious drama skillfully shows its clerical cast are as much victims as villains.



Duo Klavitarre during their concert at Lawrence University in Appleton, WI



Mike Brzezinski's genealogy class in Pulaski



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Thank You New members, RENEWING MEMBERS, and Donors!

The Polish Heritage Society of Northeastern Wisconsin is pleased to report renewing since our last issue are all long-time and a few founding members including **Alice Kowalkowski** of Pulaski, **Paul Jankowski** of Murrells Inlet, South Carolina, **Florence Ahasay** of Green Bay, and **Gerald Smurawa** of Pulaski. It is wonderful to see that we are maintaining the organization's dedicated membership! *Dobrze jest mieć Was z nami!*

Grateful thanks to founding member **Alice Kowalkowski** of Pulaski who included a very thoughtful donation with her membership. Thank you very much to **Frank Czarnecki** of Green Bay who donated toward the sponsorship of the Academy Award Nominated Polish film, *Cold War* (2018), screened in the International Film Series at the Neville Public Museum in October. The Society also received a donation from Lawrence University of Appleton to assist the Society in bringing the musicians, Duo Klavitarre, to their campus.

I appreciate the special notes many of you include with your membership dues which I may appropriately share with your Board of Directors. Thank you all for your support and interest in our Polish heritage! If you have any membership status or financial inquiries, please feel free to contact me. Also, your board officers' contact information is listed in this newspaper and on the phsofnew.org website.

Paul M. Zwicker, Treasurer
(zwickerp@aol.com), (phsofnew@gmail.com)

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 Paczki Day Party (Feb) Input to Newsletter
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 Polish Music event
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* for PHS use only to send event reminders

GROWING UP POLISH AMERICAN

To be an American

HELEN A. SCIESZKA, PH.D.

In 1980 the remake of the movie “The Jazz Singer” was released with Neil Diamond playing the leading role. Even though the movie was not well received the soundtrack was...becoming Neil Diamond’s bestselling album ever. This included one of his top hits “America!” The lyrics tell the powerful story of the hope of the immigrants who came to this country in the early 1900’s and again in the 1980’s. It is still telling the immigrants story today... “*We’ve been traveling far...Without a home...But not without a star...Free...Only want to be free...never looking back again...home, to a new and a shiny place...They’re coming to America...*” are just a few of the words.

When we look at history and even in today’s world, we know why.

When my maternal second great grandparents and my paternal grandparents left Poland and came to America in the late 1800s and early 1900s Poland was still living under the foreign rulers of the German (Prussian), Austrian, and Russian empires. And were part of what was called the “Great Economic Emigration” that began in the 1880s as a result of the extreme poverty, the worst in Europe in the rural peasant areas they were from.

It is difficult for us to imagine the kinds of conditions that would prompt such a mass exodus. To leave family, knowing they might never see each other again; a way of life, foods and traditions they were familiar with; the language and a country they still loved. Today there are some who choose to live in another country for work, for the experience, etc. But, this was different as it had to do with basic survival and the hope and promise of a better life. (Something we often hear expressed today from the immigrants coming in from the south of us.)

For my relatives, to come into the country they first needed to have the money to pay for passage on a ship. Few could afford first or even second class and instead usually rode in the steerage area of the ship which is the lower deck where cargo was normally placed. This was not only the lowest cost but also the lowest class of travel and the only one that most immigrants could afford. The story is told that my paternal grandfather worked his way over as a cook on one of the ships.

Once they arrived they then went through a processing center like the one at Ellis Island. They were asked twenty-nine questions like: “Are you an anarchist?” “Are you a polygamist?” Plus, they

needed to have a certain amount of money on them and someone who was sponsoring them. From what we can determine it appears that my Grandmother’s older sister is the one who sponsored her as she had arrived here a few years prior. It also helped if they already had a job waiting as one of the determining factors on their admittance was whether or not the United States was going to have to support them.

Next was the physical exam which included more than just questions as the doctors and nurses were also looking for any handicaps, mental illness or disease. All of this was to determine if they were suitable to enter the country.

This processing took about three or four hours until they were finally released if everything was okay. If not, they could be rejected and sent back to their country of origin.

So once finally here they strove to be an American. It’s not that they wanted to lose or forget their homeland, its’ food and traditions, but they were in America now.

First, they got jobs and worked hard. My paternal grandparents initially worked as a maid and a porter in a hotel eventually moving farther north with my grandfather taking a job at an automobile manufacturing company and then opened their own neighborhood grocery store. Grocery stores, bakeries, fish and meat markets – especially in larger cities were one of the ways that immigrants could more easily have an income and support their growing families. Part of their service to their neighborhoods and customers was to offer meat and vegetables that were fresh, delivery service and the

ability to speak English for their non-Polish clientele. I am guessing this is part of the reason that once they had the store that, according to my father, they no longer allowed their school age children to speak Polish in the home, only English so that they could better learn the new language. Thus, my father never learned very much Polish, but gratefully his older sisters did.

In addition to the adjustments of living in a new country there was also the challenge of the naturalization process. First, they had to file a declaration of intention saying that they intended to become a US citizen, to give up their allegiance to all other countries and to permanently live here. Somewhere within two to seven years after this they could then apply to the court for citizenship. Along with the petition they had to also supply affidavits from two witnesses who could basically vouch for them. Then a thorough investigation of the person was conducted that was then given to the courts along with a recommendation as to whether or not to allow them citizenship. If the judge agreed, then the person swore an oath of allegiance to the United States, its Constitution and laws and citizenship was granted. It was quite a process but one that most immigrants of the time gladly went through.

Many immigrant men,

including my grandfather, of that era also registered for military service for both World War I & II. Even though Draft registration was required most of the men were happy to have the possibility of going to war for their new country. To this day in the Federated Polish Home in my hometown there is an Honor Roll listing its members who served in the Armed Forces. I am honored to say that my father and my uncles are on that list. After all, the immigrants and their children were Americans now and proud of it.

And as a nation, we too are proud of our diversity and grateful for the gifts these immigrants have brought. And I as a grand daughter and a great great grand daughter am proud to be one of their descendants.

“*Got a dream they’ve come to share...They’re coming to America... My country ‘tis of thee...Sweet land of liberty...Of thee I sing...*”

NOTE: Be sure to watch for my next set of articles beginning in the next newsletter about my recent trip to Poland.

Helen A. Scieszka, Ph.D. is a former ad executive, psychologist, college professor, Catholic church pastoral associate, Diocesan marriage & family life director; published author. Please visit her website drhelenscieszka.com to keep up with news on talks, book sale/signings and new releases!

Winter is coming – tips on how to survive wintertime in Poland!

Although it is the season to be jolly, many foreigners are horrified when they face the Polish winter for the first time. But unlike the North in the popular TV show “Game of Thrones,” our climate is hardly deadly. Take a look at our list of survival tips!

1. Be prepared, act surprised

Although we intend to supply you with this life-saving guide, remember to put on your shocked face upon seeing the very first snowflake. Polish people love being surprised by the weather (*Who would expect blizzards in the middle of December?*). Not sure whether it’s a genuine bewilderment, or just a

good topic for small talk in a lift – try to go with it nonetheless. With time, you may even acquire the skill naturally – just wait till next winter and you’ll probably be surprised with the heavy snowfall yourself, without faking it.

2. Stock up your freezer

It’s freezing outside – but make sure that your freezer is full and ready to go for the next few months! It doesn’t matter whether you like to dine out in fancy restaurants or grab a bite in the nearest fast food place – upon coming home on a long and dark evening you may feel a twitch in your stomach. Polish cuisine has a lot to

offer, so go ahead and experiment with *bigos* or *pierogi* in order to survive the cold. A hearty meal is known to have saved lives before.

3. Save the dates

In Poland you may feel spoiled by having shops open almost 24/7, while in most Western countries this is seen as a luxury. However, do not be fooled – December and January are full of days when you won’t be able to pop into the nearest shop for an emergency bottle of wine for your guests. Most of the shops will be completely shut down on December 25th and 26th, as well as on January 1st and January 6th. Two other risky days for

shopping are December 24th and 31st. Keep those dates in mind and put some time aside for doing proper shopping earlier.

4. Leave earlier than usual

Everyday commuting may become painful as you scratch the ice off of your windscreen in complete darkness. Once you are done with this, it only gets better. Thin layers of ice, heavy snowfall and lots of mud – you can expect all of these on Polish roads as early as in November. No wonder that traffic jams fill almost every winter day. Leaving extra early may be bothersome, but it won’t hurt if you don’t want to miss an important business meeting. It doesn’t matter if you catch a taxi or go by bus – not many vehicles can effortlessly handle our snow barricades.

5. Go clothes-shopping

If you tend to go for the business look – beware. Ladies will need to stock up on thicker tights, while gentlemen may want to consider buying a pair (or more!) of long johns. They will become your best friends during the long wintertime – just don’t brag about wearing them underneath your tailor-made suit. Make extra sure your shoes are on

your side as well. Fine and smooth soles won’t do in our climate. Polish pavements are generally taken care of with appropriate attention, but some slippery patches may hide just around the corner of your office.

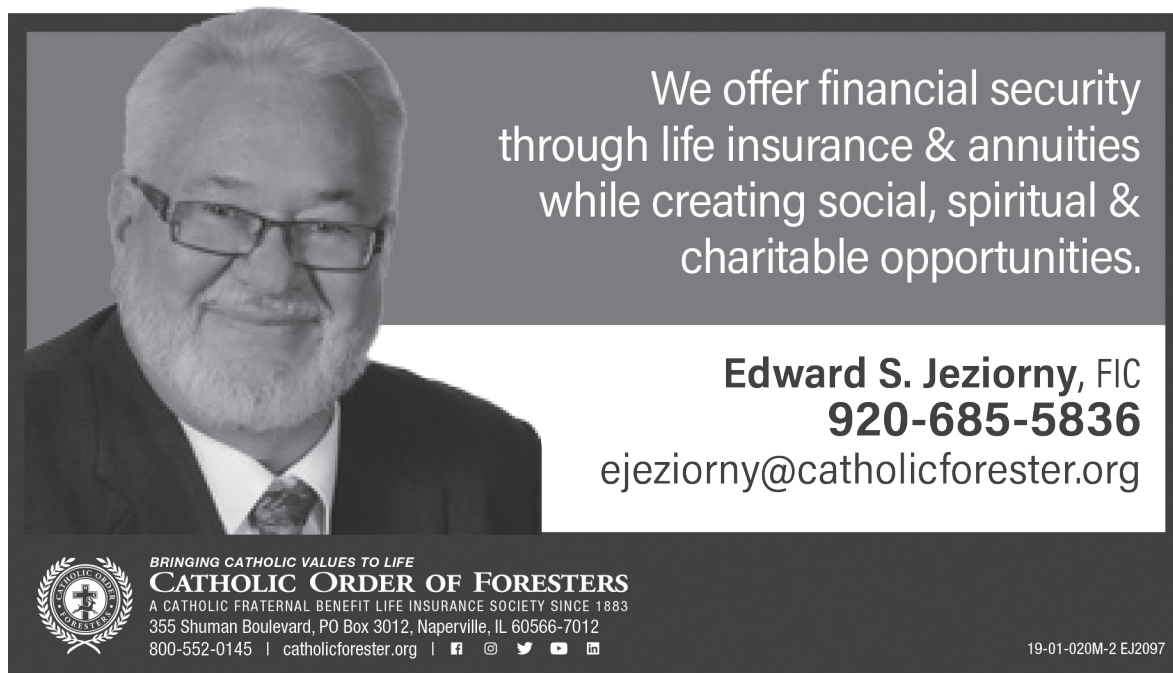
7. Book a skiing trip

You need to be warned about positive things as well! Foreigners find Polish mountains to be thoroughly enjoyable (and easy on your wallet!). A weekend trip with your co-workers may be enough to make you fall in love with our beautiful Tatras. Sliding down a slope or two should make a terrific gateway from the office life.

And while you’re in Zakopane (*the winter capital of Poland*), you will probably stumble upon a ski-jumping contest. Never heard of this sport? Don’t worry, you’re going to love it. After a few cups of mulled wine you may even admit that it’s better than football!

The list could go on, but we’ll leave the rest of fun to you. Poland can be a truly magical winter wonderland, so enjoy discovering all of its charms. And if you cannot bear the cold at any cost – just remember that eventually it will pass!

Ewelina Nurczyk



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Your Wigilia check list

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a vase. If you can add several stalks of grain (wheat or rye), you will approximate the old Polish Wigilia custom of standing sheaves of grain in all four corners of the room.

Empty place-setting: Traditionally there is an empty place-setting at the Wigilia table in memory of a dearly departed loved one. But it may be offered to any lonely person who would otherwise have to spend this festive evening in solitude. It's best to invite that person well in advance.

Oplatek: The Christmas wafer is the holiday's main ritual artifact without which there can be no wigilia. If your parish or some local retail shop does not supply oplatek, contact Polish Art Center at raymond@polsartcenter.com or Google "Christmas wafers."

Family kolędy sing: For the words (in Polish and English) and music simply Google "Polish Christmas carols" or "polskie koledy." (Yes, it should be "kolędy," but computerdom dispenses with

accent marks.) You can then print out and pass around to family members as many copies as needed.

Wigilia etiquette: Wigilia dishes are brought in and eaten one at a time. One of the beliefs surrounding the meal is that no-one should get up and leave the table until the supper is over. Another says everyone should sample at



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least the tiniest bit of every food on the table. Failure to do so may augur poverty and hunger in the year ahead.

Gift distribution: If there will be young children present, it might be nice to have someone the kids don't know

turn up in the role of Święty Mikołaj (Saint Nicholas). Costumes are available from Michigan's St Nicholas Center (<https://www.stnicholas-center.org/pages/costumes/>) or direct from Poland (http://www.strojemikolaja.pl/stroje-swietego-mikolaja-biskupa/cat_24.php) If not, then appoint one of the youngsters to read and pass out the labeled presents from under the tree.

Shepherds Mass: Midnight Mass (often held earlier than

midnight) is a fitting culmination to this "magic Polish night." Pasterka (Shepherds Mass) is especially solemn and festive at our older Polish parishes, so it may be worthwhile driving across town to attend, if possible, with the entire family.

herring. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight for flavors to blend. Served with boiled potatoes.

CLEAR DRIED MUSHROOM SOUP 1. (czysta zupa grzybowa z suszonych grzybów): In 2 c water re-hydrate (soak until soft) and cook 1 oz dried bolete mushrooms with 2 bayleaves and 2 grains allspice until tender. When tender, slice into strips or dice and add together with the mushroom stock to enough vegetable stock to make 6 c. For vegetable stock, in about 4 c water cook 1 sliced celery stalk, carrot and onion until veggies are tender. Add a mushroom bouillon cube, bring to boil, simmer briefly and salt & pepper to taste. Garnish with a little freshly-chopped parsley if desired. Serve over side egg noodles.

FRIED FISH FILLETS (filety rybne smażone): Rinse well and pat dry 2 lbs fresh or thawed freshwater fillets. (Walleye, whitefish, pike, lake perch, catfish, cod, haddock, plaice, fresh herring, etc. are good.) Place in bowl, salt well and intersperse with 1 thinly sliced onion and 1 small sliced lemon. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Next day, discard onion and lemon, rinse fillets and dry well on paper towel. Season with pepper and sweet paprika (the overnight salting may suffice), dredge in flour, shaking off excess, and fry in 1/2" hot oil to a nice golden brown on both sides. Drain on absorbent paper before serving. Serve with horseradish sauce.

Robert Strybel
strybel@interia.pl

THE POLISH CHEF

Traditonal Polish Wigilia treats

Here are some of the best-known dishes of Polish Wigilia, Christmas Eve supper – the most important family meal of the year. Some recipes have been simplified to make them easier to prepare.

CHRISTMAS WAFER (oplatek): Wigilia begins with the sharing of the white Christmas wafer (oplatek) during which best wishes are exchanged. The ritual is complete when everyone has hugged, kissed and shared oplatek with everyone else present.

PICKLED HERRING (śledź marynowany): Soak 4-6 Matjes herring fillets in cold water 1-4 hrs. Taste a small piece after an hr of soaking to see if it is not too salty. If still quite salty, continue soaking. (Unlike traditional salt herring requiring overnight soaking and changing waters, Matjes herring are less salted. While they soak, in saucepan combine 1 c 6% distilled vinegar and 1 c water, add 3 bay leaves, 6 peppercorns, 2 grains allspice, 1 t mustard seed and from 1 heaping t to 1 heaping

T sugar. Bring to boil and simmer covered on low 10 min. Switch off heat and let stand until cooled to room temp. Dry fillets well on paper towel, slice into 1-1/2" pieces and layer with wafer-thin small onion slices in a jar or crockery bowl. Drench with marinade and seal jar or cover bowl and refrigerate at least 24 hrs before serving. Serve with rye bread or boiled potatoes.

CREAMED HERRING (śledź w śmietanie): Soak, dry and cut 1 lb Matjes herring as above. Remove from water and dry on paper towel. In sauce pan combine 1 c water, 2 T cider or white-wine vinegar, 2 bay leaves and 4 grains allspice and bring to boil. Add 2 onions sliced wafer thin and simmer until onion is tender. Strain in sieve, discard bay leaves and allspice and set onions aside to cool. On glass or crockery serving platter place herring and intersperse with onions. Fork-blend 3/4 c sour cream with 2 T mayonnaise, season with ground pepper nad sugar to taste and pour over



I'm sure all of our readers have heard of the organization Habitat for Humanity. Poland has a similar organization called Habitat Poland. Habitat Poland uses its advocacy efforts to bring together national and local governments, private and public landlords, nonprofits and the Polish people themselves to help families struggling in a tight and expensive housing market.

Seeking affordable housing solutions for the country's most vulnerable groups, Habitat Poland is participating in a pilot project funded by a European Union grant. An agency run by Habitat Poland in partnership with the city of Warsaw uses housing stock from private landlords and the city. A family's new apartment is owned by the city of Warsaw and is renovated by Habitat Poland. The agency identifies good tenants and negotiates a rent that they can comfortably pay with the earnings from their employment. Habitat Poland will continue to manage the property until the family pays off the mortgage and owns the property. The agency eases

the financial burdens on the city of Warsaw which wants to renovate even more apartments to help even more people.

The housing crisis in Poland is among the most dire of the European Union. It starts with a shortage of decent, affordable places to live. Today, some 18 million Poles – 40% of the population – live in overcrowded dwellings. An estimated 15 percent live in substandard places, many without a bathroom or central heat. This is the backdrop that has Habitat Poland responding to needs. Regardless of what the solutions look like, they all start with the basic premise, "Housing is key. It's a base for a better life." (from the magazine HABITAT, May, 2019)

A thought: If you've worked with Habitat for Humanity in the U.S., you may enjoy a stint in Poland.

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