

PolAm

A Publication of the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota www.pacim.org

April 2013

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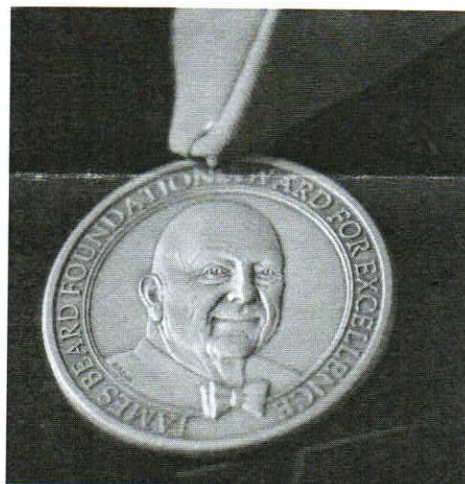
Vol. 35, Num. 4

James Beard Award for Kramarczuk's

Northeast Minneapolis' Eastern European deli and restaurant garnered the prestigious James Beard American Classic



Kramarczuk's was founded in 1954 by Ukrainian refugees Wasyl and Anna Kramarczuk. Today their son, Orest, is



the primary owner and the place continues to be a first job for immigrants.

Known for their homemade sausages and cafeteria-style eatery, Kramarczuk's is also a strong supporter of Central and Eastern European groups in the Twin Cities. For the last few autumns, they have hosted the Kielbasa Festival, staffed with volunteers from the Dolina, Chabry and Słoneczniki Polish Folk Dance Groups. Proceeds from the festival helped pay for the groups' costumes and performance expenses for the year.

Next month, Orest will attend the Beard Foundation's annual gala at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall to receive the coveted prize.

Award late in February. The award is given to regional establishments that are "treasured for their quality food, local character and lasting appeal."

The James Beard Foundation awards are named after the American chef and food writer who helped establish a gourmet American food identity and who taught French cooking to the American upper crust in the 1950s. Beard's foundation "celebrates, nurtures and preserves America's diverse culinary heritage and future." Receiving their award is tantamount to winning an Oscar in the culinary arts.

Kwas Goes Mainstream

Out of *Babcia's* humble kitchen comes the latest food and health craze—*kwas*. This fermented beet juice, used mostly in soups, is now a staple on shelves of trendy co-ops, health food stores and upscale markets. Packed with nutrients and powerful enzymes, *kwas* and other fermented foods demonstrate the wisdom of Poland's culinary traditions and is the "next big thing."



Visit any grocery store dairy section and try to count the number of yogurts advertised as "probiotic." Their claim to contain beneficial microorganisms which restore the balance of microflora in the digestive tract sounds new and fancy, but dates back thousands of years. "Probiotic" comes from the Greek "for life," and this good bacteria found in some yogurts is super-abundant in *kwas*, pickles, sauerkraut and other naturally fermented foods.

Kwas continues on page 3

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Thoughts

It is almost time to start our gardens here in Minnesota and one of the first seeds I plan to drop in the soil will be beets. A



staple of the Polish diet, I love them roasted, steamed or pickled. This issue offers a smattering of beet-related articles to get us ready to start planting.

Recently I tasted the zippy Kvass made by the Zu-Kay company (see page 8) and loved the fact that the young woman offering samples of their fermented drinks knew that the owner's name (Grzybek) means "little mushroom." That's what I call knowing family roots.

Be sure to head over to St. Paul for the Festival of Nations in early May. There promises to be delicious food at the Polish Café; imported crafts and gifts from Poland; and several performances by the Dolina, Chabry and Słoneczniki Polish Folk Dancers. My little daughter Beatka dances with Słoneczniki, so I will be there for sure. Hope to see you.

Do zobaczenia,
Jane Mrazek Flanders, *Editor*

The Polish government and Roman Catholic Church representatives reached a "working compromise" on a 0.5% tax write-off to replace state funding for priests. Under the new scheme, Poles will be able to donate 0.5% of their income tax to a church or religious denomination of their choice. The deduction will replace part of the \$28 million annual state subsidy now received by religious institutions to cover the health insurance and pensions of clerics.

Export goods from Poland grew in 2012 by 3.8% to \$44.3 billion.

Last year export of Polish agricultural products exceeded \$5.4 billion, a 15% increase. Polish foods most purchased abroad are meat, chocolate and dairy products. Poland is among Europe's biggest food producers. It is a leading producer of apples, mushrooms, potatoes, rye, rapeseed and sugar beets.

Deputies of the **Polish Parliament rejected three bills that would have opened the way for Poland to introduce domestic partnerships**, including for same-sex couples. A bill proposed by the ruling Civic Platform (PO) party was rejected by some of its own members, causing a split in the party between more progressive lawmakers and those worried that the plans were a step too far in a socially conservative, Catholic country.

Poland's state-owned LOT Airlines announced that it will not use either of its Boeing 787 Dreamliner passenger jets before October, as the U.S. aircraft maker has to remove their battery-related malfunctions.

Four Polish climbers made the first winter ascent of Broad Peak (elev. 26,414 ft.) in the Karakoram mountain range bordering Pakistan and China. However, during the descent, two climbers disappeared and subsequently were pronounced dead. One of the missing climbers, 58 year old Maciej Barbeka, was just few hundred meters away from getting to Broad Peak in winter 25 years ago only to withdraw because of the adverse weather conditions.

PolAm

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We appreciate your continued support.
Dziękujemy!

News From Poland

by Mietek Konczyk

U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced that the **U.S. is abandoning the final stage of its Eastern European missile defense plan due to perceived threats from Iran and North Korea.** As a result of this change, deployment of several ballistic missile interceptors in Poland will be scrapped. However, the shorter-range interceptors would still be based in Poland as part of NATO's missile defense system in Europe.

Kwas continues

Zu-Kay, a Pennsylvania based company, is promoting the health benefits of fermented foods. With the slogan “Cure for the Modern Diet,” Zu-Kay sells Kvas— with a slightly different spelling, but essentially the same as *kwas*. Their Veggie-Biotic beverages claim to detox the body, enable better digestion, and make people stronger. Scott Grzybek, Zu-Kay’s owner, leans heavily on his Polish roots to promote his products. Clever, retro pictures of his ancestors adorn Zu-Kay’s website along with claims that their products are “steeped in tradition.” They blend fermented beet juice with ginger, carrot, winter squash, kale, parsley, cucumbers and other nutritional foods to produce juice drinks and salad dressings.

A much larger company also got into the *kwas* craze when Coca Cola launched Krushka & Bochka Kvas in 2010.



Initially sold in niche markets in large U.S. urban areas, *kwas* is a fermented beverage made from rye bread. Mostly popular in Poland’s neighboring countries to the east, Poles

enjoy the crisp malt drink and refer to it as *kwas chlebowy*. Today, Coca Cola dominates the *kwas* market in Europe. In the U.S., Coke’s *kwas* is branching out to higher-end grocery stores like Whole Foods Market that cater to “better-off, more educated consumers with healthier lifestyles who are on the lookout to try new things,” said a marketing executive.

Sauerkraut, another fermented food ubiquitous to the Polish diet, is now linked to fighting breast cancer. A 2005 study between Michigan State University and the National Food and Nutrition Institute of Warsaw, Poland, evaluated the diet of Polish immigrants living in the Chicago and Detroit areas. The study was initiated after a researcher observed



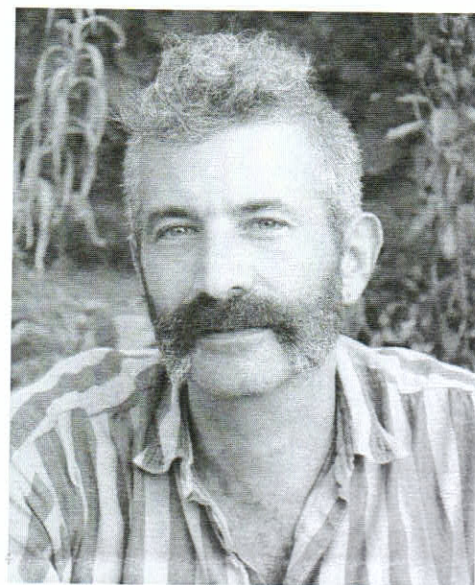
that the breast cancer risk of Polish women rose three-fold after they emigrated to the U.S. “Women who ate at least three servings a week of raw cabbage and sauerkraut had a significantly reduced breast cancer risk compared with women who ate only one serving per week,” reported the American Association for Cancer Research’s Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research.

The study also noted that consuming naturally fermented uncooked cabbage during adolescence yielded the lowest rate of breast cancer, and high consumption during adulthood served as a protective measure from the disease. The cooking process kills *Lactobacillus Plantarum*, an “immunobiotic” element which boosts cellular immunity and in some cases offers anti-allergic, anti-tumor and anti-flu effects.

In Poland, an average woman eats an average of 30 pounds of cabbage and sauerkraut per year and American women eat less than 10 pounds a year. Perhaps women and girls in the U.S. need to start thinking of sauerkraut as more than just a topping for hotdogs and brats.

Polish ethnographer Anna Kowalska-Lewicka reported that the Eastern European taste for fermented foods came partly out of a need to preserve food, but also out of a desire to ratchet up the taste of the bland peasant diet. What was probably unknown to early fermenter fans was that those sour foods packed more nutrition than raw foods. It may sound contrary to how people eat and think in the U.S., but the facts are indisputable.

Uncooked fermented foods create their own “cooking juices” that are loaded with healthy lacto-enzymes which are highly useful and in greater need in the human body the older we get. The probiotics in fermented foods help our bodies assimilate nutrients better and stimulate stomach acid to aid digestion. Because of the live bacteria growing in fermented foods, there is a significantly higher percentage of vitamin B than exists in raw foods.



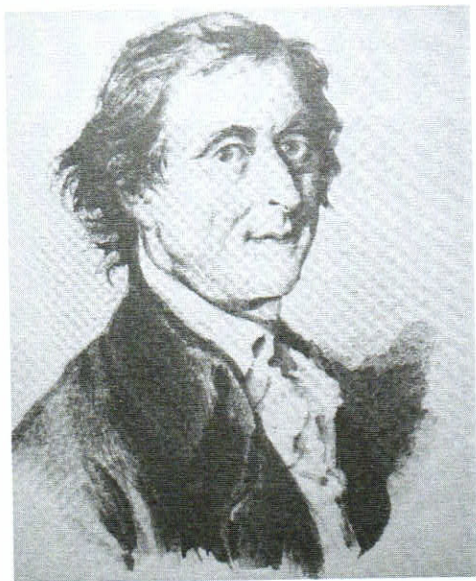
Sandor Ellix Katz

Unless you live in an area with immigrants or health savvy people who make and sell unprocessed fermented foods, the only way to get them is to make them yourself. A recent New York Times best-selling book, *The Art of Fermentation* by Sandor Ellix Katz, offers recipes, culture, history and the science of fermentation. Riding on the popularity of fermented foods in the U.S., the book explores the health benefits of these foods and delivers it with humor and the author’s true appreciation for the taste of naturally sour foods.

But if books aren’t a strong enough teaching tool, workshops through co-ops and community education centers offer hands-on instruction. Even some colleges offer classes in the science and technique of creating lacto-fermented foods. It seems these days everyone has jumped on the bandwagon for pickled foods.

Sounds like *Babcia* was onto something good in her kitchen.

Could it be that one of Poland's favorite vegetables holds the answer to global warming and limited fossil fuels? For centuries we've known that beets are good for the body; but now researchers are finding ways to use beets as renewable energy. Proponents of this new biofuel have Silesia to thank for discovering that beets are more than just tasty.



In 1786 Franz Karl Achard first extracted sugar from beets on a large scale and later built the first beet sugar factory with financial support from Frederick William III.

In the mid-18th century, scientists in the southwest region of partitioned Poland demonstrated that sugar could be



Early sketch of the world's first beet sugar factory in Konary, Poland. circa 1802.

extracted from certain varieties of beets. In 1801, Frederick William III, King of Prussia, issued a royal decree founding the world's first beet sugar factory in Konary, Poland (Silesia). Until then, sweeteners came from honey and sugar cane. This new discovery brought the humble beet onto the global stage and world economy.

Napoleon Bonaparte grew especially interested in beets in 1806 when the British government enacted a naval blockade against France halting the import of sugar and other prized goods. Napoleon appointed a commission of scientists to visit Konary and learn the sugar extraction process. He opened schools specifically for studying beets and ordered that thousands of acres of French soil be planted with the crop.



An early push for farmers to turn their efforts toward a new crop.

Thanks to the Napoleonic Wars, the sugar beet grabbed Europe's sweet tooth and the industry made its mark. Sugar beets arrived in North America around 1830 and in South America two decades later. By 1840 5% of the world's sugar came from sugar beets, and by 1880 sugar beets provided more than 50% of the world with sugar. Today 90% of sugar in the U.S. comes from sugar beets.

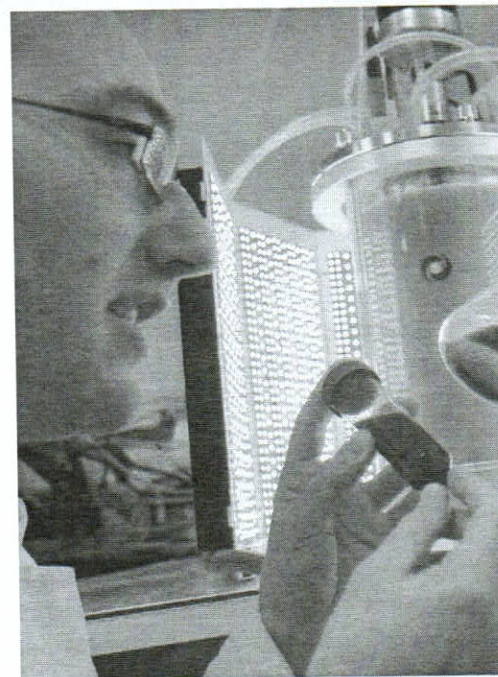
Unlike its cousin with dark red flesh, the sugar beet is pale to white in color. Cultivated for its higher sugar content, this white root vegetable is relatively easy to grow and, unlike sugar cane that is tender to the cold, beets can withstand light frost and considerable heat. In warmer climates sugar beets are a winter crop and new species of the sugar beet can grow in tropical and subtropical regions, allowing the industry to meet the world's growing demand for sugar.

The Beet

By Jane Mrazek Flanders



The Silesian white beet's high sugar content is the basis for



With pressure from the EPA and other global regulatory agencies, researchers are exploring beets as a biofuel source.

Goes On

The popularity of the sugar beet is also linked to the crop's positive effect on growing other important crops like barley and wheat. Prior to Silesia's farming of sugar beets in the 18th century, small grain monoculture ruled the fields. The inclusion of sugar beets into crop rotation created a system for better soil fertility and weed reduction. As the growth of sugar beets' increased, agricultural researchers began looking for additional uses for this super food.

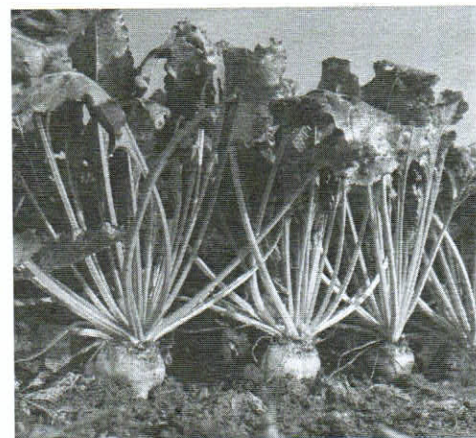
Like a frugal Polish housewife who refuses to waste anything, scientists and farmers now use nearly all of the sugar beet after the sugar is extracted. Among the byproducts of sugar beets is raffinose, a liquid packed with protein and essential minerals which is used as feed for beef cows. Another byproduct is aglime, which boosts the pH of acidic soil, provides calcium and magnesium for plants, and increases the uptake of plant nutrients. Aglime is also used at power plants to reduce the amount of pollutants emitted by coal burners. This use of a sugar beet byproduct is just one way the environment benefits from the use and study of this crop.

"energy beets" is being hailed as "the best bang for your buck" by scientists and environmentalists. Sugar beets require a far shorter length of time to mature and 40% less water to grow. Their byproducts offer greater uses, and the amount of time and energy needed to produce a biofuel are significantly less than corn.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2012 ruling allows unrestricted planting of genetically modified sugar beets for producing sugar and biofuels.

Each year the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ratchets up its quota for production of non-corn-based biofuels. In 2012 the figure rose 36% and contenders to fill this quota include sugar cane and sugar beets. The sugar beet beats the competition because it competes against the petroleum market, not the food market.



German multinationals are developing a new variety of Betanal sugar beets that use a natural enzyme to tolerate herbicides. Not genetically modified, but a traditional hybrid, these beets offer broad spectrum weed control.

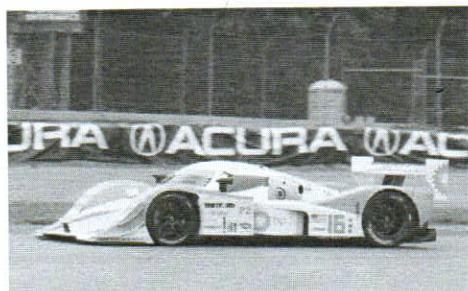
International commissions are working to find the best biofuel to help lower carbon emissions, moderate oil prices, decrease soil erosion and feed the world's hungry. The sugar beet may well be an answer to much of the world's problems and a key to unlocking a better tomorrow.



varieties grown today.



scientists are working to find alternative and replenishable



Dyson Racing's No. 16 Mazda-powered Lola LMP2 coupe used a biobutanol blend in the 12th annual Petit Le Mans Race.

A recent cooperative project between British Petroleum and Associated British Foods used sugar beets to produce an alternative fuel. This fuel, biobutanol, offers a way to provide energy without increasing the world's carbon footprint or interfering with crops as a food source. Currently, the only major market biofuel available is corn-based ethanol. The competition for corn as a food, plus the large amount of water and energy needed for its growth and the production of ethanol, have researchers looking to alternative crops such as beets. A new strain of

News

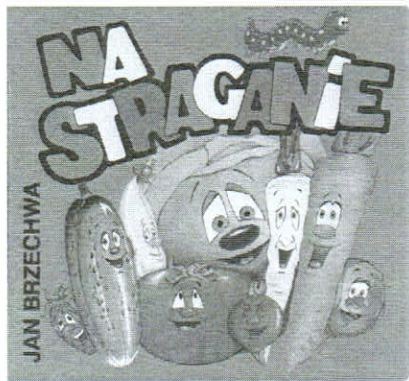
The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible to the extent limited by law. Please consider including us in your tax and estate planning. We appreciate your generous support.

The Board of Directors of PACIM holds their monthly meeting on the first Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Institute: 43 Main St SE, Ste 228, Minneapolis, MN. All are invited. 612-378-9291.

PACIM Library

43 Main St SE, Ste 228
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Hours: Sundays from 1 to 4 PM
or by appointment

When our *PolAm* editor mentioned "Beets" as the theme for this issue, the first thing that came to mind was a Jan Brzechwa poem *Na Straganie*:



Burak stroni od cebuli, A cebula doń się czuli:

"Mój Buraku, mój czerwony, Czybyś nie chciał takiej żony?"

Burak tylko nos zatyka:

"Niech no pani prędzej zmyka, Ja chcę żonę mieć buraczą, Bo przy pani wszyscy płaczą."

This beloved Polish classic is part of our growing children's collection in the Library. Roughly translated, the poem tells of a beet spurning the advances of an

amorous onion. The beet would only have another beet for a wife in order to avoid the tears that onions are known to cause. A wise vegetable.

If you are traveling to Poland for a spring vacation, please remember the Library in your travels and support our *Bring a Book from Poland* program. We welcome all donations, and are particularly fond of new fiction.

Witamy wiosne!

Basia Kiernoziak
(Kiernoziak@gmail.com)

Scholarships

Rog Scholarship

The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota (PACIM) established an endowment fund honoring one of its founding members, Chester Rog. The fund grants stipends up to \$1,000 per year to individuals and/or groups who seek further professional growth, the study of the Polish language, artistic and cultural study both locally and abroad, and who are committed to use what they have achieved to benefit the cause of Polish heritage in Minnesota or Wisconsin. More at www.pacim.org.

Guminga Scholarship

Thanks to the generous bequest from Angeline Guminga, PACIM is able to offer the Guminga Scholarship. Awarded scholarships will be in amounts up to \$1,000 but not exceeding one-half (1/2) of the total cost of tuition, room and board. Applicants can apply for only one scholarship administered by PACIM in any given year (i.e. if you apply for the Rog Scholarship, you cannot apply for the Guminga Scholarship and vice versa). Additional details are available at www.pacim.org.

Deadline for applications is April 30.

PACIM Officers and Board of Directors:

President: Jane Mrazek Flanders, Vice President: Paul Rog, Secretary: Magdalena Zborowski, Treasurer: Greg Gramza, Directors: John Bieniek, Charlene Delaney, Rachel Jendrzewski, Terry Kita, Ursula Peterson, Bruce Rubin and Dan Schyma.

Polish Films at Festival

The International Film Festival returns to St. Anthony Main Theatre (April 11–28) and includes three contributions from Poland:

*F*ck for Forest* by Michał Marczak

A feature documentary revealing one of the world's most bizarre charities. Based on the idea that "sex can save the



world," the charity raises money for environmental causes by selling home

made erotic films on the internet. Not a film for the whole family, but one that discovers a neo-hippy world where sexual liberation merges with global altruism.

80 Million by Waldemar Krzystek

A feature narrative portrays the struggle against communism in Wrocław in 1981. The events depicted in the film took place



ten days before martial law was introduced in Poland when the regional

leader of Solidarity and four colleagues withdrew \$80 million of the organization's money out of the bank. The money was later used to build the underground resistance movement.

In the Shadow by David Ondricek

Set in former Czechoslovakia amid dramatic events of the 1950s, this gripping crime narrative film ultimately intervenes in the fates of the characters and their



loved ones. A run-of-the-mill burglary becomes a political affair replete

with investigations, secret police and communist dictatorship.

Tickets available at the door 115 SE Main St, Minneapolis, www.mspfilm-fest.org or by calling 612-331-3134.

Events

Many dates and times for events are given to us well in advance of the actual date and are subject to change. Please call to verify the particulars.

April 11–28 International Film Festival

The Film Society of Minneapolis and St. Paul's centerpiece event is their annual International Film Festival. Exhibiting more than 200 films from 70 countries and drawing audiences of more than 40,000, this event is not to be missed. Included in this year's program is *Songs of Exile: Cinema of Displacement and Dispossession*. This special selection of new independent documentary and narrative feature films from around the world uses fresh and contrasting perspectives to examine an age-old predicament: the movement or displacement (geographical, cultural or psychological) of peoples around the globe. A number of the films featured will be representative of the new and growing international populations in this state. Visit www.mspfilmfest.org for details. See page 6 for a highlight of Polish films.

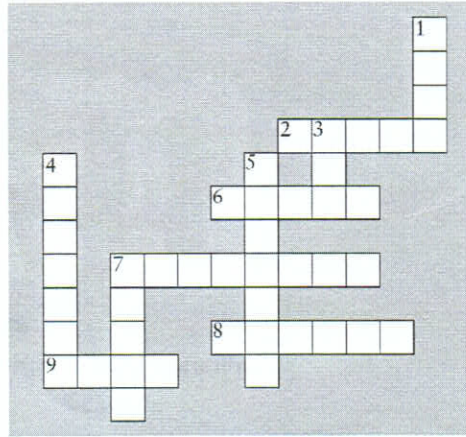
April 20 Early Polonia in Northeast Minneapolis

Sponsored by Columbia Heights-Lomianki Poland Sister Cities International, this presentation centers on Polish immigrants arriving in Northeast Minneapolis around 1900. Presenter John Rys, an active writer and member of the Polish Genealogical Society of America, will include an extensive slide presentation. Admission is free and open to the public. 10:15–Noon, Columbia Heights Public Library, 820 40th Ave NW.

April 27 Polish Feast in Little Falls

Sponsored by the Polish Echos, this annual Polish Feast features *zupa*, chicken in cream sauce, *gołabki*, *kielbasa with kapusta*, *pierogi*, desserts and beverages. Event begins at 4 pm with mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Church and feast imme-

April Crossword Puzzle



March 2013 Answers, Across: 3. Guminga, 6. Wajda, 7. Kaminski, 8. Munk
Down: 1. Negri, 2. MNGS, 4. Gwizdek, 5. Bal, 6. Wit

diately after. 208 W Broadway, Little Falls, MN. Adults \$15, Children (5–12) \$7.50. Reservations accepted until April 25. For details and reservations call Phinee Zak (320) 632-2652.

April 28 Topola Choir Performance and Dinner

The Polish Choir will perform a selection of Spring and Easter pieces beginning at 1:30 pm in the PNA Hall, 13th Ave and 4th St NE, Minneapolis. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the door.

May 2–5 Festival of Nations

One of the nation's largest and longest running multicultural events, the Festival includes 35 cafés from around the globe offering unique ethnic food, global artists providing incredible ethnic cultural events, and the opportunity to purchase one-of-a-kind ethnic items from the international bazaar. RiverCentre, 175 W Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul. For event details visit www.festivalofnations.com.

May 4–5 Polish Folk Dance Performances at Festival of Nations

Don't miss the foot stomping, hand clapping and heart pumping dances by the Twin Cities' own Polish folk dancers. Three groups ranging in age from 4 years to adult perform throughout the Festival in the Roy Wilkins Auditorium. *Słoneczniki* (ages 4–11), Saturday, noon.

Across:

2. Sour Cabbage
6. Kramarczuk Deli Owner
7. "Na Straganie" Author
8. Site of First Beet Sugar Factory
9. Fermented Beet Juice

Down:

1. Source of New Biofuel
3. PGS April 20 Presenter
4. Zu-Kay Live Foods Founder
5. Setting for Polish Film "80 Million"
7. Polish for "Beet"

Chabry (teens), Saturday, 1 pm.
Dolina (adults), Saturday, 5 pm;
Sunday, 1 pm and 4 pm
Special Saturday evening performance by Dolina at 7:30 on the Atrium Stage

May 4 Genealogical Cluster Studies

The Polish Genealogical Society hosts speaker Gretchen Leisen from 10 am–noon. Gretchen is editor of "PasTimes," the St. Cloud Area Genealogists newsletter, and a 40 year veteran of genealogy studies. 1185 N Concord Street, South St. Paul, 2nd floor Conference Room.

May 4 Annual Spring Majówka May Day Celebration

Festive Social Hour at 6:30 pm and Polish Dinner at 7 pm followed by music from 8–midnight. Holy Family Catholic Church, 2340 W Third St, Duluth, MN. Advance ticket purchase required. Call Mark at (218) 727-2697.

May 11–June 22 Citizenship Classes

The International Institute of Minnesota offers citizenship classes that teach: 1) the process of becoming a citizen; 2) U.S. history and government; and 3) interview preparation and practice. Classes are 6 weeks long and are held on Saturday mornings at the Institute, 1694 Como Ave, St. Paul. For details and enrollment call Corleen Smith 651-647-0101 X307.

People



Scott Grzybek
1972-

worked at McCormick & Co and Hormel Foods. Zu-Kay introduced the world's first line of probiotic condiments and is helping mainstream the consumption of naturally fermented foods. Today their beet-based drinks, salad dressings, ketchup and salsa are bringing to the U.S. the delicious sour taste of *kwas*. Scott enjoys his work. "I ferment cool stuff and sell people super healthy things. I have a good life."

Grew up in Bangor, Pennsylvania, and along with his wife, Cathy, founded Zu-Kay Live Foods in 2008. Scott has degrees from Rice University and Penn State. Before founding Zu-Kay, Scott

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Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota
Presents a

Polish Café

As part of the Festival of Nations International Celebration May 2-5, PACIM will host a Polish Café. Serving up traditional foods with a big helping of that famous Polish hospitality, the Café introduces the food, culture and customs of Poland. Menu includes: *Pierogi*, *Kielbasa*, *Makowiec*, *Sernik*, *Herbata Malinowa*.

Discounted advance tickets available by calling 651-647-0191. Children 5 and under are free. RiverCentre, 175 W Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul, MN.

Additional information available at www.festivalofnations.com.

Volunteers interested in helping at the Café should call PACIM 612-378-9291.

