



# Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon, PHC Chairman and President

Greetings during this Polish Heritage month of October. On behalf of the PHC Board, we're delighted to announce the completion of the Bishop John W. Yanta room in the Polish Heritage Center. How appropriate it is to honor Bishop Yanta with our main activity room, since he was the guiding force who envisioned the Center, recruited the Board, became the major donor, and was instrumental in the leadership, fundraising and public relations as well as managing the architects, designer, engineer and contractors. We would not have the Polish Heritage Center without his efforts and the donors he recruited. Many thanks to George and Betty Kowalik for donating the Bishop's portrait which graces his room.

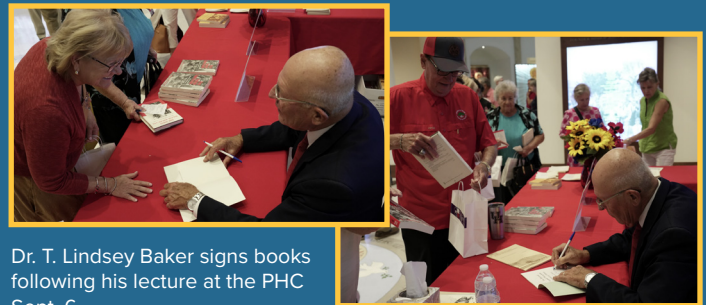
The Bishop Yanta room is available for receptions, reunions, meetings, workshops and other celebrations. Information is available on our website: Welcome | Polish Heritage Center ([polishheritagecentertx.org](http://polishheritagecentertx.org)). (Pictures of the Sept. 30 dedication will be in our next newsletter.)

Dr. T. Lindsay Baker was the primary historian for the development of the PHC exhibits. He was the guest speaker at the Center on Sept 6, treating a good group of historians and PHC supporters to the story of his life and what led him to focus on Poland's first permanent

settlement in Texas and the United States. It was a fine gathering of family in the theater.

The audience was greatly impressed with Dr. Baker's research and his diligence. He made photographic copies of 1500 pages of manuscript letters written to superiors in the Congregation of the Resurrection in Europe by Polish priests in Texas. These were utilized in many of his writings. He donated his books to the Polish Heritage Center and invited researchers to delve further into that resource and the photos in his archives. He answered questions from the attendees and remained to sign his books in the lobby after the presentation. The lecture will be available on the PHC website.

October also signals Turkey dinner season. Get your fill of fine food and fellowship at our Heritage communities. And come see our new exhibit which celebrates Cestohowa's 150th anniversary.



Dr. T. Lindsey Baker signs books following his lecture at the PHC Sept. 6.

# A New Partnership

By Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

The Polish Heritage Center is pleased to announce our new partnership with the Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) grant. The ACE grant was recently awarded to the Karnes City Independent School District, and it also incorporates Kenedy ISD, Stockdale ISD, Runge ISD, Pettus ISD, and Pawnee ISD - all of which are in our surrounding area.

The ACE grant is administered by the Texas Education Agency and provides high-quality programs in each district. It operates in more than 700 centers in more than 140 school districts. The goal is to improve academic performance, attendance, behavior, and student engagement through hands-on learning and enrichment activities. ACE provides before school, after school, and summer activities. It encourages project-based activities that build confidence and leadership skills.

As a partner, PHC plans to bring lessons to life with fun, interactive, community and cultural related activities for hundreds of area students. Field trips to the Center, Polish art and culinary activities, music and dance events are just some of the ideas PHC will be planning with ACE for our summer program. PHC feels this partnership will instill a sense of community and provide a stronger connection to our Polish culture that has made such an impact in our area and throughout Texas. The Polish Heritage Center welcomes our partnership with ACE director, Molly Kollodziej and her wonderful staff!



PHC Executive Director Alice Poore and ACE Director Molly Kollodziej announce new partnership.

# | It's Turkey Time!

By Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey, PHC Board Secretary

Just about the time folks finish off the fried chicken from the Falls City picnic, their thoughts turn toward another bird. Whether or not outside temperatures cooperate, it is time for Autumn and time for turkey.

In several of our heritage communities, the annual Turkey Dinner is a tradition going back more than half a century. Panna Maria's parish leaders were looking for a fundraiser in the cooler temperatures of Fall... one that didn't focus on barbecue and sausage. Turkey seemed a festive option, but the logistics were daunting. How do you bake turkey and dressing for the masses? However, the parish did have a secret weapon: Felix Moczygemba's World War II Army cookbook, which featured a recipe for dressing that served 300. It was the beginning of an honored event that occurs every second Sunday in October.

Over decades of trial and error, expanding barbecue pits to accommodate more and more turkeys, evolving the dressing operation into a three-day affair that would make a field general proud, surviving thunderstorms and heat waves, the Panna Maria Homecoming and Turkey Dinner now serves more than 4000 visitors from all over South Texas. Not bad for a small community depending on faith and an old cookbook. And it really is a homecoming, because family members who have moved away from the area come back each year to work the Turkey Dinner.

The 2023 Panna Maria Homecoming and Turkey Dinner is Oct. 8, with Mass at 8:30 a.m. Serving begins at 10:30 a.m. and the big auction is at 1:30 p.m. There will also be bingo, a raffle, cake stand, kids' games and all the other elements that make this event a staple of the Fall.

Cestohowa's Turkey Dinner is traditionally the third Sunday of October. It goes back to the 1970s when Msgr. Erwin Juraschek encouraged the Altar Society to serve turkey in conjunction with the annual Turkey Shoot put on by the Men's Club. This year, the Cestohowa Turkey Dinner is Oct. 15, as the parish continues to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Mass is at 10 a.m. and serving starts at 11 a.m. along with bingo, kids' games and cake stands.



# | A New Way to Give

By Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

The Polish Heritage Center is pleased to announce our second anniversary. We opened our doors to the public on October 23, 2021, and time has certainly flown. Because of generous donors like you, 3,390 people worldwide have walked through our doors to experience this incredible facility and the beautiful story of the early immigrants, along with the heritage, culture, and customs they instilled in future generations. We are now moving forward with plans to elevate our educational programs, increase awareness of our Polish heritage through amazing exhibits, enhance technology capabilities and expand our PHC footprint both nationally and globally.

To help PHC accomplish our goals, we are incorporating a new method, a QR Code, to make supporting the PHC quick and easy. Just follow these simple directions:

1. Point your camera at the QR CODE to the right.
2. When your camera scans the code an icon, donor perfect.net, will appear. TAP it.
3. This will bring you to a screen called Donation information.
4. Follow the instructions on the phone to make your donation.
5. You will receive a receipt at the end of the transaction.



Please remember that any amount, large or small, helps our mission continue. Because of supporters like you, the PHC Foundation will be able to follow the vision of our founder, Bishop John W. Yanta, by providing a unique experience that will rekindle a new generation's interest in their Polish heritage. Thank you all so much for your continued support and I look forward to meeting each of you on your next visit to the Polish Heritage Center.

# | Academic Opportunities from the Kosciuszko Foundation

If you have friends or family in Poland who want to study in America, the Kosciuszko Foundation could make that happen. The Foundation is now accepting applications for its 2024-25 Exchange Program to the US. Scholars in Poland can apply for study and research grants of 3 – 6 months in US institutions. There are no restrictions on fields of study. Visit the KF Exchange Program to the US website for more information. The application deadline is Nov. 15, 2023. The Kosciuszko Foundation is the oldest Polish American non-profit dedicated to funding educational exchanges and promoting Polish culture in America.

# Brigadier General Kazimierz (Casimir) Pułaski “Father of the American Cavalry”

By John Cebrowski, PHC Board Member

Kazimierz Pułaski was born into nobility in Warsaw in 1745 and was educated on the family estate in Warka and in Warsaw. In addition to his formal education, Kazimierz was introduced into the military through a local “company of soldiers,” which was cavalry-oriented.

His father and other like-minded nobles formed the Confederation of Bar in 1768 in response to Russian interference in Poland’s affairs. Kazimierz was named a colonel commanding a horse-mounted detachment, which he grew into a 6,000-man cavalry army becoming the Confederacy’s Commander-in-Chief. Unfortunately, the uprising failed, his father and brothers were dispatched, the family estates were plundered and he was driven into exile, first to Austria, then to France.

There he sent a letter to Silas Deane and Benjamin Franklin, the first American diplomats to France, offering his services for the American Revolution. Pułaski was sympathetic to the American cause because he would be fighting for the same ideals as he had in Poland. Franklin, impressed, gave Pułaski letters of introduction to George Washington.

On June 1777, Pułaski sailed to America to meet General Washington with Franklin’s letters and his own letter in hand, stating, “I came here where freedom is being defended, to serve it, and to live or die for it”. Washington wrote a letter to John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, asking for Pułaski’s appointment.

While waiting for an official position, Pułaski traveled as part of General Washington’s staff. On September 11, 1777, during the Battle of Brandywine, Pułaski took command of Washington’s Headquarters 30-man cavalry detachment to fight off a British force that had snuck up on the American rear. His subsequent charge averted a disastrous defeat, saved the life of George Washington, and earned him fame in America. Upon hearing about Pułaski’s actions at Brandywine, on the orders of the Continental Congress, Washington commissioned Pułaski the first Brigadier General of Cavalry, earning him the title “The Father of American Cavalry”.

In March 1778, Congress approved the formation of an independent cavalry unit, the Pułaski Cavalry Legion, in Baltimore. By August, it numbered about 330 men. Almost all the officers were either Polish, French, or Hungarian. The rank and file, mostly from Maryland, were Americans, Frenchmen, Poles, Germans, and Irishmen. Pułaski used his own funds when money from Congress was scarce, in order to assure his forces had the best equipment and personal safety.

On February 2, 1779, Washington ordered him to march to Charleston, South Carolina, where his Legion was placed

under the command of General Lincoln in order to relieve outnumbered American forces. At the beginning of September, Lincoln prepared to launch an attempt to retake Savannah with French assistance. In the assault on Savannah on October 9, Pułaski commanded the whole cavalry, both French and American.

As the battle ensued, the American infantry was repelled after two assaults. Riding at the head while attempting to rally fleeing French forces during a cavalry charge, Pułaski was mortally wounded by grapeshot.



“General Pułaski at Savannah,” by Stanisław Batowski, 1933, hangs prominently at the Polish Museum of America in Chicago.

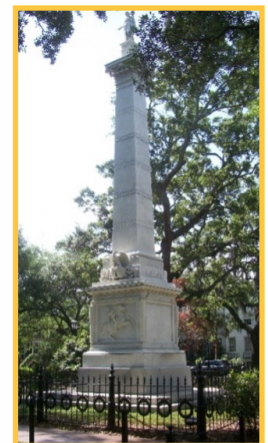
He was taken from the battlefield, died two days later, and was buried at Greenwich Plantation.

Pułaski never took one cent of his pay from the Continental Congress. In his honor, during the period between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, eight cities and counties in seven states were named after Pułaski, and many more followed.

A monument located in Monterey Square, Savannah was erected and dedicated on January 8, 1855. His remains were disinterred from Greenwich Plantation and placed inside the monument.

On June 18, 1929, President Hoover established October 11 as General Pułaski Memorial Day, a federal holiday, but not a day off. On November 6, 2009, President Obama signed a Congressional bill making General Pułaski an honorary U.S. citizen, becoming the 7th person so honored, joining previous recipients such as Winston Churchill, Mother Teresa, and The Marquis de Lafayette.

Ed Krolikowski, past chairman of the Savannah General Pułaski Committee, and Joanna Sikorski, past president of the General Casimir Pułaski Polish American Society of El Paso contributed to this article.





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News from the Heritage Communities

# October Turkey Dinners!

## Panna Maria Homecoming & Turkey Dinner

Sunday, Oct. 8  
Mass 8:30 a.m.  
Serving begins at 10:30 a.m.  
Live Auction 1:30 p.m.

## Cestohowa Turkey Dinner Sunday, Oct. 15

Mass: 10 a.m.  
Serving begins at 11 a.m.

