



News of Polonia

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Wiadomości Polonijne

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Free or Home Delivery

Polish Independence Day Celebrated with Concert at USC

By: *Betsy Cepielik*



Jacek Nowaczyński

Consul General Paulina Kapuścińska presented the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit to Janusz Kamiński, noted Director and Cinematographer

On November 10 Polish Consul General Paulina Kapuścińska and the Polish Music Center at USC were the hosts of a gala concert at the University of Southern California - in celebration of 90 years of Poland's independence.

The Consul General gave opening remarks and welcomed the guests. She introduced the guests who were there from Poland for the Sister Cities ceremony in Paso Robles later in the week.

Marek Żebrowski, Director of the Polish Music Center, expressed his regrets that the honored musician Wojciech Kilar was unable to be present. Instead, Mr. Żebrowski produced a video interview with the artist, which was shown to the audience.

Then it was time for the concert of symphony and film music by Wojciech Kilar. The Midnight Strings and USC Strings, accompanied by Marek Żebrowski and Daniel Kamiński (keyboards) and Sally Rentschier and John Robinson (recorders) began the

Polish Independence to page 7

Kościusko Chair.. Polish Chair in the USA

By: *Marek Chodakiewicz*

With great pleasure I'd like to inform you, that on 90th anniversary of declaring Poland's Independence, thanks to the help and generosity of many Poles in the USA, we have opened another Polish Chair, Kościusko Chair – Polish Studies in the Institute of World Affairs in Washington. The inauguration was festive and followed by a whole day seminar about Polish – American and Polish – European relations prepared by our lecturers. More information about this is written in "Rzeczpospolita" by Piotr Żychowicz.

Counterattack by Poles in the USA

By: *Piotr Żychowicz*

Kościusko Chair – Polish Studies was opened in the conservative Institute of World Affairs in Washington. Here, the degrees are obtained by alumnus of prestigious American universities and employees of the Federal Administration. Also diplomats, special service agents, security and defense specialists.

It's time to break the silence.

Thanks to opening of the Kościusko Chair they will have an opportunity to get acquainted with Polish history, politics and culture. They will also be familiarized with the Polish interpretation of Poland's recent history. There is no secret that Poland has bad media coverage in the USA. Often, Poland is depicted as a country which contributed to the Holocaust and is an anti-Semitic country.

During the last 50 years Poland was enclosed in a communistic cage. When other countries were talking about their glorious histories, Poles were under duress and did not have an opportunity to express their true history... they were silent. It's time for a change says Marek Chodakiewicz, the chairman of the Kościusko Chair. He emphasizes, however, that he and other professors of the Institute of the World Affairs – Kościusko Chair, are not going to be engaged in propaganda but conduct true research and teach the truth. For example, during the classes about city fighting techniques, we analyzed the Warsaw Uprising. During classes about preventing genocide, I spoke about the extermination of Poles by national socialists and communists and the Wolyn Massacre. Now, these events have a formal shape – explains professor Chodakiewicz.

Million dollars at the beginning

Many of the classes are being taught by known American professors who have Polish roots, i.e. Walter Jajko, David M. L. Kłoczek, and former advisor to President Reagan John Lenczowski. The Kościusko Chair will also publish and print Prof. Adam Ulam's (Polish – American specialist of Soviet Affairs) works of his publishing house – Leopold Press, which his widow transferred to the Kościusko Chair.

To date, the foundation has collected 1.1 million dollars. The collection continues, our goal is to fund scholarships for students from Poland, the future of Poland. "We do not take any grants from the U.S. government because we want to be independent. We don't want the federal administration to tell us what to do", says

The Kościusko Chair to page 15

Paso Robles Honors Paderewski in Annual Festival

By: *Paula O'Farrell*



Paso Robles and Tarnów are Sister Cities L. - Paso Robles Mayor Frank Meecham and Mieczysław Kras, Supervisor of the Tarnów District signed the agreement.

Classical music, local wine, and Polish dialects were all abundant in the 2008 Paderewski Festival held this month in Paso Robles. The annual city festival celebrates its most famous resident with concerts, exhibits, vineyard tours, ceremonies, and film screening.

Dignitaries from the Tarnów District of Poland participated in this year's celebration on the invitation of festival organizers. Mieczysław Kras, Supervisor of the Tarnów Region, Ryszard Ządło, Director Office of Promotion and Tourism, Krystyna Szymańska, Director, Paderewski Center Kańska Dolna toured Mission San Luis Obispo, Hearst Castle, the original Paderewski vineyard and met with various elected officials and Chamber of Commerce representatives to discuss business exchange opportunities.

Festival Board members toured Poland in June 2008 as guests of the Polish Ministry of Culture and met with Tarnów officials to initiate the cultural exchange. Tarnów is significant as the home of the Paderewski estate, Kańska Dolna, and the current home of the Paderewski Center and an annual youth music festival.

A defining moment for festival organizers was the public ceremony in which the Paso Robles mayor, Frank Mecham, and Tarnów Supervisor M. Kras signed a Collaboration Agreement to promote cultural and business exchange opportunities.

The Gala Concert featuring 19-year old Nikita Mndoyants, winner of the 2007 International Paderewski Competition, dazzled the sold-out crowd with his performance of Paderewski pieces such as Polonaise, Legende and Scherzino, Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, Chopin's Three Mazurkas and Polonaise-Fantasia, and Beethoven's Op. 111 on a new Steinway concert grand piano brought in specifically for the festival to the historic Paso Robles Inn Ballroom.

Winners of the 2008 Youth Piano Competition, ages 10 to 14, performed a free afternoon recital to a standing room only audience. After the medal ceremony, winners were publicly invited by the Paderewski Center Director to participate in the Summer 2009 youth music festival at Kańska Dolna with accommodations and local transportation paid for by the Polish Ministry of Culture.

The 1937 classic film "Moonlight Sonata" with Paderewski in his only film

Paderewski Festival to page 8

Did your family Lose Property in Eastern Poland???

Dear Polish American Congress:

We seek your urgent assistance in getting this information to your Divisions and to Polonia in the USA.

At stake are justice and respect for the property rights of your members whose families lost property in eastern Poland during the war.

They have only one month in which to register their interest in receiving compensation for this land, and after 31 December 2008 it will be too late.

Information is found below and attached. Please contact me urgently if you have any questions or concerns.

Stefan Wisniowski, Chairman KRESY-SIBERIA GROUP

3 Castle Circuit Close
Seaforth NSW 2092 Australia
Telephone +61 411 864 873
Stefan.Wisniowski@Kresy-Siberia.org
www.Kresy-Siberia.org

Przewodniczący, GRUPA KRESY-SYBERIA

ul. Wisniowa 40B lokal nr 6
02-516 Warszawa, Polska
Telefon +48 22 5424090 fax +48 22 5424089
Kom. +48 517 206 491
Stefan.Wisniowski@Kresy-Syberia.org
www.Kresy-Syberia.org

Eastern Poland property compensation deadline approaches

Although it has not been widely publicized outside of Poland, the deadline is looming for the Polish government's offer of compensation for property left outside its present borders in connection with the Second World War.

This is in not related to restitution for property confiscated in Poland by the German Nazi and post-war Communist regimes. Rather, it is compensation offered for property left behind when Poland's borders were shifted west after the war. Poland's eastern territories were taken over by the Soviet Union in exchange for new western territories taken from a vanquished Germany.

Almost 70 years after the war started, partial justice may finally be restored with the Polish government's compensation offer of twenty percent of the current value of the lost land and buildings. The compensation is funded by the sale of government property. Already nearly \$100 million has been awarded to former residents of the Eastern Borderlands („Kresy” in Polish) and their families for their lost land and homes.

The 8 July 2005 Polish law provides for compensation on an equal basis for all pre-war Polish citizens leaving land outside the present borders of Poland due to circumstances surrounding the 1939-1945 war. This includes the deported families, the soldiers who served in the Polish Forces in the West, and their families who spent the war in refugee camps around the world.

Australian second-generation survivor Louise Błazejowska says: "The story of the Soviet war-time persecution of eastern Poland's residents is a little known episode in the history of World War 2, including mass deportations to 'Siberia'"

Property in Poland to page 5

Wiadomości Polonijne

Chodakiewicz - Kościusko Chair	17
Prezydent Kwaśniewski	18
Inglis - „Trzech Kumpłi”	18
Ks. Kamiński - Św. Faustyna	18
Narębska - Moje wakacje	19
Petryka - Święto Niepodległości	17
Prof. Pogonowski - Gra o Izrael	17
Energetyczne rezerwy	19
Prof. Przystawa - Nauczyciel Polski	17
Sosiński - Waldek ze Zbierska	18
Wierzewski - Pułaski Muzeum	19
ACPC - Pułaski Scholarships	4
Andrzejki	9
Ball, Justyna - Heifer had a little farm	2
Brit Polish Connection	10
Calendar of SoCal	2
Copernicu image reconstructed	4
Investments - Your portfolio	3
Janek's Corner - Museums	4
Katyn - Rottfeld article	6
Legal - J - I Visa	3
Moscow Court reject Katyn	4
Music News - Paderewski Festival	3
Northern California	12
Oplatek Luncheon and Awards	5
Oprah - Man to ride to her	10
Orange County news - Janczur Award	6
Paderewski Music Society	7
PAC	5
Polish News Bytes	7
Profiles - Cabaret Man	2
President Kaczyński in Georgia	4
Retirement in Poland	10
Scotland tribute to Polish Army Bear	4
Christine Smith in Paso Robles	8
Taxes - Tax Planning	3
Univ of Illinois - Chicago 10 M gift	7