

POLAM

Jan.-Feb. 2014

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WILLIAM A. IRVIN



Full Steam Ahead!

Stanisław Skrowaczewski

Gdańsk

Behind the Scenes



Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!

Maritime is our focus this issue. From the Baltic Sea to the Port of Duluth, we offer information and stories about Poland's long relationship with big water.

Among this issue's contributors is Professor Dick Lewis, who brings his past experience with espionage work in the Baltic to his article on Gdańsk.

An intimate look at the efforts of one of our members to secure political asylum for a couple of Polish ship jumpers in the late 1980s underscores Minnesota's strong ties with Poland. Our state's land, waters and hospitable people feel like home to Polish visitors.

We are delighted by the positive feedback the revamped *PolAm* brought from readers. The vibrant color, fresh design and additional writers seem to be a hit. Reaching out to cover more statewide and regional stories is our goal, and we are always interested in relevant happenings to share with readers. Stay in touch and keep on reading.

Do zobaczenia,
Jane Mrazek Flanders, *Editor*

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The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota (PACIM) is a non-profit organization offering broad ranging programs and events, providing opportunities to grow deeper in understanding and appreciation of Polish traditions, culture and history.

Learn Polish with PACIM

Beginning February 10, PACIM will conduct four sections of Polish language classes. Late registrations are welcome. All classes are taught by Iwona Srienc, Ph.D. and take place at PACIM, 43 Main Street SE, Minneapolis. Call 612-378-9291 for details.

Monday evenings

Beginning Polish (second semester)

5:30–7 pm

Intermediate Polish (second semester)

7:15–8:45 pm

Tuesday evenings

Advanced Polish (second semester)

5:30–7 pm

Beginning Polish (second semester)

7:15–8:45



Thank you to the many new and sustaining PACIM members.

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 Wielinski, Stan & Dee
 Ziecina, Fred
 Zydowicz, Daniel

Reflections on Poland with Conductor-Composer Stanisław Skrowaczewski

What was it like to be back home after so many years?

On one hand it was devastating because so much had changed in the city physically. But its character, specialness, was somehow still in the air. I was happy to be able to show my youngest son, Nicholas, where I was born and other important places of my childhood such as Bernardine Church, my school, the conservatory and the opera house.

How often do you conduct in Poland?

Since I became the music director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra [today, Minnesota Orchestra] in 1960, it was impossible as a Westerner to guest conduct in Communist Poland. My first time back was in 1981 when I led the Warsaw Philharmonic. I was so warmly received. They joked, "You are number two. The Pope is number one!" This was because two years earlier Pope John Paul II had made his triumphant visit back home to Poland. Since the 1980s I conduct concerts in Poland for one or two weeks every year.

Have you been involved with Minnesota's Polish community?

Not formally, but my late wife Krystyna was a strong supporter of PACIM. I performed many works by Polish composers during my tenure with the Minnesota Orchestra including Szymanowski, Lutosławski, Penderecki and, of course, Chopin.

What is your opinion on the musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra being locked out?

Well, it is an incredible disaster not only for the arts in Minnesota but also for the world of classical music. It shows how fragile cultural life can be and what improper care of it leads to. Given my 19 years as music director of the Minnesota Orchestra and since then as Conductor Laureate, the situation is a great blow to me.

Tell us about your birthday celebration on February 22.

I am very humbled, really almost embarrassed by it. But it is wonderful. I must conduct and compose a new work. This task is not easy for me. I'd better leave now so I may finish it!



Maestro

Stanisław Skrowaczewski is a world-renowned conductor-composer who served as music director of the Minnesota Orchestra (1960–1979), the Hallé Orchestra and the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, as well as for several orchestras in Poland. His orchestral compositions have twice been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in music.

On February 22, 2014, the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota is celebrating Maestro at a special concert in honor of his 90th birthday. In advance of this concert, Dr. Frederick Harris, author of *Seeking the Infinite: The Musical Life of Stanisław Skrowaczewski* and conductor on the music faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, interviewed the Maestro about his reflections on music and Poland.

The Chamber Music Society of Minnesota presents *Happy 90th Maestro Stan! A Concert to Celebrate Stanisław Skrowaczewski*, February 22, 2014, 8 pm at Benson Great Hall on the campus of Bethel University (3900 Bethel Drive) in Arden Hills, Minnesota. Special guests include Maestro Skrowaczewski, world-renowned cellist Lynn Harrell, Guthrie Theater Artistic Director Joe Dowling, Gunther Schuller and many of Minnesota's most distinguished musicians. The program features world-premiere compositions written for the celebration by John Harbison, Paul Schoenfield, Gunther Schuller, Steven Stucky and the Maestro himself, and other works by Bach, Bruckner and Skrowaczewski. Tickets available at www.chambermusicmn.org.

Harris: You were born in Lwów, Poland, (today Lviv, Ukraine) in 1923. What was it like growing up in that city?

Skrowaczewski: Lwów was one of the great cities of Europe. It was a center for cultural and intellectual life. It fed my imagination and influenced my development very much. Every day I still feel it in my bones.

Have you been back to visit?

Very few times. During World War II, Nazis and Soviets occupied the city. My parents and I left for good in 1945. I made a short visit in 1959, not long before I came to live in Minneapolis, but then I did not return again until 2008.

GDAŃSK — DANGER VS. ADVANTAGE

At the height of the Cold War I worked for U.S. Intelligence in the Baltic region. One day, as I was walking along the cobblestone streets of Gdańsk, I noticed a dozen or so North Vietnamese naval cadets, accompanied by a young Polish naval officer, enter a movie theater showing *The Yellow Submarine*. What a mixture of cultures — American, British, Polish and Vietnamese! During the Cold War, the North Vietnamese navy got their training and gunboats in Gdańsk as part of the forced Polish contribution to the Russian-led communist world offensive. As a port city, Gdańsk has historically been open to the world — to positive influences as well as dangers.

For centuries Gdańsk has been a major hub of trade activity for the Baltic Sea. Beginning in the 13th century, Gdańsk was part of the Hanseatic League, the trade and defensive network of port cities from the Baltic to the North Sea. Through Gdańsk, Poland became the bread basket of Central Europe, exporting grain to the West and importing manufactured and luxury goods. This trade continued even as Poles and Germans fought for control of the Baltic coast during the Middle Ages.

By the 16th century, as the power of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth grew under Jagiellonian rulers, neighbor-

ing Sweden posed a threat to Gdańsk. Clashing over naval domination of the Baltic Sea and expressions of faith, the Polish-Swedish wars went on for years. Sweden focused narrowly on the control of the Baltic, while Poland-Lithuania fought against Sweden, Russia and other peoples to the east and southeast. Gdańsk became the entry point for invading Swedish armies. Facing multiple enemies in the middle of the 17th century, Poland could no longer defend itself against the Swedes, whose devastating invasion came to be known as “The Deluge.” The Treaty of Oliwa (a suburb of Gdańsk) formally recognized Polish weakness and Swedish supremacy over the Baltic Sea.

When this weakened Poland was partitioned shortly before 1800, Gdańsk became part of the German Empire. After the First World War, the victorious powers waffled at Versailles, coming to a compromise over Gdańsk that satisfied neither the defeated Germans nor the newly free Poles. Gdańsk became a “free city” with a mixed German-Polish population.

During the 1930s Hitler accused the Poles of discriminating against the Germans living in Gdańsk. On September 1, 1939, the opening day of World War II, he used this excuse to attack Poland at the Polish fortress of Westerplatte, a small peninsula



Neptune's Fountain is one of Gdansk's most recognizable symbols.

in Gdańsk harbor. For a week the garrison of some 70 Polish soldiers held out against 20,000 German troops. When all food and ammunition were gone, the Poles were forced to surrender. Westerplatte was to begin the brutal Nazi occupation of Poland that lasted over five years.

After World War II, under Communist rule, Gdańsk became a major shipbuilding center, producing small military vessels, freighters and container ships. In the 1970s, Gdańsk's concentrated labor force and greater access to the non-communist world sparked two explosions of dis

Continued on page 11



Full Steam Ahead!



Through a shroud of heavy December snowfall in Duluth's harbor, the silhouette of an international freighter slowly becomes visible. As if cutting through a cloud, the Polish vessel *Orla* chugs into the canal and under the lift bridge. The ear blasting honk of the ship's horn announces its arrival, resonating through the empty hull awaiting a load of grain and causing onlookers to cover their ears.

Since 1870 the port of Duluth-Superior has been a transportation artery smack dab in the middle of the continent. Legend has it that citizens dug Duluth's shipping canal by hand overnight; but, whether it was dug by Paul Bunyan or sturdy citizens, the location of the canal in close proximity to some of the country's most abundant natural resources was spot on.

Linked by the St. Lawrence Seaway to the Atlantic Ocean 2,342 miles away, the Duluth harbor has long been a port for international cargo ships. From Asia to Europe, captains and crew brought their vessels to the little city on the hill, and, along with their cargo, they brought their cultures and history. Stories of struggles at home and on board followed the wake of sailors drinking at local bars. After a few rounds, most sailors headed back to their duties aboard ship; but occasionally some sought solace in the company of area residents and stayed.

During Poland's communist rule, sailors aboard iron clad ships heading to Duluth, Minnesota, smelled freedom in Lake Superior's freshwater spray. By the mid-1980s, when Solidarity was ablaze in Poland, the cool and refreshing air of the harbor sometimes proved too tempting. Coupled with the knowledge that Duluth is home to a significant Polish American population, every so often a sailor would jump ship causing a stir among the crew and with border guards.

In September, 1986, two sailors from the Polish freighter *Zhemia Opolska* refused to return to their duties, and with the help of a local university professor sought political asylum. "Bogdan and Janusz were arguing with the captain when I visited the ship," shared Anthony Bukoski, an area resident and professor at Wisconsin State University Superior. "In those days anyone could board a



Planning session aboard a Polish freighter in the Duluth Harbor.

aboard the freighters. Instead of sailing on a huge ship, Poles began building them for the international market. One of Europe's largest cargo ship operators is Polsteam, headquartered in Szczecin. With the largest fleet in the country, Polsteam's vessels arrive in the Duluth Harbor every other week. The freighter *Orla* that made the snowy trip into the harbor in December is part of the fleet, carrying U.S. grown wheat to Italy to make pasta.

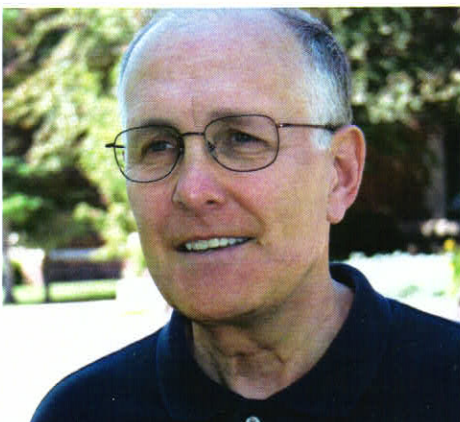
Poles aboard freighters today are mostly high level employees. Engineering and other officers top the list. Polsteam knows it has to compete for qualified personnel so they offer free medical care, professional training and an attractive salary for employees 45 years or younger with an officer diploma and a commitment to four months at sea. Crewmen from financially struggling countries like the Philippines and India fill the ranks, doing the grunt work to keep America's breadbasket filling the stomachs of the world. Their pay isn't anything to write home about, but an average engine room crewman is proud of his \$44 a month and happily sends home half.

A year or so after Bogdan and Janusz met with INS officers and were granted political asylum, Bukoski was standing on the pier watching a ship enter Duluth's harbor. "A really nice car pulled up and out stepped Bogdan dressed way better than me. His transition to the U.S. looked successful, but Janusz returned to Poland."

Watch the Polish freighter Orla enter the Duluth harbor

www.Duluthshippingnews.com.

Jane Mrazek Flanders



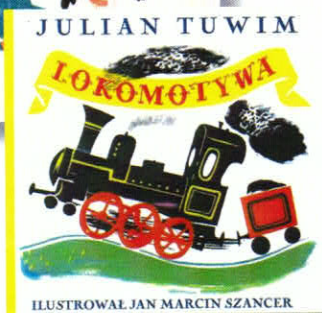
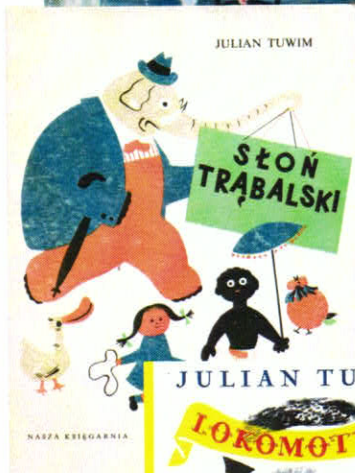
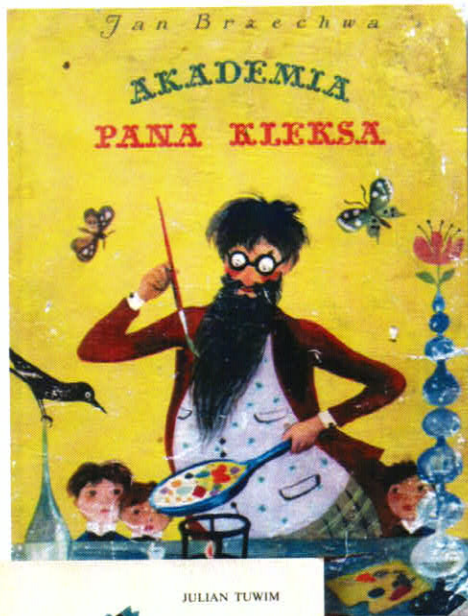
Anthony Bukoski

visiting ship unlike today's tight restrictions." Bukoski brought the sailors to town to eat and sober up. With the help of a local woman who spoke Polish, Bukoski learned that Bogdan and Janusz felt the captain of the ship made their lives unbearable and planned to stay in

the U.S. Not wanting to stir up trouble with immigration officials, he arranged for the sailors to stay in a trailer for the night so they could be fresh to meet with INS the following day. The next morning when Bukoski showed up, the place was littered with empty beer cans and the two Polish men were in no shape to be taken seriously by government officials.

Faced with freedom, why would so few Polish crew defect? Bukoski found that the burdens of home and family pushed most Polish sailors into service aboard freighters. Nearly impossible to earn money in communist Poland, their many months at sea provided food and small luxuries for loved ones. Phrases like "I'm too tired." or "It is too late in life." came from men with faces creased by cares and salt air.

Poland's independence in the late 80s brought a change in the country's economy and in the composition of the crew



The Power of Illustration in Children's Books.

If you want to bring a smile to someone's face just ask, "What is your favorite childhood book?" Along with the smile comes a story. You might even spark a quarrel from a group of friends over the superiority of Polish classics like *Pan Kleks* over *Pan Hilary*, or *Rogaś* over *Stoń Trąbalski*.

One afternoon, while exploring the children's Polish section of the PACIM Library, I discovered many classic books in their old editions, with the illustrations that shaped my childhood. These precious characters beautifully illustrated the original editions of my youth. It made me think, is it the actual story or the illustrated pictures that I remember the most? An artist's visualization of a book is a tremendous influence on a child's life. A tale is remembered often by the cover illustration, the painting or drawing of a favorite or scary character.

I compare *Akademia Pana Kleksa* and *Koziółek Matolek* in originally illustrated books from the 70s and 80s versus modern day editions, and my eye automatically picks up the old one. It gives me a warm, pleasant feeling and stirs up memories of my mom's kitchen when she read me the stories and I stared at the illustrations. Imagine my joy in the library when I see the edition of *Rogaś z Doliny Roztoki* with illustrations by Janusz Grabiański that I read and reread dozens of times as one of my favorites. There are many of those classic titles in the library. There are a few titles with illustrations by Jan Marcin Szancer, the co-creator of *Świerszczyk*. Every Polish child knew his *Akademia Pana Kleksa* by Jan Brzechwa and *Lokomotywa* by Julian Tuwim. Also, the translations of foreign classics — like *Baśnie* by Hans Christian Andersen, *Pinokio* by Carlo Collodi, *Dziadek do orzechów* by E.T.A. Hoffmann, or *Podróże Guliwera* by Jonathan Swift — were illustrated by J. M. Szancer, and we picture those characters in a large degree by how Szancer visualized them. One more that we all love is *Stoń Trąbalski* by J. Tuwim with memorable illustrations by Ignacy Witz, another artist whose illustrations and posters we grown-ups remember well from the past.

I highly recommend a visit to the library on one of those cold Sunday afternoons to warm up with the beautiful classic stories that we wouldn't expect to find here in Minnesota. Come by yourself, or bring a kid.

Krystyna Borgen

To share the beautiful children's books, PACIM is organizing a 'story time' in Polish for the youngest children, ages 2–5. One Sunday each month from 2–3 pm there will be storytelling and small projects related to the story, song, tale, etc. free of charge. The next reading will be January 26th. For future dates, please call PACIM (612-378-9291) or visit www.pacim.org.

PACIM Library

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

HAPPENINGS

Local

February 14

PACIM's Polish Film Night: *Sami Swoi*

Drop in to the PACIM Library every second Friday for a contemporary Polish film with English subtitles. Film begins at 7 pm followed by optional discussion and refreshments. The classic film *Sami Swoi* is part of a Polish comedic trilogy by Sylwester Chęcinski and parlays a Romeo and Juliet theme into post World War II Poland.

February 16

Chopin Society Concert

French pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet will perform works of Haydn, Beethoven, Debussy and Bartok at Macalester College's Maris Concert Hall. A former student of Pierre Sancan at the Paris Conservatoire, Bavouzet is known for his clear, penetrating sound and a musical approach that balances ardor and restraint. Named Artist of the Year by the International Classical Music Awards, Bavouzet's concert begins at 3 pm. Visit www.chopinsocietymn.org for tickets and details.

March 1

Poland and the Changing Economy

Dr. Jan Werner presents on Poland's changing economic conditions in recent decades and its effect on the lives of citizens. A professor at the University of Minnesota, Dr. Werner received his education in Germany and at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. His expertise in the Polish economy is recognized worldwide. Sponsored by the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota, 10 am–2 pm at their South St. Paul location. Visit www.pgsmn.org for details.

March 8

Kaszubian and Pommern Cultures in Poland Thrive

Dr. Joseph J. Hughes, professor at Missouri State University, presents on the blending of Kaszubian and German-speaking Pommerns in northern Poland. Bringing his knowledge of Kaszubian history and culture, Dr. Hughes will examine folk traditions and language in a unique light. Sponsored by the Genealogical Society of Minnesota, 10 am–2 pm at Murzyn Hall in Columbia Heights, MN. For details visit www.pgsmn.org.

Bal Karnawałowy

Keep those dancing shoes polished and get ready to bid on exclusive silent auction items when PACIM's annual *Bal Karnawałowy* returns in 2015. Plans are already underway to make this highly anticipated gala event one of the best. Look for details toward the end of this year.



President Bronisław **Komorowski** remains Poland's most trusted politician. 71% of surveyed Poles expressed trust in Komorowski, while only 31% feel Prime Minister Tusk warrants their trust.

After missteps and snafus in Poland's electronic health fund caused errors in excess of 800 million *złotych*, the country's health fund chief, **Agnieszka Pachciarz** was dismissed.

Following a New Year's Day accident where a drunk driver killed six people, the Polish government proposes **stiffer penalties** for driving under the influence. Moving toward a zero tolerance policy, the government wants to extend the length of time offenders' licenses are suspended and make it mandatory that every vehicle is equipped with a breathalyser.

Kitesurfing along Poland's Baltic coast is hugely popular. World champion Karolina Winkowska's cat-like agility on the wind and waves has made her a leader among professional kitesurfers. After claiming the top title for several years, Winkowska sustained an injury and lost in China's big event during 2013. Having participated in six World Cup and two Ford Kite Cup events in Poland, she has her sights set on the next big competition in Australia.

The Balancing Act of Water and Warmth

Poland pays a significantly high rate for energy resources. To keep people warm and the country fueled, current options include importing more fuel from Russia at record high prices, a greater dependence on natural gas, or burning more coal. One alternative to these fuel options rests under the surface of Polish land and the Baltic Sea with shale oil fields.

U.S. companies that have been courting Poland to gain drilling rights into these fields claim there is enough shale to heat Poland for 300 years. EU and private studies indicate that a much smaller length of time is more likely the case. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk is very supportive of the oil initiative and more than 100 shale gas licenses have been issued and 40 wells have been drilled. Production is set to begin in late 2015.

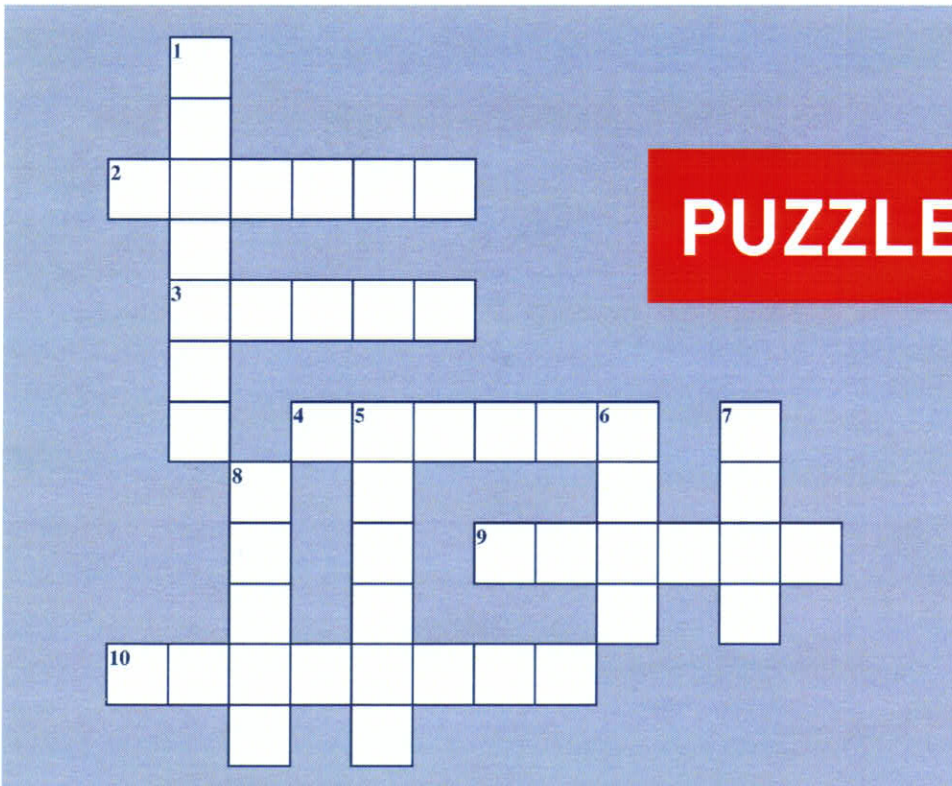
In Poland, all of the subsurface rights belong to the government. However, Tusk and the Polish government face significant obstacles, not only from the European Union Baltic policies, but from very strong citizen backlash surrounding the issues of noise, fumes, increased traffic, significant impact on the waterways and potential devastation. Poland is already under fire by the EU over nitrates and water pollution issues in the Baltic.

The process of extracting gas and oil from shale rock known as fracking is being met with strong opposition among many Poles. Concerns of carcinogenic chemicals escaping from the drill site bring fears of infertility and birth defects. The vast amounts of water used in fracking present the possibility of ground water contamination. With strong reaction to current oil fracking proposals, the EU is carefully examining data on environmental impacts. In October 2013, regulations on fracking were tightened, demanding audits showing direct and indirect significant effects on human health concerns.

Even with reduced production, the Polish government is still enthusiastic about shale gas fracking and the potential freedom from Russian energy (2/3 of its resources are from Russia). With a push to become free of Russia's energy by 2019, Tusk and his cabinet's efforts underscore the common concern among Poles that government is placing political desire ahead of business knowledge.

Not to be outdone, Russia has offered significant latitude in the drilling processes to the U.S. firms to drill under the Arctic in Russia to further boost their energy monopoly over Europe and Asia. There is a balance, and Poland and other EU countries are struggling to find the right balance for energy sustainability and protection of the environment and maritime areas.





Across

- 2 PGS March 1 presenter
- 3 *Stoń Trąbalski* author
- 4 Solidarity's birthplace
- 9 PACIM's top giving level
- 10 Polish cargo ship company

Down

- 1 Stanisław Skrowaczewski
- 5 U.S. inland harbor
- 6 PACIM board member Terry _____
- 7 Polish Film Night feature "*Sami* _____"

November December Crossword Answers

Across: 1. Grunwald, 5. Matejko, 6. Vampires, 8. Borgen, 9. PACIM
 Down: 2. Lohaus, 3. Lempicka, 4. Poland, 7. Amber

Gdańsk *Continued from page 5*

content. In 1970, when the Communist government raised food prices right before Christmas, Gdańsk shipyard workers launched a strike, forcing the dismissal of their incompetent Communist leaders. New Communist leaders introduced a program to provide greater consumer goods, paid for by loans from the West. However, by the late 1970s this strategy also failed and living standards fell sharply. A coalition of intellectuals and shipyard workers, led by Lech Wałęsa, went beyond strikes to form "Solidarity." From its Gdańsk beginnings, Solidarity became a powerful political force, uniting most Poles under its red and white banner.

Afraid it would be driven from power and facing indecision from a Soviet Union

bogged down in a failing war in Afghanistan, the Polish Communist Party began to fall apart. Yet, in December, 1981, with Solidarity leaders meeting in Gdańsk, the Polish military and secret police acted suddenly. They quickly arrested most of the top 4,000 Solidarity leaders and introduced a brutal martial law regime. For the next five years, priests were murdered, people waiting in queues for trams were brutally beaten and Solidarity leaders in hiding were hunted down.

Ironically, as communism collapsed in Poland at the end of the 1980s, so too did the vibrant Gdańsk ship building industry. An industry built on military orders succumbed with the end of the Cold War. No longer a major ship builder, Gdańsk turned its focus to ship repairs and the construction of small pleasure craft.

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Gdańsk's past glory and importance on the world stage are remembered in maritime museums, monuments and crucial lessons in history. The brick and stone buildings from the port city's heyday as a pivotal player are reminders that Gdańsk remains an opening to the world as well as a path into Poland for threats from the outside.

Richard D. Lewis, Ph.D.

Polish Film Night

February 14

FILM SYLWESTRA CHĘCIŃSKIEGO

SAMI SWOI

WERSJA
KOLORYZOWANA

"Sąd sadem a sprawiedliwość
musi być po naszej stronie."



7 pm

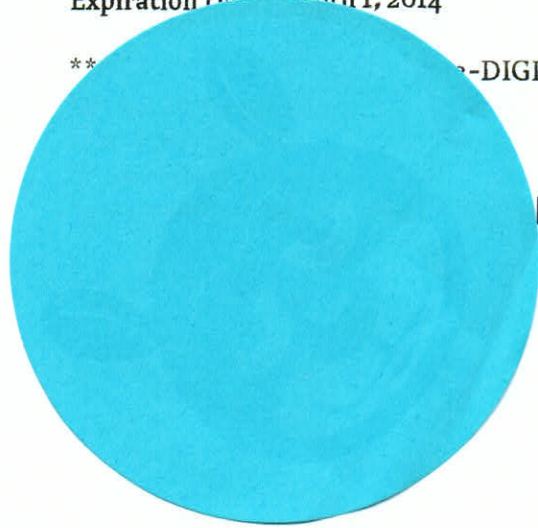
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Happy 90th Maestro Stan!

*A Concert to Celebrate
Stanisław Skrowaczewski*

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2014 - 8 PM

Benson Great Hall • Bethel University • Arden Hills

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

Maestro Stanisław Skrowaczewski, *conductor*

Lynn Harrell, *cellist*

Joe Dowling, *narrator*

Chamber
Music
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