

Did a Pole reach America before Columbus?

Poland's mysterious Jan z Kolna

BY ROBERT STRYBEL

Although most everyone has heard that "Columbus discovered America in 1492," the Italian explorer never set foot in what would become the continental United States and mainly explored the Caribbean islands. But never tell that to a proud Italo-American for whom Columbus Day, a national holiday celebrated on the second Monday of October, is a way of life.



John Scolvus as depicted by a statue from modern times in Szczecin, Poland with the Polish origin theory name rendering of Jan z Kolna

Americans of Scandinavian origin point to Norseman Leif Erickson, believed to have discovered America around the year 1000. Leif Erickson Day is marked on October 9th, but again the Viking actually only got as far as what he

called Vinland, believed to be what would become Canada's Newfoundland.

In that respect, Poland's Jan z Kolna (John of Kolno) reportedly outdid both those explorers. As fleet master of Denmark's King Christian I Oldenburg, Jan was said to have been a Polish navigator who not only reached Labrador, Canada in 1476 but went on to sail south and explore the area around what would become Boston. But it was not until 1570, nearly a century later, that Frenchman François de Belleforest first alluded to his Polish origin.

That notion was reinforced by Cornelius Wytfliet of Flanders who in 1599 wrote: "Jan Scolnus, a Pole (Polonus in the Latin-language original), in 1476 sailed beyond Norway. Greenland and Friesland just below the Arctic Circle and reached the lands of Labrador and Estotiland." The navigator's name had been variously spelled Scolvus, Skolwus, Scowus, Scolvo and Scolnus. His first name has been recorded as Johannes, as Latin was still the lingua franca of the day.

It was Polish historian and cartographer Joachim Lelewel (1786-1861) who translated Johannes Scolnus as Jan Szkolny (John the Scholar or John of the School) and eventually concluded that the original Latinized appellation had been derived from Jan z Kolna (John of Kolno), a reference to a town in northern Mazovia bordering Prussia. That version was widely popularized in Polonia by Polish-American historian Artur Leonard Waldo (1896-1985). Polish-American artist Artur Szyk (1894-1951) painted a portrait of the allegedly Polish navigator on the basis of how he imagined his subject appeared in real life.

But many questions remain. Did those diverse spellings all refer to one and the same person or perhaps different individuals? Other historical mentions list his nationality as Danish, Norwegian and even Portuguese. And in 1911, Norwegian oceanographer Fridtjof Nansen suggested that "Pilotus" (navigator, pilot) had been misread as "Polonus." The bottom line seems to be that there is no newer evidence resolving this dilemma one way or the other.

The Esteemed Nobel Laureates of Poland Are... (1)

HELEN A. SCIESZKA, PH.D.

Over the next year (6 articles) we will take a brief look at the lives of 18 individuals from Poland (of Polish ethnicity or citizenship) who have been awarded 19 Nobel prizes covering all six categories: Chemistry, Physics, Literature, Physiology or Medicine, the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, and of course the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize.

These prizes were instituted by Alfred Nobel in his will stipulating that most of his estate was to be invested and then be given annually "...to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind." From 1901 through 2021 these prizes have been awarded to 943 individuals and 25 organizations (some more than once).

Our first recipient is Marie Salomea Skłodowska Curie who was born in Warsaw November 7, 1867 and was the first woman to win a Nobel prize in 1903 along with her husband Pierre (whom she had married in 1895),

thus also the first married couple to win the prize. It was in Physics for their work on the theory of radioactivity. (Their daughter Irene and her husband Frederic Joliot were the second couple to win the Nobel Prize but in Chemistry.) In 1911 Marie was awarded a second Nobel Prize this time in Chemistry for her discovery of polonium and radium, thus becoming the first person and the only woman to win the Nobel Prize twice and the only individual to win it in two different scientific fields.

Madam Curie, as she came to be known, died July 4, 1934 in France from aplastic anemia caused by exposure to radiation in her work during World War I at field hospitals and from her other scientific research.

Our next recipient is Henryk Adam Aleksander Pius Sienkiewicz (also known as Litwos) who received his Nobel Prize in Literature in 1905 "...because of his outstanding merits as an epic writer" and is best known for writing historical novels. He was born May 5, 1846

continued on p. 3



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Polish Heritage Society will not be hosting a Fat Tuesday/Paczki Party in March due to health safety concerns around COVID-19. We apologize for any inconvenience.

February 4, Friday, 6:00 PM-8:30 PM – Polish Workshop with Pierogi Dinner in Appleton, WI
For more information visit <https://www.airbnb.com/experiences/2556518>

February 6, 3:00 PM (1st Sunday of the month) – Polish Mass in Wisconsin Dells
Saint Cecilia Catholic Church, 603 Oak St, Wisconsin Dells, WI, Fr. Mirosław Szyal.

February 10, 6:00 PM – PHS Board Meeting
Bay Family Restaurant, 1301 S. Military, Green Bay, WI. You are invited!

February 18, Friday, 6:00 PM-8:30 PM – Polish Workshop with Pierogi Dinner in Appleton, WI
For more information visit <https://www.airbnb.com/experiences/2556518>

March 2, 7:00 PM – "Chopin. Caribbean Key" (Poland, 2020), Neville Museum, 210 Place, Green Bay, WI. Co-sponsor: Polish Heritage Society.

March 4, Friday, 6:00 PM-8:30 PM – Polish Workshop with Pierogi Dinner in Appleton, WI
For more information visit <https://www.airbnb.com/experiences/2556518>

March 6, 3:00 PM, (1st Sunday of the month) – Polish Mass in Wisconsin Dells
Saint Cecilia Catholic Church, 603 Oak St, Wisconsin Dells, WI, Fr. Mirosław Szyal

March 6-13 – Casimir Pulaski Days, Pulaski, WI
See page 3 schedule of events and times.

March 10, 6:00 PM – PHS Board Meeting
Bay Family Restaurant, 1301 S. Military, Green Bay, WI. You are invited!

March 11 – Newspaper article deadline
Submit articles to Malgosia at malgosiadaugherty@yahoo.com

March 18, Friday, 6:00 PM-8:30 PM – Polish Workshop with Pierogi Dinner in Appleton, WI
For more information visit <https://www.airbnb.com/experiences/2556518>

March 23, 6:30 PM – Newspaper distribution meeting
255 Terraview Dr, Green Bay, WI.



Phot. Private Archive

Polish Workshop with Pierogi Dinner in Appleton, WI

This workshop is addressed to adults to learn and expand their knowledge of Polish history and culture. The course is also a perfect opportunity to gain more understanding of your Polish heritage or prepare you for a visit in Poland.

As a Poland native born, I will take you on a tour of how my country looks today and share many stories about its history, events and people that shaped it in the past 100 years. Starting with a short language lesson, I will teach you a few Polish greetings and how to introduce yourself in my native tongue. I will then cover Polish geography, climate, and interesting facts. I will spend some time talking about Polish history, World War II, the Solidarity Movement and changes that took place in Poland in 1989 and helped the country flourish and transition to democracy. Moving on, we will learn about Polish people's traditions, and I will show you a video of my brother's wedding from Kielce, Poland.

There are 16 National Holidays in Poland, and I will talk about my favorite, All-Saints Day. At the end, I will invite you to try my mom's famous pierogi and share the recipe on how to make them. Come join me to discover your roots, learn about Poland, and gain an appreciation for the rich tradition and culture of the Polish people!

Malgosia Daugherty

<https://www.airbnb.com/experiences/2556518>

POLISH NEWSBYTES

COMPILED BY ROBERT STRYBEL

BELARUSSIAN REGIME EMBARGOES POLISH FOOD IMPORTS

The regime of Belarusian strongman Aleksander Lukashenko has slapped an embargo on food products imported from Poland. The move was seen as a retaliatory gesture against Polish-backed EU sanctions. According to Deputy Prime Minister Henryk Kowalczyk, the embargo will not be a big problem for Poland but will probably harm Belarus. "Our trade with Belarus is worth around \$226 million a year, which accounts for 0.6 percent of Poland's food exports," Kowalczyk said. The embargo includes Polish beef, poultry, pork, milk and dairy products, fruit, vegetables, nuts and sweets. Apples have been Poland's top export to Belarus.

40 YEARS AGO, POLAND LANGUISHED UNDER MARTIAL LAW

"The day martial law was declared was one of the blackest dates in the history of our dear homeland," current Solidarity leader Piotr Duda told an assembly in the north-central city of Bydgoszcz. "The Jaruzelski junta had declared war on the Polish nation, not on an outside invader." The Soviet-trained general's "choice of the lesser evil" (hinting but failing to openly say that Soviet intervention would be a worse alternative) clamped the country under a dictatorial regimen. Its purpose was to crush the 10-million-strong Solidarność union which was challenging Poland's Soviet-backed regime at every turn. During the 1983 pilgrimage to his native land, Pope John Paul II asked the communist dictator to end martial law, and it was lifted the following month. Its toll: 10,000 imprisoned, 100 killed

and many hundreds wounded. Polish Television outdid itself in providing relevant feature films, documentaries, concerts, and interviews with people who had been part of that ordeal.

POLISH OIL GIANT CLINCHES GREEN NUCLEAR DEAL

PKN Orlen, Poland's largest oil refinery, has set up a joint venture with the environmentally minded energy firm Synthos Green Energy. "The project's main purpose is to prepare and commercialize small nuclear-reactor technology in Poland," the company said in a statement. Its main focus is on GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy's BWRX-300 reactors. The statement added that the project would "offer an opportunity to accelerate the decarbonization (phasing out coal) of the Orlen group's production assets, while also helping to improve energy security and drive economic growth," Orlen CEO Daniel Obajtek explained. He said he hoped the first reactor would be deployed in Poland by 2030.

UNESCO ADDS POLISH FLORAL-CARPET RITUAL TO HERITAGE LIST

The Polish tradition of creating temporary floral carpets over which Corpus Christi processions are to pass has been added to UNESCO's Representative List of Mankind's Intangible Cultural Heritage. The floral carpets are laboriously created in often elaborate geometric patterns only to be obliterated after the procession passes over them. The decision was made by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee in charge of safeguarding intangible cultural assets at its 16th session in Paris, Poland's PAP news agency reported. UNESCO stands for

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Corpus Christi (*Boże Ciało*) is a national holiday in Poland marked by Eucharistic processions at every Catholic parish throughout the land. This year it falls on June 16th.

TWO MORE AWARDS FOR POLISH STRIKER ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI

Poland's star goal-scorer Robert Lewandowski won two Globe Football (Soccer) Awards in the United Arab Emirates for his goal-scoring feats this year. The Globe Football Awards are granted to the world's best male and female players as well as best clubs, Poland's PAP news agency reported. At the awards gala in Dubai, French forward Kylian Mbappe was named male footballer of the year, but Robert Lewandowski keeps racking up the milestones after his latest goal. Having already equaled the calendar-year Bundesliga goal record of Germany's all-time great Gerd Muller, in his final 2021 match the Pole equaled the incredible 2013 campaign of Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, widely regarded as one of the greatest players of all time.

WILL A YOUNG WARSAW SCIENTIST REVOLUTIONIZE THE COSMETICS INDUSTRY?

Michał Styczyński, a PhD researcher at the Biology Department of Warsaw University, has made a pioneering discovery based on observations of the behavior of Antarctic bacteria. He has become the first in the world to discover a natural UV filter with potential to replace the environmentally damaging synthetic filters currently used in the cosmetics industry. The university said on social media: "PhD student Michał Styczyński discovered a substance from the melanin category which can be used as an effective, natural UV filter (eliminating synthetic ingredients of creams which contribute to the death of coral reefs). Congratulations! We are keeping our fingers crossed for the commercialization of this discovery!"

Why study in Poland?

BY ROBERT STRYBEL

If someone suggested that your kids or grandkids study in Poland, how would you and they react? "I don't speak any Polish," is a common reply. "That must be expensive," others might say. "Why study all the way over in Poland when



Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Courtyard of the Collegium Maius

we've got so many colleges here in America?" is another typical question.

Poland boasts numerous schools of higher education of every type: universities, academies, higher schools, institutes, and colleges. Many are general-education institutions. They offer bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees in the fields of arts and humanities, social sciences, science, engineering, computer science, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and business administration. They are equipped with the latest computer, audio-visual and lab facilities, and most programs are offered in both Polish and English, so not knowing Polish is no obstacle to admission.

"OK, so an American gets a degree from a Polish university, but where does he go from there?" is an obvious concern. For one, Polish medical schools are accredited in the US, and Polish diplomas open up doors to the best companies on both sides of the Atlantic, Polish educators insist. Also, while studying in Poland a student has access to the European Union's study programs and is able to do internships or traineeships abroad in English.

Many cultural perks await a Polish American studying here.

They have a chance to tour the country and visit its imposing cathedrals, palaces, and quaint Old Town districts not to mention its breath-taking Tatra Mountains and Europe's last primeval forest. During Christmas, Easter, and summer vacations, any point in Europe is easily accessible from centrally located Poland. Even on weekends, such nearby countries as Germany, Russia, Sweden, Austria, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic are just a couple hours away.

The question on most everyone's mind is: How much will it cost? The good news is that the above-mentioned study programs are very affordable compared to the tuition fees charged by American universities. A Bachelor's Degree will set the student back around \$7,900 for all four years combined, and a Master's program is within the \$10,000 range. Whether you are potentially interested or just curious, it never hurts to ask. Find out more at: <https://study.gov.pl>



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Thank You New members, RENEWING MEMBERS, and Donors!

A grateful thank you to lifetime members **Vern & Gail Shukoski, Chester Dudkiewicz, and Mike & Harriet Wichowski** for their kind and generous donations.

The Polish Heritage Society of Northeastern Wisconsin is pleased to acknowledge renewing society members: **Bob Palzewicz** or Crivitz, **Jo Mundy** of Edina, Minnesota, the **Quintin Adamski Family** of Green Bay, **March Kelly** of Carpinteria, California, **Mike & Harriet Wichowski Family** of Green Bay, the **Kay & Linda Patoka Families** of Menasha, **Chester Dudkiewicz** of Green Bay, **Gregory Suchyta**, Jr as a gift of **Gregory Suchyta, Sr** of Kaukauna, **Tom Ristau** of Green Bay, **John Gliniecki** of Shiocton, the **Gene & Rosa Nelson Family** of San Diego, California, **Shirley Kegel** of Green Bay, **Jakub Polakowski** of Suamico, **Victoria Kononova** of Madison, **Krzysztof Siara** of Waubesa, **Yvonne Borreson** of Ettrick, Wisconsin, the **Cheryl & Lenny Passel Family** of De Pere, **Cindy Clark** of McFarland, and the **Barb & Ken Kleczka Family** of Little Suamico. *Cieszymy się, że jesteście z nami!*

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 Zwicker, Treasurer

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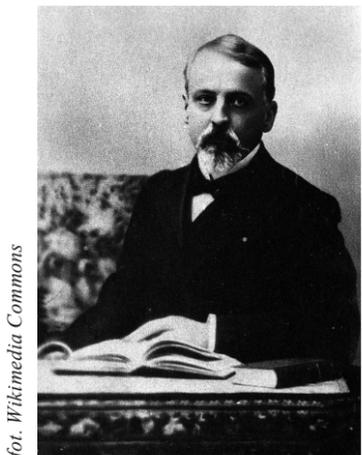
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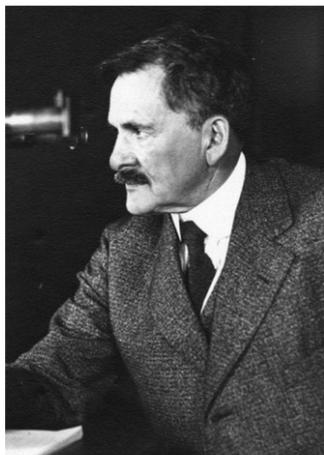
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Marie Skłodowska Curie



Henryk Sienkiewicz



Albert Abraham Michelson

The Esteemed Nobel Laureates of Poland Are...

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in Wola Okrzejska, which was part of Russian Poland at the time.

Most famous of his writings is “Quo Vadis” which takes place in Rome during the time of Nero. It was turned into a movie numerous times; the most famous being the 1951 version from Hollywood. In Poland, his most famous historical works set in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 17th century are his “Trilogy” – “With Fire and Sword,” “The Deluge,” and “Sir Michael.”

He died November 15, 1916 of heart disease in Switzerland. Once Poland became independent again, in 1924 his remains were then moved to St. John’s Cathedral in Warsaw, Poland.

Our next laureate is Albert Abraham Michelson who was born in Strelno, Posen, Prussia (now the city of Strzelno, Poland) on December 19, 1852. However, when he was two years old, he and his parents emigrated to the United States.

In 1869 he received a special appointment to

the U.S. Naval Academy graduating in 1873 and eventually returning to be one of its instructors.

Although Polish in origin, as an American citizen he was the first one to win a Nobel Prize which was in Physics in 1907 “for his optical precision instruments and the spectroscopic and metrological investigations carried out with their aid.” He is best known for his work on measuring the “speed of light.” He died May 9, 1931 in Pasadena, California.

Note: Information for this article was gathered from various sites on the web.

Helen A. Scieszka, Ph.D. is a former ad executive, psychologist, college professor, Catholic church pastoral associate, Diocesan marriage & family life director; published author of four novels and stories in “Chicken Soup for the Soul” books. She loves reading, travel, music, photography, art, sports, & family genealogy. Please visit her website drhelenscieszka.com to keep up with news on talks, book sale/signings and new releases.

Test your Polish!

It is widely believed that only some 10% of the PolAm community is currently fluent in Polish. Fluent means being able to freely express every idea and situation in a given language. Others are semi-fluent or quasi-fluent, but most have retained only a smattering of Polish words and phrases remembered from their childhood – usually things *Babcia* and *Dziadek* used to say. These usually include common greetings and courtesy phrases (*dzień dobry*, *dziękuję*) plus the names of popular ethnic foods and customs (*pierogi*, *goląbki*, *Wigilia*, *święconka*) with possibly a few swear-words thrown into the bargain.

Today you can see where your place on the continuum is. Simply choose the letter which corresponds to the correct answer. The answers are at bottom but don’t peek or Google because you’ll only be fooling yourself.

1. If you wanted to wish someone a happy birthday, you’d say: a) *Wesołych urodzin*, b) *Wszystkiego najlepszego w dniu urodzin*, c) *Wesołych Świąt*.

2. Your spouse’s father is your: a) *teść*, b) *zięć*, c) *szwagier*.

3. When you enter a room where someone is eating, the proper thing to say is: a) *Dzień dobry*, b) *Smacznego*, c) *Do widzenia*.

4. Which group contains fruit: a) *gruszka*, *śliwka*, *malina*, b) *marchew*, *burak*, *szpinak*, c) *okoń*, *szczupak*, *węgorz*.

5. The proper way to greet a priest is: a) *Jak się masz?*, b) *Szczęście Boże*, c) *Bóg zapłać*.

6. Which version best translates the sentence: Both options are very interesting: a) *Obie opcje są bardzo interesowne*, b) *Obie opcje są bardzo interesujące*, c) *Obie opcje są bardzo zainteresowane*.

7. There’s a knock on the door and you want the person to enter so you say: a) *Proszę*, b) *Dobranoc*, c) *Idź do diabła*.

8. *Dziadek* hits his thumb with a hammer and says: a) *Psiakrew*, b) *Dobry wieczór*, c) *Bardzo dziękuję*.

9. Which group contains a misspelling: a) *las*, *łąka*, *pole*, b) *góra*, *pagórek*, *dolina*, c) *jezioro*, *żeka*, *staw*.

10. *Wróbel*, *sowa*, and *bocian* are: a) a tree species, b) a bird species, c) a fish species.

CORRECT ANSWERS: 1. b), 2. a), 3. b), 4. a), 5. b), 6. b), 7. a), 8. a), 9. c), 10. b).

Ask “Our Man” in Warsaw

Kindly airmail all Polish/Polonian queries to: Robert Strybel • ul. Kaniowska 24 • 01-529 Warsaw, Poland or e-mail them to: strybel@interia.pl or research60@gmail.com

Q: One of my cousins passed away in Warsaw. She was almost 90 and lived a long, good life. My sister and I considered sending flowers, but is it still considered appropriate in Poland? Are there any other suggestions to honor her passing and to comfort her family, which is quite large?

TERESA PENCAK SCHWARTZ

A: Yes, flowers are still good. There are now many online ways to send funeral wreaths. Such a floral arrangement is known in Polish as *wieniec pogrzebowy*. BTW, your use of the word “still” suggests that flowers have become less common at American funerals. But Po-

land is essentially a conservative country, people still uphold many traditional customs, go to church, share *opłatek* on *Wigilia* and have their Easter baskets blessed at church on Holy Saturday. And thank God for that!

Q: I once saw a recipe for white *barszcz* just like my mother made at Easter time. I printed it out but unfortunately cannot locate it now. Would you have one?

SANDRA LEFEVRE
sandy0509@aol.com

A: White Easter *barszcz* (*biały barszcz wielkanocny*): Start with 4 c of stock in which white (fresh) *kielbasa* was cooked.

Refrigerate overnight and remove and discard congealed fat off the top. In pot combine the degreased *kielbasa* stock with more or less an equal amt of bottled *żur* (available at Polish markets and) delis. If unavailable, combine the stock with plain water and sour to taste with cider vinegar. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and simmer several min. Remove from heat. Whisk 1 heaping T flour with 1 c sour cream until smooth. Add about 1 c hot soup to flour-cream mixture, a spoonful at a time, whisking vigorously. Stir cream mixture into soup in a thin stream and simmer several min longer. Add 2-3 buds crushed garlic and season to taste with salt, pepper, and marjoram. Serve hot over diced hard-cooked eggs, sliced cooked white *kielbasa* and cubed farmer cheese Provide prepared horseradish for your guests to add extra zing to their soup. *Smacznego!*

Q: A friend posted a recipe for Polish Anise *Pierniki*, basically a sugar cookie. While it sounds delicious, *piernik* to me means a type of gingerbread. And I have never seen a Polish recipe that uses anise. Can you shed any light on this?

CHRISTINA GUTT, Penfield, NY
krysia1001@hotmail.com

A: Quite right. Anise-flavored cookies are called *anyżówki*. A pinch of anise can be added to *pierniki* but that doesn’t change their name. Actually, many *pierniki* nowadays do not conform to the original meaning of *piernik*. In Old Polish, *pierny* meant peppery (now *pieprzony*), so they should contain pepper, but many don’t. Back in the day, Polish *pierniki* were on the savory side, not sweet, and meant to go with beer like today’s pretzel sticks and crisps.

Casimir Pulaski Days 2022

For the past nine years, Promote Pulaski, Inc. a 501c3 non-profit corporation has helped to promote Pulaski by hosting the “Casimir Pulaski Days” event along with many businesses and organizations that have sponsored the event. Casimir Pulaski Day is a holiday celebrated around the country, on the first Monday in March, honoring revolutionary war hero, General Casimir Pulaski.

One of the goals of the non-profit organization is looking to educate the public about Count Casimir Pulaski and why this community was named after him. Bringing awareness not only to the residents of Pulaski, but to neighboring communities, the schools and businesses are another goal of the organization. The non-profit group is focused on tourism and business growth for Pulaski, hoping to make Pulaski, Wisconsin a destination for visitors from around the world year-round.

The event dates are March 6 – March 13, 2022. The committee is excited to bring back the Mollie B “Casimir Pulaski’s Birthday Celebration” Virtual Polka Show on Sunday, March 6 at 6:30 PM. A Historic Virtual Bus Tour of local bars in and around Pulaski, Wisconsin, “If These Bars Could Talk” will show on Wednesday, March 9 at 6:30 PM. **Wicka’s Famous Polka Jam Session** on Friday, March 11 from 2-6 PM and **Casimir’s Polka Party Dance** at Mountain Bay Bar from 7 to 11 in the evening, featuring “Live Wire” (\$5 cover charge). On Saturday, March 12, at the Scolly’s Historic Ballroom (formerly known as Zielinski’s Historic Ballroom) will host the first ever **Concertina Swap Meet** in the afternoon, and in the evening from 7 PM to 11 PM, the **Big Casimir Dance**. There will be Basket Raffles and special performances by the youngest talent in Pulaski, **Zander’s Music rayMakers** along with the featured **IPA Tribute Band** from Chicago, Illinois. Admission is \$15/per person, under 18 free.

Promote Pulaski will again host the **CASIMIR PULASKI RAFFLE**, an online virtual raffle. This year, it will feature

an authentic, commercial grade Skee-Ball® Home Arcade Premium Machine as top prize, valued at \$5,000! The Skee-Ball® was donated by The Village Companies, a local company in Pulaski, Wisconsin. This commercial grade machine is specifically designed for homes, anyone can participate in the raffle by purchasing chances through the on-line raffle. More information and details will be made available by February. Proceeds from the raffle will go toward the non-profit’s projects and events to help continue their mission building tourism and business in Pulaski and surrounding areas. The raffle winners will be announced at 8:00 PM on Saturday, March 12 during the Casimir Dance at Scolly’s Historic Ballroom.

Currently the organization looking for sponsors and donations for this huge event. Businesses and organizations are encouraged to participate. If you have a business or organization interested in sponsoring or participating in this historic event, contact Tammy at 920-822-



4450 for more information on how you can take part in this event or email your inquiry to promotepulaski@gmail.com. You can also visit the website: www.casimirpulaskidays.com to learn more.

Casimir Pulaski Day is an event of Promote Pulaski, Inc., which is a non-profit 501c3 organization that promotes educating, marketing, and building business and tourism in Pulaski, Wisconsin and surrounding communities focusing our uniqueness and historic past. The Casimir Pulaski committee meets monthly. All events held are subject to change.

Searching for sernik

BY JOANNA SPICE

When people move away from their homelands, they tend to take with them few physical items. What travels with them is the traditions, language, and food. And while traditions and language often get lost in the process of assimilation over subsequent decades, what perseveres is food. Children and grandchildren of Polish emigrants might not be able to speak Polish or explain why their families followed some unusual routines at holidays, but they will recognize certain foods as distinctly Polish.

For me, raised in Poland, the list of food is very long. My Babcia was a fantastic cook and baker, and to this day we frequently reminisce about her soups and pastries. When I visit Poland, the first few days are always filled with food I have longed for. I may disappoint many of our readers by saying that those are almost never kielbasas or pierogi... It's breads, cakes, and pastries in Poland that are unrivaled, especially compared to American ones, which tend to be unnecessarily loaded with sugar and heavy.

There are many classic Polish cakes, but unequivocally three top the list for me and many Poles: *makowiec* (poppy seed roll), *sernik* (cheesecake), and *szarlotka* (apple cake). I remember stopping at the Polish bakery in Pulasaki, WI, and finding none of the three. My disappointment was palpable! I've been there a few more times since and have still not seen those on display. The outcome, however, has been my quest to make them myself, and I started with my favorite: *sernik*.

Polish cheesecake is made with *twaróg*,

or shortbread crust. The Viennese cheesecake (*sernik wiedeński*) has no crust and is fluffier. *Sernik krakowski* (Cracovian cheesecake) has shortbread crust and top. *Sernik królewski* (royal cheesecake) is a variation of the Cracovian kind, with the chocolate shortbread on the bottom and top. Lastly, a popular summer variety is *sernik na zimno* (no-bake cheesecake), in which the cheese filling is mixed or topped with fresh fruit.

Traditional Polish Cheesecake:

Crust:

1 cup graham crumbs (or 8-10 crumbled graham crackers)

4 tbsp butter, melted

Mix the crumbs with melted butter and pack tightly on the bottom of a cake pan. Bake for about 8 minutes at 350 F.

Cheese filling:

2 lb farmer cheese

2 sticks of butter (softened)

1 cup (or less) fine sugar

4 large/ 5 small eggs, with yolks and whites separated

2 tbsp corn starch

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp vanilla or rum extract

Dried fruit and nuts (optional): raisins, candied orange peel, walnut pieces

All ingredients should be at room temperature.

Using a mixer, mix softened butter with sugar until it becomes light and fluffy. Add yolks and extract and mix well. Gradually add



fol. Pixabay

in Poland often referred to as *biały ser* (white cheese). It is fresh white cheese made of soured milk which is heated until curdling occurs and then strained. But as straightforward as this process sounds, it is very hard here to buy *twaróg* that matches the Polish kind in both flavor and consistency. It is denser than quark or cottage cheese; ricotta comes close but is much sweeter. The most similar is Lifeway's Farmer Cheese, which you can buy at Woodman's in Green Bay in small rectangular containers.

I've tried a few *sernik* recipes since moving to Wisconsin, and I will share one that yields the most consistent results. I've made it with ricotta (too sweet) and with *twaróg* I made at home myself, but most frequently I make it with farmer cheese.

It should be noted that there are several different kinds of Polish cheesecakes. The kind I share and recommend trying is *sernik tradycyjny* (traditional cheesecake), with a graham

farmer cheese and mix well. Add starch, baking powder, and dried fruit and mix. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form and then fold into the cheese mixture with a spatula.

Pour the cheese filling into the cake pan with the crust. Bake for about 60 minutes at 350 F. When the surface is browned and the toothpick comes out clean, turn off the oven, crack it open slightly, and leave the cake inside until it cools.

You can decorate the cheesecake with powdered sugar or with chocolate glaze:

1/3 cup heavy cream

1/3 cup baking chocolate

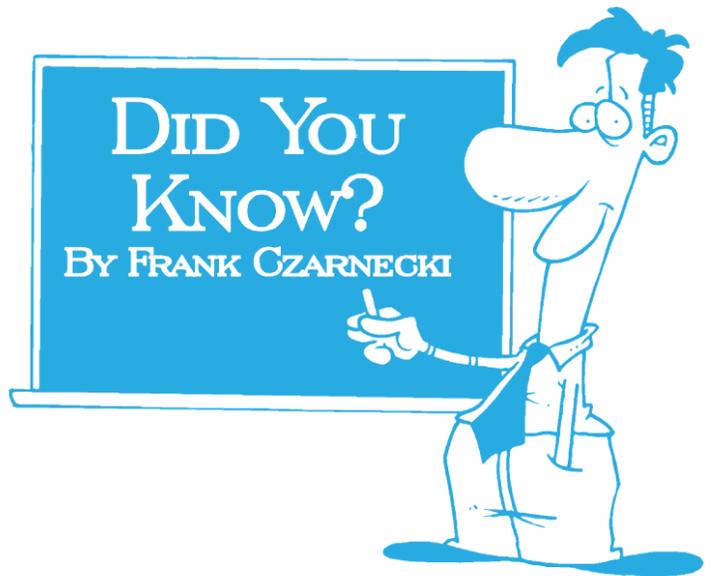
Heat the cream in a small saucepan, take off the burner, and add chocolate. Let it sit for 2 minutes, then mix well until you have a smooth glaze. Cool to thicken and then pour over the cake.

Smacznego!

How to Make Polish Cheesecake "LIVE" Class on Saturday, February 26, 2022, at 11:00 AM.

The class will be held on February 26, 2022, at 11:00 AM (Central Daylight Time). Individuals can register for the class by sending the email to Tammy at tammy@dynamic-designpulaski.com. The cost is \$15 for members of the PHS, or \$25 for non-members. Any proceeds from the event will go towards the

mission of the Polish Heritage Society of NE Wisconsin. Individuals that register will be provided a special zoom link for the virtual class and have the opportunity to win prizes at the end of the presentation as well. A follow up email with the recorded presentation and a copy of the recipe will be sent to all who register. For more information visit the website at <http://www.phsofnew.org>, or like follow the Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/phsofnew>.



(We continue the story of Kosciuszko's life after his successful service to the American Revolution, but unsuccessful attempt to effect the same result in Poland.)

Kosciuszko's fight for the freedom of his nation brought him honor and tribute around the world. During the Insurrection newspapers and magazines, especially in the United States, carried jubilant stories of his triumphs and sympathetic accounts of his defeats. Upon his release from his Siberian prison, he was welcomed everywhere. Sonnets were written to him by Keats and Coleridge. A novel, Thaddeus of Warsaw, became widely popular. He was called "The Martyr of Liberty."

On leaving Russia, Kosciuszko was accompanied by the Polish author Julian Niemcewicz who had been imprisoned with him. Also in the group was a servant whose duty it was to carry the crippled Kosciuszko about. They spent six months in Sweden and London before leaving for the United States.

Niemcewicz wrote a day-by-day account of his travels with Kosciuszko. They were greeted by distinguished citizens, presented with gifts and testimonials of esteem. Kosciuszko portraits were engraved and widely sold, as were lockets, rings, tableware, and other objects with the hero's likeness or his initials.

The Russian Czar sent orders to London where the Russian Minister arranged for a

physical examination of Kosciuszko by a team of ten outstanding British doctors.

After the examination they wrote a five-page report prescribing treatment for him. The report was for Dr. Benjamin Rush, the celebrated Philadelphia physician. It is still among the Rush papers of the Library Company of Philadelphia: "General Kosciuszko received a wound at the lower part of the hind head, with a blunt sabre, which both bruised, and most probably, divided the nerve on the right side that supplies the posterior portion of the scalp with sensibility. Since that time, the scalp at the upper and posterior part has been without feeling... The paralytic state of the thigh and leg is owing to another wound he received at the same time in the hip with a Cossack pike. This instrument had penetrated so deep as to divide or injure extremely the sciatic nerve..."

Kosciuszko was visited in his London room by the American Ambassador. The American artist Benjamin West visited and painted a portrait of him on his couch. Citizens at the port of Bristol staged a procession in his honor and he was presented with a set of silver, each piece engraved "The Friends of Liberty in Bristol to the gallant Kosciuszko, 1797." When he sailed for America on June 19, 1797, on the ship *Adriana*, thousands lined the shore, cheering and waving handkerchiefs.

(to be continued)

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