



*Moderator Krsytyna Borgen asks Filip Springer to detail how he researched *History of a Disappearance*. PACIM sponsored his Twin Cities visit in April in conjunction with the author's nationwide book tour.*

Book Review

Noted Warsaw author Filip Springer shares his writing approach

In English, it is said a picture is worth a thousand words. One of Polish author Filip Springer's maxims is that photography is not enough to tell the story of architecture and buildings, or the story of a Silesian town that has disappeared off the map after seven centuries.

Springer's *History of a Disappearance: The Story of a Forgotten Polish Town*, first published in Poland six years ago and recently translated into English, provides a storyteller's look at the demise of Miedzianka, which means Cooper in Polish. Thanks to reckless Soviet Army uranium mining in the early days of the Cold War, the community faced an environmental disaster akin to New York's Love Canal, an economic loss comparable to the shutdown of a factory in a one-employer town and social decay as bad as any flight from a crime-ridden U.S. urban neighborhood.

"People described a *Paradise Lost*," Springer told a standing-room only audience at Common Good Books in St. Paul on April 29. The 35-year-old self-taught journalist said he interviewed 200 former residents in writing his book. *Continued on pg. 3*

An interview with Rich Stanek

It took a teacher and a Polish neighborhood to make a sheriff

Over the course of four decades, Hennepin County Sheriff Rich Stanek says he has received more than 100 gifts from a former teacher, a woman who calls him often, sometimes two or three times a week, to just say hello, see how things are going or offer kind words of wisdom.

The gifts are mostly crucifixes the size of a thumbnail, and the giver is Sr. Mary Benita, OSF, Stanek's Catholic grade school teacher, currently a pastoral minister at Holy Cross Church in Minneapolis.

"She's my biggest fan, my guardian angel," says Stanek, a third generation Polish-American who grew up in a Nordeast duplex that was home to an extended family household of nine.

It was Sr. Benita who held a Bible when Stanek first took the oath of office as sheriff 10 years ago, and who has watched Stanek progress from her classroom to building a family in Maple Grove, to high profile visits to the Oval Office in Washington.

"He told me when he was in 8th grade that after graduating Edison he wanted to be a cop," she says.

In an interview with *PolAm*, Stanek, now 55, recalled how the encouragement of Polish neighbors, his teacher and the work ethic of his parents helped shape a 35- year career, and helps informs his approach to current issues such as immigration and fighting crime.

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Mark Your Calendars

August 11 to 13 Twin Cities Polish Festival



Outdoors at 43 Main St SE, Minneapolis

The Twin Cities Polish Festival is just two months away. Go to www.TCPolishFestival.org for more information. Free admission. PACIM will be operating a booth at the Festival. We would love to hear from you about how we can more fully share the Minnesota story of Polish Americans. We would be delighted to have you as a PACIM volunteer. Email Mark Dillon at mglendillon@aol.com

September 30

Kickoff of PACIM's New Guest Speaker Series

Victor Cordella — An Architect for All

Location: Holy Cross Church, 1pm

Hear Wisconsin historian Geoffrey Gyrisco talk about the 12 Minnesota churches designed by Polish-born architect Victor Cordella of Minneapolis. Meet the Speaker Reception afterward. Details coming soon.



Food, Fun and Fellowship at Festival of Nations

I am writing this column after four marvelously hectic days at the Festival of Nations. What a fabulous gathering of more than 90 nationalities sharing cultures, traditions and foods. We are pleased to share our Polish culture and heritage with many others, as well as learn what we share in common.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

BY EDWARD RAJTAR

For several years, PACIM has run the café booth & cultural exhibit booths. The Chair of the food booth this year was Marie Przynski, who did a yeoman's job in organizing, cooking and making sure things ran smoothly. After several years of absence, *bigos* was added (See combo plate photo, lower right) to the menu and sold out by Sunday afternoon. Kudos to Kora Korczak and her crew that handcrafted the *bigos*. New additions this year were *kabanosy* and *paczki*. Both were also very well received.

Renata Stachowicz created the cultural display booth, which depicted *Noc Świętojańska*, the ancient Slavic ritual of maidens floating floral head pieces on moving water in hopes of an eligible bachelor finding it and the couple finding love. It is also known as St. John's Day in Poland. We got many compliments from festival attendees, especially teens.



The Polish dance groups, *Słoneczniki* (children), *Charby* (teens, at left) and *Dolina* (adults) put on awesome displays of dancing, and also a returning entity, the *Dolina* choir entertained audiences with folk songs. *Dolina* also ran the bazaar booth, with featured many folk items, pottery and holiday ornaments to purchase.

I would truly be amiss not to give a huge **THANK YOU** to all who donated time to help make this event successful. Many volunteers make this event successful. Many of you stepped up to the call for help. Your dedication to help PACIM is greatly appreciated. The work is easier with the help of many. I hope we continue to get great support from members, families and friends for all our endeavors. Again, a big **DZIĘKUJEMY** to all who helped. The week prior to the Festival of Nations, we hosted Polish author Filip Springer. There was an intimate dinner and discussion on Friday in Minneapolis, then a book signing Saturday at Common Good Books in St. Paul. (See page 1).



Enjoy this summer. If you are traveling to Poland, think about possibly of buying and donating a book to the library, especially ones related to Polish history. We always welcome new materials. *Please feel to contact me with your suggestions for programs, thoughts and ideas on how to make PACIM a better organization, or if you wish to volunteer for any of our committees at: president@pacim.org.*

Memories of malignant mining and migration

Continued on pg. 1

Readers looking for an Erin Brockovich-type tale that documents institutional legal responsibility won't find that in Springer's work. He's more interested in conveying the emotional impact of the town's demise as seen through the eyes and memories of the people who lived it.

"I was trying to find more than the simple facts" by articulating the "myths and legends" surrounding the mountain-top community, Springer says.

A key part of the town's historical identity over the centuries has been the struggles it faced amid warfare, ethnic rivalries, forced relocations and man-made disasters. Originally known as Kupferberg, German for Copper Mountain, the town survived major fires, the Plague, the 30-Years War, a Swedish invasion, World War I food shortages and extensive mining of copper and silver. The Nazis' discovery of uranium that the Soviets then exploited for five years in the late 1940s after Silesia became part of Poland marked the beginning of the end. Toxic sinkholes and lung-disease illnesses began appearing in the 1950s and 1960s, and the town was evacuated in 1969. All homeowners and workers got was a lump of coal.

"Miners got two tons each to heat their homes. That was the only compensation," Springer says he learned.

The poisonous physical environment was made even worse by the bitterness surrounding the collapse of Germany in 1945, when townspeople fled to avoid encountering the advancing Red Army. After the war, Miedzianka was repopulated by Poles who moved into homes the Germans abandoned, as well as people seeking work amid the short-lived uranium boom. Some of the Poles themselves were relocated from what is now Belarus and Ukraine, victims of Stalin's refusal to turn over land Russia conquered in 1939.

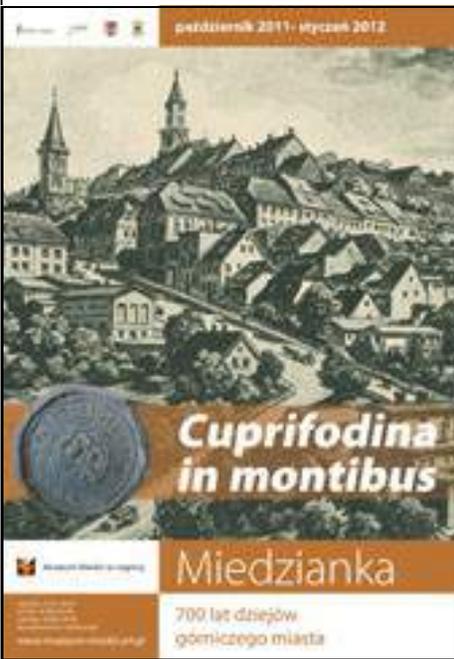
Before his book on Miedzianka, much of Springer's writing career had been devoted to books about Polish architecture, expressing a critical view of the modern built environment comparable to that of Polish architect Frank Gehry. He said his idea for the book came after seeing photos of the town before its uranium mining days and then comparing that to the barren, desolate landscape of today.

"There is no life without architecture" Springer says.

Editor's Note: The website <http://fotopolska.eu/Miedzianka> has a collection of 19th and early 20th century postcards of Miedzianka.



Author Filip Springer (center) shared dinner and an evening of Polish conversation with PACIM members and other folks from the Polish community in Minneapolis on April 29.



Above: A Polish language poster of Filip Springer's book about Miedzianka in Silesia.

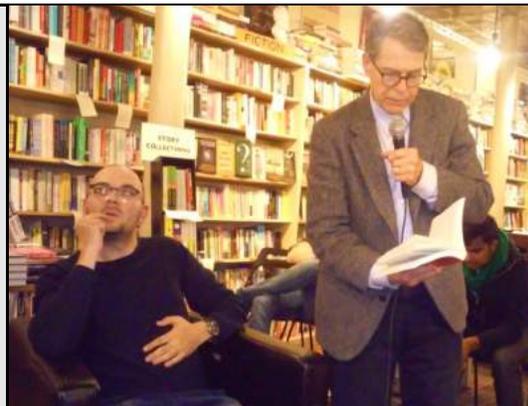
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Filip Springer listens to a reading of an anecdote in English from his book about Miedzianka.

Springtime refreshment Polish recipe, Minnesota-grown fruit **Kisiel fruit pudding**

Prep time/refrigeration: up to 3.5 hours.

Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup sugar or 3 tbsp honey
- 3 tblps potato starch or 4 tblps cornstarch
- 1 pound washed and crushed strawberries, mulberries, blackberries, cherries, raspberries or cranberries (strawberry and cherry are traditional Polish, cranberry is a Lithuanian variation called kisielius)
- 1/2 teaspoon tsp lemon juice (to enhance flavor for fruit)

Optional: Pinch of cinnamon, cloves or ginger
2/3 cup of red or white wine (a Ukrainian version called kysil)

Note: Thickness of the liquid will be jello-like with the addition of more starch. Greater thickness is a former Russian partition variation.

Preparation

1. In a large saucepan, boil 1 cup water & sugar.
 2. Dissolve potato starch in 1/2 cup cold water and stir into the sugar-water mixture. Return to the heat and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add fruit and mix well.
 3. Portion into dessert bowls or a large bowl.
- Place in refrigerator until firm, approximately three hours, or serve warm. Serve with cream, half-and-half, milk or whipped cream.



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Krosno: A town with more than just glass

Mention the Polish city of Krosno in the Carpathian foothills, and many Polish Americans think of glass, both fine crystal and everyday tableware that can be found at a Target or Crate & Barrel.

However, Krosno, a community smaller than Minnetonka, has a lot more to look at these days — for tourists, historians, business leaders and artists.

It is a place that in the 15th century once rivaled Krakow and Lviv in its national cultural and economic importance, a town that has kept reinventing itself for 675 years.

Originally built on Europe's cloth trade with the East during the reign of Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great) and called Little Krakow, Krosno's current cultural offerings includes:

- ◆ a National Biennale of Photography (photo art fair)
- ◆ the International Biennale of Artistic Linen Tapestry billed as “the only artistic event in the whole world promoting linen art.”
- ◆ a Biennale of “Plastic Arts”
- ◆ an International Mountain Ballooning Contest each May
- ◆ a National Tournament of Ballroom Dancing for the Podkarpacie Cup
- ◆ a Regional Centre of Borderland Cultures research/conference facility

Krosno's leading economic role began to lose its significance with the growth of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the town was hit hard by the Swedish Deluge in the 17th Century. However, it enjoyed a rebirth as an oil industry center in 1853 after the world's first oil well was opened in a nearby forest. The town's glass industry was revived in 1923 and rebuilt after World War II.

Now Krosno is on the planned “New Silk Road” trade route with China and its economy also includes

- ◆ a light aircraft assembly plant, pilot training hub and airport
- ◆ a landing gear plant of Burnsville, MN-based UTC Aerospace (for Boeing 737 commercial jets)
- ◆ a Chinese-owned factory that supplies shock absorbers to most European auto makers
- ◆ a leading office furniture company (Nowy Styl Sp. z.o.o.)
- ◆ a garden hose factory that exports to much of Europe (Cellfast)
- ◆ a plant that makes milk trucks and milk processing equipment

Glass is still quite important to Krosno, but since the 2012 opening of a Glass Heritage Centre, its role has taken on greater artistic and global dimensions. For example, at Krosno's Centrum Dziedzictwa Szkła museum through June 14, Kathy Barnard, a glass artist from Kansas City, has a large nature scene in etched glass on display (see above photo) as part of a three-month exhibit of German art glass making techniques. Barnard's U.S. works include a large glass sculpture that depicts the migration of Monarch butterflies from Minnesota to Mexico. (See kathybarnardstudio.com).



Above: A portion of a leading Midwest artist's etched art glass that is on exhibit until June 14 in Krosno. Photo source: Kathy Barnard

Teens showcase heroism in Poland on History Day

Given a National History Day in Minneaota project theme of “Taking a Stand” this year, many high school students submitted entries about domestic politics or civil protests.

A few chose another topic—showcasing 20th Century heroism and bravery in Poland the face of extreme adversity. On April 29, a dozen individuals and teams of these students were recognized with awards for exhibits, video documentaries and performance presentations.

Leading the way was **Lizzie Williamson** of Chanhassen High School with an entry entitled “The Warsaw Uprising: A Battle Against the Liquidation of Poland’s Largest Ghetto,” which took 3rd Place in the Senior Individual Documentary category.

Eight award-winning student entries involved themes surrounding The Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Poland during WWII, including three projects about Irena Sendler and two about Oskar Schindler. These won 4th and 5th Place and Honorable Mentions. **Shadia Fayad-Jaramillo** and **Sahen Rai** of Marshall High School, in the Senior Group Documentary category, focused on the heroism of one Polish soldier at Auschwitz, with an entry entitled “Prisoner 4859: (Witold) Pilecki’s Stand Against the Nazi Regime.”

Two more award-winning projects highlighted the scientific achievements of Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus.

Finally, **Tanya Luniewski** of Woodbury Middle School won an honorable mention for her exhibit entitled “Lech Walesa and the Polish Solidarity Movement: Taking a Stand for Human Rights Under Communist Oppression.”

One of the more unique additional entries was that of **Connor Arneson** of Edison High School, who focused on Polish soldiers’ courage at the Battle of Wizna. The 5th generation Polish-American created a 10-minute video about a conflict during the first week of WW II as German forces attacked from Prussia. At a village near Łomża, 720 Polish soldiers held off 42,200 Nazi soldiers armed with 350 tanks, 457 mortars, cannon, grenade launchers and 600 aircraft for three days. Most of the Poles died in the battle. It is conflict that is not widely known outside of Poland.

“Definitely my family history is why I chose to do this. It wasn’t easy. There were very few sources around, and no books in English,” Connor explained. “Poland’s history has often been so tragic and overlooked (by Americans).”

Part of Connor’s family is originally from Rdzawka, near Nowy Targ in the Carpathians. He said all four of his grandfathers fought in the U.S. Armed Forces during WWII.



A remnant of a Polish Army bunker at the Sept. 1939 Battle of Wizna site at Strękowa Góra, Poland

Student Winners with Themes of Heroism in Poland

Category	Topic	Students	Award
Jr Ind. Exhibit	Oskar Schindler	Phuong Dao	HM
Jr Ind. Exhibit	Oskar Schindler	Cayden Kubesh	HM
Jr Ind. Exhibit	Solidarity	Tanya Luniewski	HM
Jr Grp Exhibit	Irena Sendler	U. Abawari, P. Moa	HM
Jr Grp Exhibit	Holocaust	M. Henning, E. Maschoff	5th
Sr Grp Exhibit	Copernicus	Kellyn McKee	5th
Jr Ind Perform	Copernicus	Rachel Poppleton	HM
Jr Grp Perform	Auschwitz	D. Panda, M. Chadwick, A. Ginuga	HM
Jr Grp Perform	Irena Sendler	A. Hansen, N. Winikoff, L. White	HM
Jr Grp Perform	Irena Sendler	L. Leither, L. Strecker	4th
Sr Grp Docmtry	Witold Pilecki	S. Fayad-Jaramillo, S. Rai	4th
Sr Ind Docmtry	Warsaw Uprising	Lizzie Williamson	3rd

Source: <http://education.mnhs.org/historyday/state-history-day>

2017 Festival of Nations

Students read and take notes upon seeing our Festival of Nations cultural exhibit on May 5 about St. John’s Night and the ancient Slavic summer solstice celebration. This year Poland’s flag was near that of the USA in the exhibit hall at RiverCentre in St. Paul. Below left, a pysanki-making display was also part of the event, as was the return of PACIM’s handcrafted bigos to our Polish Café.



A sheriff's Polish pathway

Continued from pg. 1

"You can take me out of the Nordeast but you can't take the Nordeast out of me," he says. "I am very proud of my heritage".

The Stanek story in America begins in October 1906 when Andrew Stanek, Rich's grandfather, emigrated on the steamship S.S. Main from the Galician village of Trzcynica near Jaslo in the Carpathian foothills. Arriving in Minneapolis, Andrew got a job at a B.F. Nelson paper mill.

Stanek's father, Stanley (Stasiu), was a Nordeast letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service who moonlighted as a bartender at the First Call, Last Chance tavern, where his mother, Marianne, was a waitress. Seeing his Dad go to a 5am to 1pm job and then seeing both parents work evenings instilled in a young Rich the value of sacrifice for family, as well as pride in wearing a uniform, he says. A friendship with a next door neighbor, a police officer, got Stanek interested in law enforcement.

It was his Polish neighbors who Stanek says picked up the ball when life got tough, and made a lasting impression of how important it is maintain community and family cohesion across generations, and as neighborhoods change.

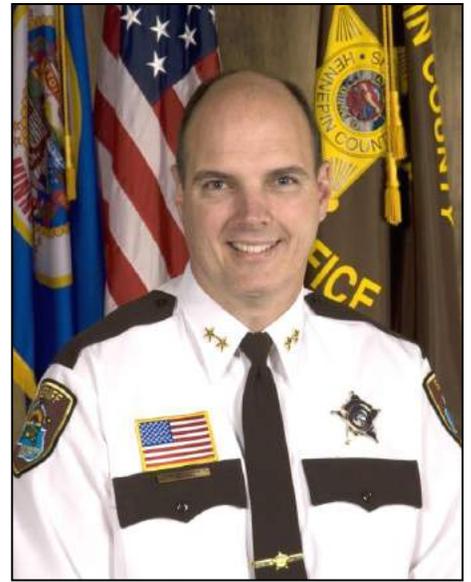
In a July 2002 interview about the Bottineau neighborhood, Stanek, then a Minneapolis police officer, told a Macalester College researcher that "When my parents were sick, or my dad had his leg amputated, or when my mother passed away a few years later, my next door neighbors, the Zandlos and Novaks would come over and make us dinner, clean the house and take care of us boys. I had two younger brothers when my mother passed away and the 'neighbor ladies' would come over and take care of us. They didn't care that we weren't their children. That's just the way the neighborhood was. We did things for each other."

Over the years, Stanek's efforts to be a positive role model for young people has shown itself in multiple ways, from creating the Minneapolis Police Athletic League in 1986 to current board memberships such as Boys and Girls Club of Twin Cities.

"Everyone needs a mentor. I spending a lot of time meeting kids in all types of neighborhoods, and I tell them about my experience growing up," he says.

Being in the public eye in both law enforcement and as a state representative for nine years from Maple Grove (from 1995 to 2003) has generated its share of partisan controversy for Stanek over the years. However, Stanek is not shy about taking a strong stand for what he believes in, such as opposing increased legalization of marijuana or, earlier this year, speaking out and taking action to reduce fatal heroin overdoses, and requesting that Washington do the same.

Asked last year by *Minnpost* to comment on regional violent crime, Stanek said "some of it is an erosion of respect across the community. If people don't respect their friends and where they live, you've got a problem on your hands. Crime is less, but it is more violent than every before."



Richard Stanek Career Highlights

- Hennepin County Sheriff since Jan. 2007
- Minnesota Comm. of Public Safety and Director of Homeland Security 2003-2004
- Member, Minn. House of Representatives 1995-2003 (GOP, District 33B & 32B)
- Officer, Commander, Criminal Investigations, Minneapolis Police Dept
- President, National Sheriffs Association

Sharing his Catholic faith to help build trust is something that appears to come naturally for Stanek. He says he gives some of the crucifixes he has received from Sr. Benita to newly sworn in sheriff's deputies.

"It is meant as an act of love" he adds.

Stanek, a Republican, also isn't afraid to challenge both conventional and extreme thinking on the political right and left regarding whether today's first generation Americans should either adapt to or stand apart from society and popular culture.

"One of the things I always hear from some folks is that they want today's immigrants to assimilate. I say not so much. I want people of all cultures to keep their faith and traditions alive. Celebrate them. Share them with other cultures. Integrate them. I say people should want to integrate, not assimilate," Stanek says.

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-Nicolaus Copernicus

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