

Twenty Year Anniversary of PAC Relief Committee for Poles in Former USSR Celebrated in Los Angeles

By: *Betsy Cepielik*

On Sunday, June 7 the Our Lady of the Bright Mount Parish Hall was the setting for the celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the PAC Relief Committee for Poles in the Former USSR. The founder and still chairman of the committee is Frank Kosowicz, who is also a National Director of the Polish American Congress.

The hall and tables were festively decorated, as the guests were seated at their assigned tables. Bish Petryka welcomed them and introduced Frank Kosowicz. Honored guests were acknowledged: Consul General Paulina Kapuścińska, Cultural Consul Małgorzata Cup, PAC S.Cal President Richard Wideryński, PAC VP Michael Dutkowski, PAC Commissioner Greg Chilecki, Polish Club of Laguna Woods President Irena Lawyer, Former Commissioner Elizabeth Rudzińska, representatives from the Polish Womens Alliance, local radio personality Natalia Kamińska, and News of Polonia editor Betsy Cepielik.

The Consul General then issued awards. The first was to Janina Kosowicz, Frank's devoted wife, who has helped him with the committee and traveled with him to the former Soviet countries, where they have been graciously received at the many institutions where they have visited and presented computers and other gifts. The audience gave a standing ovation and sang St Lat to her. Next, awards were given to 23 others who have been active with the committee:

Franciszek Kosowicz, Janina Kosowicz, Ksiądz Proboszcz Marek Ciesielski, Adamowicz Zofia, Cybulski Stanisław, Czyżewski Piotr, Dąbrowska Grażyna, Dudzik Teresa, Dutkowski Mieczysław, Gutowska Hanka, Henzel Henrietta i Marcin, Hryniewicz Maria i Witold, Karpiel Susan i Martin, Kowalski Zbigniew (pośmiertnie), Ładowicz Józef (pośmiertnie), Liwak Roman, Maciejowski Tadeusz (pośmiertnie), Małek Krystyna i Jan, Petrovich Zofia i Zbigniew, Petryka Zbysław, Pisarski Lech, Polewko Michal, Rubinek Edmund, Wojciech Narbut, Zawadzki Michal (pośmiertnie), Żurawski Franciszek
They were further rewarded with a gift of wine personalized and presented by Michael Dutkowski.

Father Marek Ciesielski, Pastor of the Our Lady of the Bright Mount Church gave the Luncheon Blessing and a delicious Polish meal was served by Teresa Turek Catering.

Following the meal, there was entertainment, introduced by Stanisław Cybulski. Soprano Yola Tensor enthralled the audience with her beautiful renditions of songs in Polish and the final encore in French ("La Vie en Rose.") She was accompanied on the piano by the very talented Szymon Grab. Anna Gmirek played several wonderful songs on the flute and piano.

Cake and coffee were served before the program continued. Frank Kosowicz told about the computers donated and thanked Roman Liwak for his help in refurbishing them. Greetings were read from many of the recipients, including Agnieszka Bogucka of Wspólnota Polska in Warsaw and Professor Romuald Brazis of the Polish University in Wilno.

Congratulations to Frank Kosowicz for his twenty years of dedication to the Poles in the Former USSR and for his very successful banquet. Sto Lat! □

Polish Genealogical Society of California Seminar

The Polish Genealogical Society of Southern California is presenting a Family History Seminar on Saturday, August 22 at the Weingart Senior Center, 5220 Oliva Avenue in Lakewood, from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. The cost is \$40 for PGS members, \$50 for non-members, and \$60 for new members (fee and registration.) After August 8, add \$10. Registration includes a snack and a Teresa Turek Polish luncheon.

The lectures will be on Genealogy and the Changing Map of Eastern Europe, A New Look at Immigrant Passenger Manifests, Using DNA to Establish Family Relationships, and Genealogy Blogs. The guest speaker will be Stephen Danko, PhD, PLCGS. Dr. Danko resides in San Francisco. He has studied American, Canadian, and Polish records and conducted research in Poland and Lithuania. He writes a daily weblog at <http://www.stephendanko.com>.

For information, call 310-378-0877 or Email President@pgsca.org. Send checks to PGS-CA Seminar, 5319 Via del Valle, Torrance, CA 90505. A confirmation will be sent with map and directions. □

New element named "Copernicium"

A July 16 article on the BBC NEWS website reports... Discovered 13 years ago, and officially added to the periodic table just weeks ago, element 112 finally has a name.

It will be called "Copernicium", with the symbol Cp, in honour of the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus. Copernicus deduced that the planets revolved around the Sun, and finally refuted the belief that the Earth was the centre of the Universe.

The team of scientists who discovered the element chose the name to honour the man who "changed our world view."

The International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) will officially endorse the new element's name in six months' time in order to give the scientific community "time to discuss the suggestion."

Scientists from the Centre for Heavy Ion Research in Germany, led by Professor Sigurd Hofmann, discovered Copernicium in fusion experiments in 1996.

"After IUPAC officially recognised our discovery, we agreed on proposing the name (because) we would like to honour an outstanding scientist," said Professor Hofmann.

Copernicus was born 1473 in Torun, Poland. His finding that the planets circle the sun underpins much of modern science. It was pivotal for the discovery of gravity, and led to the conclusion that the stars are incredibly far away and that the Universe is inconceivably large.

Under IUPAC rules, the team was not allowed to name the element after a living person. But when asked if, rules aside, he would have liked to have "Hofmanium" added to the periodic table, Professor Hofmann told BBC News: "No, I think Copernicium sounds much better." □

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Endowed Chair in Polish Studies Established at Columbia

Professorship will focus on research and education within university's East Central European Media NEW YORK, April 27, 2009 - Columbia University recently completed a \$3 million fundraising effort to establish its first endowed chair in its Polish studies program at the university's East Central European Center.

"The new chair in Polish studies reflects not only Poland's historical contributions to art, literature and the sciences as the birthplace of such notable figures as Czesław Miłosz, Frederick Chopin, Marie Curie and Pope John Paul II, but also recognizes its current prominent position as a member of the European Union," said Nicholas Dirks, Columbia's vice president and dean of the faculty of arts and sciences. "Students will benefit from the wide array of studies we offer that pay tribute to the remarkable achievements that Poland has realized culturally, economically and politically."

Following an international search to fill the professorship, a scholar specializing in one of the social sciences as it pertains to Poland and its neighbors will join Columbia's faculty.

The announcement of the endowed chair took place in Warsaw on Wednesday, March 25. A formal ceremony was organized by Poland's Consulate General in New York and the Foundation for Polish Science. It was attended by Radosław Sikorski, Poland's minister of foreign affairs, Bogdan Zdrojewski, minister of culture and national heritage, and Aleksander Grad, minister of state treasury, among others.

During the ceremony, Foreign Minister Sikorski thanked the institutional and individual donors and emphasized that he was personally "touched and proud" that a project that was so important for Poland was successfully completed.

"The Polish studies chair provides a marvelous and timely opportunity to engage our Polish and central European colleagues in the university's planned worldwide network of Columbia Global Centers, which are designed to mobilize scholarship around the globe to address the multiple challenges facing us all," said Kenneth Prewitt, vice president for Global Centers at Columbia.

John S. Micgiel, director of the Columbia's East Central European Center, led the five-year fundraising program that culminated in a final transfer of funds last month.

"Our ability to reach out successfully to Polish business was the direct result of the engagement of Consul General Krzysztof W. Kasprzyk of the Polish Consulate General in New York, Professor Włodzimierz Bolecki of the Foundation for Polish Science in Warsaw, and especially Polish Consul Dr. Ewa Ger," said Micgiel. "Their connections and determination to make links between Poland and Columbia built on our earlier efforts to establish a Polish studies professorship among Polish-American institutions and individual donors."

The Kościuszko Foundation, which promotes Polish culture, education and history in the United States, was one of the original proponents of the Polish studies chair at Columbia and helped facilitate fundraising, along with Warsaw's Semper Polonia Foundation.

The Brooklyn-based Polish Slavic Federal Credit Union, headed by Bogdan *Polish studies at Columbia to page 15*



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A thread to community

It's become apparent recently that it's not easy to be a pop star in Poland. It's not only intelligentsia (if such exists) that makes one blush, but also the Catholic Church that does not appreciate the fact that Poland is no longer behind the closed door and new forms of art may be introduced in the once-communist-country.

For years Poland has been omitted in world tours of the world's pop icons. And, if such individuals or bands came to Poland under the 'communist' regime, it was always a splendid performance that made people happier and more open to the unknown world.

This year a few major world-known pop stars are coming to Poland. Some of them have already performed on a famous Opener Festival. They gave tremendous gigs and impressed the audiences from all over the world. Yes, Polish music festival is a renowned gathering for millions of people who wish to listen to varied types of music, all inclusive in three days. Next such stop will be Myślenice, where an underground music OFF Festival takes place.

In the middle of festivals, there are two fabulous singers that come to Poland this year, as well. Firstly, Madonna will perform (or not) on June, 15. Why is the date of her performance so provoking? On this day, the Catholic Church celebrates one of its holy days. This has caused a frenzy around Madonna's performance. There have been petitions to organize demonstrations against such a state of affairs (no lavish performances should be taking place on a holy day, some states) and a group of people are believed to have already said the rosaries.

To top all of this, Lech Wałęsa also expressed his concerns about Madonna's performance. He stated that he is willing to personally talk to Madonna to persuade her to change the date of her performance.

I find such behaviors rather funny and odd. Why is it that in free Poland people oppose the new wave of fresh air that comes from the once-so-hunger-for the West? Why do some groups of people find it inappropriate to allow performances that they would never attend? Why do they think they are entitled to organize other people's lives?

On the other hand, I understand that for some it's important to live according to the Decalogue and to worship their Lord on a holy day. However, cannot they limit themselves to let others live by their rules and according to their needs and plans?

It's been a battle of values for a while now in Poland. It's been a battle that does not draw people together; it's rather a point that colliding groups would never meet eye to eye. However, is it worth broadcasting such conflicts? For some, the answer is yes. For others, it seems a waste of time.

What I hope won't happen is to bring similar slogans when the second world-known pop icon comes to Poland, i.e. Britney Spears.

Of course, one can love them, one can hate them, but various forms of art should not be banned. It is human expression and individualism that count the most. □

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