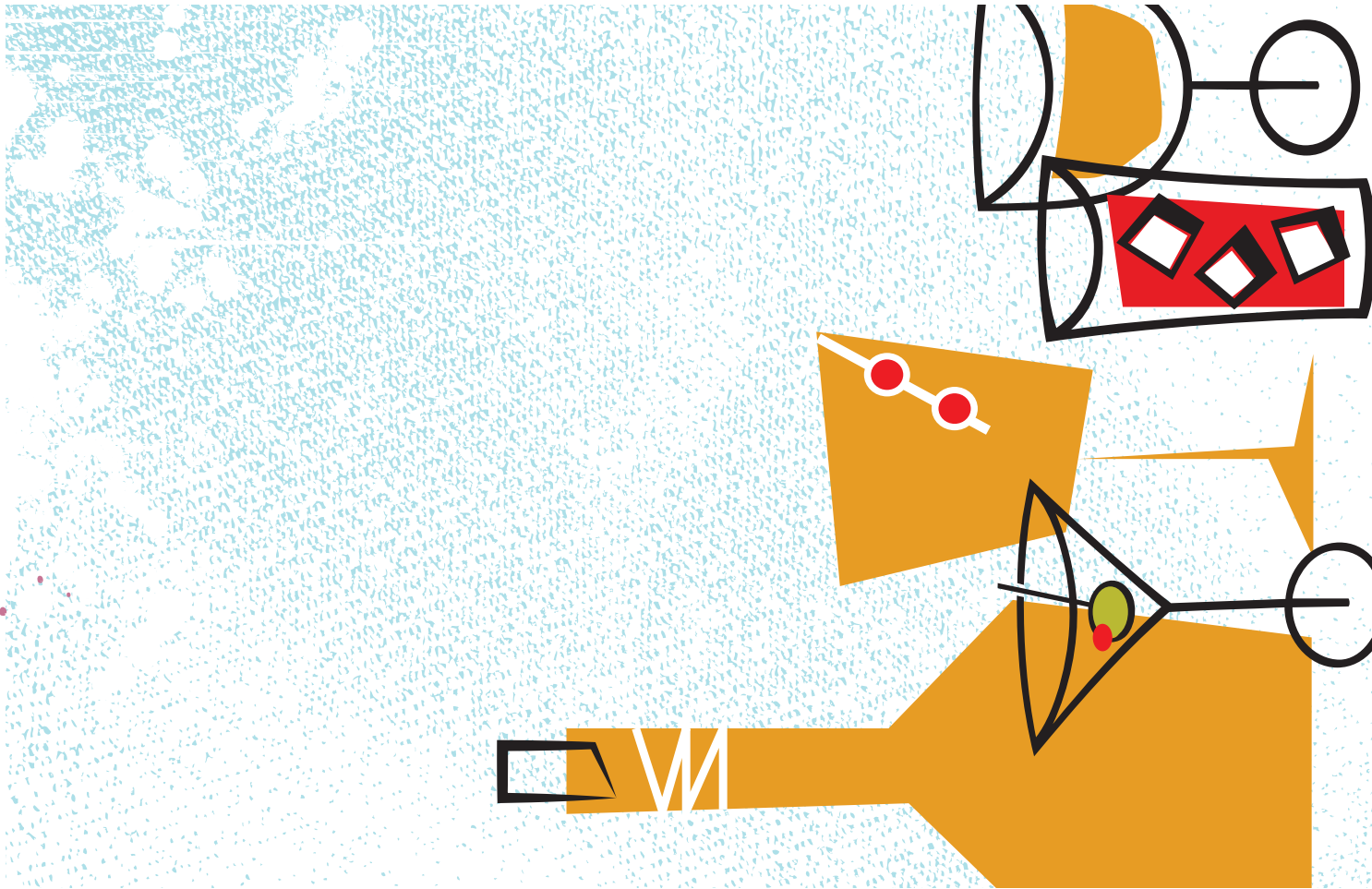


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POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL

JULY 26-28
FRI • SAT • SUN

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DANCE**

CHEEKTOWAGA TOWN PARK
2600 Harlem Road

Meat & Fill
RED APPLE

A vibrant, stylized illustration for the Polish American Arts Festival. It features a large, stylized figure in a red dress and black hat, holding a white plate with a fork and knife. The figure is surrounded by various elements: a woman in a blue dress, a man in a white suit, a woman in a red dress, and a man in a black suit. The background is a mix of warm and cool colors, with large, stylized flowers and leaves. The text is bold and colorful, with 'POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL' in large, stylized letters. The dates 'JULY 26-28' and 'FRI • SAT • SUN' are prominently displayed. The location 'CHEEKTOWAGA TOWN PARK 2600 Harlem Road' is at the bottom. There are logos for 'Meat & Fill' and 'RED APPLE' in the bottom right corner.



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CHEEKTOWAGA POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL

FRIDAY, JULY 26TH - SUNDAY JULY 28TH

FRIDAY, 5PM - 10PM • SATURDAY, 12PM - 10PM • SUNDAY, 12PM - 10PM

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**“Being of Polish-Russian background,
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this event. We are all proud to be
Americans, and being able to celebrate
our heritage is a wonderful way to
bring our communities together.”**

- Margo Catsimatidis





Dear friends of Polonia, as another beautiful summer unfolds here in WNY we are reminded that once again it's time to celebrate what our ancestors created here on the eastern shore of Lake Erie. What started out as a small group of faithful Poles quickly became one of the largest communities of Polish immigrants anywhere in the world. Their sheer size compounded with the love of their country and liberty resonates to this very day. As such we are proud to present to you the 44th Annual Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival at Cheektowaga Town Park on Harlem Road.

The Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival has been a mainstay in WNY for over four decades. Founded in 1980, the three day Festival is the area's oldest, largest, and most authentic Polish cultural event. It serves as an extravaganza of Polish culture and faith. The festival features Polish traditional folk art, crafts, an outdoor Mass, authentic food, dance, and music.

In fact, in 1986 the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival received the Dorothy Mullen National Arts and Humanities Award, which is given annually in recognition of the most innovative and effective arts and humanities programs across the nation. In 2007, the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival was honored by the Ampol Eagle newspaper in the category of Community

Organizations for its dedicated efforts in planning and organizing New York State's premier ethnic Festival for many years.

The Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival has run continuously with the exception of a two year hiatus due to the COVID Pandemic. In 2022, after two years of extensive discussions, former Town Supervisor Diane Benczkowski along with Polish American Congress, Western New York Division President, James L. Ławicki II, came to an agreement to join forces in order to improve the festival experience while continuing a decades old tradition of celebrating Polish heritage and culture with people of all nationalities and ethnic ancestry.

The former town Supervisor had the vision of transitioning the production and management of the Polish American Arts Festival to the Polish American Congress, Western New York Division. Benczkowski remarked, "At the time and after many discussions with Mr. Ławicki, I realized the resources and expertise that the PAC offered in strengthening and improving the overall Festival experience. It was clear in my mind that the Polish American Congress should be the producer and manager of the Festival with financial support from the Town of Cheektowaga."

To this end Ławicki, consulted extensively with fellow Board Members and made the decision to enlist an expert in the area of festival production, Dyngus Day Buffalo.

Ławicki remarked, "Following discussions with the Supervisor regarding the festival, I realized what a tremendous opportunity it would be for the PAC, to embrace the management and production of the festival. However, I recognized that the festival business is not necessarily my organization's forte. Rather it serves as the primary advocacy group and the voice of nearly 350,000 Western New York residents of Polish descent. With this realization, I engaged Mr. Edward Dobosiewicz of Dyngus Day Buffalo, LLC to serve as the Polish American Arts Festival's official event Chairman. Eddy brings a wealth knowledge and expertise in the area of event production, media management and promotion that is second to none. His genuine passion and commitment to promoting Polish culture has been evidenced by the success of Dyngus Day - the singular largest one-day Polish event in the United States. He is truly a master of his trade." Now people from all over the United States and Canada make their way to Cheektowaga, New York to extol the huge contribution made by Poles and Polonia while enjoying Western New York's glorious summer weather.

So after two years of successful Polish American Congress management, it was decided this year with newly elected Cheektowaga Town Supervisor, Brian Nowak, that the Town of Cheektowaga would

transition the complete production and management of the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival to the Polish American Congress, Western New York Division with continuing financial and other support from Town of Cheektowaga.

Supervisor Nowak remarked, "After seeing how the Polish American Congress in collaboration with Dyngus Day Buffalo, has greatly improved the overall operations and experience of the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival, it was clear that they should be in the lead in managing the event. Cheektowaga will continue to be a partner in supporting the event now and in the future. However, we are going to transition the Festival to the capable hands of the Polish American Congress, WNY Division so that we can focus on the Town of Cheektowaga's business at hand.

Those attending the event for the very first time will be surprised at the wealth of activities being offered at this free event. Everything from Grammy nominated polka bands, old world folk ensembles, award winning dance troupes, truly authentic Eastern European cuisine, dozens of artisanal vendors along with an entire weekend of old world crafting demonstrations, lectures, religious and historical displays, cooking demos, children's activities, wandering minstrels and even a real medieval Hussar knight encampment, will be ongoing throughout the park all weekend long. Those attendees returning for their annual dose of polkas and pierogi will be amazed at the growth of the event and the level of authenticity infused into the three-day festival. Whether you are of Polish ancestry or not we welcome everyone to celebrate the rich culture of Polonia and it's impact on the world.

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descendants of the dance

polonia progeny

Polish folk dances are a tradition rooted in ten centuries of Polish culture. Many dances stem from regional customs and historical events. The most notable and renowned dances of Poland include the Krakowiak, Mazurka, Oberek, and Polonaise. These dances are classified as national because almost every region in Poland has displayed a variety of these dances. Many of them were brought to the ballroom floor following Napoleon's expansion into Central and Eastern Europe, which brought French nobility imitating the Polish peasants style of dance, and adding flavors of ballet.

Often people marvel at the colorful hand embroidered outfits worn by dancers. Many don't realize the wide variety of designs and styles, particularly the vests worn by women. There are over 60 different variations of ladies dresses and vests that may reflect region and sometimes social or marital status. The costumes are not worn in daily life but at folk festivals, folk weddings, and religious holidays.

Although, most of Western New York's Polonia is a number of generations removed from the ancestors that created the Polish colony of Buffalo, traditional folk dancing remains part of the culture even if the native language is not as prevalent as it once was. Luckily this art form continues and we're fortunate enough to be able to share this form of cultural expression with our children.



This year's festival is proud to feature 3 different dance troupes from WNY and Southern Ontario. First of all to help kickoff our festival opening on Friday night, we present the Krakowiacy Dance Troupe from Eugenia Dance Studio in Orchard Park. This group, not only has a rich history of performance at our festival, they have also won numerous awards at dance competitions throughout the United States and performed at 2 International Festivals in Poland! In addition to Krakowiacy, we are thrilled to welcome Lechowia Folk Dance Company from Toronto and Opole Dancers from Warren, Michigan. All 3 groups demonstrate the vibrant energy of traditional Polish folk dancing representing various artistic expressions from all areas of Poland. Not only are they all extremely talented dancers, they bring with them a youthful exuberance and energy which not only conveys the beauty and grace of the rhythmic movement associated with traditional Polish folk dancing, but enhances their ability to act as bright young ambassadors of Polish culture.

We are proud to present the Krakowiacy Polish Dancers from the Eugenia Dance Studio, Opole and Lechowia Folk Dance Company as part of this year's Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival main-stage entertainment. ●

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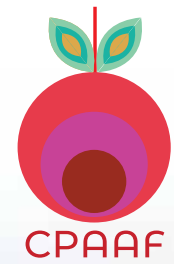
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EVENT CALENDAR
2024



3-5

OCTOBER

7PM

2024 POLISH FILM FESTIVAL

at Adam Mickiewicz Library & Dramatic Circle

Thursday, October 3 at 7:00PM

Rozyczka 2 (Little Rose 2)

Friday, October 4 at 7:00PM

Doppelganger (Sobowtor/The Double)

Saturday, October 5 at 4:00PM

Swieto Ognia (Feast of Fire)

Saturday, October 5 at 7:00PM

Chlopi (Peasants)

w/Polish Arts Club of Buffalo celebrating the 100th anniversary of Wladyslaw Reymont's Nobel Prize in Literature for his great national epic "The Peasants"

(Films presented are subject to change)

\$10 admission, student and seniors \$5

8-10

NOVEMBER

Times Vary

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Prof. Wlodzimierz Batog, Professor of History at University of Warsaw

Prof. Tomasz Pudlocki, History Professor at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow & more!

26

JANUARY

1PM

SCREENING OF IRENA'S VOW

About the WWII heroine Irena Gut-Opdyke

In honor of UN Holocaust

Remembrance Day

at the Amherst Theatre

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email wyrobekml@gmail.com



polka, polka, polka

once upon a time there was a little twirl

For over 40 years the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival has featured some of the best polka musicians in the world and this year is no exception. With scheduled performances from Maestros Men, The Buffalo Touch, Concertina All Stars, New Direction, Al Pitkowski, Dave Gawronski of the Forgotten Buffalo Orchestra, Polka Boyz and a special Tribute to the G-Notes featuring Johnny Karas ...this might be the best polka lineup in festival history.

Although many consider Polka music as a Polish creation, the music is very much an American invention combining Polish folk tune set to a driving Dixieland type of rhythm. The dance itself is actually attributed to Bohemia in the early 1800's. By 1835 the Polka became a dance craze all over the ballrooms of Czechoslovakia before spreading throughout Europe by way of Vienna and Paris.

Within ten years the lively 2/4 step dance hopped over the "pond" to the US and it remained a dominantly popular dance in Europe as well as N. America until the 20th century, when it was displaced by ragtime jazz, and the dances of the Roaring twenties. However polka did experience a resurgence after World War II, when many Polish refugees moved to the US. Polka dances are still held regularly across many parts of the US with Central European heritage.

Although the origin can be traced back to one basic



source, there are various styles of polka. "The Chicago Honky" (clarinet and 1 trumpet), "Chicago Push" (accordion, concertinas, bass, drums, and almost always two trumpets), North American "Slovenian style" is fast (piano accordion, chromatic accordion, and/or diatonic button box accordion), North American "Dutchmenstyle" (an "oompah" sound often with a tuba & banjo), "Conjunto-style" polkas have roots in northern Mexico and Texas, and are also called "Norteno".

In the 1980s and 1990s, some bands began to combine polka with various rock styles (sometimes referred to as "punk polka"). They not only attracted a whole new generation of listeners but have sparked interest in some classic long time polka icons as well. Legendary performers like Marion Lush, Frank Wojnanowski, and Lil Wally have all found new audiences thanks in part to younger people discovering the genre through such groups as Brave Combo.

Ironically in 2009 just as interest seemed to be growing, the Grammy Awards, announced they were dropping the polka category because there was only one recording that was considered to be a "wide release item".

Whether you are listening, watching or a newcomer to the dance floor, rest assured this European form of aerobics can be enjoyed without Dramamine and is one thing for sure. FUN!!

CHEEKTOWAGA POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL PROUD PARTNER



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festival flashback

a retrospective rewind

In 1978, New York Governor, Hugh Carey was present at the opening ceremonies for a new outdoor amphitheater, which had just been built in Cheektowaga's Town Park with the assistance of state funding. Armed with the knowledge that at that time nearly half of the town's 100,000 residents claimed some degree of Polish decent, Governor Carey exclaimed, "Wouldn't this center be a wonderful place to host a Polish-American festival?" That comment would eventually change the summer season for Western New York's Polish community.

The chairman of the Town's Park and Recreation Committee, Frank Swiatek, took the Governor's lead and transformed an annual concert of Polish-American music, part of the Town's Summer Concert Series, into a three day extravaganza featuring traditional folk art, crafts, foods, dance and music. Frank Swiatek served as the festival's first chairman.

In 1986, the Festival and the Town of Cheektowaga received the Dorothy Mullen National Arts and Humanities Award, which is given annually in recognition of the most innovative and effective arts and humanities programs across the nation. The national winners of the Dorothy Mullen awards are judged on content, innovation, quality, contribution to the community served and expansion of interest in the arts and humanities.



In 2007, the Cheektowaga Polish-American Festival Committee was honored by the Am-Pol Eagle newspaper in the category of Community Organizations for their dedicated efforts in planning and organizing New York State's premier ethnic festival for then the past twenty-nine years.

Following former Supervisor Frank Swiatek and Councilman William Rogowski as festival chairman, were Dennis H. Gabryszak and Mary Holtz. Along the way the Festival became more diversified, adding premiere musical and dance entertainment, authentic food and drinks while utilizing new methods of marketing to increase attendance and share Polonias' significance and legacy.

This is now the third year of collaboration between the Town of Cheektowaga, the Polish American Congress Western New York, Division Inc. and the organizers of Dyngus Day Buffalo, with the goal to improve the festival experience, while continuing a decades old tradition of celebrating Polish heritage and culture with people of all nationalities and ethnic ancestry. This is why people from all over the United States and Canada make their way to Cheektowaga, New York to extol the huge contribution made by Poles and Polonia while enjoying our salubrious Western New York summer weather. ●



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Organizations that serve the needs of our community are all members of a vitally important family of Western New Yorkers that make positive changes in the lives of individuals and families, resulting in a brighter future for everyone touched by their good works. **The Polish American Congress of WNY** and ECMC are proud members of this family of valued community service providers.

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Participants will create a plate in a traditional style Polish technique.
The cost of the class is \$25 which includes pattern and all supplies as well as firing of the piece. Seats are limited. Register now via text 716-830-6847.
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FRI • JULY 26

5PM

Gates Open

Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion

5PM

Grand Entrance March

5:30PM

Opening Ceremony

6PM

Krakowiacy Dancers
from Eugenia Dance Studio

7PM

The Buffalo Touch
Grammy nominated Polka Band

Polonia Platform Stage

6PM

Dave Gawronski
of Forgotten Buffalo Orchestra

FREE Demos & Lectures

5-8PM

Hussar Encampment Setup

SAT • JULY 27

12PM

Gates Open

Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion

1PM

Opole Dancers
from Warren MI

2PM

Maestro's Men
IPA favorite band 2002-2014

4:45PM

Traditional Outdoor Mass
featuring Chopin Singing Society
& Kapela Pokolynie

6PM

Lechowia Folk Dance Co.
from Toronto CA

7PM

Maestro's Men
IPA favorite band 2002-2014

Polonia Platform Stage

12PM

Al Piatkowski
IPA Hall-Of-Famer

3PM

Chopin Singing Society
World Renowned Choir

3:30PM

Kapela Pokolynie
Goralskie Folk Group

6:30PM

Buffalo Concertina All Stars
Premier Polka Band

FREE Demos & Lectures

12-2PM

Polish Pottery Making Class
with Michelle Mcleod

See Demo Spotlight above

12-8PM

Hussar Knight Encampment
Banner of Jasna Gora

1-2PM

Making Gołubki
with Linda Lund Ziolkowski of Babcia's

1, 3, 5PM

Hussar Knight
Sabre Cutting Demo

1-4PM

Kids Activities
Y.E.S. Program

1:30PM

Goral Music Lecture & Demo
with Staszek Mąka

2-4PM

Polish Egg Writing
with Kathy Sacilowski

2, 4, 7PM

Dance Instruction
with Lechowia Folk Dance Co.

3PM

Thunder Candles
with Dawidek Newman

3-4PM

Making Fuczki Fritters
with Jim Ławicki of Bacik Foods

6-8PM

Polish Egg Writing
with Diane Woloszyn
& Samantha Michel

SUN • JULY 28

12PM

Gates Open

Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion

1PM

New Direction
Hometown Favorite Polka Band

4PM

Lechowia Folk Dance Co.
from Toronto CA

5:30PM

Polky
Contemporary Folk from Toronto

7:45PM

G-Notes Tribute
featuring Johnny Karas

Polonia Platform Stage

1PM

Al Piatkowski
IPA Hall-Of-Famer

3:30PM

Polish Saturday School
Children's Chorus

4:30PM

Polanie
from St. Catherines

5:30PM

Lechowia Folk Dance Co.
from Toronto CA

6:30PM

Polanie
from St. Catherines

8PM

Polka Boyz
High Energy Polka

FREE Demos & Lectures

12-8PM

Hussar Knight Encampment
Banner of Jasna Gora

1-4PM

Kids Activities
Y.E.S. Program

1, 3, 5PM

Hussar Knight
Sabre Cutting Demo

1 & 3PM

Dance Instruction
with Lechowia Folk Dance Co.

1-4PM

Thunder Candles
with Dawidek Newman

2-4PM

Polish Egg Writing
with Kathy Sacilowski

2PM

Folk Costume Lecture
with Ted Zdybat

2-3PM

Making Kremówka Papieska
with Edziu Kutas of Polish Villa 2

2-4PM

Palm Bouquet Making
with Micheal Szafranski

4PM

Making Fasolka Po Bretońsku
with Jim Ławicki of Bacik Foods

6-8PM

Polish Egg Writing
with Samantha Michel

FRI-SUN JULY 26-28

Heritage Bazaar Vendors

5-9PM Friday

11AM-9PM Saturday

11AM-9PM Sunday

Amber America
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Polish Geneological Society
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Polish Arts Club
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& Heritage

Polish Heritage Dancers of
WNY/AmPol Eagle
Promoting Polish Culture

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Saint Adalbert Church
Memorabilia and Information

Saint John Kanty Church
Baked Goods and Raffle

Smokin' Oak
Smoked Meat Snacks and Jerky

Swede Hill Garden
Garden Gifts & Statuary

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Stare Miasto Craft Marketplace Vendors

5-8PM Friday

11AM-6PM Saturday

11AM-5PM Sunday

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& More

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Body & Room Sprays • Candle Melts

Sugar Swap Bake Shop
Sugar and Gluten Free Baked Goods

Tbirdzki
Face Glitter Tattoos • Jewelry Resin

Taste of Polonia Food Court & Beer Garden Vendors

Desserts by
Polish Saturday School

Kevin Kutas Catering

Polish Cadets

Potts Deli

Redlinski Meats

Sto Lat

Stare Miasto Craft Marketplace Foodtrucks

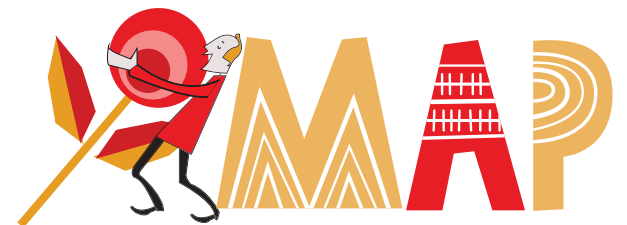
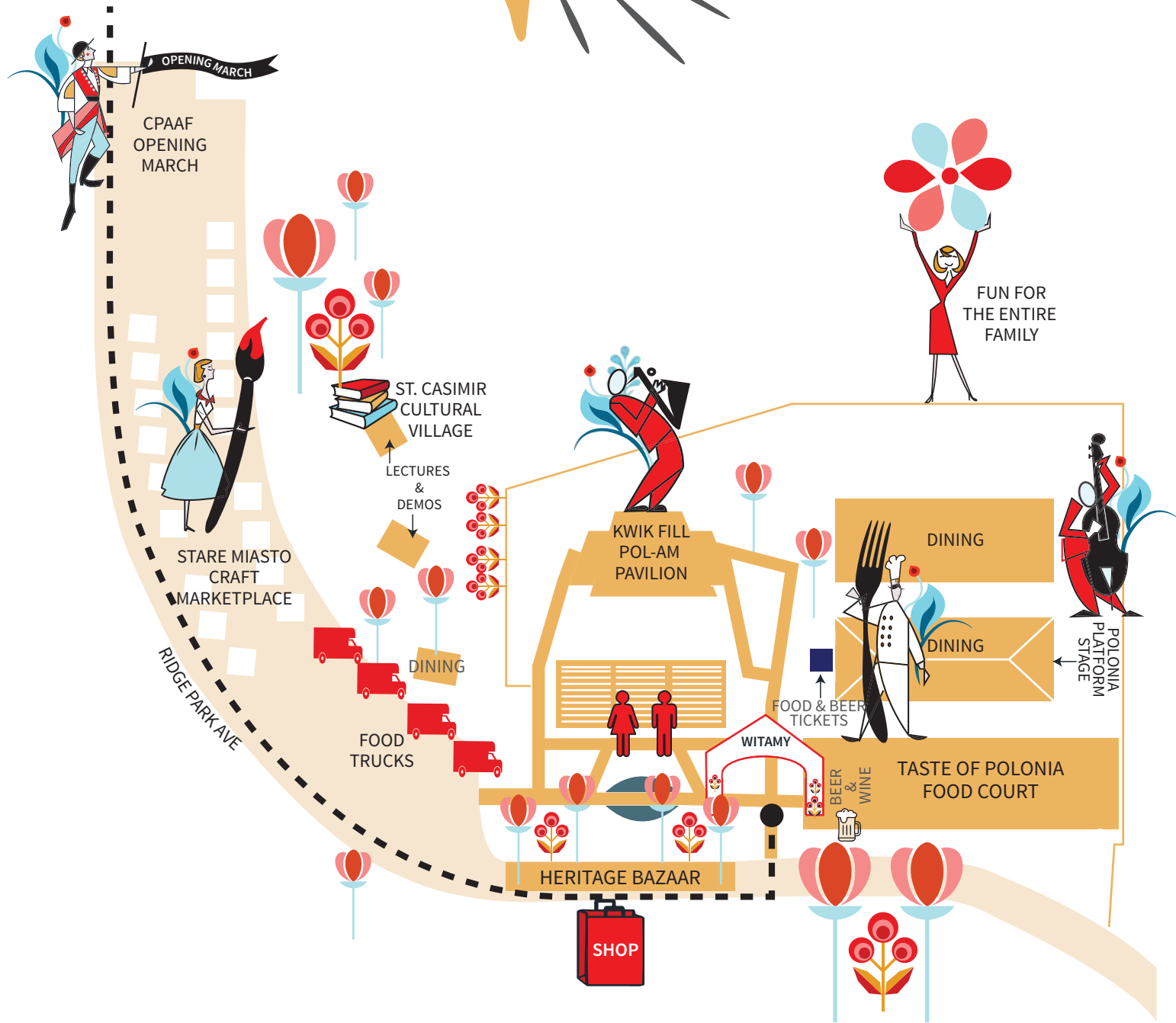
Babcia's Pierogi

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merchants & mentors

souvenirs, knights & bites

In addition to the great musical entertainment this year, we're very happy to offer a wide variety of authentic foods. We invite everyone to sup on all our food vendors have to offer. Whether, it's underneath our Taste of Polonia Food Court tent or one of our Stare Miasto Food Trucks, there's a lot to taste so make sure you come with a good appetite.

After you've sampled some of the areas best Polish fare, rather than risk cramping up on the dance floor, we recommend you take a stroll through our Main Tent Heritage Bazaar to see what kind of treasures you can find. Whether it's a Slavic souvenir, or gift for a friend, this year we have more to offer than ever before. In addition to European folk art, woodcarvings, nesting dolls, and amber jewelry, you'll find fresh baked goods, smoked meats, garden gifts even handmade baby items decorated with Polish sayings.

If early Christmas shopping is not your thing, fret not, there's more. The shade from the July sun alone, is a good enough excuse to take a tour through our tent but if you need more vitamin D why not check out our open air Stare Miasto craft marketplace. We've assembled some of the finest crafters and artisans in the area with this new addition to our festival, adjacent to our St. Casimir Cultural Village demonstration area.

After you're done shopping, make sure to attend one or all of our cooking demos in the demonstration and lecture



area. Our guest chefs have put together some great instructional workshops that they'll share with participants on the fine art of preparing classic Polish cuisine.

Not only do we offer a chance to pick up some culinary tips from our guest gourmards, we also have polka lessons, historical lectures, we even have a class in the art of Polish pottery making on Saturday. Michelle Mcleod will share some of her ceramic secrets while you make your own handmade polish pottery piece for your family and friends to enjoy for years to come.

Even if cooking is not your cup of tea the St. Casimirs Cultural Village is something you won't want to miss. In addition to the demo classes there will be ongoing pisanki and palm branch bouquet making demos, lectures about thunder candles, a medieval hussar knight encampment, kids activities and much more. Check out our calendar on page twelve for complete details. These demos will undoubtedly fill up fast so make sure you add them to your itinerary.

Even in the unlikely event that you have already finished your Holiday shopping it's still worth a stroll to see all the cool stuff or just to check out the Hussar Knights, get info about organizations like the Polish Arts Club, visiting Poland with POMOST or finally research your family tree with the Polish Geneological Society. ●



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sound the alarm

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By 1903 Cheektowagas population had grown from 1,000 in 1839 to over 5,000. Progress had come in the form of railroads, a few planked toll roads were in evidence and water mains were laid to service the town. The time had come, to organize a fire fighting company. A meeting was held, and as a result "Rescue Volunteer Hose Company No. 1", came into existence.

In September 1,000 feet of hose was bought for \$700. Two months later, a number of firemen journeyed to Tonawanda, NY where a hose cart was purchased for the price of \$62.50.

Rescue's first firehouse was a wooden structure located on Walden Avenue directly across from Pine Ridge Rd. Now they needed to look like firemen. An official uniform was adopted and while the firemen were required to purchase trousers and shirts, the company supplied the belts, black leather helmets and badges.

However this smooth beginning was short lived, when in the dead of night, a fire erupted in an adjacent hotel. Both buildings were reduced to ashes. However all was not lost. The hose cart was salvaged, and the company was able to relocate in temporary quarters while a new firehouse was built , and new pieces of equipment purchased. Rescue Hose Company acquired a 4-wheel fire wagon. Built by a local blacksmith, this wagon, with buggy springs, carriage lamps, green varnished wood and gilded leathering was as beautiful as it was function-



al. It carried all equipment necessary for the performance of fire fighting duties, and served well beyond the advent of gasoline-powered engines. It was finally retired in the name of progress to make way for a shiny red and gold behemoth, which was more efficient.

Around that time another company was being formed on the south side of town. "Doyle Hose Company No 1" received its charter in 1911. The original structure was a wooden structure on William and Alaska Streets. In subsequent years more companies were added and new technology replaced antiquated equipment to serve the fast growing community.

Today there are many different Fire companies that serve the town and municipalities including Bellevue Volunteer, Cleveland Hill, Doyle #1 and 2, Forks Fire Co., Hy-View Fire Co., Pine Hill Fire Dept., Sloan Active Hose Company #1, South Line Fire Co., and U Crest Fire Co.

The legacy of those first organizers in 1903 lives on, and the residents of the town of Cheektowaga and their families are safer than they ever been before.

If you'd like more information about becoming part of a Volunteer Fire Dept and how to earn credits toward a college degree or contribute to a retirement fund while contributing an important service to your community call Alex Leader of Pine Hill Fire Co. 716-341-9595. ●

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If you've ever been to a Polish wedding or family gathering and raised a glass, at some point you probably wound up singing "Sto Lat". The song basically means may you live one hundred years. But the power of song to Poles is much older than that.

The significant role of music in Polish culture cannot be over-emphasized. From Baroque to the Polonaise music has played an integral role in Polish culture for a very long time.

Poles that began immigrating to the United States in many cases came with very little in the way of personal possessions, let alone an accordion or other musical instruments. However the instrument they were able to bring along on the journey, was their voice.

Singing has always played a major role in the Polish experience. It served as a way of passing along history. It was a way to tell the story of triumph and tragedy, of love and longing. During the time of the great partition when Poland didn't even exist as a recognized country, the lyrics of songs played an important role in preserving the culture and traditions of the once mighty empire. Singing was a way to pass on their rich legacy to younger generations while keeping it alive for their elders as they fought and struggled to regain their sovereignty, which didn't happen until World War I ended. 123 years had passed in the meantime.

When immigrants began streaming into the U.S. Poles initially tended to create their own communities. Due to the widespread prejudice toward Poles compounded by their different language and customs, the Polish started their own institutions and businesses. Whether it was religious, commercial or social, dealing with people that shared a common language and understanding, made more sense initially than trying to integrate into a society that treated them with such disdain. Singing societies became an important source for that social interaction as well as musical expression.

While these clubs acted as social hubs for new immigrants they also contributed to the cultural and benevolent fabric of Buffalo. These social clubs were the social media of their day.

In 1899 two years after the formation of the Polish Singing Circle on the far east side of Buffalo, NY, an organist at Saint Adalberts church, Boleslaus Michaiski founded the Chopin Singing Society. Early on in their existence Chopins decided to join the National Polish Singers Alliance of America, thereby establishing credibility and the opportunity to take part in national competitions.

Whether it was sponsoring an international young pianists competition, or offering support to displaced families, during World War 2, the Chopin Singing Society's contributions still reverberate today, as they were

the organization that first began hosting successful Dyngus day parties in the early 1960's.

During the decades long leadership of Theodore V. Mikoll and his wife Ann, the Society produced a plethora of rich cultural programming. The Society made three concert tours to Poland, one to Rome, Italy and one to Argentina. It appeared for 15 years in annual concerts with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in Kleinhans Musical Hall and numerous television appearances. It sponsored the International Chopin Young Pianists' Competition for 20 years.

The work that the Chopin Singing Society did to promote Polonia went beyond the stage and the streets of Buffalo's east side. In 1925 artist Joseph Mazur was commissioned by the Society to produce a bronze bust of Fredrick Chopin that continues to greet visitors to Kleinhans Music Hall from his perch on Symphony Circle.

Although change is inevitable the power of evoking emotion and stirring memories through song will undoubtedly remain a force in our shared experience. Regardless of the trials and tribulations we go through, a song can always soothe us through heartache or help us celebrate our very existence. So raise that glass and raise your voice. Sing to the 125th Anniversary of the Chopin Singing Society. May they grace us with their collective voices for many more years to come. Gratulacje!

On September 1, 1939 Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany, an act that shattered the lives of its people and precipitated the start of World War II. For the then 6 million members of the Polish community in America, Germany's ruthless aggression, followed by the Soviet invasion of Poland just weeks later, was a profound shock. Not only were many in America linked to suffering family members in Poland, but it was a huge blow to Polonia's morale, since the community's efforts to work for the achievement of Poland's independence back in 1918 had been one of its proudest organizational achievements.

Given America's initial neutrality in the conflict, the only way for Polish Americans to respond on Poland's behalf was by collecting goods on behalf of Polish refugees under the auspices of the Rada Polonii Amerykanskiej federation. Yet even when the U.S. did enter the War after Pearl Harbor in December 1941 the Rada Polonii was forbidden as a humanitarian organization from operating as a political lobby for Poland's independence. This U.S. government decision effectively paralyzed the organizations of the massive Polish community in addressing the issue of Poland's future fate to America's leaders in Washington.

In response to the forming of two pro Soviet American groups, a number of activists in the Polish community refused to buckle under their intimidating propaganda and organized the

National Committee of Americans of Polish Descent (Komitet Narodowy Amerykanow Polskiego Pochodzenia, KNAPP).

In their view, Poland's very future as an independent state was threatened by an unmindful Soviet-American alliance, a view that also made them sharply critical of the Polish exile government in London headed by General Wladyslaw Sikorski.

Though vilified by critics and even subjected to U.S. government harassment, the KNAPP group persisted. But after the discovery of the Katyn massacre in March 1943, the Soviet government decision to break diplomatic relations with the London government in favor of its own handpicked communist followers, and the tragic death of Gen. Sikorski, conditions dramatically changed. Soon, KNAPP's warnings were receiving greater and greater recognition. In December 1943, leaders from KNAPP met in Chicago with the presidents of the Polish National Alliance fraternal, Polish Women's Alliance, Polish Falcons of America, the Polish Roman Catholic Union, leaders of the Polish clergy and the Polish American press. They agreed that the time had come for the true representatives of the Polish community in America to organize politically and speak their mind to the United States government.

What followed was the call to elect delegates from across the country to meet in Buffalo, a major Polonia center located midway between the vast Polish

populations in the East and the Midwest and to set up a true political lobby on Poland's behalf.

The Polish American Congress was the product of this extraordinary gathering at the end of May 1944. During that convention more than 2,500 elected representatives of the Polish community from all across the United States spoke in one voice to express their total support for the victory of the United States over Nazi Germany and imperial Japan and for the restoration of a free and sovereign Poland once the War was won.

Charles Rozmarek of Chicago was elected president of the new organization and he along with his fellow officers immediately set to work to mobilize the Polish community in support of the aims of the Congress. Although, the Allies' victory in World War II did not lead to a Poland restored to freedom and sovereignty, the Polish American Congress never wavered in their energetic efforts on behalf of the Polish cause, a cause that was at last realized in 1989 with the creation of the Third Republic of Poland.

The record of the Polish American Congress in its constant support of a free and sovereign Poland, its humanitarian work on behalf of Poland's people, and its key role in bringing about Poland's entry in to NATO should be well known to its members and to well informed Americans and Poles alike. Now as they celebrate 80 years of advocacy, let's wish them many more. Sto Lat! ●

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Since the collaboration of the Polish American Congress and the Town of Cheektowaga began a few years ago, the goal for this summertime Slavic fest is the creation of a multi sensory experience sharing the richness of Polish traditions and culture. Not only how that history relates to the huge number of people in WNY and southern Ontario who happen to be of Polish ancestry, but to everyone regardless of where their ancestors got their surnames.

As such, this years' Polish American Arts Festival is much more than a gathering of people dancing a little polka and sampling some pierogi and piwo. Our festival is more of a homecoming, a reunion of family, of friends, a reawakening of memories and a sharing of spirit and love. Every aspect of our festival has been planned to rekindle a sense of adventure and rediscovery. Even if you're experiencing the festival for the very first time, all your senses will be stimulated. Whether it be, the smell of simmering kapusta, grilling kielbasa or homemade pierogi being sautéed with onions, the sounds of an accordion bellowing out the happy notes of a polka or oberek or simply being around friends and family exchanging nostalgic recollections. Whatever senses are stirred, our goal is to provide everyone an opportunity to travel back to your fondest memories of growing up in Polonia while experiencing the

growth and transformation that our community has gone through since its beginnings, while celebrating the significance of Polands history and impact on the world. No matter if your ancestral roots are more parallel to Peru rather than Poland, we think you will find a welcoming and comforting vibe at our gathering, even if you have never nibbled naleśniki or perked up to a polka.

Speaking of polkas, we are very excited about this years festival entertainment. In some ways we think it's the best the event has ever presented. Not only have we put together some of the best lineup that the genre has to offer but we have managed to gather together some legendary performers that we thought were no longer attainable.

Starting with our opening ceremony Grand Entrance March, as individual families and Polonia organizations all process through Cheektowaga Town Park, waving flags and carrying banners proclaiming their genealogical pride. To begin our celebration they will make their way through our festival gateway to announce the start of our three day event. We open our main stage with the colorful pageantry and youthful exuberance of the Krakowiac Dancers from Eugenia Dance Studio followed by the acclaimed "Buffalo Touch". Although based here in the Nickel City this is the Touchs' first

appearance performing at the CPAAF in years.

And that's just for starters. The schedules for both Saturday and Sunday are loaded with all kinds of fun in the sun starting with the renowned ensemble known as "Maestros Men". One of the top polka bands in the nation, this Grammy nominated group from Colchester, Connecticut has been honored numerous times by the International Polka Association and has been dubbed the East Coasts Top Polka Band. "Maestros Men" takes the stage in the Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion before and after our outdoor Saturday afternoon Mass

Although polka dancing seems to be synonymous with Polish festivals throughout North America, Polish folk dancing is a lot more than polka. In fact in addition to Bohemian polka, dances like the Mazurka, Polonaise, Kujawiak and Oberek are all renowned and known as national dances of the motherland. These dances all stem from regional customs and historical events but are thrilling to watch, if for nothing else, the exuberance of the dancers and the colorful costumes that are worn while they perform are equally as stimulating. This year we are proud to feature three of the best dance troupes this side of Warsaw with the inclusion of "Krakowiacy" of Eugenia's Dance Studio from Orchard Park, Opole Dancers from

Warren, MI and Lechowia Folk Dance Co from Toronto, Ontario. Both of these groups have delighted audiences all over the world and we are beyond excited to be able to have them be a part of our summertime fete this year.

Of course singing, dancing and squeezing the accordion are fun, but it's equally important to regularly stop and acknowledge our source and creator. As such we will once again offer an outdoor Mass Saturday afternoon which has become as much of a tradition with our festival as any musical offering. Reverend Lou Klein the pastor of Queen of Martyrs Church will lead us in a traditional celebration of the Eucharist along with musical accompaniment from the renowned Chopin Singing Society.

We are particularly excited about the addition of the Canadian folk group "Polky" to our talent roster this year. This award winning group from Toronto incorporates traditional folk melodies and infuses a youthful energy and exuberance that is sure to raise the energy of the festival in a profound way. "Polky" stands out for its distinctive elements, including the mesmerizing traditional vocals and incorporation of the 'suka,' an ancient lap fiddle reconstructed from historical paintings. Their latest work draws inspiration from various sources, such as Polish traditional music hailing from the Mazovia region and Polish mountains and themes of immigration to Canada. Interestingly, even Led Zeppelin played a role in their creative influences.

Over the years Buffalo and Western New York have been instrumental in shaping the legacy of what we have come to know as modern polka music. In the mid 1960s, two brothers Tommy and Johnny Karas joined forces with Gino Kurdziel, Gene Martin and Jerry Miesowicz to form the G-Notes, a band that many fans of the genre consider one of the finest



collaborations to ever hit the scene nationally. The fact that they were a product of Buffalo's Historic Polonia district on the city's far east side makes their existence an even bigger source of local pride. Their recordings are considered by many as some of the best examples of this musical genre to this very day. The bands legacy will be celebrated on Sunday evening with a very special "Tribute to the G-Notes" with an ensemble comprising some of the best polka musicians in the nation including founding band member Johnny Karas, lead vocalist and saxophone player of the world renowned Jimmy Sturr Orchestra.

In addition to the various performances on the amphitheater stage we have another stage loaded with talent including the accordion wizardry from the likes of Dave Gawronski of the Forgotten Buffalo Orchestra and International Polka Association inductee Al Piatkowski, one of our favorite ethnic trios and always crowd pleasers "The Polka Boyz." An intimate choral performance from the "Chopin Singing Society", the sweet sounds of the Saint Stanislaus Polish Saturday School Choir and the very popular "Polanie" from St. Catharines, Ontario. Plus, more singing and dancing from Lechowia Folk Dance Co and Kapela Pokolynie also from north of the border. As a very special treat we present a good old fashioned Polka Party in the Pavilion Saturday evening with the acclaimed Buffalo Concertina All Stars.

So whether you're looking for polka, prayer or provisions, this fest is filled with the best in world class entertainment sure to please all. For full entertainment listings and schedules see pg 12 or visit our website polamartfest.com.

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remembrance mass

for faithful passed

In his infancy Raymond Kolbe seems to have had a normal childhood. However we are told that one day, after his mother had scolded him for some mischief, her words took effect and brought about a radical change in the child's behavior. Later he explained this change. 'That night I asked the Mother of God what was to become of me and she came to me holding two crowns, one white, the other red. She asked if I was willing to accept either of these crowns. The white one meant that I should persevere in purity, and the red that I should become a martyr. I said that I would accept them both.' Thus from an early age young Raymond accepted that he was destined for martyrdom. His belief in that dream colored all his future actions. Years later he entered a Franciscan Monastery and took the name Maximilian. That vision came to fruition when he offered his own life in exchange for that of a fellow prisoner sentenced to die as reprisal because of an escape from Auschwitz.

Since 1998 Buffalo's Polonia has commemorated the feast day of St. Maximilian Kolbe with a Mass of remembrance. The event also honors the people of Poland who suffered or died in concentration camps, forced labor, Siberian gulags, those in the military and in the Home Army, as well as countless Polish citizens. Numerous survivors, resettled in the U.S.



including Buffalo and the surrounding area.

The memorial begins a noon mass, August 11 at St. Stanislaus Church, Fillmore and Peckham St. Buffalo. Each year in addition to honoring all Poles who suffered, a particular group or event is given special recognition. This year the Catholic priests, monks, and nuns who suffered repression and death at the hands of the Nazis and Soviets are being recognized.

A special exhibit, "Priests and Religious in the Nazi Concentration Camps", prepared by Dr. Eileen Lyon will be available for viewing immediately following the mass at the St Stanislaus Social center. Dr. Lyon received her PhD from the University of Cambridge, and has been researching and publishing on the topic of the history of the Holocaust, with special focus on the role faith played in the survival of many individuals. She is currently working with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland.

A reception with light refreshments will be held at the Social Center directly across the street from the church immediately following the mass. The Polish American Congress, Polish Legacy Project and the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College sponsor this annual event. Please join in honoring the Poles who suffered during World War II. ●



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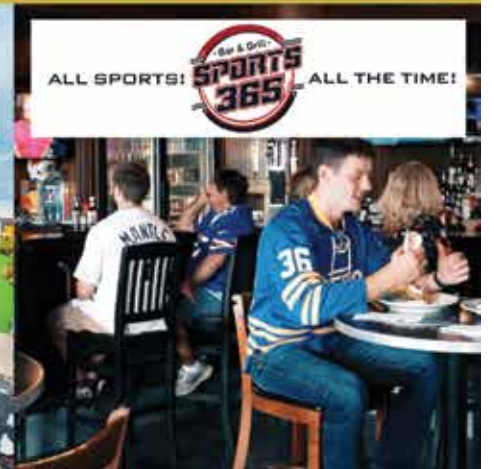
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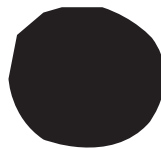


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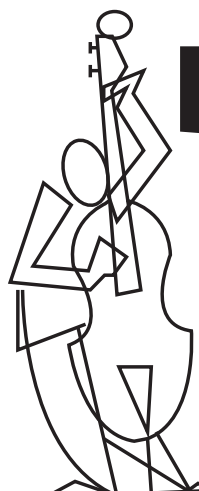
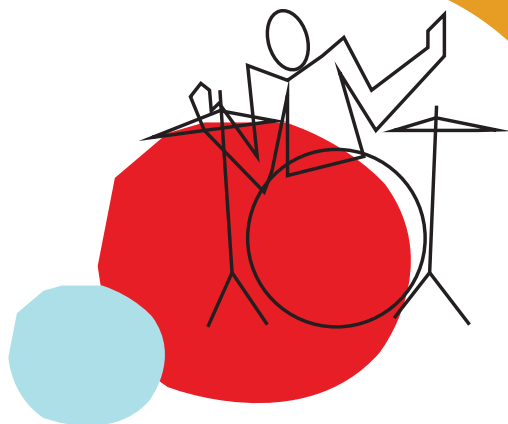
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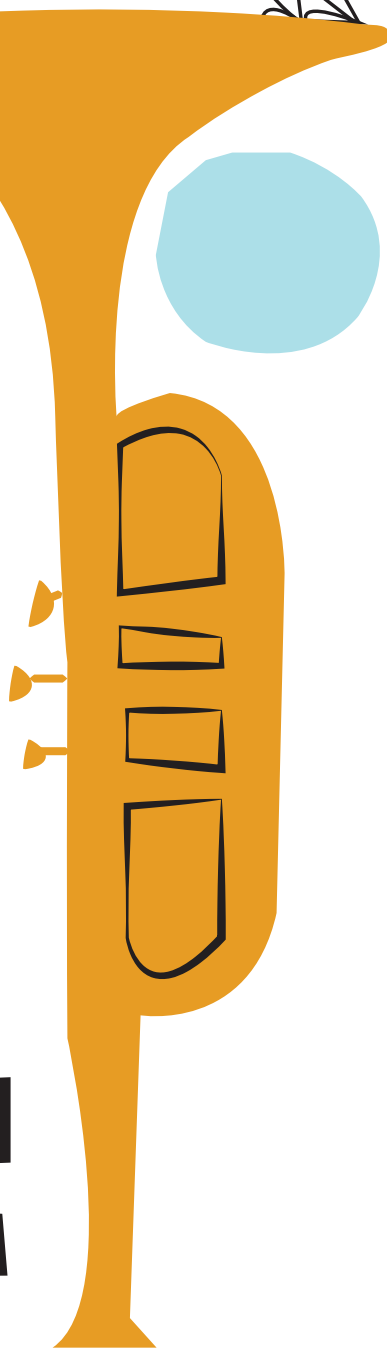


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