



THE POLISH HERITAGE CENTER AT PANNA MARIA

Center Updates | May 2023



Left: Pisanki, the painted Polish Easter Egg | Right: The Lang family from Rockport and San Antonio research their ancestors on Family Day.

Celebrating May

By: Aloys Notzon, PHC Chairman and President

Greetings from the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria during this month of May, which is when Poland celebrates its Constitution Day. PHC Board member John Cebrowski and Dr. Piotr Przybylski detail the history and significance of the Polish Constitution in an excellent article that can be found on the PHC website: polishheritagecentertx.org. An excerpt is included in this issue.

I want to thank our Board members for really stepping up during this period of transition at the Center as we search for our new Executive Director. Special thanks go to Susan Moczygamba-McKinsey for taking over as acting ED. We are actively searching for a qualified Executive Director for a nonprofit organization who can carry forward the vision and leadership that Bishop Yanta would expect.

We would also like to welcome Mirna Estrella as our new Office Manager at the PHC. Mirna comes with an excellent background in office management, having worked both in the Archdiocese of San Antonio and for St. Anthony's parish in Elmendorf.

Recently, Susan and I, along with John and Amanda Cebrowski, hosted the Director of the IPN, Łukasz Witek,

and his deputy Marta Golińska, for a tour of the Center. The IPN, the Institute of National Remembrance, was created by special legislation on December 18, 1998, to be a nonpartisan research and educational agency. The IPN delegation loved the movie and early history of Poland and agreed to assist the PHC in providing books, meetings, editing and research assistance to the Center. We look forward to working with the IPN.

The virtual program by Genny Kraus last month was entertaining and educational. The supporting material, the Polish garb, the physical materials, and the pictures along with Genny's presentation were excellent and quite joyful.

The Polish Heritage Center held an open house "Family Day" on April 1. Susie Kotara, along with Betty Kowalik and her daughter Dana, assisted the participants in painting Easter eggs, the Pisanki, along with learning about other Polish traditions in preparation for Easter.

I want to thank our Donors who are supporting the Polish Heritage Center with gifts large and small. All of these contributions help us to maintain the Center and to expand its reach to more audiences. May God continue to bless you for your support.

Polish Constitution Day: May 3rd Święto Konstytucji 3 Maja

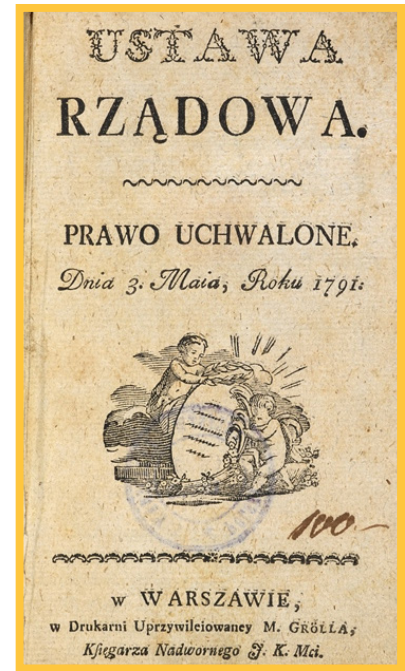
By John Cebrowski and Dr. Piotr Przybylski

The historic Constitution of May 3, 1791 combined a monarchic republic with a clear division of executive, legislative, and judicial powers. It was Europe's first and the world's second modern written national constitution, after the United States Constitution which had come into effect in 1789. In Poland, and Polonia worldwide, the Constitution is viewed as a national symbol, the culmination of all that was good and enlightened in Polish history and culture. May 3rd is a major public holiday in Poland.

The Constitution was characterized by the ideas, values, and persuasive strategies of the late Enlightenment, which gave primacy to reason, law and freedom, as well



as to religious tolerance. While recognizing the leading role of the nobility, the Constitution gave political rights to towns and cities and provided political protection for the peasants, laying the groundwork for emancipation.



It abolished the paralyzing “liberum veto,” a form of unanimity rule voting, that allowed any member of the Sejm (Parliament) to force an immediate end to the current session or to nullify any legislation that had already been passed...a major cause of weakening of the Polish state that led to its partitions.

Catholicism was declared the dominant faith, but full freedom of conscience was granted to all citizens. The Sejm was the supreme legal authority, the king was the chief executive, and an independent judiciary was established. It remedied long-standing political defects of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

However, the Constitution’s adoption provoked the active hostility of the Commonwealth’s autocratic neighbors because orderly liberty would be infectious. It led to the Second Partition of Poland in 1793, the Kościuszko Uprising of 1794, and the Third and final Partition of Poland, in 1795.

Despite being in effect for only 15 months the Constitution is considered one of the most important achievements in the history of Poland. The memory of the Constitution helped keep alive for generations Polish aspirations for an independent and just society.

The May 3 anniversary has been observed as one of Poland’s most important national public holidays since Poland regained independence in 1918.

Its importance for the Polish people can be compared to that of the 4th of July for Americans.

May 3rd is observed with flag flying, parades, cannon salvos, exhibitions, concerts, speeches, readings of the Constitution’s preamble, the singing of patriotic songs, and celebratory Masses.

God bless Poland and the Polish people for their fortitude, faith, patriotism, and leadership.

Our Lady of Częstochowa Mosaic Given to Panna Maria

It was on May 3, 1966, the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland and its conversion to Christianity, when President Lyndon B. Johnson hosted a delegation from Panna Maria at the White House. In observance of Poland’s National Day and the Millennium, the President had been given a mosaic of Our Lady of Czestochowa, created by artisan Jan E. Krantz. In turn, the President presented the mosaic to the Panna Maria representatives: Felix Mika Sr., Felix Snoga and Father Anthony Matula. President Johnson spoke of the enduring importance of the icon throughout Polish history and asked that the mosaic be taken to Panna Maria. Later that year, the mosaic was placed in the Immaculate Conception Church during events celebrating the Millennium and attended by an estimated ten thousand people. It resides in the church to this day. We invite you to come see it when you visit Panna Maria and our Polish Heritage Center.



Bigos! A Polish Culinary Delight

By John Cebrowski, PHC Board Member

Bigos (bee-gose) is a Polish national dish, which, according to historians “has been romanticized in poetry, discussed in its most minute details in all sorts of literary contexts, and never made in small quantities.”

The Austin Polish Society has been hosting a “Bigos Cook-Off” for the past 17 years. A fierce and friendly competition, this social event always draws a large crowd. PHC Board member John Cebrowski (with the help of his talented wife Amanda) won the 2023 competition, in a field of 12 contestants, and gladly shares his ‘Texas version’ of Bigos, Bigos z Teksasu, which contained an ample quantity of Texas beef brisket.

The recipe (below) John used came from a good friend in Wrocław, Poland, but John modified it a little for the Texas Polonia palate.



John and Amanda Cebrowski, 2023 Bigos Cook-Off Champions

Bigos Recipe

By John Cebrowski

- 2 lbs. of pork tenderloin marinated overnight cut into bite-sized cubes
- 1 lb. Kielbasa brand Polish sausage seared on the grill and cut into thin slices
- 2 lbs. of lean brisket, marinated overnight then seared on the grill and cut into bite-sized pieces + 1 large white onion diced into cubes
- 2 Tbs. of vegetable oil
- 3 cups of beef broth
- A package of dried Polish mushrooms (available at Sasha’s European Market in San Antonio, and other Polish food markets.)
- A hearty handful of dried plums cut in half
- 2 lbs. of sauerkraut, well drained
- ½ cup of tomato sauce
- 1 Tbs. of flour and 1 Tbs. of butter
- And the secret ingredient, Prymat brand “Przyprawa do Bigosu” (seasonings for bigos). Google Prymat, przyprawa do bigosu, and order through Ziggy’s Kielbasa House online for only \$2.00, plus delivery!



In a large soup pot, sauté the onion in oil. Add pork and brown well on all sides. Add brisket, 2 cups of broth, and bring to a boil. Add broken mushrooms, cover pot, reduce heat and cook for 45 minutes. Add kielbasa slices, spice package, and dried plums. Cover and cook for 15 minutes. Add squeezed sauerkraut and another cup of broth and tomato sauce. Cook 30 minutes.

In a dry skillet fry the flour, stirring until it begins to turn brown. Then add butter and stir until butter melts. With the pan still on the burner, add ½ cup of the stew mixture, stirring until well mixed. Then transfer contents of the skillet back to the pot, stir and bring to a boil. Can be served now or kept warm for several hours. Taste improves with time! An option to consider: Add a little red wine and honey at the end.

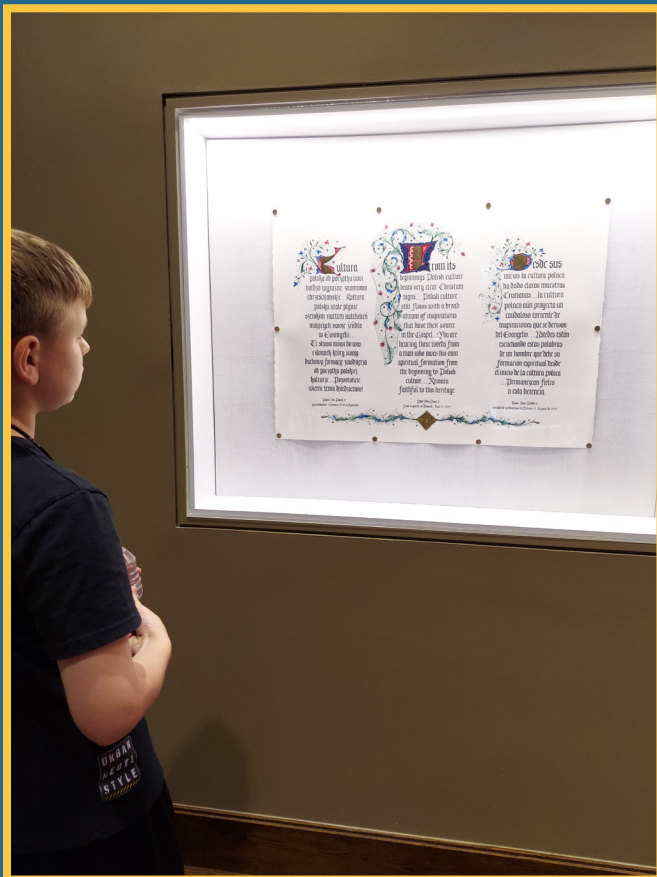
We urge you to consider this Polish culinary tradition for family, church, or community events...and...why not have a local competition of your own! Let your own culinary creativity run free! Smacznego! (Good appetite!)

Adam Zalewski and Joanna Sokołowska contributed to this article which can be found in its entirety on the PHC website.



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AT PANNA MARIA**

13909 N FM 81
PO Box 25
Panna Maria, Texas 78144



“From its beginnings, Polish culture bears very clear Christian signs... Polish culture still flows with a broad stream of inspirations that have their sources in the Gospel... You are hearing these words from a man who owes his own spiritual formation from the beginning to Polish culture... Remain faithful to this heritage.”

- Pope John Paul II
From a speech on Poland, June 3, 1979

