

MAY 2006

"Keep Alive This Heritage"
Pope John Paul II

A Newsletter About Polish Culture
And Current Events
Established In 1979

POLAM

Polish Constitution Day



Constitution of the Third of May by Jan Matejko (1891) Royal Castle in Warsaw. Exultant citizens of Warsaw carry King Stanisław August Poniatowski into St. John's Cathedral to swear to uphold the new Polish Constitution.

*A National Holiday in Poland
A Holiday Celebrated by Polish
Americans*

Each year in May, readers of *Pol-Am* no doubt will remember reading many references to Constitution Day in *Pol-Am* and all other Polish American journals, newspapers, and other media. This year will not be an exception for good reason and that is the topic of this article.

The Importance of Polish Constitution Day to Poles, Polish Americans and their Friends

Until the end of the 1800's almost all of the countries of the world were ruled by royalty and other rulers who

ruled in some cases with absolute power and in others with their power somewhat limited by the nobles and other elite of the land. Then came the great American Constitutional experiment. We declared our independence from Great Britain in 1776, the last battle was in 1781 and the last British troops left New York City on November 25, 1783. The rest is history and we've showed the world that democracy and personal liberty can and does work.

The first modern constitutions in the world appeared at the end of the 18th Century and there were three of them. The first was the American Constitution of September 17, 1787. The Polish Constitution of May 3,

1791 came next and was the first one in Europe. And, finally, came the French Constitution of September 3rd, 1791.

To the freedom loving Poles, who in the 1700's were living between Tsarist Russia and German Prussia, in which people lived under tyranny and the unconditional power of their Tsar and king, the Polish Constitution of 1791 granted the Poles freedom, liberty and political rights unknown before.

The Constitution followed the American pattern and set up three independent branches of government, rule by the majority, secret ballot, religious freedom and liberty. It curbed the power of the King and his State Council of acting independently of the Sejm and eliminated the hated 'Liberum Veto' which allowed one noble to stop any legislation.

Poland had for many years strived to rid itself of this cursed liberum veto but the "Dumb Sejm of 1717" which Tsar Peter of Russia imposed on Poland, made removing this "veto" impossible. This particular Sejm, which met for one day in which no one was allowed to speak, hence the name, had the dubious honor of having 18,000 Russian troops surrounding the building "to protect" them. This action by Tsar Peter all but made Poland a Russian protectorate. It also limited Poland to a standing army of no more than 30,000 and kept the hated Saxon Kings on the throne as puppets of the Russian Tsar.

Constitution continued on page 3

Letters To The Editor

Last night I read your article, "Białowieza Forest" in the *Pol-Am*. Great words and wonderful pictures. I could smell the forest and feel the cush under my feet. It made me recall a book, "In the Memory of the Forest," by Charles Powers. It describes the lives of people living in a forest. Thank you for the article. I enjoy the subtle changes to *Pol-Am*.
—Pat Bumgarner

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Pol-Am

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We appreciate your continued generosity and support. Dziękuję

My Thoughts Managing Editor

This issue commemorates two very important events, V-E Day on May 8, marking the end of World War II in Europe and Polish Constitution Day on May 3. Both events celebrate the will of people to be free of tyranny and to be free to pursue their lives in liberty and justice.



When I wrote the last paragraph of the front page article, I had my late father very much in mind. He was a veteran of WW II. He fought his way across North Africa and Sicily, then had a few weeks of R & R in England then landed on the beaches in Normandy only to be shot down by a sniper's grenade in Cherbourg, France. He came home aboard a hospital ship. He was fiercely proud that he and all the other soldiers had sacrificed for his country and its freedom and I learned early on to honor and respect that sacrifice.

We take a moment too, to reflect upon all the people down through the ages, especially our Polish ancestors who took up arms against tyranny not only for themselves but also for the freedom of others. They gave witness to the world that freedom was something worth fighting for. So we honor this month all veterans and all those who rally under the cry "For your freedom and ours!"

Finally, I hope to see you at the Open House at the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota stop by and introduce yourself.

Od serca do serca Heart To Heart

Everyone who grew up in a Polish immigrant home will remember the importance of the date "Tzreciego



Maja," or the "Third of May!" It was the anniversary of the Polish Constitution. The last great national act of old Poland was the voting of a new constitution on May 3rd,

1791. The day has since become a Polish national holiday, similar to the Fourth of July in the United States. The Polish Constitution made all citizens equal in the eyes of the law and established the foundation of modern government. It is the second oldest constitution in the world, after the U.S.

For the last two weeks, CNN has repeatedly aired a series titled "The Last Days of Pope John Paul II." I would like to repeat one of Polish pontiff's prayers:

Praise be to Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to invite you to join me in professing our faith, our hope, and our fidelity to Mary, the Mother of Christ and of the Church, and also to begin again on the road of history and of the Church. Without Christ, it is impossible to understand the history of Poland, the history of the people who have passed or are passing through this land... I, who am a son of the land of Poland and who am also Pope John Paul II, I cry from all the depths of this millennium, I cry... Let your Spirit descend and renew your life as it renews the face of the earth... The face of this land.

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Constitution *continued*

Nonetheless in 1791 the Poles made known to the world their desire to be a free nation; that democratic ideals were truly noble and worth fighting for, that despite the forces allied against them they would plant their flag and hopes on the mountain of freedom and liberty. What we as Americans see as valiant, noble and inspiring, the Elector of Prussia, the Tsar of Russia and the Empress of Austria saw as "the Polish cancer of freedom" and together they vowed to wipe off the face of the earth. Each of these powers feared that such freedom would destroy their own absolute tyranny of power and so, Russia, Prussia and Austria partitioned Poland. By 1795 Poland no longer existed except in the hearts of her sons and daughters. And after 1795 whenever Poles took up arms to fight tyranny either against them or against others "For your freedom and ours" was their rallying cry, a cry that was heard on American soil and all throughout Europe during World Wars I & II.

Every year on May 3rd, Poles, Polish-Americans and their Friends gather and celebrate Polish Constitution day because we want to remember the contributions our ancestors made to liberty throughout the world based on the ideals the constitution put forth. And finally we celebrate because we never want to forget that liberty, justice and freedom comes at a frightful cost and that it has been bought for us over and over by the blood and sacrifice of our Polish and American ancestors.

No discussion of the Polish Constitution of 1791 should forget the brave men who made it possible:

King Stanisław August

Poniatowski, considered one of the most enlightened kings of Europe of his time, did all he could to make sure the constitution was enacted.

Ignacy Potocki from the leading princely families of Poland and Rev. Hugo Kollątaj who co-wrote the draft of the document. Stanisław Malachowski, Speaker of the Sejm and Stanisław Staszic patriots and leading reformers in the Sejm who were invited by the King to help draft the Constitution in secret.

Polish 2nd Rifle Division

Refuge and Asylum

By Joseph Beben

We lead hurried lives today and not infrequently one hears that the human spirit needs a "place of



Polish soldiers.

refuge," a quiet place where it can retreat for rest and be nurtured. At other times there may be difficulty in a person's life that would sort itself out given a little time. A person in these circumstances might want to flee to a place where he or she is beyond the reach of pursuers.

During the Second World War an entire Polish division of soldiers would find such a place of refuge that they could escape to and evade captivity. It happened this way. In 1940 the Poles, after Poland had been defeated the previous September by the combined armies of Germany and the Soviet Union, reconstituted an army of almost 80,000 in France. When the French capitulated to the Germans in June 1940, the Polish 2nd Rifle Division had been fighting at Belfort near the Swiss border and the commander of Polish forces, General Sikorski, ordered the division to cross over and seek asylum. Thus, beginning June 19, 1940 the entire division, together with a French division, crossed into Switzerland. They brought with them huge quantities of arms and ammunition, which they surrendered to the custody of the Swiss.

The interned Poles were encouraged to return to their studies and many took this option. The Universities of Fribourg and Zurich, together with the HEC at St. Gall and a Lycée camp at Wetzikon, provided a wide variety of courses, particularly

in the sciences and maths. For others, the farms, mines and forests provided work. Some work details were based in the mountains building roads, bridges and trails that are still in use today.

The division also continued to train in internment. Meanwhile, many of the troops crossed back into Vichy France to join Polish resistance forces which conducted intelligence operations, sabotage and armed partisan activities against the German occupying forces. When the Allies landed in Normandy, a number of individuals and even large groups of the Polish 2nd Rifle Division crossed the Alps to join in the four-month long battle to drive the Wehrmacht from French soil.

Had Switzerland been invaded, the interned Polish soldiers would have been rearmed and would have



Polish and British soldiers.

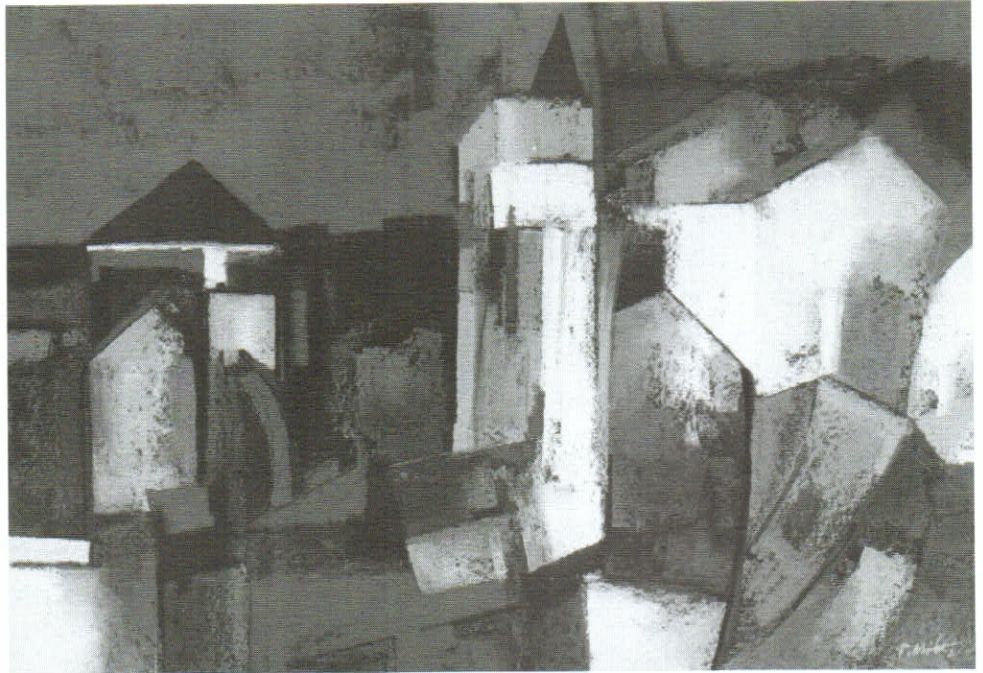
had the chance to fight the Nazis again. In fact, the Germans did draw up plans to

invade Switzerland but never made any serious attempts do so.

The Inter-national Red Cross reported that the Poles interned by the Swiss numbered 14,972 by the end of the war and most had been there since 1940. In their hour of need, the soldiers of the 2nd Rifle Division found a place of refuge in Switzerland. I do not know what happened to them when the war came to a close but many probably joined the vast number of Poles who were now among the Displaced Persons of World War II. I do remember that, as a young boy in Philadelphia, my family sponsored Polish DP's on two separate occasions but I never learned their background and how they came to be DP's.

Perhaps some of our readers can shed light on what happened to the soldiers of the Polish 2nd Rifle Division.

Joe Beben's passion is researching the WW II Polish army. His parents emigrated from Poland and he is a retired army officer who lives in Hugo, Minnesota.



RYSZARD MIŁEK

A Visionary Polish Artist Relays His Love for Poland Through Pastels
at the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota's Open House

"As I see it, color, light and composition embedded in my work represent what's most wondrous about the Polish spirit and my feeling of it. Both abstract and impressionistic perspectives imbued within my interpretations of Poland's reality convey basic human wonder and beguilement," says Ryszard Miłek, an internationally acclaimed premier European pastelist whose love for his homeland of Poland is bringing him to Minneapolis for an exclusive one-time showing on May 21st during the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota's Open House.

The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota (PACIM) is hosting an Open House on Sunday, May 21st from 1 to 4 pm to celebrate the opening of their new location at 2514 Central Ave NE in Minneapolis.

As guest of honor, Ryszard Miłek will display his work for the first time to a Midwestern audience, dedicating the show's honors to the heart-felt supporters of PACIM

and the Twin Cities international art scene. Miłek's exhibition will set the atmosphere for the tour of the new building and the exploration of the revamped PACIM library.

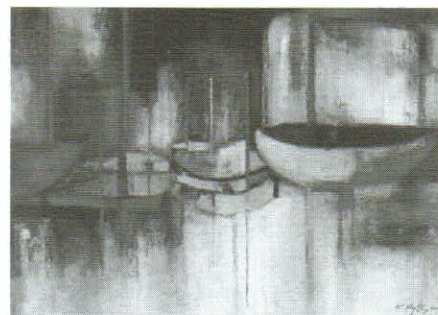
A widely-respected Polish critic, Janusz Trzebiatowski, had this to say about Ryszard Miłek's life-earned acclaim: "For years now I have thought of him as an artist of great aplomb and respect, recognized in his own country and other parts of the world. He is a true master, whose work, irrespective of its price, is sought after by art connoisseurs."

Perhaps Ryszard Miłek would never have gone this far—becoming the winner of the First International Pastel Biennial held in 1996 in Nowy Sącz, Poland, had it not been for his intense sensitivity to the world of art evoked in his university years in Poland. As though in opposition to all norms and standards, Ryszard Miłek surprised the world, art buyers, critics and fellow artists with his avant-garde desire to practice the extremely demanding pastel art form.

His paintings, at first glance, may seem outmoded, dating to an era long past rather than to the 21st century; but then, upon contemplation, they prove exceptionally intriguing and fresh. The insurmountable experience, both in terms of form and content, prove that Ryszard Miłek is as capable in expressing himself through still life images, portraits and nudes as he is with landscapes that are extremely visionary compounded with layers of hidden expressions.

In all cases, his painting style is distinctive, quite recognizable among hundreds and thousands of other works, appealing with a freshness of perspective of the reality that surrounds the artist, and is characterized by his ability to illuminate hidden feelings.

Ryszard Miłek's works have been on display at world-class galleries in Rome, Paris, Prague, Berlin, Philadelphia, and New York. Pope John Paul II commissioned



Miłek in 1998 to create a series of landscapes depicting the areas of Southern Poland where the Pope was born and raised. Today these paintings are in the private Vatican collection.

Without a doubt, Ryszard is extremely excited about the opportunity to connect with his fellow Polish-Americans in Minnesota, and to share his perspective on Poland's effervescent beauty through a display that will incorporate the landscapes of Southern Poland and renditions of still life.

This ensemble has never been shown before at any gallery. "I want to give Minnesotans a snapshot of the best of Poland I see every day, and hold dear in my heart. Because of so many Poles living in the Midwest, and the immigrant roots of Northeast Minneapolis, Minnesota will be a journey of the heart for me, and an opportunity to strengthen the love for our country among fellow Poles," said Miłek.

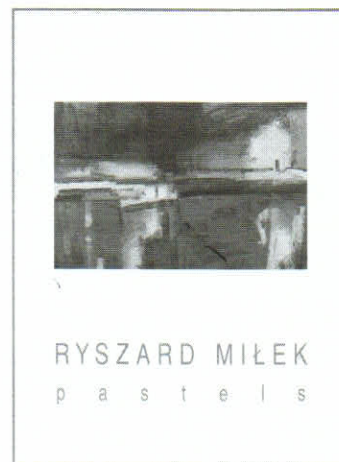
Exclusively for the PACIM audience, Ryszard has donated a few of his original pieces to be auctioned off at the event. Proceeds will support the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota. In addition, numbered artist-autographed reproductions of the original paintings in high quality, framable prints will be available for sale to visitors.

"Miłek is the most unconventional and innovative artist who deserves and receives only the highest honors and acclaim in the world of Pastelism - the art which he only creates, and is a living 'soul' as a true master and visionary pastelists," said Trzebiatowski.

Come celebrate PACIM's Open House and delight in the grandeur of Ryszard Miłek's art and his artistic charisma.

It will be a splendid opportunity on a Sunday afternoon to ruminate about Polish culture over light refreshments and hors d'oeuvres.

by Jerzy Hornik



For more information about the event and artist, visit PACIM's website at www.pacim.org

PACIM NEWS

News from the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota

The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible to the extent limited by law. Please consider including us in your tax and estate planning. We appreciate your generous support.

Polskie Przysłowia—*Polish Proverbs*
"Gość w dom, Bóg w dom."
A guest in the house is God in the house.

From the PACIM Library...

Our library is located at our building at 2514 Central Ave NE, one block north of Lowry Ave. Everyone is welcome, however only members of the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota may check out materials.

A heartfelt thank you to Chester Bijoch for his \$400 donation to the Library. I'm dreaming about all of the lovely books and movies we'll be able to buy!

This month, I was able to purchase at discounted prices three English translations of fairly current Polish literature: *Death in Danzig* by Stefan Chwin, *Bacacay* by Witold Gombrowicz, and *Dreams and Stones* by Magdalena Tulli.

A huge personal thank you to all of the people who helped with the move. It is so gratifying to learn that a project I've spent 12 years working on is valued by others. I'd like to particularly thank my family who surprised me by showing up in force. I guess they have been listening to me over the years.

We love the new space for the library! It is so convenient having all of the books in one room. The shelves donated by Haslett Movers are very attractive and make us look very professional. Once we get some of the remaining boxes unpacked, you'll see that we have a large open center section that PACIM will use for activities such as lectures and classes.

Naturally, our first event will be the Open House showing of the works of Polish artist Ryszard Miłek on May 21.

Thanks also to James Szczukowski who brought back from his last trip to Poland a number of beautiful travel books and a Stephen King translation. Please, as you travel to Poland this spring and summer, remember the Library. Stop in any bookstore and tell the clerk you want one of their newest books—mystery, adventure or romance.

If you have been getting the Polish Update by email and wish to continue doing so, would you please email your electronic address to me at judytam@usfamily.net? I got a new computer and, while they tell me the addresses are still there someplace, I can't figure out where.

Next month, we'll start making public, details of the Polish Village Wedding event that we are planning for September 10th at Cedars Hall (St. Maron's Church on 6th and University Avenue NE, Minneapolis). It's a faithful-as-we-can-make-it recreation of a turn-of-the-century wedding that could have taken place in a small Polish village. The evening will include a small skit and other activities, delicious food served family style, and an authentic Polish polka band for dancing. The cost will be \$45 per person.

— Judith Blanchard, Librarian

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The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota wishes to thank the following for their help in helping us move to our new location: Ron Tomczyk, Jeff, John, and Pamela Tomaszewski, Sue Havelak, Delores & Bob Lundberg, Martin Koshiol, Phyllis Husted, Joe Beben, Pat Salo, Andy Remiarz, Lucy & Roman Marsalek, Pat & Bill Bumgarner, Jacki Padula, Charles Padula, Marta & Chester Pachnik, Pat Kile, Stephen Kile, John Schrandt, Andy Zimba, George Hornik, Michael Redmond, Bruce Rubin, John Radziłowski, Steven Ukasick, Marie Przysnki, Judith Blanchard. Despite the rain your help and muscles saved the day.

The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota invites you to its Open House on Sunday May 21st 1 to 4 pm at our new location at 2514 Central Ave NE. See pages 4 & 5 for details.

Membership Form For
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Please add \$5 to the above membership levels, if you wish to join American Council for Polish Culture, ACPC, through PACIM (a 50% discount).

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Events

Many events are given to us well in advance of the actual date. Please call the contact information to verify particulars. If you would like your event listed, contact Judith at judytam@usfamily.net

April 30 **Święconka**

Polish Easter Song Concert and Dinner. 1:30 pm at PNA Hall, 1304 4th Street NE. Price is \$10. Tickets may be purchased at Eva's Europol Delicatessen, 359 13th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, 612-617-0022 or at the door. Contact Janina at 763-521-5321 for more information.

May 5-7 **Trip to Polish Chicago**

Only 4 SEATS LEFT
Join folks from the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota on a bus trip to experience the Polish side of Chicago. The bus leaves 8 am on Friday, May 5 and returns around 6 pm on Sunday, May 7. Travelers will take part in Chicago's famous Constitution Day Parade. They will also eat in several Polish restaurants and attend Mass at St. Mary of the Angels Church. On Sunday, they will visit a pierogi factory to purchase any (or all) of their 20 different flavors at prices as low as \$2 per dozen. We will also stop at a Polish grocery/meat market/bakery/liquor store to purchase goodies to bring back. Bringing coolers is recommended. Meals provided: 3 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners. Price \$235 per person. For more information, call Judith at 763-571-9602.

May 4-7 **Festival of Nations**

Saint Paul RiverCentre Volunteers needed in the kitchen. Please contact Marta at marta@ititworks.com Also, volunteers needed in the culture booth. Please contact Renata at rstachowicz@msn.com. Volunteers will be given a ticket for free entry if they work a 4-hour shift.
Hours of the Festival:
Thursday, May 4: 9 am to 3 pm

Friday, May 5: 9:30 am to 10 pm
Saturday, May 6: 10 am to 10 pm
Sunday, May 7: 11 am to 6 pm
Polish Folk Dancers Schedule:
Dolina Dancers: Friday at 6-7 pm in Roy Wilkins Hall
Saturday at 4-5 pm in Roy Wilkins Hall
Saturday at 8-9 pm in Roy Wilkins Hall
Słoneczniki: Saturday children's program at 12:30-1:30 pm

May 21
Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota Open House
2514 Central Ave NE, 1-4 pm
Limited parking in back. See pages 4 & 5 for details.

May 21, 7:30 pm
Warsaw Village Band
In concert at the Cedar Cultural Center, 416 Cedar Ave S, Minneapolis.



The Warsaw Village Band was founded in 1997 by six young people who play violin, suka (a unique Polish fiddle dating from the XVIth century), cello and various traditional Polish drums. Their repertoire consists of folk dance melodies, ballads and rural songs, blended with modern elements. By traveling to small villages and visiting old musicians who tell them about their tradition, customs and ancient habits, they work to preserve the best parts of Polish roots, and use it to inspire and enrich contemporary culture. They recently won "The Fyderyk" Polish Music Award for the best Folk/Ethno Album 2005, for their most recent CD "Uprooting"
Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 day of show. Seniors (65+), and children (5-12) half price. Tel: 612-338-2674 ext 2 (Visa/MC), or ext. 0 for more info. www.thecedar.org.

Sunday, May 21, 2006, 3-7 pm
Sunday, June 18, 2006, 3-7 pm
Historical Village Playhouse Benefit

1701 W. Houghton Lake Drive, Houghton Lake Michigan
The Polish Kid & Company, \$10
Polkas-Waltzes-Country-Swing-Ballroom. Food and Beverages available.
For more information: 989-389-4374, 989-728-7724, 989-422-6393

June 23-25 **Milwaukee Trip**

Please mark your calendar for June 23-25th the Midwest Polka Association will be taking a bus trip to the Milwaukee Polish Fest on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan. More details to come.

August 8-18 **Best of Poland Tour**

Hosted by Fran Toler. Visit Warsaw, Kraków, Częstochowa, Rzeszów, Wadowice and Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and more. For more information call Fran at 612-781-7694

John Paul II Memorial Polish American Calendar – 2007

You don't have to be Polish or even Catholic to appreciate and use this English-Language calendar on the life and achievements of the late, beloved Polish Pope John Paul II. Each and every day notes an event in his life associated with that date, 365 in all. Each month presents a recipe for a favorite food much loved by him, like cream cakes, pierogi, Polish omelets, etc. Graphics in blue and black relate to his 80+ year lifetime. His thoughts and quotes are unique memorial keepsakes of this holy and revered man that many call a "Great" of the 20th Century.

Spend the Year learning about the life of John Paul II by obtaining the 2007 Polish American Calendar. Send \$5.95 (includes mailing) to its Pol-Am teacher-author:

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Figures Of Poland's Culture And History



Jan Nowak-Jezioranski
1914-2005
Polish Patriot

Born Zdzisław Antoni Jeziorański in Warsaw on October 3, 1914. Fought the Nazis in WW II and joined the Armia Krajowa as a courier between Poland and London making five trips. He fought in the 1944 Warsaw uprising then fled to London. After the war he worked for Radio Free Europe

then came to Washington and worked for the National Security Council. Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996 in recognition of his achievements on behalf of liberty. Also awarded: Virtuti Militari (1944), highest Polish military award; Order of the White Eagle (1994), highest Polish civilian award; Grand Cross of Duke Gediminas, highest Lithuanian civilian award. Returned to Poland in 2002 and advocated for Poland's entry into NATO. Died January 20, 2005 at 90.

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POL-AM's Spotlight On Things Polish

Professor Leonard Polakiewicz Honored

Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures Leonard Polakiewicz has been awarded the National Council



of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages Ronald Walton Award in recognition of "a career distinguished by selfless service and noteworthy contributions to

the fostering of less commonly taught language initiatives in the United States." He was honored at the council's conference in Madison, Wisconsin, April 28.

The Face Of The State Department

John Armstrong, Senior Political Officer at the US State Department, was recently highlighted in their



"The Face of the State Department".

John was an official US election observer for the Belarusian elec-

tions this spring and was interviewed about his experiences there as well as his career in the State Department.

For the full interview go to:
www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/63725.htm

John was born in Robbinsdale, Minnesota, and graduated from Patrick Henry High School in Minneapolis. Prior to joining the State Department, John taught history at Metropolitan State University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is a great supporter of both *Pol-Am* Newsletter and the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota.

Polish Word Tips

Spring is finally here! Have some fun with Polish proverbs about the transition of seasons and the blossoming of vivid colors in the springtime.

"I wiosna by tak nie smakowała, gdyby przedtem zimy nie było."
What makes Spring special and unique is Winter that precedes it.

"Na Trzech Króli słońce świeci, wiosna do nas pędem leci."
When the sun reaches Three Kings, Spring is on its way in full swing.

"W kwietniu, gdy pszczoła jeszcze nie ruchliwa, mokra wiosna zwykle bywa."
When in April there is yet no bee buzz to be heard around, Spring is to be wet and damp.