

PAC Oplatek and Awards Presentation

By: *Betsy Cepielik*



Award Recipients - L. Rich Wideryński, Elizabeth Rudzińska, John Stanwyck



Cellist Janice Foy

On December 2 the Our Lady of the Bright Mount Church Hall was the setting for the Polish American Congress – S. California Division's annual Oplatek Luncheon and Awards Ceremony. The hall was beautifully decorated by Teresa Dudzick and her committee – with gala streamers, greens, and a tree. Betsy and Grace Maolepsza welcomed the guests as they entered.

Herring and Polish sausage were prepared by Turek Catering. Guests partook in toasts of Król vodka (donated by Król owners Stanley and Helena Kołodziej.)

Guests were then seated at their tables and welcomed by MC Teresa Dudzick, who introduced past President Michael Dutkowski who gave a memorial to members who passed on in the past year: Zbigniew Janczur, Anna Świerczewska, Gene and Stanley Stankiewicz. Teresa then introduced the new pastor of Our Lady of the Bright Mount Church, Father Marek Ciesielski who gave the Benediction. Also introduced were former Pastor Father Edward Mroczyński, and Sisters Margaret Romanowska and Mariola Ina MChr. Father Mroczyński now resides in San Jose but keeps current on L.A. news with the News of Polonia. Next came the sharing of oplatek, where all were able to greet old and new friends.

A delicious gourmet meal (menu planned by Elizabeth Rudzińska) was served by the Tureks: Żur soup, ham with a special sauce, beets, pierogi, and kasha, followed by pastry for dessert.

The Consulate was represented by Jakub Zaborowski (Consul of Culture, Science Education, and Public Affairs), who greeted the assemblage and gave his wishes for the upcoming Christmas season.

Then it was time for the presentation of the Polonia awards. The winners are chosen by the Board of the PAC. The award was a beautiful glass sculpture, engraved with the name of the winner and the wording "For outstanding dedication and service to the Polish Community."

The first awardee introduced by Teresa Dudzick was John Stankiewicz Stanwyck, who accepted the award posthumously for his parents Gene and Stanley Stankiewicz who both died this past year. He felt that his parents would be speechless at this honor. He proposed two toasts – one for each of his parents. His mother was a "Polish Sophia Loren." His father was very Polish. They both had many accomplishments. Gene translated the King Roger opera into English. Stanley and Gene translated WWII pilot Barbara Karpińska's book, "Winds and Hurricanes" into English, and John hopes to

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Christmas Vigil at the Helena Modrzejewska Polish School

By: *Jadwiga Inglis*



The Three wise men visited Jesus, Mary and Joseph



Shepherds paid homage to Baby Jesus

Photos by David Milligan

Zakopane to Gdańsk. We are not sure, but we think this time he was the real Santa "Święty Mikołaj."

He also brought "Mieszanka Czekoladowa" mixed chocolates from Wedel. He gave gifts to all the good Polish children. No one was left behind.

The Polish Saturday School in the USA is very important part of our children's lives. Children are learning not only their Polish language, but also their Polish traditions, culture, and history; while, most important of all, they are having a lot of fun while they learn.

If you have children and would like to join us please do. Register at the Pope John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda. Donations for the School are also helpful and welcome. Merry Christmas to you all!!! ☐

Angels, shepherds, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and three Kings – "The Annual Jaselka" - celebrated by the Helena Modrzejewska Polish School in Yorba Linda was successful.

Students with teachers from the school prepared a wonderful Annual Christmas program. Children recited their lines in the Polish language throughout the whole Christmas play. School Director Mrs. Elizabeth Rudzińska, who has been rewarded for her work many times by Poland's Presidents and the Polish American Congress, reminded us of the history of our traditions at school, wishing a Merry Christmas to everyone. We all shared "oplatek" and sang Polish Christmas Carols. Father Henryk Noga invoked a blessing and prayed for a good Christmas Season before starting our Polish meatless traditional, "Wigilia" dinner. The atmosphere was very warm. The Bethlehem background with stars in the sky and all participants dressed in great costumes in the stable made the vigil night look realistic.

Santa Claus arrived from the North Pole. He said that on the way to California he visited Poland and reported much more snow from

Hyde Park's Nativity scene will not be moved

In an article by John Davis of the Poughkeepsie (N.Y.) Journal - A manger scene will remain on the lawn of town hall in the city of Hyde Park.

A day after asking the town to remove the nativity scene, Bonnie Meadow, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Dutchess County, has withdrawn her request.

The public outcry following her request was more than Meadow expected, she said in a letter today to Hyde Park Supervisor Pompey Delafield. She had asked the town to remove the manger scene, claiming it offended some non-Christians in Hyde Park and that it violated federal law.

"I never dreamt that my request to remove the nativity scene at the offices of the Town of Hyde Park would upset so many people so much," Meadow said in the letter. "It was never my intent to hurt anyone or to spoil their holidays. In view of the public outcry, I hereby rescind my request to you.

"I apologize for whatever difficulty this may have caused and I wish you and your community a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays," she said.

After researching the legality of the issue, Hyde Park Supervisor Pompey Delafield today said the manger will stay due to it being a longstanding tradition. He did not mention, however, that Meadow had withdrawn her request.

"The Hyde Park Knights of Columbus have provided and maintained a nativity scene as part of a 30-year-old holiday celebration," Delafield said in a prepared statement this afternoon. "We have and will continue to honor that tradition again this year. This display is the property of the Knights of Columbus and we will continue to work with them to address any appropriate future tradition for the nativity scene after the holidays."

Delafield also said the town will welcome the placement of other religious symbols on the town hall lawn.

"The town honors all religions in this holiday season and would be open to a similar display of the menorah to honor the season of Chanukah, or any other appropriate season display as a part of this year's holiday offering at town hall," Delafield said in the statement.

The Hyde Park Knights of Columbus, a Catholic men's organization, have put up the manger scene on the town hall lawn every Christmas season for more than 30 years.

Dean Davis, a local Knight, said he was contacted by the town Wednesday about removing the manger scene.

"They are taking Christmas from us," he said. "It's Christ's Mass. If they want to do that, it's going to ruin the whole country."

After receiving a request Wednesday from the Jewish Federation of Dutchess County to remove the nativity scene, the town officials said they were considering asking the Knights of Columbus to remove it.

Meadow said in her original request the manger offended some non-Christians in Hyde Park and the display of religious symbols on government property was a violation of federal law.

After receiving that letter, Delafield said he would have the town attorney research the legality of the manger scene.

"If the law says it has to come down, it will have to come down," Delafield said Wednesday.

The town supervisor said he never had a problem with the manger scene on the lawn, but if it became one for others, he would prefer seeing it removed.

"I did not want to make an issue out of it," he said. "I believe in the separation of church and state."

<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071206/NEWS01/712060335> ☐



Janek's Corner

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It's Getting Crazy!

It seems that Poles tend to assimilate foreign countries' favorite shows. No wonder then that Polish editions of "Dancing With The Stars," and the very first brand new edition of "So You Think You Can Dance" (the Polish name, "You can dance Po prostu tańcz") have coincided with each other for quite a while now. With their finales, there comes a question whether or not we do really need them.

Both shows focus on dance as a tool of entertainment. It is a solid footing that undoubtedly results in the high audience in front of TVs. One can surely say that adaptations of both shows have created a new standard for the entertaining programs in Polish Television (especially, privately-operated ones). It forced the state-operated equivalent, on the other hand, to create a similar show based on dance, too. However, it is less popular due to its kitschy look. "Gwiazdy tańczą na lodzie" (original name, "Dancing on Ice") does not appear to be attractive to Poles... The ultimate reason might be that it is poorly directed.

However, the real question is why we are so in love with dancers, drama, eliminations, and much more that comes across us while watching these shows. Can we feel what the competitor can feel, can we imagine us dancing like they do, can they finally count on our votes during the elimination process?

The shows hold great appeal for Poles, it seems. People are amazed with the competitors' abilities. It appears that they move effortlessly, jump easily, and dance beautifully. Can that not be fascinating to an ordinary person? Can we not look up to the stars that show us their potential and prove their greatness? Of course we are bound to recognize their dance and self-discipline. No wonder that we want more and more...

And, as a matter of fact, the more is about to come soon. The producers of "Dancing With The Stars" are considering starting a 7th edition of show in Poland, and it is certain that the second edition of "So You Think You Can Dance" will be organized soon. Let us hope that both shows will prove their value and help young dancers get recognized. ☐

Our Lady of the Bright Mount Roman Catholic Church

3424 W. Adams Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90018

Schedule of Masses

Saturday 5:00 pm
Sunday 8:30 & 10:00am, 12:00pm
Weekdays 8:00 am, 7:30 pm

(All Masses are in Polish)

Ks. Marek Ciesielski, Proboszcz
Ks. Robert Wojsław, Asystent
Ks. Antoni Bury, Rezydent

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Mówimy po polsku