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October 2019

POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 5

Your Voice
in America!

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Future PAC Newsletters will be sent out:

Deadline for submission	Publication date
Friday, December 6, 2019	Friday, December 13, 2019
Friday, February 7, 2020	Friday, February 14, 2020
Friday, April 3, 2020	Friday, April 10, 2020
Friday, June 5, 2020	Friday, June 12, 2020

President's Message



Frank J. Spula, President

Dear Council of Directors,

After several years of campaigning for Poland to be included in the Visa Waiver Program, WE GOT IT!

A thank you goes to the combined efforts of numerous individuals and organizations within the United States as well as in Poland keeping this issue alive—success was finally achieved.

President Donald Trump was first introduced to the issue of Visa Waiver for Poland at a meeting of the Polish American Congress while he was campaigning in Chicago. He made a promise; if elected, he would make certain Poland would be included in the Visa Waiver. Three years later, he kept his word.

With the upcoming meeting of Council of Directors in Chicago on November 14th and 15th there will be a celebration commemorating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Polish American Congress. This celebration is a tribute to the founders of the organization as well accomplishments achieved over the years.

An interesting meeting has been planned which I hope all of the PAC National Directors will participate. Looking forward in seeing you in Chicago in November!

Sincerely,

Frank J. Spula

Frank J. Spula

“Your Voice in America” is a bimonthly newsletter published 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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PRESS RELEASE – VISA WAVIER FOR POLAND



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PAC National Vice President for Public Relations
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October 4, 2019

October 4, 2019 is an historic day in the relations between the United States and the Republic of Poland. Today, President Donald J. Trump announced that the Department of State has formally nominated Poland for entry into the Visa Waiver Program. This is an important step in continuing to increase economic, security, cultural, and people-to-people connections between our two nations.

Now that Poland has been nominated, the Department of Homeland Security will take necessary action, as soon as possible, to assess Poland's entry into the program. If Poland is designated as a Visa Waiver Program country, its nationals would be authorized for visa-free travel to the United States for business and tourism. The bilateral relationship between the United States and Poland has never been stronger, and this would serve as a remarkable accomplishment for both countries.

The Polish American Congress has rallied for Poland's admission into the Visa Waiver Program since 2003. Today's announcement is the fulfillment of these efforts. The PAC, as well as other Polish American organizations and individuals that have sought Visa Waiver for Poland, extend their heartfelt appreciation to President Trump for his historic announcement today. Thank you, Mr. President!

Visas & Waivers for Poland

Written by Fred Gedrich
October 7, 2019

Since Poland shed its communist chains about 30 years ago it has sought to gain entrance into the U.S. Visa Waiver Program. The long wait of this stalwart U.S. ally is apparently nearing the end when, to the delight of some 38 million Polish citizens and 10 million Americans of Polish descent, U.S. President Donald Trump announced on September 23, in a meeting with Poland's President, Andrzej Duda, that Poland's entry into the program has been approved with only formalities to be worked out.

The White House followed up with an October 4 announcement that the U.S. State Department formally nominated Poland's entry into the program with the nomination headed to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for final assessment. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security administers the program in consultation with the State Department. In a speech made before the Polish American Congress in September 2016, candidate Trump promised to make

it possible for Poland to become part of the VWP. His promise echoed that of his presidential predecessor, Barack Obama, who had promised to do the same several years earlier but didn't deliver. Several previous attempts by U.S. Congress members to legislate a fix to bring Poland into the program also failed. But where others failed President Trump has kept his promise to the people of Poland and their American cousins.

Poland is a strategically important Central European nation. It has a land mass about double the size of the United States' Georgia. The country borders Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Russia, and the Baltic Sea. It is a European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization member. Moreover, Poland is one of only eight of NATO's 28 members meeting that organization's financial obligations.

Continued on next page...

What is the VWP? The U.S. established the VWP in 1986 primarily to facilitate commerce and tourism between friendly nations. Since its inception, the program has evolved into a security partnership with special passport and security upgrades to detect and prevent terrorists, criminals, and other mala fide actors from entering each country. There are presently 38 countries in VWP, 29 of them European. The program features reciprocal agreements allowing citizens to travel on business or pleasure without visas and no application fees between member countries for up to 90 days.

What has Poland done to gain VWP entry? Three important ingredients for gaining VWP status are national wealth, a high Human Development Index, and a low security risk. Poland scores high on each count. At \$1.1 trillion, its economy is the EU's sixth largest and the world's 23rd greatest. The 2017 United Nations Development Report classified Poland as a "very high" Human Development Index country with its 78 years average life expectancy, 99.8 percent literacy rate for males and females, and \$29,600-plus average annual income. And with its strong American ties, NATO membership, participation in the Afghanistan and Iraq military coalitions, and the general absence of radical Islamic terror attacks on its soil, Poland clearly isn't a security threat. Moreover, it has implemented and adopted VWP-related security measures and information-sharing protocols asked of them by the U.S. government. In addition, Freedom House — an independent watchdog organization that advocates democracy and human rights and monitors the status of freedom around the world — ranked Poland in 2018 as a free country, which grants its citizens a full panoply of political rights and civil liberties and allows them to freely elect their governmental leaders.

What previously prevented Poland's VWP entry? A provision in the Immigration and Nationality Act that requires a visa refusal rate of 3 percent or less to qualify for the program — and arguably a lack of previous presidential leadership on this issue. According to the State Department, Poland's visa refusal rate has consistently dropped during the Trump administration to a point at which it now appears, based on President Trump's statements and U.S. State Department action, that Poland has met the legal requirements for program admittance.



President Donald Trump and Polish President Andrzej Duda.

One would be hard-pressed to find a better U.S. ally and friend than Poland and its people. As America fought for its independence, it did so with major contributions from Polish generals Thaddeus Kościuszko and Casimir Pulaski. As the world faced the Cold War's darkest days, it was two Poles, Pope John Paul II and Solidarity's Lech Walesa, along with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who served as the principal catalysts for leading tens of millions out of their communist enslavement and into the sunshine of freedom.

Afterward, Poles continued their tradition of standing beside their American friends by fighting and dying in Afghanistan and Iraq and supporting the U.S.-led military effort to protect Kosovo's Muslim population. The U.S. State Department correctly describes Poland as "one of the United States' strongest partners on the continent in fostering transatlantic security and prosperity regionally, throughout Europe, and the world."

Lech Walesa called it a matter of "honor" for Poland to gain entrance into the VWP. And President Trump said it was an honor to make it happen for the Polish people in the United States and Poland. The day is finally near when the U.S. government will begin treating Polish citizens the same way as it does most of their European counterparts regarding the ability to more easily visit the United States without obtaining visas and undergoing some other visa-processing requirements. And millions of Poles and Polish Americans will be grateful to President Trump for finally making it happen.

(Note: Fred Gedrich is a foreign policy and national security analyst who served in the U.S. departments of State and Defense. Reprinted with permission from The American Spectator.)





45th Annual Polish Heritage Ball

Submitted by Andrzej Tomasz Niemyjski
PAC President – Arizona Division

Saturday, November 9, 2019
Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort
11111 N 7th St., Phoenix, AZ 85020

Cocktails at 6:00 PM
Black Tie Dinner and Dancing at 7:00 pm
Tickets: \$100 per person
For more information please call
or text Kathy at (602) 402-6782.

The Polish American Congress of Arizona proudly invites everyone to celebrate Polish culture and heritage by hosting the 45th Annual Polish Heritage Ball on November 9th, 2019 at the Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs Resort in Phoenix, Arizona.

This year we will be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Polish American Congress and we are honored to announce that Mr. Frank Spula, President of The Polish American Congress, will be our guest speaker. Please join us in honoring the leaders who have timelessly worked to both support and unite the growing Polish American community within Arizona. Both the Polish Heritage Awards and

Distinguished Service Awards this year will be given to Sister Bozena Blad, the organization "Tatry," and Anna Piechocka.

The Polish American Congress of Arizona has worked to promote educational, culture, and charitable programs throughout the West Coast. With the hard work of our executive board and over 120 members, we have been able to not only foster a welcoming community, but also support it in many ways. Our division has created a scholarship fund, which has helped six outstanding students fulfill their dreams of receiving a college education this year. Furthermore, we promote and encourage children to explore summer immersion camp experiences abroad to expand their knowledge of Polish history and culture. In keeping with tradition, we gather the Polish community in the sunny state of Arizona for an annual family picnic, complete with all the Polish picnic food and drink staples for an authentic experience.

We are so grateful for our opportunity to have worked alongside so many positive people who try so diligently to promote our rich cultural background in our rapidly growing community. We look forward to sharing in a future that we are devoted to building every day, and through our present actions, we hope, to inspire the next generation of Polish Americans to carry it forward.



75th Diamond Jubilee Polish American Congress, Inc.

On Thursday, November 14th, 2019

Reception at Six-thirty in the evening Dinner at Seven O'clock

Hyatt Rosemont Hotel
6350 North River Road, Rosemont, Illinois

Please respond by November 1st



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING

November 14-15, 2019 | Tentative Agenda

NOVEMBER 14

1 p.m.

- Call to Order
- National Anthems
- Opening Prayer
- Quorum Verification with Secretary Kuzma
- Appointment of Parliamentarian
- Review of Meeting Rules

1:15 p.m.

- Financial Report with Bob Hughes and Treasurer Jaminski

1:45 p.m.

- Report of Rick Mazella, Vice President Membership Development

2:00 p.m.

- Report of Debbie Majka, Vice President Cultural Affairs

2:15 p.m.

- Report of Mark Pienkos, Vice President Public Relations

2:30 p.m.

- Report of Bozena Nowicka-McLees, Vice President Education

2:45 p.m.

- Report of Mary Anselmo, Vice President Financial Development

3:00 p.m.

- Break

3:15 p.m.

- Report of Tony Bajdek, Vice President American Affairs

3:45 p.m.

- Presentation by John Cebrowski, Vice President and Director of Development at Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria

4:00 p.m.

- Presentation by Don Pienkos

4:30 p.m.

- Report of Bozena Kaminski, Vice President Polish Affairs

5 p.m.

- Recess

6:00 p.m.

- 75th Anniversary Banquet

NOVEMBER 15

7:30 a.m.

- PAC Executive Council Breakfast Meeting

9:00 a.m.

- Presentation of PAC Survey Results—Vice President Pienkos and Secretary Kuzma

11 a.m.

- Break

11:15 a.m.

- Discussion on U.S. House Resolution 447 with President Spula and John Czop

11:30 a.m.

- Amendments to PAC Bylaws

Noon

- Lunch (Speakers to be announced)

1:30 p.m.

- Resolutions

2:00 p.m.

- Discussion on the Dual Taxation Issue with President Spula and V.P. Bozena Kaminski

2:30 p.m.

- Report of Washington Office Committee Findings and Recommendations with Vice President Pierchalski

3:00 p.m.

- PACCF Christopher Nowotarski

3:15 p.m.

- An update on the PAC website with Ms. Klara Wisniewski

3:30 p.m.

- Maciej Cybulski – President Polish American Chamber of Commerce

3:45 p.m.

- 44 Years of the Polish American Congress with Dr. Joanna Wojdon, Author

4:00 p.m.

- Speakers to be determined

4:30 p.m.

- Open Discussion

5:00 p.m.

- Adjournment



THADEUSZ CISEK

Polish American Congress – Wisconsin Division Member Honored

Submitted by Liz Barber, Ted Cisek's daughter



Ted Cisek fought with Polish units, during Operation Market Garden in Arnhem, The Netherlands. Ted was recently honored on the 75th Anniversary of the battle.

The entire weekend was beyond words—we were treated as the utmost VIPs. There were only three Polish Veterans there, so the attention was considerable.

The outpouring of love and appreciation from thousands of people was so incredible! Tens of thousands applauded the veterans. My father's photo was taken hundreds of times and he signed countless autographs. He was interviewed by Polish radio and Danish TV stations. There were thousands of Poles there as well – all so proud of the contributions of these men. It brought tears to my eyes.

Dad spoke with Prince Charles. Along with the Danish Defense Minister, my father was escorted by Polish Generals. All this for a humble man who saw great need and did his duty.

[Click here for more info detailing a portion of Ted Cisek's patriotic life.](#)

Editor's Note: Anyone who knows Ted Cisek always comes away with a strong feeling of patriotism, integrity, professionalism, and genuineness that he exudes. Most of all, Ted Cisek is a gentleman. Ted is a long-standing member of the Polish American Congress – Wisconsin Division. During his membership, Ted has served in numerous officer capacities – always in a distinguished manner. I consider Ted Cisek a friend and I know many, many share these sentiments. What a fantastic Polish American! God Bless You, Ted Cisek! And THANK YOU! (Mark Pienkos)



Cisek (upper left) during parachute training in Scotland, 1942-44. Preparing for Operation Market-Garden, 1944.



England's Prince Charles bows head after laying a wreath during the Polish Airborne Commemorative Service in Driel, near Arnhem in The Netherlands. (Arthur Edwards/The Sun/PA)

Honoring Wincenty Knapczyk



Wincenty Knapczyk, 96, passed away on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at The Veterans Affairs Medical Center in West Haven, CT. The oldest of seven children, he was born on May 30, 1923 in Baranovich, Poland to Franciszek and Jadwiga Knapczyk. On December 26, 1948, he married Helena Kubowicz in Nottingham, England. They bonded in their pride of attaining American citizenship; connection to their beloved Poland; and joy in spending time with family. Wincenty retired from Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, CT in 1993.

Wincenty devoted his life to his family and to the Polish American Community. He was an honored and decorated World War II Veteran. In 1942, he joined the Polish Army under the command of General Wladyslaw Anders and served in Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and on the front in Italy. After the war, he was a leader in both Polish Veteran and fraternal organizations. Most recently, he served as National Commander of the Polish Army Veterans of America. Among his many honors in the United States, Italy, England, and Poland were: A special audience with Pope Francis and being decorated with the Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta by Poland's President, Andrzej Duda.

Wincenty was a much-loved husband, father, grandfather (Dziadziu), great grandfather, brother and uncle. His family will always remain proud of this kind, dedicated, honorable man.

Mr. Knapczyk is survived by his devoted wife of 70 years, Helena (Kubowicz) Knapczyk, daughters Mary Skelly, Alicia Rominger, Donna Kelly, eight grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, one sister, two brothers, two sons-in-law, and many nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by cherished daughter, Hedy Robinson.

Anyone wishing to make a donation, the family requests donations be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or a charity meaningful to you in Wincenty's name.

Often seen in various Polish activities and events, Mr. Knapczyk also gave presentations about his life. In one entitled: "Traces of My Life Story," Mr. Knapczyk described how his life changed irreparably as a teenager living in eastern Poland when World War II started on September 1, 1939 with Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland from the west which was followed on September 17, 1939 by the Soviet Russian invasion of Poland from the east.

Mr. Knapczyk had numerous wartime experiences in Poland, Siberia, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Italy, and England as a young Polish patriot and soldier. After his forced Polish exile to Siberia by Soviet Russia, Wincenty eventually became a combat veteran of the 2nd Polish Corps of Monte Cassino fame during World War II. One of his many contributions to Polonia was his service as the National Commander of the Polish Army Veterans Association (Stowarzyszenie Weteranow Armii Polskiej) of America.



Wincenty Knapczyk meeting the Republic of Poland President Andrzej Duda during the celebration of Mr. Knapczyk receiving the Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta.

You Will Always Be Remembered. Peace.

CHICAGO REMEMBERS:

The 40th Anniversary of Pope John Paul II's Visit & Mass Celebrated.

*Written by J. Villa Gomez
Chicago Tribune
October 6, 2019*

Five Holy Martyrs Church on the South Side of Chicago was once again the site for an outdoor Mass on Sunday afternoon, October 6, 2019. Churchgoers gathered to celebrate the 40th anniversary of a visit to Chicago by Pope John Paul II to Chicago in 1979. The Mass paid homage to the pope's monumental visit to the city on Oct. 5, 1979, when he packed Grant Park with a three-hour outdoor Mass that was heavily attended by both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Officials estimated the crowd to be as large as 1.5 million.

During his stay in Chicago, the pope also conducted a special morning Mass for an estimated 200,000 parishioners at Five Holy Martyrs, a Polish church in the city's Brighton Park neighborhood. The visit became a landmark occasion for parishioners and church officials. One of those in attendance was Irene Lesniewski. Her husband, Jerzy, and their daughter, Ann (who attended the parish's grammar school when she came to America at age 9) were parishioners. They lived across the street from where Pope John Paul celebrated the Mass.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Poland was elevated to Pope on Oct. 16, 1978. Pope John Paul II was highly regarded around the world and was credited with helping banish communism from Poland while maintaining the traditional perspectives of the Catholic Church. As the first Polish pope, he would go on to make papal history and visited 129 countries

The pope's visit was part of a six-day trip to the United States, during which he also visited Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Des Moines, Iowa. At the time, Chicago had the nation's largest Catholic archdiocese and was chosen for the papal visit for its central location. The growing Polish population in the city also made the Mass popular among parishioners, who lined the motorcade route to welcome him into the city.

Note: Ann (Lesniewski) Pienkos is the wife of Mark Pienkos, PAC National Vice President for Public Relations. Ann and Mark were married at Five Holy Martyrs in 1972. Bishop Alfred Abramowicz was the celebrant.



A total of 200,000 parishioners gather for Mass to be celebrated at Five Holy Martyrs Church on October 5, 1979.



Irene and Jerzy Lesniewski in 1979.



Pope John Paul II saying Mass to 1.5 million people in Chicago's Grant Park in 1979.



(Building on left): The upper level apartment where the Lesniewski Family lived. Pope John Paul II said Mass approximately 500 feet away across the street.



One Story – Among Many – of “India’s Children”

*Submitted by Ewa Wypijewska Clarke
Richmond, VA*

This past September on the anniversary of the start of World War II, my octogenarian parents, two sisters and I attended a reunion in Kolhapur, India with Poles from around the world who had spent their childhood in a refugee camp in India during WW II. From 1943 until 1948, 5,000 Poles who survived exile in Russia found a home and refuge in Valivade Camp. Today the Indian people are building a Memorial Museum on the site of this former camp to honor “the eternal fragrance of friendship between the Indians and the Poles during World War II.”

I’ve been sharing my family’s story of deportation to Russia during WW II and their consequent experiences in refugee camps in Iran, Lebanon, and India on social media and with my community in Virginia. In light of the current migrant and refugee crisis, their stories illustrate the need to be welcoming and compassionate to those who have left their homes and countries because of politics, persecution, and war.

My American friends are incredulous when I describe the forced deportation of a million and a half Polish men, women and children from the eastern borderlands known as Kresy in 1940. My father and mother along with their families were taken from their homes at gunpoint in the middle of the night by NKVD Russian soldiers in February 1940. Their families hadn’t committed any crimes. Yet all the arrested and deported Poles were considered enemies of the Russian state because they were educated, or held elected municipal positions, or were landowners, or had fought the Bolsheviks, or were simply Polish. A minority of the deportees were Jewish, Ukrainian, Bielorrussian, the majority were Catholics Poles. They were packed into cattle cars and traveled for weeks with little food, water, or medicine. It was a bitterly cold winter and many people became sick and died on the way to their new homes - the labor camps or collective farms “kolkhozes” in Kazakhstan and Siberia. They spent the next two years surviving inhumane conditions. They were perpetually cold and hungry, exhausted from long days cutting trees in the forest and sleepless nights battling lice and bedbugs. They longed to go back to Poland.

In 1941, Germany attacked Russia in “Operation Barbarossa” and the exiled Poles were granted “amnesty.” The men were free to join the Polish Army and the Allies (which now included Russia). The men made their way to the middle east where the Polish forces were forming. If they were lucky to have a husband or father joining the army, the families were given papers allowing them to leave Russia too. The journey through Siberia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan was complicated. Many of the starved, sick, and exhausted people didn’t make it. Those who finally arrived in Krasnovodsk waited for days in unbearable heat for the few ships designated to transport them across the Caspian Sea to Pahlavi, Persia (Iran). Many people died on the rough sea crossing to freedom. On the beach, white tents awaited the refugees with designated areas for the sick, the orphans, the army, and the families.

Once the Poles had been registered, deloused, and had regained their strength, they were ready for relocation to other camps. Countries that welcomed the Polish refugees included Lebanon, Iran, Palestine, Tanzania, Uganda, New Zealand, South Africa, Mexico, and India. My father’s family sailed to India. For my father, India was heaven. He attended school, joined the scouts, ate mangoes, and trained pigeons and parakeets. The memory of hunger, misery and horrors of war were overshadowed by the safety and routine of the camp. In India, the Poles were given a refugee guide reminding them that they are guests of India. It encouraged them to behave and uphold their good reputation. It stressed cleanliness and discipline and warned against complaining and gossiping.

Everyone fully expecting to return to Poland after the war. Despite fighting alongside the Allies, the end of the war did not bring victory to the Poles. Poland’s borders were redrawn, and my parents’ familial lands were now located in Ukraine. Poland was handed to the Russian communists, and the Poles were denied the freedom for which they had fought. Once again, my parents became refugees or DPs (displaced persons) when they arrived in America. This time they were able to integrate and find a permanent home in Chicago. I credit my parents lifelong positive outlook on life to the kindness of the refugee communities and countries that welcomed them. I saw this same zest and positive spirit among the twelve Poles who came back to India for the reunion this past September. This story of Polish people’s surviving and thriving needs to be included in our collective world history. And the story of refugees throughout history should not be forgotten. We cannot turn our heads and look away.

Note: Ewa grew up in Chicago attending Polish School and Harcerstwo on Saturdays. In 1976, she was crowned Miss Polish American by the PAC and was honored to represent the Polish community in parades, banquets, and TV appearances during the bicentennial celebratory year. Ewa and her three children were recently granted Polish Citizenship.



Ewa’s father in India with his two sisters Krystyna (Rytwinska) and Ala (Kratynska).



The Wypijewski family in India: Renata de Dalmas, Christina Wypijewska, Dionizy and Maria Wypijewski and Ewa Clarke.



THE FIRST CEEC IN-CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT MEETING ON THREE SEAS INITIATIVE ORGANIZED BY THE PAC



*Written by John Czop
PAC Director of Policy Planning*

The Polish American Congress (PAC) played a leadership role in organizing the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC) in 1994. In 1997, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was enacted to prohibit the permanent deployment of NATO armed forces anywhere east of recently united Germany. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe and their American kin, politically organized in the CEEC, wonder why Putin's Kremlin, a serial violator of international law, should be allowed to continue to use the NATO-Russia Founding Act to justify its revanchist project to dominate the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. The NATO-Russia Founding Act continues to be an obstacle to permanent NATO bases in the CEEC countries.

Though NATO and defense issues remain top priorities for the CEEC, today the organization is working hard to move the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) from rhetoric to action. Just as NATO provides a strong measure of military and political security for the CEEC nation-states, 3SI will ensure the social and economic security and prosperity of this strategic area, the eleven countries between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black Seas. 3SI will make the eleven countries between Germany and Russia, including Austria, independent of Russian natural gas. The key to success of 3SI is to integrate, along a north-to-south axis, the economies of all eleven countries to create a strong and prosperous trading bloc, like the one in Western Europe.

Congressman Tom Malinowski (D-NJ7) was first elected to the House of Representatives in November 2018. He was born in Poland and educated in the United States and at Oxford University in England. He is the first candidate born in Poland to be elected to Congress. Congressman Malinowski served with distinction in the State Department and his career was marked by putting United States power in the service of human rights and democracy to make the world better. This is why the Congressman is likened to Senator John McCain, who stood for putting power behind American principles

to defend a rules-based international system. We well remember the visits by the late Senator McCain and the late President Lech Kaczynski to Georgia, in the summer of 2008, after Putin's Kremlin brutally invaded that country and then used armed force to change internationally recognized borders.

For over one hour, on the morning of 20 August 2019, at his District Office in Somerville, New Jersey, Congressman Malinowski met with a CEEC Delegation and agreed to support 3SI. This is the first of many more in-Congressional District meetings which the CEEC plans to hold to move 3SI from rhetoric to action.



BE AN ORIGINAL COSPONSOR ON A BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE THREE SEAS INITIATIVE & EUROPEAN ENERGY SECURITY

Current Originals Sponsors: Kaptur, Kinzinger

Dear Colleague:

Please join us as an original co-sponsor of a resolution supporting the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) to bolster energy and infrastructure security in Central and Eastern Europe in the face of increased Russian and Chinese influence. In 2015, twelve Central European nations in the European Union established the 3SI in order to increase energy autonomy and resilience through support of collective financing for new infrastructure projects to connect the region between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black Seas.

The Soviet-imposed communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe left the region with a significant energy infrastructure deficit, especially on the north-to-south axes. This deficit leaves these nations overly dependent on Russia for energy and additional economic needs. Tragically, Russia seeks to undermine democratic institutions and liberty in Europe through hybrid means, including using energy as a tool for coercion. This includes Russian gas pipeline projects such as Nord Stream II and Turk Stream, which are political in nature.



John Czop, Congressman Tom Malinowski, and Diane Barabas.

Continued on next page...



The Three Seas Initiative is a critical step forward to jointly finance projects to build connectivity and resilience in this strategic region. The adoption of this resolution would demonstrate robust U.S. support for the initiative, as well as encourage the member nations to take action on joint financing of projects.

Additionally, it encourages the Three Seas Initiative nations to extend this vision of enhanced connectivity to non-EU member states, such as Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans. It also strongly condemns Russia's efforts to weaponize energy as a means to put pressure on or to undermine liberty and democracy in Europe.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like to co-sponsor the resolution supporting the Three Seas Initiative, please contact Nicholas Kazvini-Gore (Nicholas.Kazvini-Gore@mail.house.gov or 54146) of Ms. Kaptur's staff or Sebastian DeLuca (Sebastian.DeLuca@mail.house.gov or 53635) of Mr. Kinzinger's staff.

Sincerely,

Marcy Kaptur, Member of Congress
Adam Kinzinger, Member of Congress

POLISH HERITAGE MONTH



PAC STATE DIVISION PRESIDENTS & FRIENDS OF THE POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS:

Please send articles, accompanied by photos and captions, for publication in the December issue of the PAC "Your Voice in America" newsletter, regarding your activities and celebrations. October is a wonderful month when we celebrate our Polish American Heritage. Look for a special article in the December issue highlighting the first annual "General Casimir Pulaski Day" event held in downtown Sarasota. **Please share yours, as well!**

Send articles to:

Mark Pienkos, PAC National Vice President for Public Relations
markpienkos2012@gmail.com

2019 PAC SURVEY

A big "Thank You" to all who responded to the recent 2019 PAC Survey. Over 850 electronic surveys were sent out, with 102 people responding.

The purpose of the Survey was to ask respondents to rate and give comments & suggestions as to ways to improve the organization. Particular emphasis was given to the PAC Mission Statement, communication, and relationships between the National PAC Executive Committee, National Office in Washington, D.C., and State Divisions.

The Survey was constructed by Vice President for Public Relations, Mark Pienkos, and PAC Secretary, Tim Kuzma, on behalf of the PAC Executive Committee.

The Survey results, as well as any suggested changes, will be discussed at the upcoming PAC Council of National Directors Meeting scheduled for November 14-15, 2019 in Chicago. Both Kuzma and Pienkos urge State Division Presidents and National Directors to attend this annual meeting to be part of the Survey discussion and ideas to improve the organization.



POLAND RE-ELECTS CONSERVATIVES

With over 43% of the vote, Law & Justice will again rule independently.
But with only 48 seats, it lacks a majority in the 100-member Senate.

*Written by Robert Strybel
Warsaw Correspondent*

WARSAW—Poland's ruling conservative Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) party won the October 13th general election by capturing 43.6 percent of the vote. That outcome gave it a 235-seat majority in the 460-member Sejm, parliament's main law-making chamber. PiS will again be able to govern independently without seeking a coalition partner. That was the highest support won by any political party since the collapse of communist rule in 1989 as well as the highest voter turnout – 61.1 percent.

The Civic Coalition, the main opposition bloc led by the liberal Civic Platform (PO) party and including the ultra-liberal Modern party and Greens, won 27.4 percent of the vote which translates into 134 seats. After a four-year absence, the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) teamed up with the pro-LGBT Spring party, ran as the Left (Lewica) and attracted 12.6 percent of the vote giving it 49 seats in the Sejm.

The rural-based Polish People's Party (formerly known in English as the Polish Peasant Party) or PSL ran with the anti-establishment Kukiz'15 movement to garner 8.6 percent of the ballots, winning 30 parliamentary seats. The controversial Confederation led by eccentric libertarian Janusz Korwin-Mikke and including ultra-right nationalist won the support of 6.8 percent of voters and ensuring a 11-member parliamentary team.



But the triumphant mood in the PiS camp was dampened when the results of the Senate vote were announced. The ruling party captured only 48 of the body's 100 seats with other candidates winning the remaining 52. Opposition parties had concluded a deal not to run against each other but instead to throw their support behind a single anti-PiS candidate in each of the 100 voting districts, and this strategy succeeded.



PiS's Sejm victory will enable the conservative administration to continue its generous program of welfare benefits to children, the elderly and young businessmen just getting started. Whereas PO catered mainly to big-city elites, PiS has focused on Poland's have-nots, those who lost out on the country's transformation following the collapse of communist rule.

Sensitive to popular demand, over the past four years the ruling conservatives have restored the traditional retirement age of 65 for men and 60 for women as well as re-opening provincial police stations, schools and post offices and inter-town bus lines shut down by as cost-cutting measures by the previous liberal government.

Both the ruling Law and Justice camp and the opposition are now gearing up for May's presidential election in which incumbent Duda is expected to stand for re-election.



Note: Robert Strybel, has spent most of his adult life getting his fellow Polish Americans "hooked on their heritage." Born in Detroit's once predominantly Polish enclave-suburb of Hamtramck, he spent a good deal of his childhood with his four Polish-born grandparents, learning the language, lore and traditions of his Old World ancestors.

Also, he received an MA in Polish from the University of Wisconsin. Strybel taught Polish at Orchard Lake and Bay City, MI (high school, college, and adult education) and has translated many Polish books into English. Strybel has been the Warsaw correspondent over the years for many Polish newspapers. Readers can find the many books he has written on Amazon Books. Thanks for your dedication, Robert!



Announcing Our 2nd Edition~ Reserve your copies now!

First introduced in December 2015, *POLAND - A Portrait of the Country Through its Festivals and Traditions*, is a children's book project sponsored by the Polish American Arts Association of Washington, DC. The publication met with a very positive response and the first printing is now exhausted. Thanks to continued support from the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Poland, as well as generous donations from the Kosciuszko Foundation and other organizations and individuals, we are now publishing the second, expanded edition of the book.

Our mission in 2017 was the same - to provide a resource for children, their parents and teachers to help them learn about the customs and traditions of Poland. The new edition, which appeared in December 2017, has a larger page format of 8.5" x 11"; upgraded binding; an additional 20 pages with more stories, crafts, recipes and songs - all reflecting the essential character of Poland.

Our goal is to get the books distributed to various libraries, Polish schools and organizations across the country. If you or your group are interested in acquiring copies of the book for your own use or to donate to a school or library, please let us know and we will arrange to send them.

As you can imagine, it is costly to produce a 52 page full-color children's book. We will have a very limited number of hardbound copies available for \$24 each. Most copies will be softbound and will sell for \$15 each.

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Let's Keep Our
Polish Heritage Alive!



From the Bookshelf

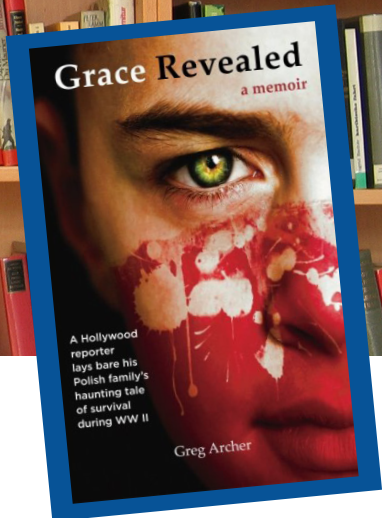
Grace Revealed By Greg Archer

Grace Revealed is a story of a son who needed to trace his Polish roots. His Polish family was uprooted from their house in the Eastern part of Poland & forced to live in Siberia, Russia by Stalin's order. On February 10, 1940 the Russian soldiers woke up Greg's family early in the morning and forced them into the cattle wagons for a long ride to desolate land that did not offer resources to survive. They had no choice but to learn how to survive in the snow covered Siberia. Primarily, though this book is the story of a son tracing his Polish roots, connecting with his family, and discovering what his mother and aunts went through and endured. Greg's mother kept the family together despite their horrific circumstances so they could survive. Greg included relevant history and historical facts so that every reader can appreciate the context of the history and scope of the crimes inflicted on the Polish people. As a result, even if the readers had no knowledge of Poland or Russia prior to reading this book, they will understand and connect the historical dates to the fate of the uprooted Polish families.

It is also a story about the strength of family bonds, and how the trauma experienced by one generation, can still be felt by the next generation(s). This book is an example to all of us because it points out the value of staying in touch with our immediate family members and ancestors. Please find time to read *Grace Revealed* by Greg Archer.

(Note: While Greg Archer worked as a journalist in San Francisco, CA he interviewed many movie stars. One day he interviewed an actor, Chris Pine who was the main character in the movie, "People Like Us. The movie was about Pine's character and serendipitously he discovered that he had a half-sister. This gave Greg an idea that he must find his Polish family roots.)

Editor's Note: Many thanks to Lucyna Spychalski for offering this book suggestion to our readers for the "From The Bookshelf" section of the newsletter. Lucyna is an active member of the Polish American Congress – Arizona Division. Again, Thank You, Lucyna!



*Celebrate the Anniversary of
Poland Regaining Its Independence!
Monday, November 11, 2019!*



*From Your Polish American
Congress Executive Committee . . .
To All Our PAC National Directors,
Members And Friends:
Happy Thanksgiving!*

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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.

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