

## Applying for citizenship

*Obtaining U.S. citizenship is a good idea for many reasons.*

Obtaining U.S. citizenship for oneself and one family members means preventing the risk that the government will take away your permanent residence in the future. There are many sad stories of children of permanent residents who never bothered to get citizenship; these children then commit crimes as adolescents and are deported to their home country, even if they have not been there since infancy and don't even speak the language. Citizenship for you and your family will prevent that from happening.

Also, a U.S. citizenship can more easily travel in many countries of the world than a citizen of almost any other country. Even though you take an oath renouncing your prior citizenship(s), you get to keep your original citizenship. You must use your U.S. passport to travel in and out of the U.S. As a dual citizen, you can live in either country for as long as you like. For instance, if you move back home for five or ten years and then decide that a better place for retirement might be found in California or Hawaii, it's not a problem.

You can also sponsor your relatives for green cards including your spouse (or spouse-to-be, even if they are out of status), your parents, your non-resident children - whether married or not, and your siblings (long wait). In most cases, if you are already married and you both become U.S. citizens before your children turn 18, they will automatically become U.S. citizens if they were not born here. If you have any children who are born outside the U.S. after you become a citizen, they will automatically be a U.S. citizen.

Some jobs are limited to U.S. citizens.

A person with U.S. citizenship can vote an important function of life in this country.

Too often I meet people who due to changed circumstances are no longer eligible for U.S. citizenship although they could have applied many years ago with no problems. I highly recommend filing as soon as one is eligible, either after three years (if married to a U.S. citizen) or after five years for everyone else. A trip outside the U.S. of over 365 days breaks residence needed for naturalization and requires waiting an additional four years and a day upon return.

To apply for U.S. citizenship you need to mail a copy of both sides of your green card (even if it has expired), Form N-400 (which is available in a fill-able version on line at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) or call (415) 752-6006), two passport (full face, not ¾ view) style photos, and the applicable filing fees to the California Service Center, P.O. Box 10400, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-0400. Keep a copy for your records.

The N-400 is a fairly straightforward application for most people, however if you have any questions or complications or need a copy of your green card file, please contact an immigration attorney. An attorney can review your N-400 prior to mailing it and answer any questions you may have and can also request a copy of your file through a Freedom of Information Act Request to make sure there are no problems or reasons why you should not file.

Once filed, you should receive a receipt for the fees and less than sixty days later you should be called for fingerprinting at an Application Support Center (ASC). As soon as you get the fingerprint notification, you can go in when it is convenient for you without waiting for the date you are scheduled, the ASC is even open on Saturdays. Timing for the interview at the local U.S. CIS office can vary depending on where you live. San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego are taking about 10-12 months, Seattle and Portland slightly less, and San Jose slightly longer. Processing times for all the district offices can also be found at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

You will be tested on your knowledge of U.S. history and government. If you pass the interview and all the security checks are done, you should get called for the oath ceremony within a few months. Once sworn in as a U.S. citizen, you will need to apply for a U.S. passport which can be done at nearly all U.S. Post Offices (where you can also register to vote!). □

## Holocaust survivor recalls heroes who saved him

Information for this article was taken from an article written by Staff writer Earl Kelly of the Maryland Gazette.

A retired Glen Burnie physician who survived the Nazi and Soviet occupations of Poland spoke at Temple Beth Shalom in commemoration of Holocaust Martyrs' Remembrance Day, or Yom HaShoah. The tale that Dr. Joseph Taler, 84, told of when Germany invaded Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, and one group thought it had the right to dominate the others.

Though the number of Holocaust survivors is dwindling fast, the message is still needed, said Ellyn Becker Kaufman, Temple Beth Shalom's education director.

Dr. Taler, 84, retired in 1991 after practicing medicine in Glen Burnie for 37 years. The Annapolis resident estimated that fewer than 10 Holocaust survivors live in Anne Arundel County now.

"I am the only one who speaks on the subject," he said.

Dr. Taler's tale is not only about cruelty, death and destruction, but also about human decency. It is as much about life as it is death, he said.

When German troops marched into Poland, Dr. Taler was a 16-year-old boy living in the comfortable town of Rozwadów, the only child of a pharmacist mother and a lawyer father. He was a straight-A student with lots of friends and a bright future.

Dr. Taler and a small handful of relatives were able to avoid extermination for one simple reason - a few Christians risked everything to save them.

"In my case, I was helped by six different Polish Christians, people who didn't know each other," Dr. Taler said of the people who forged documents, smuggled food and hid the Jewish boy.

"They saved my life; they would have been shot or taken to a concentration camp - it was at the discretion of the person who caught them," Dr. Taler said. "There was no penalty for killing a Jew or a Pole."

In this strange and dangerous world, even the slightest turn of events could prove deadly, Dr. Taler said.

The Christian underground forged work papers that allowed Dr. Taler to walk the streets and hold a job, instead of being rounded up and taken to a death camp.

"I told them to keep my first name, Joseph, so that I would know to answer when anyone spoke to me," Dr. Taler said.

Dr. Taler said he quickly realized a deadly possibility: If the forged papers showed his actual age, he likely would be put into the youth labor corps, the junakis. Joining this group would require a physical, and a physical would reveal that Dr. Taler had been circumcised, in a society where only Jews underwent the procedure.

"The man who took me up in the middle of the night told me to step into the courtyard of (a particular) apartment house, and take off my armband that bore the Star of David and showed that I was a Jew," Dr. Taler said. "He gave me my false identity papers and we crossed the street and were in the Aryan section."

Dr. Taler disappeared into the darkness as Józef Skwarczyński, a Polish Catholic who was born six years before Joseph Taler the Jew. With these papers, Dr. Taler found work in a train yard, where he shoveled coal and stoked train boilers.

One day, he saw an engineer, a young man who had gone to school with him. The man knew that Dr. Taler was a Jew, and all he had to do was shout out, and Dr. Taler was as good as dead. Each time Dr. Taler saw the man, he would bury his face in a handkerchief as if wiping away sweat, until one day he didn't see the engineer in time. "He smiled at me and walked on," Dr. Taler said.

### World gone mad

Life under the Nazis was marked by one bit of insanity after another, Dr. Taler said.

Anyone who liked onions "too much" could be revealed as a Jew and carted off, since "everyone knew" that Jews liked

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## The Polish Dwarf

An article in *Poland - In Your Pocket Tourist Guide* tells about Józef Boruwlaski, who rates as one of Poland's most curious natives. He was born near the Polish city of Halicz in 1739, and was better known as The Polish Dwarf. He was adopted at a young age by the Starostin de Carolix, though her subsequent marriage meant he was soon transferred to the patronage of Countess Humieka and her estate in Rychty.

When he was fifteen, and a mere 64 centimetres (another source claims 71 cm or 28 inches), the countess took him to visit the royal court in Vienna where he subsequently hobnobbed with Viennese high society. While perched on the knee of Empress Maria Theresa he remarked "There is nothing so wonderful as to see such a little man on the lap of so great a woman." The flirty remark delighted the Empress and moved her to present him with her diamond ring. The ring was too big for Boruwlaski so the Empress called on a young princess to award him with her ring instead. That princess was six year old Marie Antoinette, who would later achieve infamy at the business end of a guillotine.

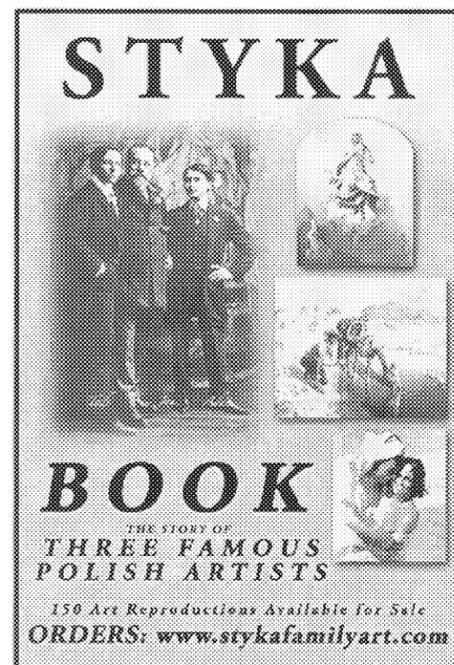
From Vienna the countess and Boruwlaski toured the courts of Germany and France, and it was at Luneville where the pocket-sized Pole was introduced to the retarded French dwarf Bebe. An immediate friendship was struck, though it wasn't long until things took a colorful turn. Measuring four inches taller than our hero, Bebe soon became jealous of the attention heaped on Boruwlaski, and during a fit of pique attempted to throw the Pole into a fire. Servants intervened and saved Boruwlaski, while Bebe was chastised, whipped and expelled from the royal household. Little is known of the fate of the Frenchman, though one history book asserts that he died of "mortification and spleen."

Although apparently a keep fit fanatic and teetotaler, Boruwlaski nonetheless enjoyed the Parisian highlife, attending masked balls, pageants, and banquets. An incurable

romantic, Boruwlaski enjoyed flirting, and we are assured that his romantic lustings were often mutual. However, when Boruwlaski fell in love with Isalina Barbutan, the countess' domestic companion, the countess threw him out in rage. Poland's King Stanislaus II intervened, gave Boruwlaski an allowance, and with royal approval the Pole later married the subject of his desire.

Using royal letters of introduction the dwarf toured the courts of Europe and Turkey, entertaining the rich with his sharp wit, dapper dance moves and masterly violin skills. One tour of Britain paired him with the Irish giant Patrick Cotter, which proved a particular hit with the paying public.

He sired several children with his wife and with money to his name Boruwlaski eventually published his memoirs and took retirement in the English town of Durham. The dwarf lived to see 97, and although happily married, one anecdote from his Durham days reveals his wife would often place him on the mantelpiece if he ever irritated her. □



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