

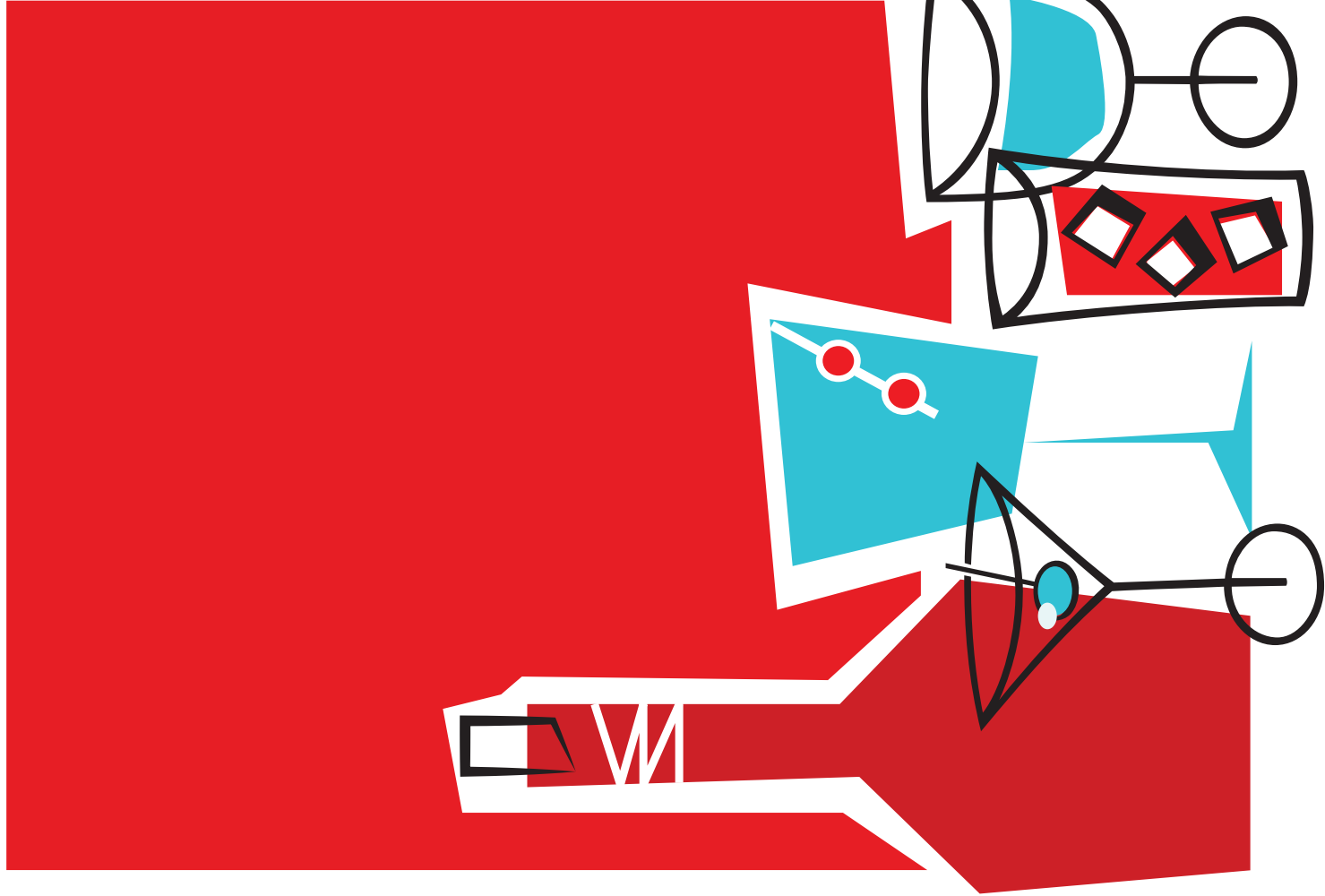
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**JULY 28-30 2023**  
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# **CHEEKTOWAGA POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL**

**FRIDAY, JULY 28<sup>TH</sup> - SUNDAY, JULY 30<sup>TH</sup>**

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Americans, and being able to celebrate  
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bring our communities together.”**

**- Margo Catsimatidis**



I am thrilled to invite all of our residents in Cheektowaga and those visiting from around the world to our 43rd Annual Polish-American Arts Festival sponsored by Kwik-Fill Red Apple. We had such a successful post-COVID comeback last year that I know we are so excited and ready for this opportunity to celebrate Polish culture through food, music, and art. I hope you brought your polka shoes and appetite as the festival features famous Polka bands from around the country and a variety of market and food vendors to entice every palate.

This successful event would not have been possible without the collaboration of the Town of Cheektowaga Polish-American Arts Festival Committee, the Polish-American Congress WNY Division, and Eddy Dobosiewicz. We had a vision for this event that inspired a unique and inviting feel so everyone could experience Polish culture at its finest. Of course, we have many sponsors whose financial commitment to this community event made this cultural experience possible. I would like to thank Kwik-Fill Red Apple for Sponsoring this event and Assembly member Monica Wallace and Legislator Frank Todaro for supporting the cause! In addition, I would like to recognize Bacik and ECMA as Presenting Sponsors, and GoNetSpeed

as a Gold sponsor. Silver sponsors include Cimas Law Office, Drescher & Malecki LLP, Mike Weber's Greenhouses, Cheektowaga Police Captains' & Lieutenants' Association, Frey Electric Construction Co., AVANGRID/NYSEG and Polish Roman Catholic Union of America. Our Bronze sponsors include Nussbaumer & Clarke Inc., Rusiniak's Service Towing and Collision repairs, Chiro First Wellness Center, Alexandra's Pierogi, Baron-Miller Funeral Home, Tile Pharmacy, Niemiec Builders Supply, Chelus, Herdzik, Speyer & Monte, PC, and Kaminski & Sons Truck Equipment, Alton's, and CMH Co. Inc.. Donations were also received from The Cheektowaga Police Benevolent Association, and Disability Management Associates. We are so grateful to all our supporters.

Friday begins with an Olympic-style opening march; I hope you can join in the fun. With two stages again this year, bands like Dynatones, "Band of Brothers" that include former Krew Brothers and Piatkowski Brothers and Dave Gawronski will impress, as well as, our neighbors in Canada, Cross Border Klezmer. New bands to this event include Polka Boyz, Polanie, and Al Piatkowski, and to top off the entertainment, we have "Box On", an entertaining polka family band from Michigan. Sprinkle in some dancers, new demonstrations, a kid's area, and of

course, the beer tent. You won't want to miss a minute of the weekend.

Enjoy the festivities this year and I hope to see you back next year for another fun and enjoyable time. I encourage you to visit the NEW Polish Festival website at: [www.polamartfest.com](http://www.polamartfest.com), and follow @CheektowagaInfo for more information on the Town news and announcements. You can also stay up to date on the Polish Festival by liking Cheektowaga Polish-American Arts Festival on Facebook or following @Cheek-PolishFest on Twitter. Sincerely,  
**Diane Benczkowski**  
Town of Cheektowaga Supervisor

On behalf of the organizations of the Polish American Congress, Western New York Division, it is my distinct honor and privilege to welcome you to the Polish-American Arts Festival. During this Festival we showcase and honor Polish culture and traditions. Featuring music, cuisine, dance, demonstrations, displays, and lectures we hope to share with you our deep and vibrant Polish culture.

Poland is a beautiful country with a highly diverse people and colorful culture. The Polish American Congress serves to represent Poland and WNY Polonia. Its Mission is as follows; promoting knowledge about Polish Americans and the Polish American community, its history, accomplishments and contributions. Close-

ly monitoring U.S. legislation and policies that could directly or indirectly affect Polish Americans. Informing PAC members and friends of Polonia, about specific legislative developments and, where relevant, organizing a unified response from the Polish American community. Supporting the bilateral trade relationship between the United States and Poland and promoting business development beneficial to both nations. Promoting successful bilateral relations between the United States and Poland in the spheres of government, education, business, and healthcare by sponsoring contact between U.S. and Polish community leaders and institutions. Providing charitable relief to Poland, especially in response to natural disasters with special attention to the needs of children, the sick, the disabled, and the elderly. Promoting cultural, political, and religious dialogue with other ethnic and racial groups in the United States.

This Festival was made possible with the help of many community leaders that contributed their time and talent over the past several months. I personally want to acknowledge and thank them for their efforts. I especially would like to thank Festival Chairman, Eddy Dobosiewicz, and Cheektowaga Town Supervisor, Diane Benczkowski, for their time, dedication, and commitment in organizing this event for all of us to enjoy. I would also like to thank all the sponsors and donors for their assistance in bringing this event to fruition. Thank you for your kind support of our Festival. Please enjoy celebrating Polish culture!

Warm regards,  
**James L. Ławicki II**  
President,  
Polish American Congress,  
WNY Division

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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 three 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 two International Festivals in Poland! In addition to Krakowiacy, we are thrilled to welcome Cracovia Polish Folk Dance Ensemble from London, Ontario and Radość-Joy Polish Canadian Dance Ensemble. All three 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're proud to present the Krakowiacy Polish Dancers from the Eugenia Dance Studio, Cracovia Polish Folk Dance Ensemble and Radość-Joy Polish Canadian Dance Ensemble as part of this year's Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival mainstage entertainment. ❁

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**crabapple of our eye**  
cheektowaga's story



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If the word Cheektowaga seems like a different language to you, you would be right because it is, unless of course you happen to speak Iriquoian. The town name is the anglicized spelling of a word describing the local flora, native to the area that is currently the eastern suburb of Buffalo, NY.

JI-IK-DOWAH-GAH (Place of the Crabapple Tree) was named by the Seneca Native Americans referring to the apple-like fruit of the Hawthorn trees abundantly growing in the area. Cheektowaga was formed from Amherst in 1839. Then, when West Seneca was formed in 1851, the town was reduced to its present limits—about 33 square miles. Throughout the 19th century, it went by its original name: “Chictawauga”. But that’s just the beginning of our story. Perhaps visualization will help tell the tale even better.

It’s been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Whether those words are English, Polish or Iriquoian, in this case one need not look any farther than the town seal, to know the history of Cheektowaga. Five symbols were incorporated. They were; the Indian, the Crabapple Tree, Air Ship, Moon symbol and the Architectural complex.

Originally a rural farming area, Cheektowaga was extensively developed during the post-WW2 subdivision boom of the 1950’s. It’s proximity, immediately adjacent to Buffalo’s large Polish



American population made Cheektowaga a logical destination for many returning GI’s looking to lay claim to their piece of the “American Dream”. Modern affordable housing was abundant and factories, such as the Westinghouse Electric plant on Genesee Street generated employment for many decades. The town continues to maintain a strong blue collar presence to this day.

Transportation also played an integral role in Cheektowaga’s growth. With it’s combined air, highway, and railroad facilities it became a natural choice for industries like Curtis Wright, Bell Aircraft along with Westinghouse and many others to come and create manufacturing facilities.

Although it is a very ethnically diverse community, nearly 40% of the population can still lay claim to some type of Polish ancestry making Cheektowaga a natural location for the annual Polish American Arts Festival.

This Western New York town, located in the heart of Erie County is the 2nd largest suburb of Buffalo and is just 10 miles from the Canadian border. Cheektowaga continues to be an ever growing, ever expanding community. In addition to it's many business opportunities, Cheektowaga also has a full range of recreational and cultural activities and facilities. There is something for everyone in Cheektowaga! Now that’s a pretty picture.

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 U.S. 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.




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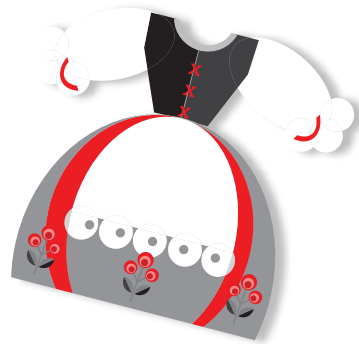
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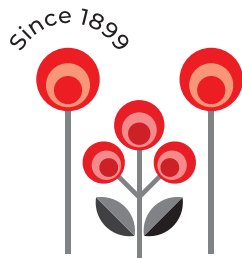
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**polka, polka, polka**  
 how it all began

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 Box On, The Dynatones, Band of Brothers featuring the Krew and Piatkowski Brothers, Dave Gawronski of the Forgotten Buffalo Orchestra, the Polka Boyz and more ...this could be the best lineup yet.

Although many consider Polka music as a Polish creation, the music is very much an American invention combining Polish folk tunes 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" (using clarinet and one



trumpet), "ChicagoPush" (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! 🌸

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We hope to share with you our deep and vibrant Polish culture. The Polish American Congress serves to represent Poland and Western New York, Polish-Americans in a myriad of ways.

From cultural and educational support for the Polish-American community, to bi-lateral relations between Poland and the United States.

The Polish American Congress continuously strives to promote the history, accomplishments and contributions of Polish-Americans.

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## festival flashback

fun facts

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. Now Town Supervisor Diane Benczkowski, along with the PACWNY, have joined forces with the organizers of Dyngus Day Buffalo 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. People from all over the United States and Canada make their way to Cheektowaga, NY to extol the huge contribution made by Poles and Polonia while enjoying our salubrious WNY summer weather. 



# ECMC...Proud to support The 2023 Polish American Arts Festival

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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# C P A A F CHEEKTOWAGA POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL \* JULY 28-30 2023

## FRI JULY 28

5PM Gates Open

### Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion

5PM

Grand Entrance March

5:30PM

Opening Ceremony

6PM

Krakowiacy Dancers from Eugenia Dance Studio

7-10PM

Band Of Brothers featuring Krew & Piatkowski Brothers

### Polonia Platform Stage

6-10PM

Dave Gawronski

## SAT JULY 29

12PM Gates Open

### Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion

1-3:30PM

Box On First Family of Polka

3:30-4PM

Cracovia Polish Folk Dance Ensemble

4:45-5:45PM

Outdoor Mass featuring Chopin Singing Society

6-6:30PM

Cracovia Polish Folk Dance Ensemble

6:45-8:45PM

Dynatones Polka Legends

9-10PM

Box On First Family of Polka

### Polonia Platform Stage

12-3PM

Al Piatkowski

3-3:30PM

Chopin Singing Society

6-10PM Polka Boyz

### Dziura Kukurydziana Cornhole Tournament

2-7PM

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### FREE Demos & Lectures

12-3PM

Kids Activities

1-3PM

Polish Egg Writing with Kathy Sacilowski

1-3PM

Flower Branch Palms with Michael Szafranski

1-8PM

Family Faith Videos "Holidays at St Casimirs" "Jasna Gora Shrine"

2-3PM

Nickel City Longsword Academy full contact historical sparring

2-3PM

Cooking Demo with Edziu Kutas of Polish Villa 2

3:15-4:15PM

Golden Grain & Harvest Loaf Rituals with Diane Woloszyn, WNY Dairy Farming Family Farmer and Culinary Expert

2-8PM

Poland's Hussars with Knights of the Queen Protector

4:30-5:30PM

Cooking Demo with Linda Lund Ziolkowski of Babcia's Pierogi

4-8PM

Thunder Candles with Dawidek Newman

4-8PM

Polish Egg Writing with Kathy Sacilowski

4-8PM

Kids Activities

## SUN JULY 30

12PM Gates Open

### Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion

1-3PM

Box On First Family of Polka

3-3:30PM

Radość-Joy Folklore Dance Group with Ania Piwowarczyk

4-5PM

Box On First Family of Polka

5-5:30PM

Radość-Joy Folklore Dance Group with Ania Piwowarczyk

6-9:30PM

Dynatones Polka Legends

### Polonia Platform Stage

1-4PM

Cross Border Klezmer from WNY & Ontario

4-4:30PM

Polished Saturday School Chorus

5-9PM

Polanie from St. Catherines

### FREE Demos & Lectures

12-3PM

Kids Activities

1-3PM

Polish Egg Writing with Kathy Sacilowski & Samantha Michel

1-4PM

Thunder Candles with Dawidek Newman

1-8PM

Supernatural Hardware with Kathy Sitarek

1-8PM

Family Faith Videos "Holidays at St Casimirs" "Jasna Gora Shrine"

2-3PM

Nickel City Longsword Academy full contact historical sparring

2-4PM

Living Memorials with Annie Graver

2-8PM

Poland's Hussars with Knights of the Queen Protector

3PM

Making Kapusta

with Sophie Hodorowicz Knab

4-8PM

Kids Activities

4-8PM

Polish Egg Writing with Kathy Sacilowski & Samantha Michel

6PM

Making Pickles with Sophie Hodorowicz Knab

## FRI-SUN JULY 28-30

### Heritage Bazaar Vendors

5-9PM Friday

11AM-9PM Saturday

11AM-9PM Sunday

Amber America Amber Jewelry

Barrel & Brine Pickling & Fermented Products

Buffalo Artisan Food Traders Buffalo's Favorite Products

Buffalo Seamery Handmade Buffalo Apparel

Creative Butterflies Arts & Crafts Supplies

European Folk Art

Genevieve's Cheesecake Specialty & Baked Goods

Jabco General Store Polish Gifts & Apparel

Mazurek's Bakery Freshly Baked Goods & Breads

Polish Geneological Society Ancestry Research

Polish Arts Club Promoting Poland's Culture & Heritage

Polish Heritage Dancers of WNY/AmPol Eagle Promoting Polish Culture

Pomost English Tutoring in Poland

Quo Vadis Christian Arts & Crafts

Swede Hill Garden & Gifts Garden Gifts & Statuary

TK Franks Polka Records Polka Record Dealer

### Stare Miasto Craft Marketplace Vendors

5-8PM Friday

11AM-6PM Saturday  
11AM-5PM Sunday

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Color Street Nail Art Dry Nail Polish

EMCO Woodworking Signs, Trays & Cutting Boards

E'Scentual Pleasures Soy Candles & Wax Melts

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Go Pink Buffalo Buffalo Lawn Ornaments

Jacara Custom Designs Lazer engraved decorative items

Let's Bow Buffalo Custom Bows for Your Pets

Nildas Jazzy Gems Papparazzi Adult & Children's Jewelry

Red Aspen Beauty Vegan Cruelty-Free Nails & Makeup

RoseHarts Kitchen Items, Totes & Wallets

Spirit Linked Dreamcatchers, Resin Art & Jewelry

Sugar Swap Bake Shop Keto & Gluten Free Baked Goods

Tastefully Simple with Mel Seasonings, Dip & Drink Mixes

The Nut Hut Nuts, Ice Cream & Kettle Corn

Traveling Growler Growling Covers & Cozies

### Taste of Polonia Food Court & Beer Garden Vendors

Polish Cadets

Polska Chata

Potts Deli

Redlinski Meats

Desserts by Polish Saturday School

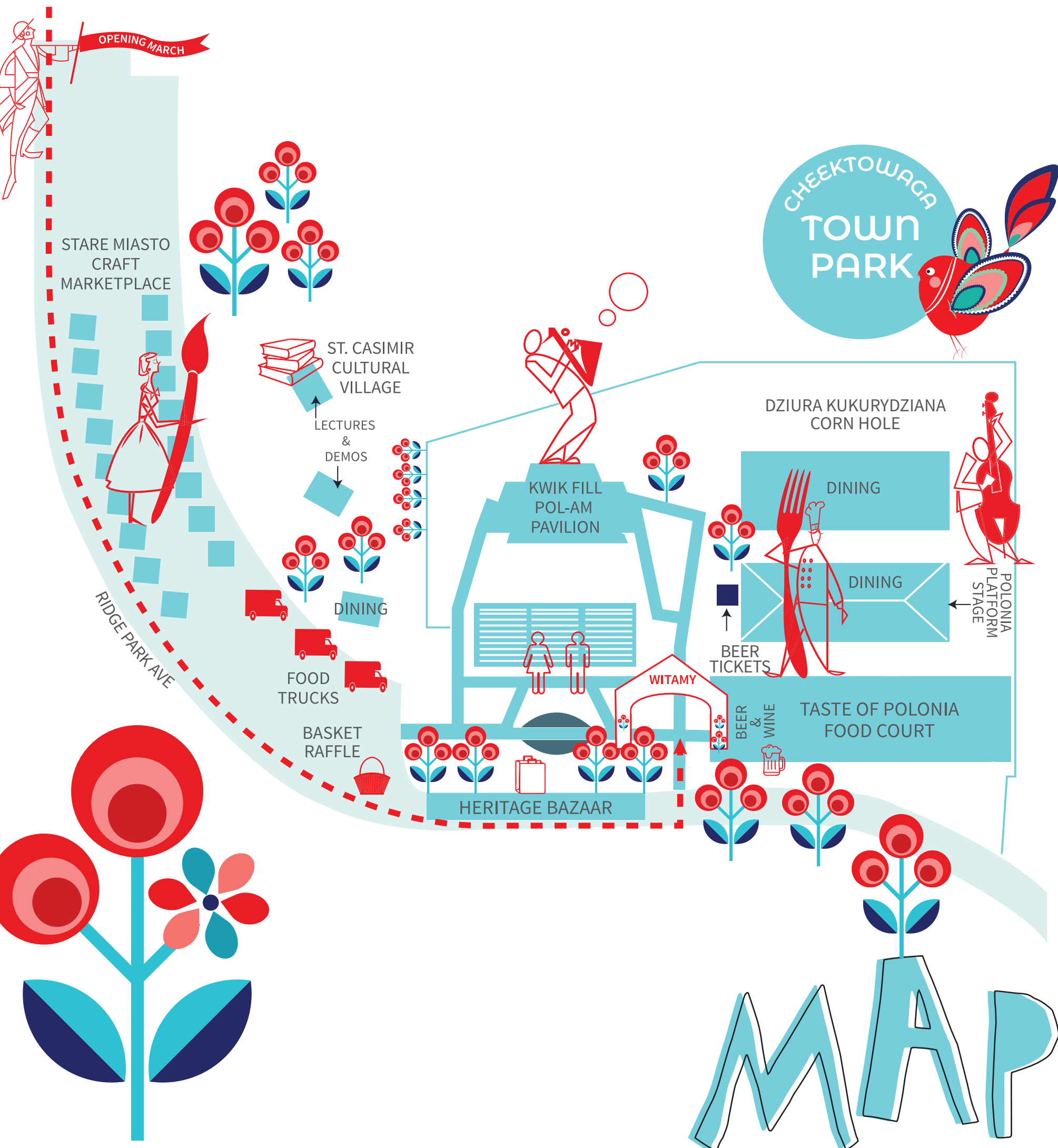
### Stare Miasto Craft Marketplace Foodtrucks

Babcia's Pierogi

Polish Villa 2

Charlap's Ice Cream

Just Pizza  
Pierogi Pizza





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**7:00PM Harvest Mass and Blessing**  
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**Refreshments**  
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**Spiritual Ecology**  
 Faith and foliage Show  
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**bites, bits & bazaars**  
 vendors, venerations and demonstrations

In addition to the great musical entertainment this year, we're very happy to offer a wide variety of authentic foods and we invite everyone to try all our food vendors have to offer, whether it's underneath our food court tent or one of our 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, wood-carvings, nesting dolls, amber jewelry, and hard to find Polish cd's, you'll find fresh baked goods, garden gifts, fermented fun 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 cultural village demonstration area.



Speaking of which, make sure to attend one or all of our cooking demos in the demonstration and lecture area. Our guest chefs have put together a whole program of instructional workshops that they'll share with participants on the fine art of preparing classic Polish cuisine. Edziu Kutas of Polish Villa fame will share some of his family's favorite recipes along with Linda Lund Ziolkowski from Babcias Pierogi. Sophie Knabs sauerkraut and pickle making demos will undoubtedly fill up fast so make sure you add that to your itinerary. 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 culinary classes there will be ongoing pisanki and palm branch bouquet demos, lectures about thunder candles, medieval huszar knights, long sword demonstrations, kids activities and much more.

Although it's highly unlikely that you've already finished your Christmas shopping it's still worth a stroll to see all the cool stuff or just to check out the pisanki making demos, get info about organizations like the Polish Arts Club, POMOST, the Polish Heritage Dancers or even research your family tree with the Polish Geneological Society.




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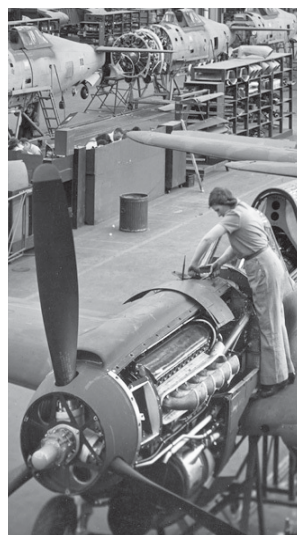


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It seems that over the last few years the interest in local history has really taken root. The explosion of nostalgic groups on social media sites sharing stories, photos and personal recollections makes it very evident that in spite of what you may have thought about sixth grade history class, learning about the past is now considered cool. Honestly though, learning about our past is as helpful as a roadmap is on any journey. It's important to know where you came from in order to see where you're going.

While the history of Buffalo's role as a transportation and economic power has been well documented, what about Cheektowaga's story? Many people think that the extent of Cheektowaga's history consists of when the Thruway Plaza turned into the Thruway Mall and eventually getting over shadowed by the Galleria Mall. Maybe throw in a reference to a plastic pink flamingo and you're done. If that's all you know of Buffalo's largest suburb may we suggest a visit to the museum operated by the Cheektowaga Historical Association next to the Town Hall on Broadway. At the very least check out their website [www.cheektowagahistory.com](http://www.cheektowagahistory.com) where you will find great vintage pictures showing the history of the police department, classic amusement parks, religious shrines, even the birth of the Bell helicopter.



The museums location in an old farmhouse makes a very quaint setting for a collection of artifacts that detail the towns evolution from farmland to transportation hub, industrial center and residential community. Here you can see the actual tools and equipment used by the towns first doctor, ancient Indian artifacts, toys that children adored in the 19th century, cool fire fighting memorabilia, you can even find out the last movie that ever played at the old Holiday movie theatre. Looking at some of this stuff and imagining what life was like back in the day could almost be as magical as some of the card tricks performed at the once venerated Forks Hotel.

They are open every Monday 11am-2pm and the first Sunday of every month from 2-4pm (or by appointment). They also have a regular series of events and guest lecturers. There is plenty of parking and it's easily accessible. So whether your looking to take your class, a group of scouts or just want to get yourself schooled in our areas past, head out to this little known treasure. The museum is located on Broadway near Union Rd. you might just learn something old which of course is now new again. For more info visit [ww.cheektowagahistory.com](http://ww.cheektowagahistory.com) or call 716-684-6544.




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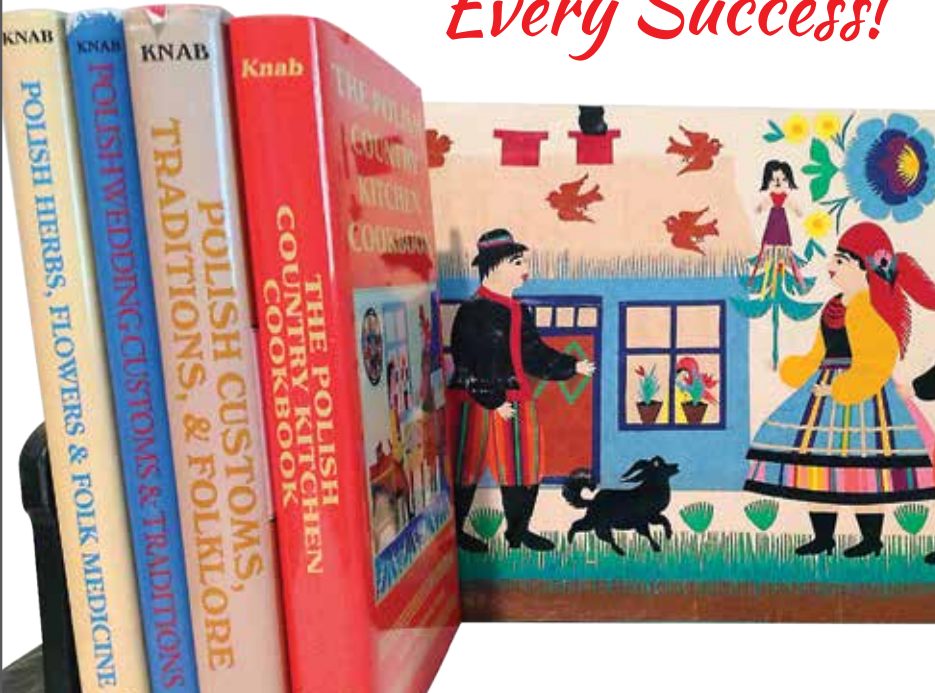
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WISHING THE

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Sophie Hodorowicz Knab is a noted Polish-American lecturer and author. If you are interested in Polish customs, traditions & food you will ♥ her books. Available on Amazon.



 **Diane Benczkowski** Cheektowaga Town Supervisor

Cheektowaga Town Hall  
3301 Broadway  
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716-686-3465

Bound to the land as serfs and peasants for thousands of years, the people of Poland were in such close communion with the earth that every tree, every flower and plant took on special meaning. Weddings could not take place without the presence of rue and rosemary. Preparing the deceased for burial involved the use of wormwood and thyme. The Feast of Corpus Christi required weaving small wreaths made of different herbs. Harvest festivals utilized oats, wheat and barley in their festivities and feast days such as that of St. John the Baptist were incomplete without mugwort.

While the above mentioned feast days were important ones when it came to gathering herbs and flowers, the single most important date for the gathering of garden, field and forest herbs and flowers occurred on the church celebration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15. So vital was this day that it was, and still is, called the Matka Boskiej Zielna, the Feast of Our Lady of the Herbs. On this special feast day, every village woman brought a bouquet of plants and herbs to church which were collected from her garden, the fields and forest in order to be blessed by the priest. All the plants and herbs were felt to be stronger, more effective for having been blessed.

On this day in the Pomorze area, the northwest section of Poland, they have a saying, Każdy kwi-

at wola, weź mnie do kościoła! (Every flower calls, take me to church!). The women gathered whatever plants or greenery grew in their region, or the herbs and flowers they especially loved or needed. In the Mazowsze and Podlasie area took hyssop, southernwood, lavender, and mullein. They also took lovage, branches of the hazel tree, hemp and mint. Both herbs from the garden and the wild were gathered. This included poppy, peony, sage, thyme, tansy, dill, caraway, and chamomile. Since the feast day coincided with the time of the harvest, it was also customary to take a few spikes of various grains such as rye, wheat or oats.

The gathered and blessed herbs were used in endless ways but mostly medicinally. In the country villages there were few practicing physicians. Isolated and poverty stricken they were usually left to their own devices to treat themselves as best they could, utilizing various herbs and plants. The most popular, most well-known medicinal plants are: Southernwood. Polish: Boze Drzewko. Universally used in treatment of bruises and contusion by application of poultices. Wormwood. Polish: Piotun. The old herbals advised that an infusion of the dried leaves as a tea as a treatment for bad breath arising from the stomach, dispelling stomach gas, improving digestive juices and at the same time can build appetite. Chamomile. Polish: Rumianek. An infusion of

the flower was taken for a fever or stomach troubles. A compress of chamomile applied to the brow relieved headache, and was applied to wounds and to the eyes when suffering from a sty. Comfrey. Polish: Żywokost. This plant is one of the best loved of all healing herbs. This tall, hairy leaved plant was used to heal broken bones, tears of the flesh and also for the aches of rheumatism. It was used both externally and internally. A decoction from the leaves, or flowers helped respiratory disorders. The root mashed together with an animal fat was used as poultices for sprains and broken bones. Elderberry. Polish: Dziki bez czarny. A common plant through all of Europe, elderberry was also called medicinal elderberry. The juice from the berries was especially beneficial for coughs. Linden. Polish: Lipa drobno-lista. From ancient times the linden was considered a sacred tree. It was so powerful that the fibers of the linden tree could tie up a devil; teas made from the flower of linden was used to treat chronic cough, mucous and phlegm in the chest and larynx, to make one sweat. Nettle. Polish: Pokrzywa. A tea made from the leaves of nettle for respiratory troubles, chiefly coughs. The leaves and stems were mashed and mixed with sugar which made a syrup within a few days.





In 1928, a 23-year-old inventor named Arthur M. Young was seeking a project that would appeal to his competitive nature. That challenge was how to make the helicopter a useful device. Young proceeded to set up a small aeronautical laboratory in a barn on the family estate in Radnor, Pa. where he began experimenting with small models. After a decade of research, and many failures, his big breakthrough was the invention of the stabilizer bar. Young was now ready to perfect a model that would appeal to a manufacturer and the production of full scale helicopters. This chance came with an appointment for a demonstration in Buffalo.

So Young and his flying model arrived at the Bell Aircraft Company on the morning of September 3, 1941 and subsequently Larry Bell and the inventor reached an agreement on November 24, 1941. It was determined that in order to have more room to build and fly the machine, it was essential to have a dedicated plant. A location was found at an old Chrysler agency and garage which is now the home of Union Garage, (Union Rd at Losson Rd). It had a big yard for preliminary testing and a meadow where short flights could be made. The building was easily converted into a combination machine shop, drafting room, office and workshop for making the blades.

When Bell opened its first helicopter plant,



there were about 15 people, including engineers, body men, tool and pattern makers, flight mechanics and one welder. Just six months following the group's arrival at "Gardenville", the Model 30 was wheeled—or as Bart Kelley (Young's assistant) described it —"shoved out the garage door." The ceremony was on a cold winter day in December 1942. A shivering secretary broke a bottle of champagne on the fuselage and aircraft No. 1 was christened Genevieve.

Problems with this first aircraft prevented an untethered flight and it wasn't until June 26, 1943 that the cable was removed and Floyd Carlson took the Model 30 on its maiden run around the meadow behind the garage. When word of the successful helicopter flights got around, Gardenville began getting attention throughout the industry including that of Igor Sikorsky, the inventor of the first mass produced helicopter.

The rest, as they say, is history. Bell became an industry leader, and was the first to obtain certification for a commercial helicopter. A lot has happened in air travel since Arthur Young began his quest in 1928. And it all started hovering over Union Road right here in the "place of the crabapple tree." ❁



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To The  
POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL  
On Another Successful Year



This year's Polish American Arts Festival is much more than a bunch of people gathering together to dance a little polka and sample 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 culture and tradition. Every aspect of our festival has been planned to rekindle a sense of 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 just simply being around friends and family while exchanging nostalgic recollections. Whatever particular 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. 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 nalesniki or perked up to a polka.

Speaking of polkas, we are very excited about this year's 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 entertainment that the genre has to offer but we have managed to gather together some legendary performers that we thought were unattainable any longer. 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 Krakowiacy Dancers from Eugenia Dance Studio followed by the first performance ever of a group we have dubbed "Band Of Brothers". Although this may be their inaugural performance under this moniker, true polka fans will know their work from previous incarnations as the band was created by combining the legendary Krew Brothers as well as the Piatkowski siblings. Any one of these individual members has a polka pedigree that's as long as a truck load of kielbasa links but the combination of all these brothers on one stage promises to be a historical collaboration that could be one of those once in a lifetime performances.

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 first family of polka the Vineckis or as they

are more widely known, "Box On". This group is as tight as a family because they literally are. Consider them a polka version of the Partridge family. Father Rick Vinecki had a band called Melody Kings in their native state of Michigan, before he met his wife Alicia when she was part of the renowned Polka Family band. Eventually they married and started their own brood who all began demonstrating their own musical abilities. Eventually all their genetic talents fused into a project they called "Box On" as an homage to the big trailer loaded with musical equipment that they would hitch up to their suburban as Mom would yell "put the box on" before embarking on their various musical engagements. In recent years the family band has curtailed their touring as the children have grown and embarked on their own individual projects and careers, however they have decided to put the box on, one more time, in order to be a part of this year's Cheektowaga Polish American Arts festival.

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. This year we are proud to feature 3 of the best dance troupes this side of Warsaw with the addition of “Radość-Joy” and “Cracovia” Polish Folk Dance Ensembles respectively from London and Toronto, Ontario in addition to WNY’s Krakowiacy. All 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 under the leadership of Dr. Thomas Witakowski.

Now if you’ve been a Western New York polka fan for a while, you have undoubtedly heard of a group called the Dynatones. In fact, if you’re a polka fan from anywhere in the world you’re probably very familiar with songs like “Zosia,” or “She Likes Kielbasa,” or “Don’t Fight Girls,” all made famous by the group that was born on the East Side of Buffalo, before being catapulted to polka stardom. Originally formed in 1968, the band quickly established itself as a polka mainstay, eventually recording 16 albums, going on to receive numerous awards from the United States Polka Association and International Polka Association, and earning a Grammy nomination in 1992 for their “When the Band Plays a Polka” recording.



Their 1982 “Live Wire” LP is still the standard by which all “live” contemporary polka recordings are measured. And the Dynatones’ back-room performances at the Broadway Grill are the stuff of which polka legends are made. Since the passing of their charismatic leader/concertina player/vocalist Dave “Scrubby” Seweryniak, the group has pretty much ceased performing altogether — only periodically gathering for the occasional gig out east. Which presents the opportunity for this rare reunion of polka royalty to become just as legendary as one of those memorable Sunday nights on Buffalo’s east side. If you are a polka fan this is a must-see show. If you are not a polka fan . . . you will be after you hear the Dynatones.

In addition to the various polka band 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 Pitakowski, one of our favorite ethnic trios and always crowd pleasers “The Polka Boyz,” an intimate choral performance from the “Chopin Singing Society”. Wait until you hear “Cross Border Klezmer”; they will almost magically transport you to the shores of the Baltic Sea with their authentic eastern European sound (they were such a hit at this year’s Dyngus Day festival main stage, that we simply had to have them at CPAAF), along with the Saint Stanislaus Polish Saturday School Choir and the very popular “Polanie” from St. Catharines, Ontario plus more singing and dancing from “Radość-Joy” and “Cracovia” Polish Folk Dance Ensembles also from north of the border.

The fest is filled with world class entertainment sure to please all. For full entertainment listings and schedules visit our website [polamartfest.com](http://polamartfest.com).



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Film Screening "Wielka Droga" 1st Post War Polish Feature Film  
"The Great Way" - The Anders Army Exhibit  
Exhibit runs September 10 - October 17  
**10**  
SEPTEMBER  
1PM

**07**  
OCTOBER  
Our Lady of Fatima Shrine Polish Day  
Film Screening, Polish Dancers, Polish Luncheon, Rosary  
4PM Mass  
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**2023 POLISH FILM FESTIVAL** at Adam Mickiewicz Library

**13**  
OCTOBER  
Friday Evening  
Film Screening "Shreds"  
7:30PM

**14**  
OCTOBER  
Saturday Evening  
6:30pm Opening Reception  
7:30pm Film Screening "Dangerous Men"  
6:30PM

**15**  
OCTOBER  
Sunday Afternoon  
Film Screening "Philip"  
2PM

**21**  
OCTOBER  
Saturday Evening  
Film Screening Andrzej Wajda's "Pan Tadeusz"  
In Honor of Adam Mickiewicz's 225th Birthday  
7:30PM

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**23**  
OCTOBER  
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7PM

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The significance of religion to certain ethnic communities and their celebrations is certainly nothing new. Many ethnicities have entire festive observances dedicated to significant religious ceremonies. Whether it's the Muslim celebration of Eid-Ul-Fitr to signify the end of Ramadan, the Hindu festival of lights known as Diwali, or the Buddhist blowout of Songkran, religion and religious ceremonies are a commonplace occurrence at celebrations and festivals all over the world and have been for centuries. Even if you are dyed in the wool hardcore atheist, odds are you have participated in some type of Christmas observance at some point in your life. Obviously certain religions play a more significant role than others and some ethnicities place much more of an emphasis on their spiritual connections than perhaps some from another continent. However in Poland religion is more than just prayer and ceremony.

Anyone that understands Polish culture knows how integral religion is to Poland and it's people. There was a time not that long ago when the church was the center of life for our entire Polonia community. Although obviously the church played an essential role in peoples spiritual affairs, it was not simply relegated to religious services and prayers. In fact it was the founding of Saint Stanislaus Church on Buffalos east side that started what eventually turned into the second

largest Polish community anywhere in the world outside of Poland. If not for the anchor created by Fr. Jan Pitass in 1873, the immigrating Poles would not have created the community around Saint Stans which eventually turned into dozens of communities centered around their own churches throughout western New York. For many decades the polish churches of our community were hubs for education, social activity, economic enterprises, youth and athletic programs as well as tending to peoples spiritual needs.

If you question that premise, just consider the alliance of Poland and Pope John Paul 2 and the role that the church played in the dismantling of the Soviet Union and it's tyrannical reign over the Poles since World War II. In fact even prior to the Nazi invasion and subsequent Soviet occupation it was religion that helped preserve Polands history and identity primarily through religious music and songs that were shared clandestinely during the time of the great partition when Poland was wiped off the face of the map and technically didn't exist as a sovereign nation. If you have ever visited Poland you know that churches are full for daily masses and Sunday mass is a standing room only occurrence. There are some places in Poland where during warmer weather, speakers are set up outside of churches so that faithful parishioners can celebrate Mass and the

sharing of the Eucharist outside if they are not able to get a spot inside.

Given that our festival is about sharing a truly authentic Polish American experience we wanted to make sure that this element of faith was included in our celebration. As such we have scheduled a very special outdoor Mass as part of our program on the Saturday festival itinerary. The last time we checked, it appears that you don't have to be indoors to pray, it's ok to worship outside as well. So we've put together a traditional Polish folk Mass that will take place on our amphitheater stage beginning at 4:45 which will be celebrated by Rev. Louis Klein, Pastor of Queen of Martyrs Church. The Knights of Columbus, Saint Maximilian Kolbe Assembly will act as the honor guard and traditional music will be provided by the Chopin Singing Society under the direction of Dr. Thomas Witakowski.

Whether you are religious or even Polish is of no consequence. Spirituality and the connection that we all have to a higher power is something that can be appreciated regardless of ethnic ancestry or theological persuasion. So join us if you like. Not only will it be good for your soul, it will fulfill your weekly Mass obligation. Which means, you won't have to get up early to attend Mass on Sunday morning. Amen.



# Poland

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Bigos (pronounced beegos) is known as a hunter's stew, it's a traditional meat and cabbage stew typical of Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian cuisine, and is Poland's national dish. It differs from what most folks idea of kapusta is in that there's more yummy stuff in there than cabbage and mushrooms. But if it's a stew, should you use a spoon instead of a fork? Or should you use a spork?

Typical ingredients include white cabbage, sauerkraut (kapusta kiszona in Polish), various cuts of meat and sausages, often whole or puréed tomatoes, honey and mushrooms. The meats may include pork (often smoked), ham, bacon, sausage, veal, beef, and, as bigos is considered a hunter's stew, venison, rabbit, or other game; leftover cuts find their way into the pot as well. It may be seasoned with pepper, caraway, juniper berries, bay leaf, marjoram, pimento, dried or smoked plums, and other ingredients. In other words much like Buffalo, NY this dish is a virtual melting pot. In this case its melded flavors versus melded cultures.

Bigos is usually served with mashed potatoes or rye bread. But is just as delicious served in a bowl all by it's lonesome. As with many stews, bigos can be kept in a cool place or refrigerated and then reheated later; it is said that its flavor much like most soups actually intensifies when reheated. One observed tradition is to keep

a big pot of bigos going for a week or more, replenishing ingredients as necessary. Thus, the seasonal availability of cabbage, and its richness in vitamin C made bigos a traditional part of the winter diet in Poland and elsewhere. It is a popular dish in Poland to be served on the Second Day of Christmas. Personally we prefer it on January 6th which is the feast of the Epiphany only because we love the word epiphany and would like to see it used more often. Plus it's a great way to celebrate the feast of the three kings. We would like to think that if one of the kings were Polish he might want to share this delicacy with the baby Jesus rather than offering myrrh or incense. But that's another story for another day.

Bigos is said by some to have been introduced to Poland by a different royal named Jogaila, a Lithuanian Grand Duke who became Polish king Władysław Jagiełło in 1385 and who supposedly served it to his hunting-party guests. Metaphorically, bigos means "confusion", "big mess" or "trouble" in Polish. However, Polish linguists trace the word bigos to a German rather than Lithuanian origin. Some speculate that it derives from the past participle begossen of a German verb meaning "to douse", as bigos was doused with wine in earlier periods. However it is spelled or who first decided to throw a bunch of stuff in with some cab-

bage and cook it low and slow is a fight that we don't care to get into right now. The bigger issue is should you use a spoon or a fork?

In the Motherland this amalgamation of flavors is legendary it's even described longingly in the great Polish epic poem "Pan Tadeusz" written by poet, writer and philosopher Adam Mickiewicz, where he features a poetic description of bigos eaten by members of the aristocratic szlachta returning from hunting:

*"In the pots warmed the bigos; mere words cannot tell of its wondrous taste, color and marvelous smell.*

*One can hear the words buzz, and the rhymes ebb and flow, But its content no city digestion can know.*

*To appreciate the Lithuanian folksong and folk food, you need health, live on land, and be back from the wood.*

*Without these, still a dish of no mediocre worth is bigos, made from legumes, best grown in the earth.*

*Pickled cabbage comes foremost, and properly chopped, which itself, is the saying, will in ones mouth hop.*

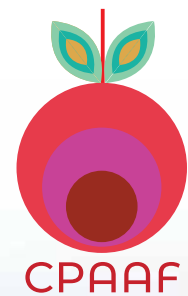
*In the boiler enclosed, with its moist bosom shields choicest morsels of meat raised on greenest of fields. Then it simmers, till fire has extracted each drop of live juice, and the liquid boils over the top, and the heady aroma wafts gently afar."*

— Adam Mickiewicz,  
*Pan Tadeusz, Book 4:  
Diplomacy and Hunt*





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