

Welcome—New Members—Witamy

Rev. Msgr. Leo Telesz
8223 Sowinski Ave., N.E.
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

Msgr. Telesz is the pastor of St. Casimir's Church. We send the church a complimentary copy of our newsletter as we publish them. Msgr. Telesz send us \$20.00 for a membership to show us that he supports what we do. What a classy thing for him to do! Thank You Father Telesz!

Mary Shaffer, interested in surnames: KOVAL, KOWAL, SHAFFER
P.O. Box 274
Vienna, Ohio 44473

Joseph & Michelle Kowalczyk DEMBEK, KOWALCZYK, KOWALSKI
1939 Homewood Dr.
Lorain, Ohio 44055

Jason Miskiewicz, interested in surnames: ANIELSKI, BALICKI, CYBANSKI, DEPLEWSKI,
2631 Hadden Rd. MISKIEWICZ, OLASKY, OLEKSY ROZYCKI, SLIWINSKI,
Euclid, Ohio 44117 SOBELEWSKI, TEREBIENIEC, WIENCEK
jasonmiskiewicz@yahoo.com

In This Issue

(There has been much going on in Cleveland's Polonia since our last newsletter and we feel compelled to inform our readers about these events. Therefore, the second installment of the history of *The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish* in Lorain, Ohio will be featured in our next issue.)

Father Ralph Bodziony receives prestigious award—

The Polish American Priests Association (PAPA) held their XVIII Convention here in Cleveland, Ohio from April 16, 2007 through April 19, 2007. At their convention, one priest is singled out to receive the prestigious *Fr. Moczygomba Award* which is the highest award given to a fellow priest by the organization. This year the award was presented to Father Ralph. Pages 2-3

The remarkable case of Helen Pelczar—

Once again, the name of Helen Pelczar resurfaces from the long ago past. For a woman who died in 1926, the memory of her lives on. At the recent *Polish American Priests Association* Convention, Father Ralph spoke to the attending priests on "Cleveland Polonia's most august religious personage, Helena Pelczar, relative of the sainted Polish bishop, former parishioner, mystic, and authentic stigmatist." Excerpts from the paper given to the priests at that time are presented here. Pages 4-5

PGSGC member Eugene Bak knighted by Republic of Poland—

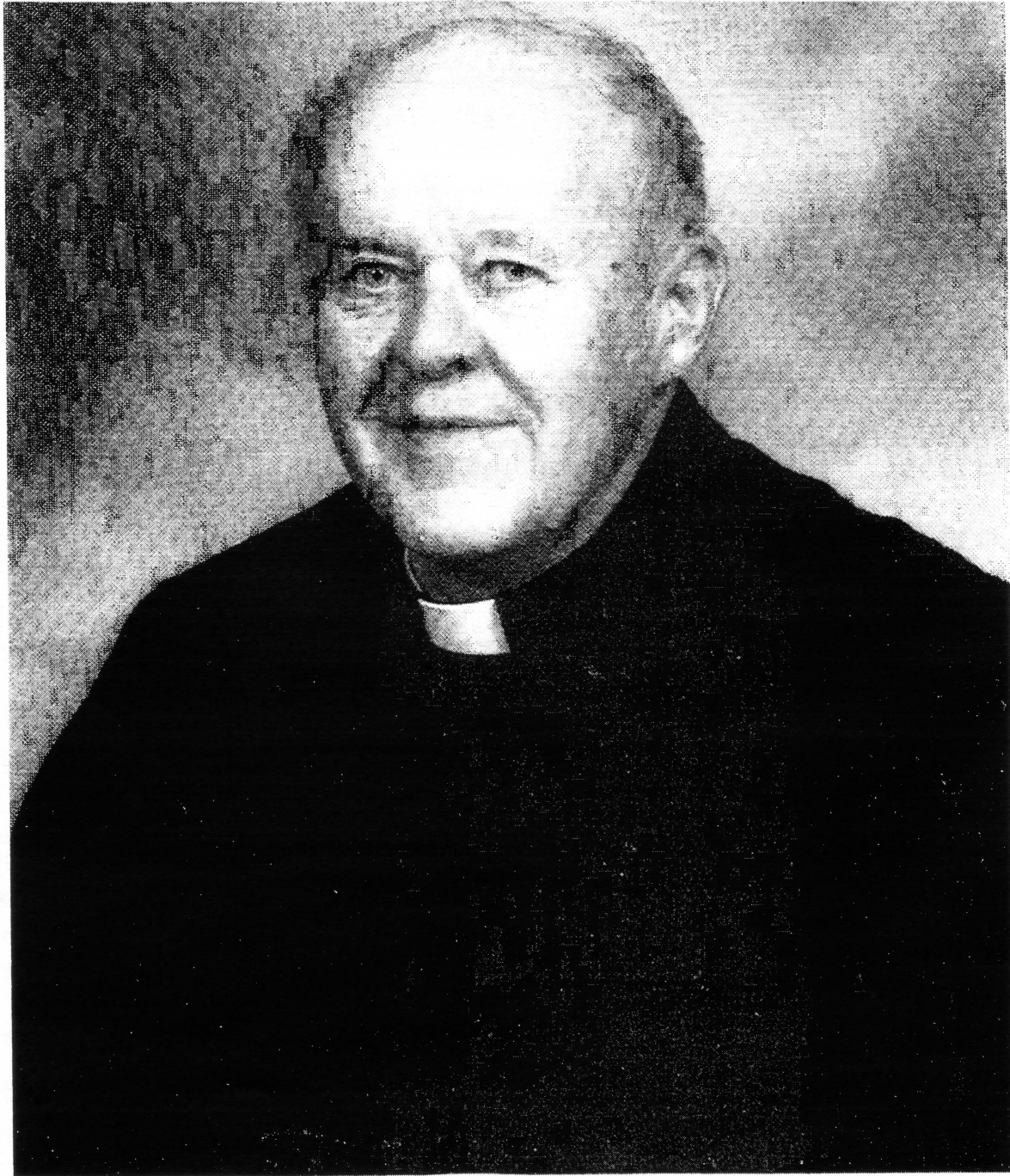
On Friday, April 20, 2007, member Eugene Bak received the highest honor that the Republic of Poland can grant a civilian living abroad. He received the *Knights Cross of the Order of Merit*. The Polish Consul came from New York to make the presentation. Pages 6-9

Photos of the Polish Constitution Day parade—

Pgs. 10-11

This and that—Scattered throughout the newsletter, where ever space permits—

Recipient of the 18th Annual
Father Leopold Moczygemba Award



Rev. Fr. Ralph A. Bodziony

Father Ralph is one of our founding members. Indeed, it is because of him that we have a genealogy group. In 1991 during the festivities of the *Polish Heritage Festival* over the Labor Day weekend, Father Ralph consented to our taking a survey as to how many visitors would be interested in forming a genealogy group. It is from this core of respondents that we formed our group.

Then, we needed a place to convene and again, Father Ralph came through for us and allowed us to use the facilities at St. John Cantius. We held our meetings there for many years until we made the move to our present location.

Fr. Ralph A. Bodziony 2007 Fr. Moczygemba Award Recipient

Rev. Fr. Ralph A. Bodziony, Pastor Emeritus of Saint John Cantius Church in Tremont, has been selected as the 2007 recipient of the Father Leopold Moczygemba Award, the highest honor given by the Polish American Priests' Association. The award was bestowed at a banquet culminating the Organization's XVIII National Convention on Thursday April 19, 2007 at the Father Keller Center of Saint Adalbert Church in Berea.

The award is named after Father Leopold Moczygemba, a Polish missionary to the United States, who is known as the founder of Polonia in America through his establishment of the first Polish community in the New World at Panna Maria, Texas, in 1854. As a missionary, his travels took him to ten states where he left in his wake a multitude of parishes, schools, and religious communities to serve the immigrant faithful.

To perpetuate his memory, the Polish American Priests' Association grants an award in his name at its annual convention to one priest who, through word and deed, keeps the spirit and ideals of Father Moczygemba alive in their service of the Church and the Polish community. This year, that priest is Fr. Bodziony.

Ordained a priest by Archbishop Edward F. Hoban for service to the Diocese of Cleveland on May 24, 1958, Father Ralph A. Bodziony was born in Cleveland on November 10, 1929 to Jacob and Sophia (nee Setlak) Bodziony. He attended St Hyacinth Parochial School, Benedictine High School, and John Carroll University before moving on to St. Gregory Minor Seminary in Cincinnati and St. Mary Seminary in Norwood. He completed his studies at Saint Mary Seminary in Cleveland. His priestly assignments included stints as Assistant Pastor at St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, Cleveland; St. Adalbert Church, Berea and St. John Cantius Church in Tremont, where he assumed the role of Pastor on January 2, 1973.

As Pastor, Fr. Bodziony's tenure was marked by his concern for the betterment of his parishioners and the wider community. He involved himself in many organizations, including the Tremont West Development Corporation and the Tremont Residents' Council. He worked tirelessly to maintain the Parish School and provided space for the Positive Education Program, a group that works with children of special needs. The Matt Talbot Inn, a rehabilitation center for recovering alcoholics, was established in the former convent building at the parish. The parish also began a hunger center as well as an outreach to the Spanish community which began moving into the area. When tragedy struck in the form of a gas explosion in 1986, Fr. Bodziony led the parish's successful restoration efforts.

Rightly proud of his Polish heritage, Fr. Bodziony has done much to support Polonia, its events, culture and tradition, and activities. In his typical unassuming, low-key style, his has been a powerful presence bringing about great good, without which, much of that which we now take for granted simply would not take place. But one example would be how in 1984 he organized the first Polish Heritage Festival at St. John Cantius during the Labor Day weekend which continues to this day as one on the Tremont area's major summer affairs.

Named Pastor Emeritus of Saint John Cantius Church on January 17, 2000, Father Bodziony remains as active and concerned as ever as he approaches his priestly Golden Jubilee. He is seen ministering frequently throughout the diocese and responding personally to the needs of others as he always has...quietly and without fanfare, yet faithfully and effectively. Always with a gentle, cheerful disposition and a kind and uplifting word, he remains a good and dedicated servant of the Lord and a worthy addition to the luminous list of those who have preceded him as recipients of the Father Leopold Moczygemba Award.

And so, with all the priests, present and former parishioners, all his friends and acquaintances, all of us at the *Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland* add our voices in praise of this outstanding member of the clergy. He has done much for us and we are grateful for all that he has done. May the good Lord grant him many more years in His vineyard. **Sto Lat!**

Helen Pelczar

(1888-1926)

The Polish Stigmatic in Cleveland, Ohio USA



Helen Pelczar was born in Korczyna near Krosno, in the Southeast part of Poland, on Christmas Day in 1888, as one of eight children of Francis Pelczar and Salomea, nee Wiernasz. Her parents were poor peasants. When Helen was ten years old her mother died and her father was forced to send her to serve at noble people's houses. She worked at several different places and all the landlords would say that Helen was a pious, obedient and disciplined girl. She had a special devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ and in her youth experienced signs of divine favor. Helen Pelczar immigrated to the United States in 1913, and moved in with her aunt, Julia Wiernasz, who lived in Cleveland, Ohio (near St. John Cantius Church).

In 1917, on Christmas day, Helen got sick suffering great pain. Three days later on Friday, December 28, 1917, some rosy round-like marks appeared on the palms of her hands and on her feet. Also, on her side, a similar but darker mark became visible. Along with the appearance of these marks, Helena's pain would increase. Mrs. Wiernasz called a physician, Dr. Smigala, who after examining the marks stated that from the medical standpoint, the marks/wounds and illness couldn't be explained. It was the beginning of stigmata.

On Ash Wednesday, February 13, 1918, the wounds became larger and changed their color to red. The next day Helen remained unconscious from noon till midnight. During that time she received a vision of Christ the King with an image of a heart on His breast. The heart was surrounded by rays of light. Then Jesus said to her: "Apologize to your aunt for anything you could have offended her with and ask her to let you attend Mass every day, if your health allows you. You shall refrain from eating or drinking anything from Thursday noon until Saturday noon. Also from now on, you shall not eat meat any longer. I shall bless you with a special gift by which you will be able to recognize sinners, for whom you should bear the sufferings I will send upon you. You will experience as much affliction, misery and pain as I did during my agony on the Cross. Due to your great love for me, you will offer all your torments for sinners whom I myself will point out to you." Then the Lord blessed her and disappeared. The above words became Helen's mission, which she carried out throughout her entire life. Helen became an instrument which Jesus Christ used to save souls from the fires of hell through the sufferings she humbly and obediently bore in His likeness.

On February 15, 1918, on the first Friday of Lent, around noontime the wounds on her hands and feet opened and started to bleed. The wounds would open gradually. First, the wound on her right hand and right

foot, then a few minutes later the wounds on her left hand and left foot would open. The wound on her side opened later, at around three o'clock in the afternoon. All the wounds were bleeding intensively until about five o'clock in the evening and then the bleeding stopped. It is very interesting that before the wounds on her feet opened and started to bleed, an invisible force moved her right foot over the left one in such a way that one wound would exactly cover the other one. Helen looked like she was dead. All her body was cold and stiff. From the expression on her face, one could easily read that she was suffering the pains of agony. Since that day, the wound would open and bleed regularly every Friday at the same time. Foretelling her own death, Helen died on April 26, 1926. Her body rests at Calvary Cemetery in Cleveland in lot 603, section 21.

Priests, doctors, and nuns, as well as her friends, documented her stigmata and suffering. Helen's mystical visions and ecstasies are very meaningful and still need some more study. One of her best biographies was written by Rev. B. F. Jarzembowski: "*Helena Pelczar-Polish Stigmatic*", Detroit, MI, 1936 (Imprimatur by Chicago Cardinal G. W. Mundelein). He investigated Helen's life and case in order to get the Church's permission to allow her public cult. Soon after Helen's death, letters started to arrive in which people would claim that their prayers were answered and miraculous occurrences would happen through Helen's intercessions.

We hope that by the Will of God this humble and pious woman gifted with Christ's stigmata one day will be announced blessed and eventually a saint and become an instrument in God's hands to promote the Passion of the Lord and Divine Mercy devotions.

NOTE: Please avoid any public veneration of Helen Pelczar and know if you receive a grace through her intercession, please write about it to the following addresses (do not forget your address and phone number):

Rev. Lucjan Stokowski
906 College Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio 44113
(St. John Cantius Church)

Rev. Eric Orzech
5276 East 105th St.
Garfield, Ohio 44125
(St. Therese Church)

Schedule of Speakers for Upcoming Meetings

June—**Maria Davila**, from The Cuyahoga County Recorder's Office---Public Outreach Department, will speak on the topic: *Website Information Seminar---Property Deeds, Transfers*.

July & August—Summer Vacation

September—**Father Eric Orzech**, Associate Pastor at St. Therese Church, Garfield Heights: Topic TBA

October—**Connie Hamman**, Library Assistant at the Western Reserve Historical Society, will speak on the topic of: *Polish Genealogical Research at WRHS*.

November—Member, **Ben Kman**, will demonstrate how to use the *Slownik Geograficzny* (Gazetteer of Poland) in finding ancestral villages in Poland.

December—Election of Officers and Christmas Party.

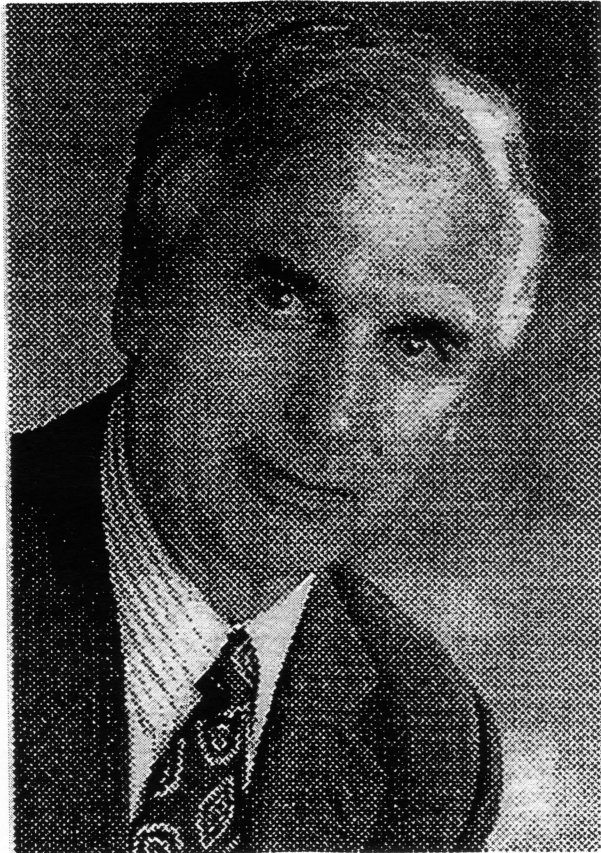


John & Sophia Talkowski

In Memoriam—Long time member and friend, **John Talkowski** of Warren, Ohio, passed away on March 11, 2007. John and wife, Sophia, made the long drive from Warren to Cleveland to attend meetings, our Christmas parties and the Polish festivals. During the summer, he would bring vegetables from his garden and give them to fellow members. If "asked" to volunteer, he never refused. John worked at the Ravenna Arsenal for 35 years before he retired in 1985. He was a kind and gentle man and will be missed by all.

George Zakarowsky, brother-in-law of member **Clementine Zakarowsky**, passed away earlier this year. Many will remember George as the manager of the Third Federal Savings And Loan branch in Parma, Ohio. May they rest in peace, Amen.

HAIL TO POLISH KNIGHT, MR. EUGENE BAK!



Mr. Eugene Bak was born in Polska Wola, Poland. The Soviets deported his entire family to Siberia in 1940. After Germany declared war on Russia, Gene and his family escaped from Siberia in 1942 and went to Uzbekistan where his father joined the Polish Army in Exile. The army and the civilians were evacuated to Iran in August 1942.

As a young child, Gene spent five years in Polish refugee camps in Iran, Pakistan, and India. He joined his father after the war in England in 1947. While in England, Gene attended Polish secondary schools there. Gene and his family immigrated to the United States in 1952.

Gene graduated from St. John Cantius High School in Cleveland in 1952 and enrolled at Ohio State University to study chemical engineering. He graduated from Ohio State in 1957 with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering degree and in 1967 obtained a Masters in Business Administration from Seton Hall University. He also attended business programs at the University of Michigan, Harvard University and Syracuse University. Gene is a Registered Professional Engineer in the states of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Gene spent his entire career in the chemical industry beginning with Diamond Shamrock where he worked as a chemical engineer and advanced to a number of supervisory positions. He joined Mooney Chemicals in 1970 as a plant manager in Franklin, Pennsylvania and was promoted to Vice President of Operations in 1974.

Mooney Chemicals merged with Kokkola Chemicals, a Finnish firm to form OMG and Gene was named President of the Mooney Chemicals Division in 1991. He became President and Chief Operating Officer of OMG in 1994 and was elected to the Board of Directors of OMG in 1995. He retired in 1999.

Gene has been very active in civic work. He served on school boards, the Northwest PA Planning Commission, Venango County Industrial Board, and Hospital Foundation. He was Co-Chairman of the United Way Campaign in 1991.

In December 1982 when the communist government declared martial law in Poland, Gene helped

Americares Foundation raise funds to deliver medicines and medical supplies to the people of Poland. He accompanied the first shipment to Poland to make sure the medicines were distributed to the Polish people as intended.

Presently, Gene is Executive Director of the Polish American Cultural Center, named in honor of Pope John Paul II and has been instrumental in expanding Polish Culture in the Cleveland area by reconstructing a facility to house cultural activities such as distinguished Polish speakers, artists, shows and displays. In 2005 a Polish Heritage Museum was opened as part of the Center to publicize Polish history as well as the history of Polish Americans in the Cleveland Area.

In addition, Gene is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland Society of Poles and Opera Circle. He is a member of the St. John Cantius Financial Advisory Board, Kosciuszko Foundation, Advisory Board of Marymount Medical Center and a number of professional organizations. He is also involved in helping people in Poland by raising funds for such charitable organizations as the Laski Institute for the Blind and the Polish Children's Heartline Foundation.

Gene has been married to Barbara for 44 years and they have three children, and five grandchildren.

An Evening with a Polish Knight

Program

Reception Chamber Music – Agnieszka Duda-Bieniek and
Wanda Sobieski

Invocation Father Jerzy Kusy

Greetings Ben Stefanski
President Polish American
Cultural Center in
Cleveland

Testimonial Marc Bak
Jolanta Stepien
Dorota Sobieski
Bernadette Zubel
Rey Vargas
Lukasz Waszczuk
Dr. Jerzy Maciuszko

Presentation of the Award Krzysztof Kasprzyk
Consul General of the
Republic of Poland

Appreciation Eugene Bak
Recipient of the Order of
Merit of the Republic of
Poland

Concert: Stanislaw Moniuszko "Znasz li ten kraj"
Dorota and Jacek Sobieski
Fryderyk Chopin – Mazurki
Jacek Sobieski

A Night to Remember



PGSGC Member, Ben Stefanski II greets guests.



Master of Ceremonies, Stanley Kwiatowski takes charge.



And there was food---



And there was music---



PGSGC Member, Ray Vargas came in costume.



PGSGC Members Cindy & Ken Spikowski among the guests.

April 20, 2007



Pinning on the medal---



An acceptance speech---



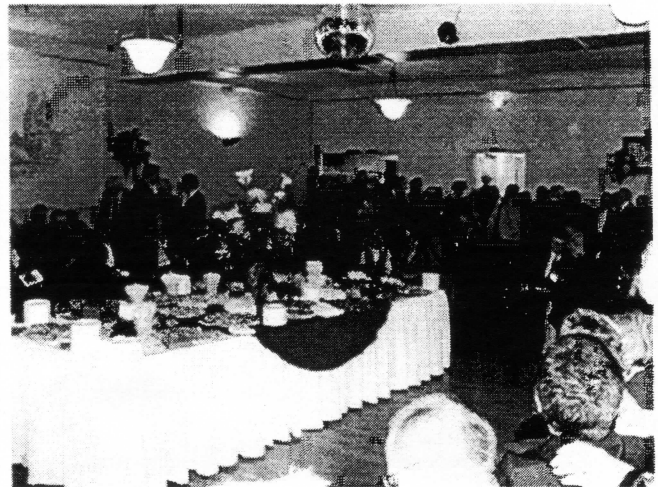
Mr. & Mrs. Bak with family---



Smiling recipient shows off his medal—



PGSGC Members Ron & Elaine Marec in attendance—



View from the front of the room—

Photographs on this page taken by Ralph Lysyk.

Polish Constitution Day Parade—May 6, 2007



Professor Jerzy Maciuszko waiting for the parade to start.



Miss Polonia of 2007 sits atop a convertible.



Cleveland Society of Poles in attendance—



Marchers in costume—



Here come the Vets—

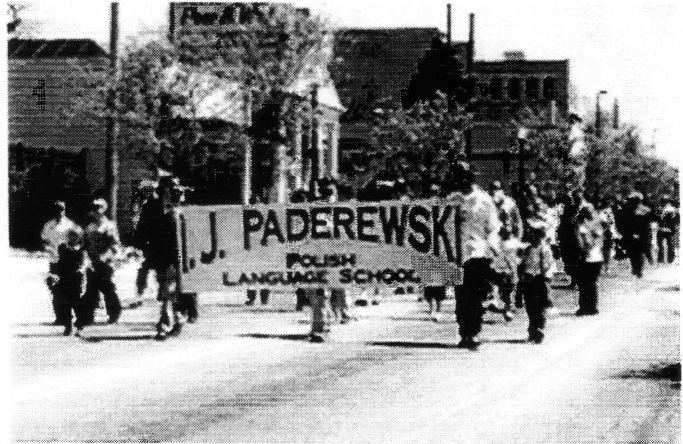


A Polish American Beauty—

Polish Constitution Day Parade—May 6, 2007



Bagpipers playing and stepping-out—



Teachers and students from the Paderewski Language School—



Cleveland's finest on motorcycles and horses—



Polish Women's Alliance in attendance—



The Syrena Dance Group struts their stuff—



The Letter Carriers Band strikes up a tune—

THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND
c/o ST. MARY'S PNC CHURCH
1901 WEXFORD AVE.
PARMA, OHIO 44134

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT: <http://www.freewebs.com/pgsgc>

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"OUR POLISH ANCESTORS"
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OF GREATER CLEVELAND



Everyone who is interested in Genealogy, and more specifically Polish Genealogy, is welcome to join our group. We meet the first Tuesday of the month from September thru June at St. Mary's PNC Church; 5375 Broadview Rd. (corner of Broadview & Wexford); Parma, Ohio. Parking is available in the parish lot, the entrance of which is on Marietta Ave. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM and usually end at 9:30-10:00 PM.

Membership dues are \$20.00 a year.

President: John F. Szuch (330) 769-4603
105 Pleasant View Dr., Seville, Ohio 44273

Vice-President: Ron Marec (216) 752-7513
3316 Elsmere Rd., Shaker Hts., Ohio 44120

Treasurer: Richarda Jambrozy (216) 226-1548
1492 Lewis Dr., Cleveland, Ohio 44107

Secretary: Sonia Chapnick (440) 256-8392
7897 Gildersleeve Circle, Kirtland, Ohio 44094

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