

The Forgotten Man

By: *Kaya Mirecka Ploss*

The Red Poppy Song

Who among us has not heard or sang the well-known song *Czerwone Maki Na Monte Cassino (Red poppies on Monte Cassino)*? "Popiół i Diament (Ashes and Diamonds)," one of the most beautiful and treasured Polish films made during Communist rule in Poland, ends with people singing that song. It became almost like a National Anthem.

It is well known that Feliks Konarski, who used the pseudonym REF-REN, wrote the words to that song. But few know or remember that the stirring music to the song was composed by Alfred Schutz. Before the war, Alfred Schutz was one of many composers who wrote light tunes, which were easy to remember and pleasant to the ear. Well-known male and female singers (among them the unforgettable Mieczysław Fogg) were performing Schutz's songs. Even after the war, the younger generation of singers like Polomski, Łazuka, Reńa Rolska and Maria Koterbska were still singing Schutz's songs, especially *Winna Jest Wiosna Dziewczyno (It is the fault of Summer Young Lady)* and *Samotnoœæ (Youth)*. Schutz composed many popular melodies but the one song that will go into history is the *Czerwone Maki na Monte Cassino*. How sad that very few people remember who wrote that melody.

The Bank Clerk

Alfred Schutz was born in Tarnopol on July 2, 1910. He studied law at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów. After he finished his studies he worked at a bank. He wasn't very happy clerking for a bank. Even as a child, Schutz knew how to play the piano and so in his spare time he did all kinds of odd jobs at the University Theater, mostly connected with music. In time he became a conductor, music arranger and sometimes he even composed a catchy little tune. The words to the songs that he composed were written by another amateur "helper" at the University Theater, Emanuel Schechter. Eventually both Schutz and Schechter became well known in the "real" theater world. Together they were coaxed by Wiktor Budzyński, the head of the most

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Vet of famed Polish WWII unit honored on 103rd birthday

By: *Yuras Karmanau*

AP article sent by: Andy Gołębowski (Kresy Sybiraki website)

IVANYETS, Belarus (AP) Tortured by Stalin's henchmen and attacked by Hitler's forces, Aleksander Szekal almost became one of World War II's millions of victims.

But he survived the Soviet Gulag and a famous battle against the Nazis - and was honored on his 103rd birthday this week as the oldest living veteran of a celebrated Polish unit that helped defeat Hitler's army in Italy.

Military attaches brought greetings from the governments of Britain, Italy and Poland, which promoted him from soldier to officer. The ceremony was held Monday at a Polish community center in western Belarus - from which he was uprooted early in the war, not to return for 60 years.

In between, Szekal endured the hardships of Soviet Communism and the fight against fascism.

"Both of these 20th Century ideologies became hell for me," said Szekal, who walks with a cane but feels healthy and remains sprightly.

He lived a quiet life as a lumberjack until 1939, when Hitler and Stalin divided eastern Europe with a nonaggression pact and the Soviet Union annexed his homeland, which had been part of Poland.

Szekal, who had served in the Polish army, was torn from his new wife, imprisoned by Stalin's secret police in Belarus and tortured until he confessed to "anti-Soviet activity." He said his captors stuck needles under his toenails and left him naked in the freezing cold, inadvertently saving his life by tossing him into a barn after they thought he was dead.

Szekal was then sentenced to eight years in the Soviet Gulag in 1940 and shipped by freight car to Russia's Pacific Coast with other Polish soldiers. Many died during the long journey.

In prison, he and the other inmates dug trenches and struggled to survive in one of the world's harshest environments.

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RUNNERS' NATION (part 2)

By: *Justyna Ball*

<http://justyna-polishdelight.blogspot.com/>

To live in the Boston area and not to participate in the marathon, either as a runner, cheerleader, spectator or at least check out the list of your local runners in the paper over your morning coffee is a ... sin. It's as mandatory as watching a Red Sox game, but much cheaper. Drive around suburbs like Newton or Hopkinton in the early spring and see how many runners you can count...

Try to skip it, and you'll regret it. The next year, accessorized with a folded chair, you'll march right onto the course.

The marathon for Boston is what the Macy's Day Parade is for NYC, the Rose Parade is for Pasadena, or the Rodeo is for Prescott, AZ.

The date, Patriot's Day, was picked to commemorate the Battle at Lexington on April 19th, 1775 and Paul Revere's midnight ride to alarm the locals that the British were coming although the present route of the race does not quite cover the original one.

In truth, Revere wasn't alone, there were several riders, and all went in different directions so the organizers of the marathon did not know which route to choose. In 1897, the original roads did not exist anymore and those that did needed to spread out the exact length, as required. So the location of the marathon did get a little adjustment.

On the day of the famous race, the town of Hopkinton clears out its locals, and the out-of-towners move in, around twenty-seven thousand strangers, crazy enough to run 26.2 miles (42 km) to prove something, or because they lost a bet or wanted to have a little fun. You definitely have to be crazy to run such distance and still claim to have fun...

When our friend, Ruedi (native of Switzerland), ran his last marathon, he twisted his ankle right at the beginning of the race, but continued without telling anyone. His wife, Madeline, found out, and Ruedi was "banned" from running and only allowed to... exercise his upper arms and face muscles by playing flute at the Old Sturbridge Village, the colonial open air museum, local tourist attraction. Well, his age also had something to do with it. Although thrilled to wear the colonial clothes, it was nothing compared to the excitement of running the marathon. He tried bicycling, but this year he stood on the route past Heartbreak Hill, to cheer on the others. Can't keep them far from the race for too long, can ya!

Kevin, also from our West Brookfield marathon team, never possessed the body of a runner, but always signed up first (and often finished the last of the group); he trained away from home, during his

business trips overseas. Going on long runs in unfamiliar surroundings, sometimes waving down a taxi when he forgot how to get back to the hotel. On his last marathon, his wife Carol joined him. I think they are done for now, but they supported Francis greatly in his fund raising efforts.

In 1996, Uta Pipping from Germany was going for her third title when she became ill (with "women issues") and ended up in the hospital for the next two days "completely drained from the race and from loss of fluids." But she made it to first! Although she was all covered up in blankets.

Dedication? You bet...

Poles are somehow represented. This year, it was a group of 27 runners, but it could be better. In the marathon's archives, Polish Olympian, Ryszard Marczak is named one of the 10 "grand masters," as for some, life begins after 40. Note that, more than half of the entries are 40 years old and up. So, gear up, get over here and I'll wait for you with a Polish flag. Just please, don't put "Polska" on the back of your shirt but on the front so I know that you are coming! Marczak set the record twice, first in 1988 when at 42 years old he came in at 2:17 (his best ever as an Olympian was 2:11) and then in 1996, this time in the over 50 category at 2:27. This latest record was never even threatened.

There was another "Polish" accent, this one visible for everyone. One of the sponsors of the race was Poland Spring water. You would hear the voice of the commentator (at the very finish) every couple of minutes, announcing: "There is Polish water waiting for you! So keep moving and congratulations!" The Poland water has nothing to do with Poland but Maine, still the sound of "Polish water" was amusing...

(The year 1976 had to be the hottest marathon. It was during the heat wave of 100F. The fire department was called and sprayed the runners, and it is now remembered as the "Run of the hoses.")

Jacek and his running buddy, Tom train on the New England back roads, unlike Wanda Panfil who won the race in 1992, after training in Mexico, at a high elevation. Besides that, leaders are just like us. I was volunteering at Heifer International for the Global Village when I started a conversation with a guy who volunteered for the Kenyan site "next door." I was surprised to learn that he, just as Jacek was also a runner, ran the Boston marathon in the past (!), and even more surprised to find out that his best time ever was 2:09!!! So then I realized that this guy next to me, milking a goat, is one of those elite runners... He traveled from Washington, where he was studying, sponsored by Nike, he came to represent his country at Heifer.

Once in NYC, we attended a pre-marathon get-together party for a Native

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Calendar of Events

May 30, Sat. Poland Forever, Depictions of famous Poles in history, dinner and dancing at the Pasadena Elks Lodge, Info: Marty 626-577-9797. (AD on page 10 for more info.)

May 31, Sun., 1:30 p.m., Polish American Congress Monthly meeting. Our Lady of the Bright Mount Church rectory—Lower level. Info: (626) 577-9797

Jun 7, Sun., Day of Brotherhood 20th Anniversary Celebration, Polish Parish hall in Los Angeles - For additional information (323) 857-0208

14, Proud to Be Polish Festival 10:30 am to 500 p.m.— Pope John Paul II Center in Yorba Linda, CA., Information: Mietek Dutkowski tel. 714-608-0511

28, 2009, Sunday, 1:00 pm PAC Annual Election Meeting, Pope John Paul II Polish Center, Yorba Linda. 3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda

Aug 9, noon Polish Day, Alpine Village, Harbor Freeway at Torrance Ave exit. sponsored by PNA Orange County Centennial Lodge 3193

16, noon - Memorial Mass for departed and living PAC Members, Our Lady of Bright Mount Polish Parish, 3424 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018

23, 10:30 am. Polish American Patriotic Anniversaries of 20th Century: World Wars I and II, Warsaw Uprising 1944, Solidarność 1980, Tribute to The Victims of Nazism and Communism. Polish Center of John Paul II, 3999 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda, CA 92886. Info: Mietek Dutkowski 714-608-0511

Sept 6, Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the beginning of WWII, The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, LA, CA, Info; Rich Widerynski 562-426-9830

Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbykoopet@aol.com ★