

**Strybel pronunciations from 1**

**BIGOS:** Pronounced: "BEE-goes", often referred to in English as "Polish hunter's stew", this all-time favorite ragoût contains sauerkraut and/or cabbage, mushrooms, different kinds of meat and sausage, all slowly simmered for hours. With the exception of meatless Wigilia, this is a favorite throughout the long season of holiday entertaining.

**BOŻE NARODZENIE:** Pronounced: "BO-sheh nah-roads-EH-nyeh", literally God's birth or divine birth, this is the standard Polish word for Christmas.

**CHOINKA:** Pronounced: "ho-EEN-kah", this can be any evergreen in general or a Christmas tree. The fir and spruce are preferred in Polish Christmas tradition. It is set up and trimmed on Dec. 24 and kept up till at least Jan. 6 or even Feb 2.

**GODNE ŚWIĘTA:** Pronounced: "GOAD-neh SHFYEN-tah", an old-fashion name for Christmas, especially the entire 12 days from Christmas Eve till the Three Kings.

**GWIAZDA BETLEJEMSKA:** Pronounced: "GVYAHZ-dah bet-lay-EM-skah", the Star of Bethlehem, a name also given to the poinsettia (red Christmas flower).

**JASELKA:** Pronounced: "yah-SEW-kah", nativity play, usually staged by children who re-enact the story of shepherds going to Bethlehem to honor Baby Jesus.

**KAPUSTA Z GRZYBAMI:** Pronounced: "kah-POOSS-tah z ghzih-BAH-mee", stewed, meatless sauerkraut with mushrooms, preferably rehydrated dried boletes – a typical Wigilia dish.

**KOLEĀDA:** Pronounced: "ko-LEN-dah", Christmas carol, traditional songs honoring the nativity, populated by angels, shepherds and their flocks as well as the Three Kings, with the Holy Family as their centerpiece.

**KOLEĀDNIK:** Pronounced "ko-LEND-neek, caroler; traditionally a caroler-masquerader dressed as a shepherd, King Herod, Death, Devil, Angel, Gypsy, Soldier, etc., forming part of a caroling party making house-to-house rounds.

**KRUPNIK:** This culinary term has two different meanings 1) vegetable-barley soup, and (at Christmas time) 2) a honey-spice cordial served hot in a shot or cordial glass.

**MAKOWIEC:** Pronounced: "mah-KO-yyets", poppyseed roll cake, a typical Polish Christmas cake; also known as "makownik" and "strucla z makiem".

**MATKI BOSKIEJ GROMNICZNEJ:** Pronounced: "MAHT-kee BOSS-kay grom-NEECH-nay", Candlemass, literally: Our Lady of the Death Candle (Feb. 2), the day candles are blessed in church marks the official end of the Polish Christmas season.

**MIKOLAJKI:** Pronounced: "mee-coe-WHY-kee", St. Nicholas celebration, at which youngsters gather to welcome Święty Mikołaj (see below).

**NOWY ROK:** Pronounced: NOW-vih ROKE", New Year's Day, Jan. 1, a time for visiting, feasting and celebrating.

**OPLATEK:** Pronounced: "oh-PWAH-tek", this is also the name of a Christmas get-together which involves breaking and sharing opłatek at church, work or some organization. Often carols are sung and light refreshments may be served, but usually not a full meal.

**PASTERKA:** Pronounced: "pahs-TEAR-kah", Shepherd's Mass celebrated at midnight on Christmas Eve.

**PIEROGI:** Pronounced: "pierre-OGH-ee", filled dough pockets or dumplings, whose meatless versions are a typical Wigilia dish.

**PODŁAŻNICZKA:** Pronounced: "pudd-wahzh-NEECH-kah", an evergreen bough or tree-top, trimmed with hand-made ornaments, sweets and nuts, suspended from the ceiling over the table; a predecessor of the Christmas tree.

**RYBA:** Pronounced: "RIB-ah", fish, a Wigilia culinary mainstay including herring, fresh-water and sea species, fried, baked, poached and in aspic.

**SAD:** Pronounced: "SAHD", this is the name given to the podłażniczka in the Tatra Mountains and elsewhere in southern Poland.

**SIANO:** Pronounced: "SHAH-no", hay, a symbol of Christ's humble birth in a stable, is strewn on the table beneath the table-cloth and forms a bed on the plate or tray containing the opłatek.

**SYLWESTRA:** Pronounced: "sil-VESSTrah", the Polish name for New Year's Eve recalls the name of St. Sylvester, whose feastday is celebrated on Dec. 31st.

**SZOPKA:** Pronounced: "SHOPE-kah", Christmas crib, Nativity set, sometimes a portable puppet theater carried by carolers house-to-house "SHOPE-kah",

**SZOPKA KRAKOWSKA:** Pronounced: "SHOPE-kah krah-KOF-skah", Kraków-style Christmas crib, fashioned from thin strips of wood, cardboard and shimmering colored foil into an urban folk-art work of true beauty.

**ŚLEDZIE:** Pronounced: "SHLEDGE-eh", herring, one of the culinary "musts" on the Wigilia table served pickled, creamed, in oil, in salads, etc.

**ŚWIĘTO TRZECH KRÓLI:** Pronounced: "SHFYEN-to TCHEKH KROO-lee", literally Feast of the Three Kings, the Epiphany (Jan. 6); chalk is blessed at church with which the formula K+M+B 2008 is inscribed over doorways in honor of the Magi.

**ŚWIĘTY MIKOLAJ:** Pronounced: "SHFYEN-tih mee-COE-why", St. Nicholas, the kindly bishop who visits kids on his feastday (Dec. 6), quizzes them on their prayers and good deeds and rewards them with treats and toys.

**WIECZERZA WIGILIJNA:** Pronounced: "vyeh-CHEH-zhah vee-ghee-LEEY-nah", Christmas Eve supper, to Poles the single most important family meal of the year.

**WIGILIA:** Pronounced: "vee-GHEEL-yah", Christmas Eve, literally: the Vigil, to Poles the single most important day of the year.

**ŻŁÓBEK:** Pronounced: "ZHWOO-bek", Christmas crib or Nativity set. □

**Strybel - Upside down tree from 1**

have lost a loved one or experienced some other tragedy.

It is a tender, nostalgic and often teary moment amid kisses, hugs, warm embraces and fond recollections of Christmases past and the smiling faces of loved ones who will never break opłatek with us again. Other nations have their Yule logs, holly wreaths, mistletoe and that mad rush to the tree on Christmas morning – but none of it can really match the unique beauty and heartfelt emotion generated by our Polish opłatek-sharing tradition. □

**Music News from 3**

Memory, River-Memory, a Mendelssohn Club commission from 1998.

Another choral concert that drew on music's power of protestation this month was a performance by the David York Ensemble in Portland, OR on November 17th. Henryk Górecki's Miserere, the central musical work of this concert, set the tone of quiet, sustained, willful power. Reviewer David Stabler of the Oregonian wrote this of the experience: "No matter what your belief, the Polish composer Górecki -- like J.S. Bach -- is a composer of spiritual persuasiveness. The prolonged pleas of 'Miserere,' written in response to a violent 1981 protest in Poland, came to feel like holy stillness." Also performed on the program were a medieval chant by Hildegard von Bingen, a piece by Joan Andrews, and York's own oratorio, Mother of Us All. □

**Taxes from 3**

your year-end planning.

Remember the general rule for deductibility of mortgage interest: You can deduct interest on up to \$1 million of mortgages on your first or second homes as long as you use the proceeds to buy, build, or substantially improve the homes. You can also deduct interest on up to \$100,000 of home-equity debt, regardless of how the money is used.

Points paid on a mortgage to buy a home are deductible in the year of purchase. Points paid on a refinancing are not currently deductible except to the extent funds are used for home improvements; instead they're deducted pro rata over the life of the loan.

If you refinance for more than the balance on the original mortgage (plus \$100,000 home-equity debt), your interest deduction is limited unless you use the excess funds for home improvement.

If you're concerned with foreclosure, contact our office for details on how current law and any pending changes could affect the tax consequences in your situation.

**Watch out for the AMT**

The dreaded alternative minimum tax (AMT) was intended to affect only the wealthiest individuals. But millions of middle-income taxpayers may have to pay AMT this year. Have your situation assessed now so you can coordinate your personal tax moves.

**Make business decisions**

Year-end tax planning can pay dividends for businesses, too. Here are some suggestions for small-business owners.

Max out on Section 179 deductions. You can currently deduct up to \$125,000 for 2007 equipment purchases.

Document efforts to collect bad debts. In general, you may deduct debts in the year they become worthless, so intensify your collection activities.

Take care of minor repairs on your building premises. Unlike building renovations, repairs are currently deductible.

Cash in on business credits, such as credits

for research expenses and hiring workers from targeted groups.

If you have additional questions about the ideas mentioned here and/or many other strategies available to you, they may be directed to me at 800-CPA-Krol (272-5765), or you may write to:

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**Investments from 3**

Not all tax-exempt organizations are eligible to receive these distributions, so make sure the distribution is made to a qualified tax-exempt charitable organization. The IRA owner - not the financial institution where the IRA is held - is responsible for making the determination on whether the organization is an eligible charitable organization.

Make sure the financial institution that holds your IRA is able to make qualified charitable distributions *before* you initiate your distribution. The distribution **must** be made payable to the charity by check or the distribution may be sent by wire to the charity's account(s).

If you intend to make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA, do **not** take a normal distribution from your IRA and then write a personal check to the charity for the amount of the distribution because this results in a taxable distribution.

**For More Information**

If you would like to learn more, please write us in care of News of Polonia. □

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