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August 2016

POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 4

Your Voice
in America!

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Future PAC Newsletter will be sent out.

Deadline for submission	Publication date
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Friday, October 7, 2016	Friday, October 14, 2016
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Friday, December 2, 2016	Friday, December 9, 2016
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“Your Voice in America” newsletter is published bimonthly by the Polish American Congress. The purpose of the newsletter is to offer PAC National Directors and PAC Executive Committee members the opportunity to share news and information about their state divisions and offices. The newsletter does not receive funds from any external source. The editor is Dr. Mark Pienkos.

Articles should be between 100 and 400 words. Some editing will be done to match our style guidelines and spatial constraints, as well as correcting grammatical errors. We do not send proofs for approval. When sending photos, please include captions with names, official titles. All submitted materials become the property of the Polish American Congress and may be used to promote the mission of the PAC. Materials will not be returned unless requested.

Articles are due according to this schedule. Send your submissions to PAC National VP for Public Relations, Mark Pienkos at markpienkos2012@gmail.com.

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PAC Meeting Held in Poland

Led by President Frank Spula, a delegation of 44 members of the Polish American Congress (PAC) traveled to Poland for a first-ever meeting outside of the U.S. borders. PAC was participating in the 2016 Forum Polonii Amerykańskiej (Forum of American Polonia) held July 25-30, in Rzeszów, Podkarpacie Region. Other members of the PAC Executive Committee included Maria Szonert-Binienda, VP for Polish Agenda, Dr. Mark Pienkos, VP for Public Relations, and Hubert Cioromski, VP for Financial Developments. The PAC delegation included representatives of 13 PAC Divisions and 7 national member organizations. Dr. Barbara Andersen, Executive Director of the Washington D.C. Office, acted as an organizational liaison cooperating closely with the organizers in the preparation and execution of this historic event.

Organized by Władysław Ortyl, Marshall of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, the Forum involved very intensive programs that included meetings, presentations by high-level speakers, and panel discussions explaining the opportunities for business, educational, and cultural partnerships. Several tourist-oriented venues the region offers were also presented. One site for the meetings was the newly opened convention center in Jasionka, across the street from the Rzeszów International Airport.



(Continued from previous page...)

In addition to PAC, several representatives from the American business community joined Polish counterparts to listen to the budding opportunities the region has to offer. Other participants included representatives of Polonia communities worldwide, including those of Canada, England, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, to name a few. Representatives from Poland's local, regional, and national governments at various levels were also in attendance. Among the many who addressed and/or hosted the group were: From the Podkarpackie region (Hosts):

- Wladyslaw Ortyl, Marshall of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship (Marszalek Wojewodztwa)
- Bogdan Romaniuk, Deputy Marshall of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship (Wice Marszalek)
- Jerzy Cyprys, Chairman of the Local Parliament (Przewodniczacy Sejmiku Wojewodztwa)
- Tadeusz Ferenc, the Mayor of Rzeszow (Prezydent miasta Rzeszow)
- Wieslaw Kapel, Lubaczow Munity Executive (Wojt Gminy Lubaczow)
- Lucjusz Nadberezny, Mayor of Stalowa Wola (Prezydent miasta Stalowa Wola)
- Tadeusz Pioro, Mayor of Sanok (Burmistrz miasta Sanoka)
- Roman Konieczny, Foreman of Sanok County (Starosta Powiatu Sanockiego)

From the government of Poland (organizing partner and sponsor):

- Minister Adam Kwiatkowski, Chief of the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland
- Minister Jan Dziedziczak, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland
- Stanislaw Karczewski, Marshall of the Senate of the Republic of Poland
- Senators of the Republic of Poland Janina Sagatowska, Artur Warzocha, and Anna Maria Anders
- Parliamentarian Malgorzata Wypych

From Wspolnota Polska (organizing partner and sponsor):

- Longin Komolowski, President
- Dariusz Bonislowski, Vice President
- Marek Rozycki, Secretary General

The organizers of the 2016 Forum prepared an impressive, activity-packed agenda that in addition to meetings, presentations, and discussions also included visiting several places in the region to gain an up-close and personal view of this beautiful area. Lancut Castle in Lancut, Sanok, Lubaczow, Krosno, Przemyśl, were just a few places that the group visited. Participants were able to sample the local atmosphere including its people, music, traditions, cuisine, cultural attractions, but above all – the famous Polish hospitality.

A special and reflection-provoking visit was paid to the Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in Markowa. The museum commemorates not only the tragic story of the Ulma family – parents and 7 children including one unborn – who were murdered for harboring Jews during WWII. The story presented in the Museum goes beyond the story of one family and highlights the heroism of Polish people in the face of the horrors of war and who, despite the great risk to themselves and their loved ones, decided to help their Jewish compatriots.

The Polish American Congress has begun preliminary discussions with its leaders as to how to assist Poland in its desire to attract business and tourism. Another important element is assisting young people in the U.S., specifically Polish Americans, in learning about the many opportunities Poland has to offer. One possibility to be discussed at the next meeting of the PAC Council of National Directors to be held in Chicago in September is the developing of programs and initiatives to enable young people to travel and study in Poland.





ALL ROADS LEAD TO CHICAGO!



The Council of National Directors will meet September 15-17 in Chicago. The purpose of this annual meeting will be to discuss the business of the organization – including the recent gathering in Rzeszów, Poland by several members of the Polish American Congress. In addition, the election of executive committee officers, as well as possible by-law changes will take place.

The officers of the PAC Executive Committee to be elected are:

President
First Vice President
Vice President for American Affairs
Vice President for Polish Affairs
Vice President for Financial Development
Vice President for Membership Development
Vice President for Cultural Activities
Vice President for Public Relations
Secretary
Treasurer

POLISH PRESIDENT: NATO SUMMIT IS A SUCCESS FOR POLAND AND THE ALLIANCE

(exerpts and edits from):

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland
July 10, 2016

“The NATO Summit in Warsaw was a success for the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance and Poland. The Summit’s conclusions were good for both our country and NATO,” Polish President Andrzej Duda said. “The key for Poland is the enhanced presence of NATO forces on our territory. These negotiations have taken a very long time and we can say that the Summit has been a success for NATO, and for Poland as a member of the North Atlantic Alliance.”

According to Duda, the Summit provided a “real response” to the changing security environment in Europe and adapts NATO’s actions to these changes. “What it means for us Poles and for Poland immediately is an enhanced presence of NATO forces on our territory,” noted the President.

Mr. Duda stressed that the Warsaw NATO Summit had clearly shown the unity, cohesion, and solidarity of the Alliance. “The Summit concluded with very important decisions, some even say – historic ones,” concluded Duda.

President Duda thanked all the leaders who came to Warsaw. He addressed special words of gratitude to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and his staff.

According to the President, Poland and its capitol made a very good impression during the Summit as a country that is able to organize “a great international event, ensure security, effective transport” and “very modern and attractive working conditions.”

There have been 26 NATO summits since 1949. The last one took place in September 2014 in the UK. These meetings are attended by the heads of state and government of NATO members and chaired by NATO's Secretary General. The EU is regularly invited to attend these summits.





2016 Council of National Directors Meeting



The annual meeting of the PAC Western PA Division was held on June 26, 2016 at the PNA's West End Pulaski Lodge at the invitation of Joe Kaminski. PNA President Frank Spula attended the meeting and spoke at length on the history as well as the current work of the PAC. An election was held for officers and the following were elected: Tim Kuzma President; Maria Staszkiwicz VP, John Soplinski Treasurer and Susan Svec Secretary. Elected National Directors to the upcoming convention included Tim Kuzma, Maria Staszkiwicz and Rick Pierchalski. Other issues discussed were the current political climate in Poland, issues confronting the PAC as well as strategies for membership growth.

Rick Pierchalski ND

MARIA SZONERT BINIENDA AWARDED WITH THE PROFESSOR HONORIS CAUSA DEGREE



The Senate of the Kolegium Jagiellońskie in Toruń, on recommendation of the Board of Trustees, by Resolution dated June 17, 2016, awarded Maria Szonert Binienda with the Professor Honoris Causa degree for her scholarly achievements, contributions in the field of humanitarian law, and for her civic engagement on behalf of Polonia. The ceremony of awarding the honorary degree to our VP for Polish Affairs took place at the annual graduation ceremony on August 13, 2016. On this occasion, Ms. Szonert Binienda delivered a speech on historical memory.

Maria Szonert Binienda was also nominated by the Marshal of the Polish Senate, Stanisław Karczewski, to the Polonia Advisory Council at the Senate of the Republic of Poland.

Congratulations Maria!

UNESCO
Declares
2017: Year of
Kościuszko!



(From the UNESCO website)

2017 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of Tadeusz Kościuszko, great political leader and humanitarian.

Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746-1817) lived at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In recognition of his activity for the sake of peace, independence and democracy – the equality of people regardless of their skin color or religion – he is considered a national hero in Poland and in the United States. He emphasized the role of both practical and citizen education, so that men and women who regained freedom should be aware of their rights, but also their duties with respect to the freedom and welfare of others.

In Poland, Kościuszko fought for the freedom and equality of all citizens: peasants, who had to work as slave-like serfs, Jews who were a religious minority, women, who had fewer rights than men, and other people who were not treated equally. He emphasized the importance and role of women in the society Kościuszko, which at that time was a very cutting-edge approach. He was a precursor of the development of national awareness in its modern sense, encompassing all social strata and groups. In his fight for freedom and independence, he favored peaceful solutions.

In acknowledgement of his activity for the sake of independence, peace and equality for all, Kościuszko is a national hero in Poland and the United States, and an honorary citizen of the French Republic. It is worth emphasizing that all views and ideas which he advocated remain relevant and important today.

The United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) was founded in 1945. UNESCO has 195 Members and eight Associate Members. It is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board. The Secretariat, headed by the Director-General, implements the decisions of these two bodies.

The Organization has more than 50 field offices around the world. Its headquarters are located in Paris, France. UNESCO Headquarters is considered international territory and belongs to the Organization's 195 Member States.



October is Polish American Heritage Month!

Things to Do!

(Listed below are suggested activities for your October celebration.)

- Community Wide

1. Meet with your local Polish American organizations to discuss a successful, well-coordinated Polish American Heritage Month event.

2. Request local elected officials to present a proclamation or special greetings to the Polish American community.

3. Offer a Mass at your local church for the intention of your area Polish American community and invite everyone to attend. Following the Mass, hold a reception with Polish pastries and refreshments, welcoming all in the spirit of Polish hospitality.

4. Sponsor an event to honor noted men and women of Poland. During October, we mark the death of American Revolutionary War Hero General Casimir Pulaski on October 15th. You can conduct a tribute ceremony in front of a portrait of Pulaski. You can also consider honoring people such as Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Fryderyk Chopin, Marie Skłodowska Curie and others.

5. Encourage people to display Polish and American flags and Polish American Heritage Month posters in their homes, organizational headquarters, banks, businesses, etc. Flags, posters and banners help bring attention to the fact that October is National Polish American Heritage Month and that Polonia is celebrating proudly. Sample posters are available at: PolishAmericanCenter.com

6. Sponsor a lunch or dinner social with Polish food, music and entertainment.

- Youth Activities

1. Organize an essay contest in your local schools. Complete information on sponsoring an essay contest is available from the Museum's Internet site. You can award prizes during a school assembly or public event to encourage participation from parents and students alike. Ask local businesses and organizations to help sponsor the event and offer prizes. This is also a way to involve local teachers as judges of the essay contest.

2. Sponsor a coloring contest. Art work samples are available upon request from the national committee or you can download coloring forms from the Museum's Internet site. The coloring contest remains very popular in schools.

Ask local art students to organize and judge the entries. Ask a local printer to reprint the artwork for your committee at no charge with the name of his business at the bottom as an advertisement.

3. Sponsor a children's music or dance recital to highlight Polish music or dance in a local auditorium, school hall or recreation center. There are children's groups that would appreciate this type of exposure. It's a great way to get people together for a positive event involving young people. Invite the general public to attend.

4. Sponsor a Polish poster art contest requesting area schools to highlight Polish history and culture through student art. Display their art works and sponsor an award ceremony.

- Cultural Displays

1. Organize a display at your local shopping mall or library featuring Polish books, arts and crafts, wycinanki and paintings by Polish American artists. Contact local artists and request them to display their works at the local library, parish hall, organization hall, and public or office building lobby.

- Media Contact & General Advertising

1. Display Polish American Heritage Month posters. Sample posters are available from the National Committee, or they can be downloaded from the Heritage Month link on the Museum's Internet site at: PolishAmericanCenter.org. You can reprint these posters and encourage local stores, banks, supermarkets, churches and organizations to display the posters throughout the month of October.

2. Contact your local newspapers, radio and TV stations to tell them about National Polish American Heritage Month and your local activities.

3. Ask local radio programs to mention your area Polish American events during October as part of their community bulletin board or public service announcements. (Every radio station is required to give time for public service announcements.) You can also ask your radio stations to play a few selections written by Polish composers over the centuries and recorded by internationally famous artists. This is a way for them to bring attention to Polish American Heritage Month and highlight Polish composers.



4. Ask local organizations, banks, businesses and elected leaders to place a "POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH SALUTE" advertisement in local newspapers or on local radio or TV programs. Placing these salutes each week during the month of October will remind everyone about POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH. (The National Committee has an artwork for the newspaper, radio and TV salutes available upon request.)

5. Ask area high school and college students of Polish descent to assist you with press releases, public service announcements and other activities. Often this is a way for younger students to get extra credit for school and will allow them to be part of the Polish American Heritage Month celebration. Possibly there are individuals in your community with children who could be called upon to assist you with publicity and other efforts.

- Family & Friends

1. Start your family tree and invite all the members of your family to get involved.

2. Review a map of Poland and learn more about the town or city of your ancestors.

3. Read a book on Polish history and share that information with family and friends.

4. Attend a Polish American event and invite others to attend with you.

5. Display a Polish and American flag, a red and white bow, or a Heritage Month poster in your home or place of business.

6. Learn more about Polish customs and share that information with others.

7. Join a Polish American organization and get involved in some way.

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Polish American Heritage Month Committee -
Michael Blichasz, National Chairman

National Headquarters: Polish American Cultural Center Museum
308 Walnut Street • Philadelphia, PA 19106 • (215) 922-1700

- Also, for additional information and up-to-date information related to Polish Americans, please visit: AmericanWorkersNeedYou.com





A PERSONAL VIEWPOINT: OUR PAC VISIT TO POLAND

A personal viewpoint shared by the newly elected President of the PAC-Wisconsin Division, David Rydzewski, regarding our Polish American Congress' first visit to Poland. David and his wife, Ruth, have established annual scholarships to the Kościuszko Foundation to assist students wishing to study at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Dr. Thomas Pudlocki, a professor at Jagiellonian, gave David a personal tour of the university following the 2016 Forum held in Rzeszow. (What follows is an email conversation they had. The PAC newsletter editor thought you would find it informative.)

Dear Mr. Rydzewski,

It was indeed very nice meeting you. I am so positively encouraged to do other American-Polish projects after meeting you personally - definitely you give off good vibes:-).

I was wondering if you would write a small note to the local newspapers in Przemyśl about your being in Przemyśl and Podkarpacie? Could you write some basic information: approximate number of PAC members who attended the Forum (maybe two or three most important surnames), purpose of your visit, timelines, and some places and people you met while in Rzeszów; and who from the Polish side was responsible for your being in Rzeszów? Have you met any officials while in Przemyśl or was it just a sightseeing tour? I think this would be a good message for the public.

Thank you very much for a very nice meeting. Wishing you the best!

Tom

Photo captions: 1. Polish Folk dancers entertain! 2. Lancut Castle 3. Ceremonial wreath laying outside the Podkarpackie Parliament Building in Rzeszow 4. Opening Ceremonies at the 2016 Forum 5. PAC President Frank Spula and Halina Koralewski (PAC-Long Island Division) at the Rzeszow Philharmonic 6. Marshall Wladyslaw Ortyl greets and addresses 2016 Forum participants 7. Polish Senator Anna Marie Anders and Ann Pienkos (General Secretary, PAC-Wisconsin Division).



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Dear Dr. Pudlocki,

July 26, 2016 began five days of the Forum Polonii Amerykańskiej. This program sponsored by the government of Podkarpackie and the Polish Office of National Development. It was meant to showcase the region and support its economic development.

Included among the invited guests were 44 members of the Polish American Congress from around the United States, including its President Frank Spula, VP Maria Szonert, and VP Dr. Mark Pienkos, as well as dozens of members of World Polonia from Canada, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Lithuania, and Germany.

Leading the conference was Marshal Wladyslaw Ortyl, who spoke before members of the Podkarpackie Parliament, Polish clergy, Polish military and Polish business leaders. The message was clear: Podkarpackie and Poland have achieved much from the hard work of its people and from its EU and NATO memberships. It has very good universities and technical schools, a robust educated work force, good government; but there is still much to do. The reason for the invitation to the PAC and other members of World Polonia, was based on Polonia's deep love and attachment for the motherland, along with a history of help and support for Poland that started long before there was an EU. With a better understanding of the potential of this region, it is believed that the business ties that members of the PAC have will promote and aid in Poland's continued growth and development.

The conference spent its first day in the chambers of the Podkarpackie Parliament, with two days at the Rzeszow conference and convention center, followed by travel into the region to see its cities, countryside, and people. It's one thing to hear the message of economic development, but seeing the area with its beautiful towns, and witnessing their efforts to blend old traditions and culture with modern life and development, speaks to what Poland cherishes.

Among the places visited were the wood church at Blizne, the Skansen in Sanok, Łancut Palace, the Ulma Family Museum in Markowa, Krosno, Lubaczow, and Przemysl. They are all amazing places by themselves, but taken together they are very impressive.

Returning to Przemysl was PAC member Grazyna Michalski from New York who was born there. She was extremely proud to show other PAC members her city.

The grandfather of Dr. Mark Pienkos came from Rzeszow in the early 1900's and he and his American family retain close ties to their Podkarpackie family, so holding this economic conference in Rzeszow was an important and proud time for him.

Dr. Pudlocki, my friends and fellow PAC members and I were very glad to have been invited to Podkarpackie, and want to extend our profound thanks to those who so graciously hosted us. From my experience, I can say Polonia loves Poland.

Sincerely,
David Rydzewski

Photo captions: 1. On behalf of the Polish American Congress, PAC Executive Committee Members present an American flag to Marshall Wladyslaw Ortyl 2. Newly opened state-of-the-art Convention Center in Jasionka across from Rzeszow International Airport 3. VP for Polish Affairs Maria Szonert participates in panel discussion 4. National Director Anita Jedwabski (PAC-Eastern Massachusetts Division) 5. Polish American Congress members attending the 2016 Forum pause for a group photo before taking a very informative and memorable tour of Łancut Castle.



Rev. Carl A. Urban Celebrates His 50th Anniversary of Priesthood



Left to right: PAC President Frank Spula, Congressman Paul D. Tonko, Rev. Carl A. Urban, New York State Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, and Dean Anthony Bajdek

Rev. Carl A. Urban, B.A., B.Ph., M.Th., S.T.L. celebrated his 50th anniversary of priesthood on May 22, 2016. A graduate of St. John Kanty College Prep, Mater Christi Seminary, University of Ottawa and St. Paul University, Ottawa, Fr. Urban served as Associate Pastor of Resurrection Parish, and St. Casimir's, Albany while teaching at Vincentian Institute. He was Chaplain at St. Joseph Provinciate, Associate at St. Patrick's Parish, and Blessed Sacrament, Albany while teaching at Cardinal McClosky High School in Albany. From 1974 to 2011, Fr. Urban served as pastor of St. Adalbert's Parish in Schenectady and continues to serve on numerous boards, organizations and associations, and as a National Director of the Polish American Congress. Fr. Urban has also received the Cavalier's Cross for Service to Poland.



Tuesday, November 8, 2016.

Stay informed. VOTE!

PAC NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Anita Jedwabski (Massachusetts)
anitareliv@gmail.com

Ania Karwan (California)
ania_k@hotmail.com

Zbigniew Koralewski (New York)
zkoral@aol.com

Tim Kuzma (Pennsylvania)
tkuzma@polishfalcons.org

Mark Pienkos (Wisconsin)
PAC National VP for Public Relations
markpienkos2012@gmail.com

**LAYOUT AND DESIGN BY
POLISH FALCONS OF AMERICA:**

Courtney Caughey-Stambul,
Communications Director

Andy Darragh,
Communications Assistant



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

Founded in May, 1944, the Polish American Congress is a National Umbrella Organization, representing at least 10 million Americans of Polish descent and origin. Its membership is comprised of fraternal, educational, veteran, religious, cultural, social, business, political organizations and individual membership. The Polish American community prides itself on its deeply rooted commitment to the values of family, faith, democracy, hard work and fulfillment of the American dream. We are present in every state and virtually every community in America, on various social, business and economic levels.

The Polish American Congress, an “umbrella” organization, is a federation of over 3000 Polish American organizations and clubs, ranging from national fraternal benefit societies, such as the Polish National Alliance, Polish Women’s Alliance, Polish Roman Catholic Union, Polish Falcons and others, including veteran, cultural, professional, religious and social associations, with aggregate membership of over one million. The PAC by-laws also provide for individual membership, as well as associate membership.

The PAC promotes civic, educational and cultural programs designed to further not only the knowledge of Polish history, language and culture, but to stimulate Polish American involvement and accomplishments.

The governing body of the PAC is the Council of National Directors, consisting of directors elected by their respective State Divisions or National Organizations and up to 10 at-large directors elected by the Council. Day-to-day operations are conducted by the Executive Committee elected by the Council of National Directors for a two year term.

CONTACT US NATIONAL OFFICE

1612 K Street NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20006
Tel.: (202) 296-6955
Fax: (202) 835-1565

Visit: www.pac1944.org

E-mail: pacwash@pac1944.org

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