

Polish News Bytes from 8

runway repairs after the peak tourist season and during weekends when business travelers normally do not fly. Poland's largest international airport services some eight million passengers a year. (See next entry.)

The world's most sophisticated equipment for destroying explosive materials and detecting illegal drugs has been installed at the Fryderyk Chopin International Airport in Warsaw. The advanced technology allows quicker and more precise specification of unattended luggage content and includes a device to prevent terrorists from using radio signals to detonate bombs. A bomb-ejecting device is part of the start-of-the-art security package.

Although wind-generated electricity accounted for only 0.5% Poland's power consumption in 2008, it is expected to increase to about 2.3% this year. According to the Polish Wind Energy Association, a 26-fold increase is likely by 2020, ranking Poland among Europe's leading wind-energy producers. At present, the country's wind farms are located mainly on land along the Baltic coast but plans are being drafted to also build offshore wind-power units.

"Gość Niedzielny" ("The Sunday Visitor"), a nationally circulated Catholic weekly published by the Archdiocese of Katowice since 1923, has recently become Poland's largest circulation weekly, knocking the leftist "Polityka" into second place. "Polityka", whose roots go back to the communist era, was once regarded as "liberal" by Soviet-bloc standards and had been the No. 1 weekly for the past 20 years. The editor of "Gość Niedzielny", Father Marek Gancarczyk, was fined last year by the "politically correct" European Court of Human Rights for calling abortion what it actually is – "killing".

Poland's luxury car market is growing despite the overall economic downturn. 2009 witnessed record-breaking sales of premium makes such as BMW and Mercedes which are now expanding their network of showrooms. Despite its \$85,000+ price tag, the BMW X6 was the year's most desired luxury vehicle. Volvo also increased its sales in 2009, Jaguar and Lexus did not.

Granting the right to co-host the 2012 European Soccer Championships to Poland and Ukraine was a risky proposition, according to Michel Platini, president of the European Football Authority (UEFA). Neither country has had any experience in hosting big sporting events, and both countries have been repeatedly criticized for slow progress in updating antiquated infrastructure. One of Poland's four host cities, Wrocław, suddenly changed stadium-construction firms, and rather than at the end of 2010 the stadium is not expected to be finished until some time in 2011.

Major world producers will soon begin prospecting for natural gas in Poland which is believed to have substantial deposits of the fuel. Chevron, Exxon Mobil, ConocoPhillips and Marathon have all purchased exploration concessions and are expected to begin drilling within a few months. Poland, which is eager to reduce its dependence on Russian deliveries, has an estimated 1.4 billion cubic meters of gas deposits, however they are found far below ground in difficult to access rock formations.

Cross-country skier Justyna Kowalczyk won Poland's won the 75th annual plebiscite for the best sports personality of the year and is one of the country's top hopefuls at the Vancouver Winter Olympics. The 27-year-old was the first Pole ever to win a medal in cross-country skiing (2008 Turin Olympics) and is a two-time world champion. Second place in the plebiscite went to burly, world champion hammer-thrower Anita Włodarczyk. Piotr Gruszka, the captain of

the volleyball team that won the men's European Championships came third.

Romuald Koperski, 56, broke the Guinness record by playing a piano for 101 hours and eight minutes, bettering by one minute the performance of Hungarian Charles Brunner. The Polish journalist, writer and Siberian explorer performed at a shopping mall in the Baltic Port of Gdańsk, and when he was done said nothing was worse than a lack of sleep. Under Guinness rules, a pianist was entitled to a five-minute break for every hour he performed, but Koperski played right through until the saved minutes added up to a 90-minute break for a brief nap. He was allowed to play classical music, selections from musicals and soundtracks as well as jazz standards, but could repeat them only after four hours.

An electronic fingerprint reader has been installed by Father Grzegorz Sowa at his church in the southern Polish town of Gryfów Śląski to monitor mass attendance by his confirmation class. Students touch the reader each time they attend church and are exempted from taking an exam ahead of their confirmation if they have attended 200 masses in three years' time. Everybody seems happy with the arrangement. "Now we don't have to wait in line to get the priest's signature in our confirmation notebooks every time we come to church," one student explained.

Germany has donated \$60 million to a global fund to preserve the site of the Nazi German Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Poland. The Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum said in a statement that the money represented half the total it needs to ensure the future of the World War II site as a permanent memorial to the Nazi victims. "This is a great day! The plan for the long-term preservation of this memorial is becoming a reality," said Piotr Cywiński, director of the state-run museum. The donation was made following the theft and recovery of the camp's infamous "Arbeit macht frei" sign. **The highest accident compensation** in the history of the United Kingdom has been awarded to Polish immigrant Łukasz Borowski, originally of Szczecin. The 27-year-old Pole was being driven to work in a Cambridgeshire factory by a co-worker, when the car skidded off the road and tumbled into a ditch. A British court awarded \$13.5 million to Borowski who suffered spine and brain damage and will be an invalid for the rest of his life.

Józef Kowalski, the oldest living Pole, recently celebrated his 110th birthday. He survived World War I, is the only living veteran of the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, was a prisoner of war during the Second World War and lived through 45 years of communism and ran his farm until 1990. He now lives in a nursing home in the western town of Tursk where he celebrated his birthday with all the trimmings except for the song "Sto Lat". Asked to what he owed his longevity, Kowalski replied with the Benedictine principle: "Ora et labora" (pray and work). □

Zakład Pogrzebowy (323) 681-0776 - (626) 793-7159

Oferujemy pełen zakres usług związanych ze zgonem. Przygotowanie pogrzebu, możliwość kremacji zwłok. Msza pogrzebowa w języku polskim, pogrzeb na polskim cmentarzu, stypa. Zawiadom nas, a my zajmiemy się przygotowaniem i formalnościami.

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or e-mail to: strybel@vp.pl

Q: Why did President Lech Kaczyński speak of 22,000 officers killed by the Russians in 1940, when in fact there were only some 15,000 and 11,000 civilian officials, and you have repeated these figures in your article "Russo-Polish debate at WWII observance". Stalin wanted not only to destroy Poland's military leadership but the entire Polish opposition.

PROFESSOR ANNA DADLEZ, 1453 Vermont Ave, Saginaw, MI 48602

A: Although there were many professionals and intellectuals killed in what is known as the Katyń massacre, most were army reservists. In addition, police, border guards and other uniformed services at times are also popularly regarded as officers. Exact break-downs of the Katyń victims are expected in historical and other scholarly studies, but at anniversary observances and in speeches addressed to the general public such mental shortcuts are not uncommon.

Q: I am doing a report on Polish clothing and I am especially interested in discussing Polish folk costumes such as the following: Łowicki, Kujawski and the mountaineer costume from Podhale. I want to know the symbolism of the costumes listed above and if people still wear them on special occasions.

STUDENT, Athens, OH (name and contact data withheld on request)

A: Polish regional garb (folk attire) is worn nowadays mainly on ceremonial occasions or for tourist purposes. Religious processions and harvest-home events are among such occasions. Sometimes you will find waitresses wearing stylized versions of folk attire or highlanders who pose for pictures or drive horse-drawn characters for the benefit of tourists. Check out the Polish Art Center of Michigan which dispenses information and stocks literature on the subject of Polish folklore, regional attire, etc. Contact them at: raymond@polartcenter.com

Q: Would you know of anywhere in the US where oscypek can be purchased?

BARBARA ROLEK, Crown Point, IN, bjrolek@netnitco.net

A: I have been unable to track down any US source for oscypek. Real oscypek is made with unpasteurized milk, and I have heard that US Food and Drug Administration regulations don't allow raw milk products that are less than 60 days old to be imported into the United States. To authenticate this, try checking directly with the FDA. Good luck!

Q: I have prepared the pasztet (pâté) according to your recipe in "Polish Heritage Cookery" and wonder if it's OK to freeze it?

PROFESSOR ROMAN SOLECKI, solecki@engr.uconn.edu

A: Yes, pasztet can be frozen. If you have prepared a large pan of it, I suggest cutting it up into the size portions you are likely to use at a single sitting before freezing it. But fresh, unfrozen pasztet still tastes the best! □

Q: Are there any regions in Poland that emphasize a certain food for certain holidays. For instance, in East-Central Pennsylvania Goose Day is celebrated in mid-September.

RICHARD M. RUDOWSKI, 797 Bocktown Cork Rd, Clinton, PA 15026

A: One that immediately comes to mind are the rogale świętomarcińskie (Martinmas crescents), baked only in the

Poznań area on the feast of St Martin (Nov. 11). A typical On Wigilia, a wheat & honey pudding called kutia is common to eastern Poland, while makówki, a sweet poppyseed dish is largely confined to southern Poland's Śląsk region. Czernina (duck-blood soup) once had a ritual significance. It was served to a suitor whom the girl's parents found unacceptable and told him his advances were not welcome.

Q: Don't print my name or e-mail address, because I want to surprise my wife by taking her to Poland for our 25th wedding anniversary this summer. She is Chicago-born Polish and interested in her heritage (I'm Irish-German), and we have never been abroad. How do you suggest we go and what's there to see over there? S.M., Chicago, IL

A: If you have never traveled abroad before, your best bet is to sign on with a tour group through one of Chicagoland's Pol-Am travel agencies. They will help you breeze through all the formalities, arrange hotel accommodation, meals and sightseeing trips around the country. The most popular tourist venues are Warsaw with sidetrips to Chopin's birthplace in Żelazowa Wola and the Kraków area down south with sidetrips to the Tatra Mountains, Częstochowa's Shrine of the Black Madonna, the historic Wieliczka Salt Mine and possibly the German concentration camp Auschwitz, now a museum. Your tour organizer will probably offer many other points of interest along the way. If your wife has

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