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25 thru 27

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**FOOD  
MUSIC  
DANCE**

Cheektowaga Town Park • 2600 Harlem Road



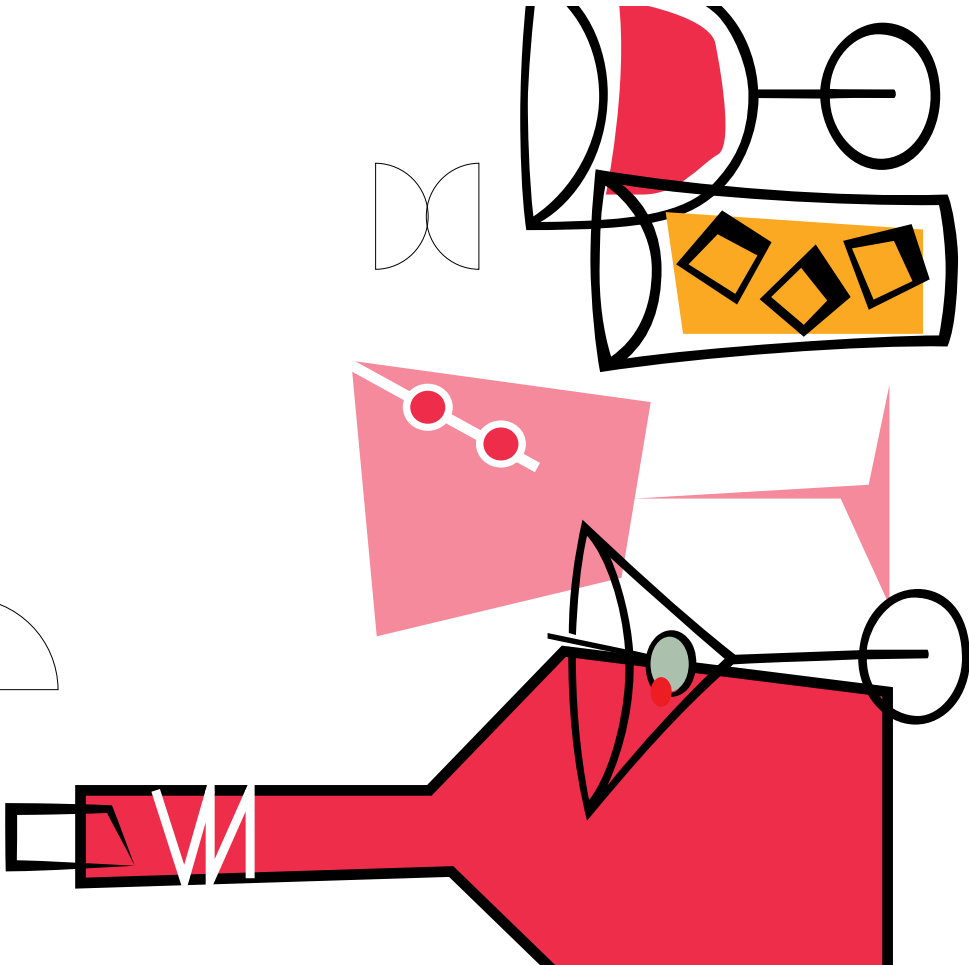
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# CHEEKTOWAGA POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL

**FRIDAY, JULY 25TH - SUNDAY JULY 27TH**

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

**WISHING ALL ATTENDEES AT  
CHEEKTOWAGA  
TOWN PARK**

**2600 Harlem Road, Cheektowaga, NY**

**AN AMAZING WEEKEND OF  
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**"Being of Polish-Russian background,  
I am proud that our company supports  
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 45th Annual Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival at Cheektowaga Town Park on Harlem Road.

The Cheektowage Polish American Arts Festival has been a mainstay in WNY for forty five years.. 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 three years of successful Polish American Congress management, it was decided this year with Cheektowaga Town Supervisor, Bri-

an 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, 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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He was born Władysław Jagiełło in 1930 but eventually became known as Maty Władziu or Lil' Wally to millions of polka fans throughout North America. This son of Polish immigrants often said he came out of his mother's womb singing.

When he was just eight years old Jagiello would get hoisted onto picnic tables to belt out tunes at Polish gatherings near his hometown of Chicago. The lil Wally moniker fit him perfectly as a child but even as an adult he only grew to be five foot six. However what he may have lacked in physical stature was made up by his performance and marketing prowess.

He became a bandleader at the ripe old age of 15 and while still in his teens he was signed to a recording deal with Columbia Records, but he was not happy with the sound of the recordings Columbia released. So in 1951 he created his own label, Jay Jay Records. To say that venture was successful would be a major understatement. He averaged more than ten albums per year in the 1950's and eventually released more than 150 in total according to the International Polka Association.

In 1954 Wally released his first English language recording "I Wish I Was Single Again" which hit the top 40 and sold over 6 million copies. The IPA inducted Jagiello as their first hall of fame member in 1969.



The "Polka King" started his own cottage industry devoted to the genre. He built offices, a recording studio and his own vinyl pressing plant all while performing throughout the Midwest and eventually up and down the eastern seaboard. At the peak of his popularity Jagiello had his own radio show, a nightclub called the Carousel, appeared several times on the Lawrence Welk show along with recording 17 gold and 4 platinum albums. Health issues forced him to slow down a bit and resulted in him moving to Florida in 1965. However he continued to record and perform albeit at a slower pace for nearly four more decades.

In 1982 Wally recorded "God Bless Our Polish Pope" which resulted in him performing at the Vatican for Pope John Paul II two years later. Ever the innovator in the late 90s he even collaborated with a Chicago polka punk band called the Polkaholics which eventually led that band to release their own concept album entitled "Wally" in 2009.

In short, Li'l Wally is synonymous with Polka music. Wherever polkas are played you'll undoubtedly hear at least one of his classic compositions. Don't miss the tribute to this legend from the Minnesota based "Live it Up" featuring Dynaton's founder Larry Trojak, Saturday, July 26.

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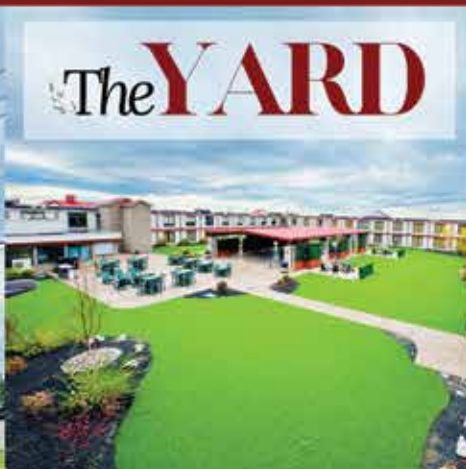
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For forty five years the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival has featured some of the best polka musicians in the world and this year is no exception. With scheduled performances from John Gora & Go-rاله, Live It Up, Whitey Ryniec, Special Delivery, Seven, Elena Stenkina, Al Piatkowski, Frank Reino and Dave Gawronski of the Forgotten Buffalo Orchestra, and special tributes to Li'l Wally and Marion Lush...this promises to be a truly memorable polka lineup.

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 Ray Budzilek, Frank Wojnanowski, and the Connecticut Twins 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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## THE CHEEKTOWAGA POLISH AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL



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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 WNY'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.



sion 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 fourth year of collaboration between the Town, the Polish American Congress and the organizers of Dyn-gus 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 as 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.





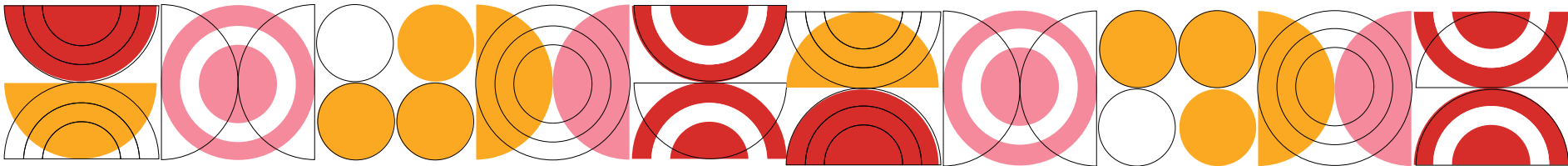
# ECMC...Proud to support The 2025 Polish American Arts Festival

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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Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival • Cheektowaga Town Park • 2600 Harlem Road • Cheektowaga NY

FRI • JULY 25

5PM  
Gates Open  
**Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion**  
5PM  
Grand Entrance March  
5:30PM  
Opening Ceremony  
6PM  
Krakowiacy Dancers  
from Eugenia Dance Studio  
7PM  
Special Delivery  
**Polonia Platform Stage**  
6PM  
Forgotten Buffalo Orchestra  
featuring Dave Gawronski  
**Demos & Lectures**  
5-7PM  
Polish Pottery Making Class  
with Michelle Mcleod  
See Demo Spotlight (page 13)  
5-8PM  
Hussar Knight Encampment

SAT • JULY 26

12PM  
Gates Open  
**Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion**  
1PM  
John Gora & Gorale  
Grammy Nominated Polka Band  
4PM  
Traditional Outdoor Mass  
with Fr. Brian Zielenieski  
featuring Chopin Singing Society  
5:30PM  
Polish Heritage Dancers  
from Buffalo NY  
7PM  
Live It Up  
a tribute to Lil' Wally featuring  
Larry Trojak of the Dynatones  
**Polonia Platform Stage**  
12PM  
Frank Reino  
of Polka Boyz  
1, 5PM  
Polka Dance Lessons  
with Jim Kaczarowski

3PM  
Chopin Singing Society  
World Renowned Choir  
3:30PM  
Krakowiacy Dancers  
from Eugenia Dance Studio  
6PM  
Elena Stenkina  
Accordion Virtuoso from Philadelphia

**Demos & Lectures**  
12-2PM  
Polish Pottery Making Class  
with Michelle Mcleod  
See Demo Spotlight (page 13)  
12-8PM  
Polish Living History Exhibit &  
Hussar Knight Encampment  
Banner of Jasna Gora  
12:30PM  
Making Gołębki  
with Linda Lund Ziolkowski of Babcia's  
1, 3, 5PM  
Hussar Knight  
Sabre Cutting Demo

1:45-4PM  
Kids Activities  
Y.E.S. Program  
2PM  
Polish Egg Writing  
with Kathy Sacilowski  
2-5PM  
Bread & Bouquets  
for Feast of the Assumption  
with Diane Woloszyn & Sophie Knab

2:30PM  
Making Sałatka Jarzynowa  
with Jim Ławicki of Bacik Foods

3PM  
Thunder Candles  
with Dawidek Newman

6PM  
Palm Bouquet Making  
with Micheal Szafranski

6PM  
Polish Egg Writing  
with Kathy Sacilowski

6:30PM  
Making Kanapki  
with Mira Szramel  
of Polish Saturday School

7:30PM  
Kaz-War, Love & Betrayal  
Author Lecture  
with Bogdan Kotnis

SUN • JULY 27

12PM  
Gates Open  
**Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion**  
1PM  
Luscious Polkas  
A Tribute to the Sounds of Marion Lush  
featuring Whitey Ryniec  
4PM  
Polonez Folk Ensemble  
from Hamilton, CA  
6PM  
Seven Polka Band  
from WNY

**Polonia Platform Stage**  
1PM  
Dave Gawronski  
of Forgotton Buffalo Orchestra  
2, 4PM  
Polka Dance Lessons  
with Jim Kaczarowski

5PM  
Polonez Folk Ensemble  
from Hamilton, CA  
6:30PM  
Korona Band Disco Polo  
from Burlington

**FREE Demos & Lectures**  
12-8PM  
Polish Living History Exhibit &  
Hussar Knight Encampment  
Banner of Jasna Gora

12:30PM  
Making Żeberka i Kapustą  
with Jim Ławicki of Bacik Foods  
1-4PM  
Polish Egg Writing  
with Laura Woloszyn, Samantha Michel  
& Jaycie Stewart

1, 3, 5PM  
Hussar Knight  
Sabre Cutting Demo

1PM  
Palm Bouquet Making  
with Micheal Szafranski

2:30PM  
Making Mizeria (Cucumber Salad)  
with Edziu Kutas of Polish Villa  
3PM  
Thunder Candles  
with Dawidek Newman  
4-8PM  
Polish Egg Writing  
with Kathy Sacilowski, Samantha  
Michel & Jaycie Stewart  
6:30PM  
Making Kanapki  
with Mira Szramel  
of Polish Saturday School

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10AM-6PM Saturday  
Noon-6PM Sunday

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The Other Dyes  
Apparel

**Taste of Polonia  
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Beer Garden Vendors**

Desserts by  
Polish Saturday School

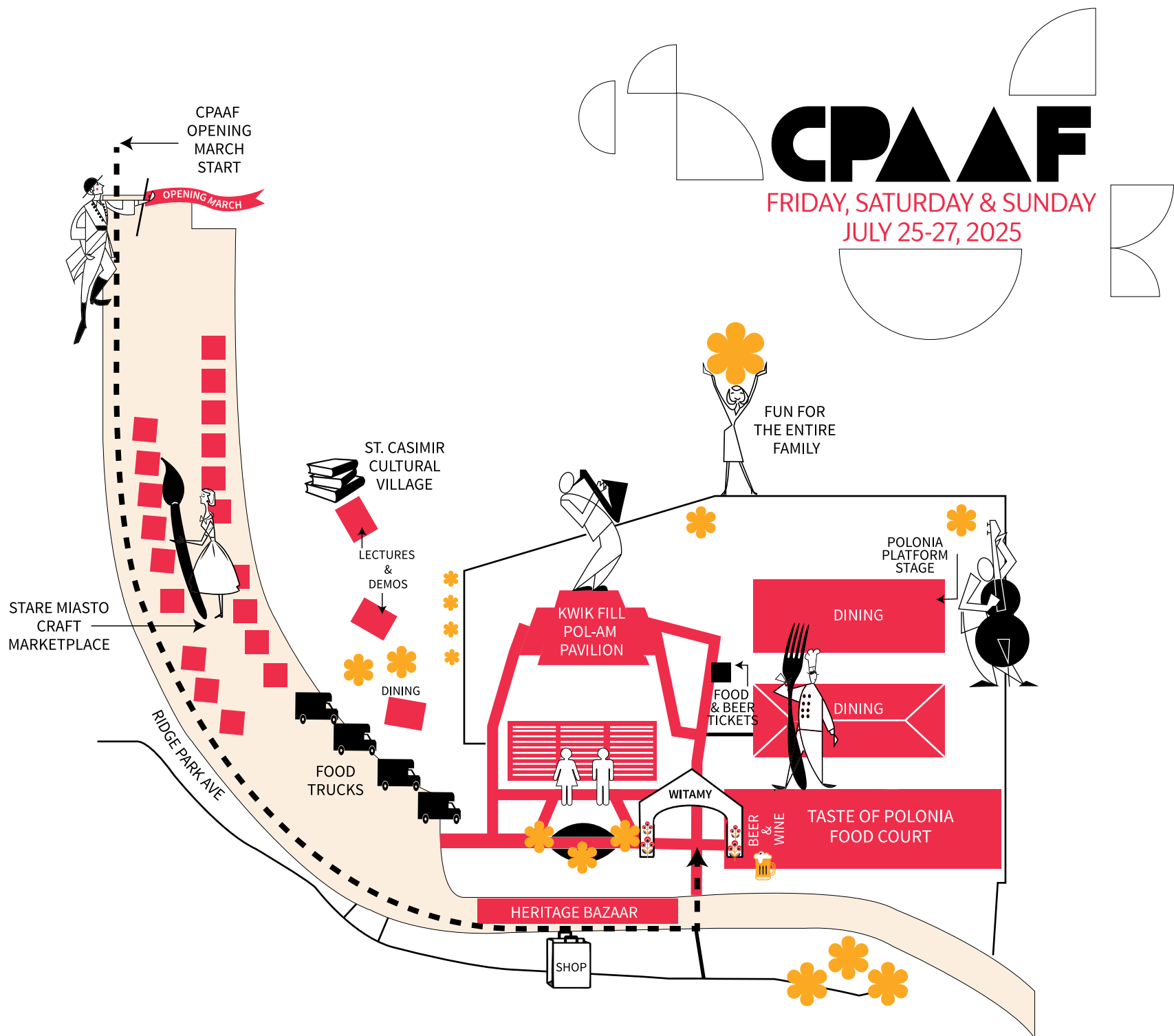
Kevin Kutas Catering  
Polish Cadets

Polska Chata  
Potts Deli

**Stare Miasto  
Craft Marketplace  
Foodtrucks**

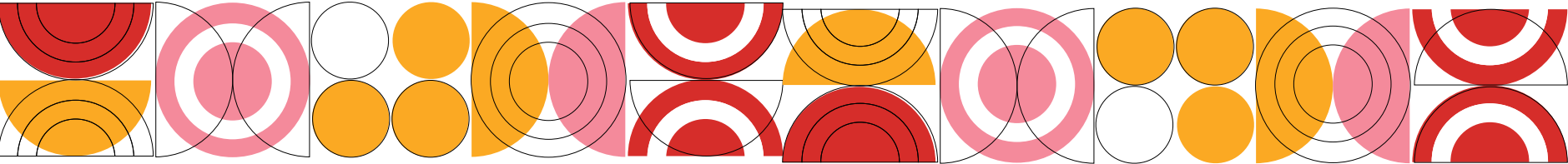
Babcia's Pierogi  
Charlaps Ice Cream  
Mr. Pizza  
Polish Villa 2





**Demo Spotlight • Polish Pottery Making Class**

Participants will create a Christmas Ornament \$40.00 (Fri. 5PM), or a Plate \$45.00 (Sat. @ Noon) in traditional Polish technique. Take both classes for \$80.00. The cost of the class includes pattern, supplies and firing of the piece. Seats are limited. Register now via text 716-830-6847. Use QR VENMO code for payment.



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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, woodcarvings, nesting dolls, and amber jewelry, you'll find fresh baked goods, 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 addition to our festival, adjacent to our 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 gourmands, we also have polka dance lessons, historical lectures and much more scheduled. 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, lectures and lessons, there will be ongoing pisanki and palm branch bouquet weaving demos, lectures about thunder candles, a medieval hussar knight encampment, a traveling Polish History museum, kids activities and much more.

We even have a couple of classes in the art of Polish pottery making . 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. Check out our schedule 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 even research your family tree with the Polish Genealogical Society.



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# polish american congress

proponents of polonia

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 Com-

mittee 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 into NATO should be well known to it's members and to well-informed Americans and Poles alike. Now as they celebrate 81 years of advocacy, let's wish them many more. Sto Lat!



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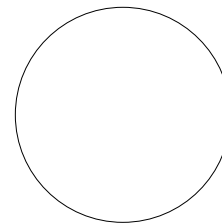
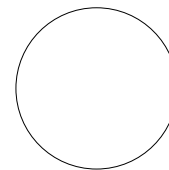
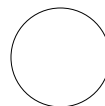
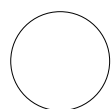
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How can you not like mushrooms?

The first three letters of the organism are F-U-N, as in fungi. Even Adam Mickiewicz in his epic *Pan Tadeusz* wrote of the Mushrooms allure:

“Of mushrooms there were plenty: the lads gathered the fair-cheeked

fox-mushrooms, so famous in the Lithuania songs as the

emblem of maidenhood, for the worms do not eat them, and, marvelous to say, no insect alights on them; the young ladies hunted for the slender

pine-lover, which the song calls the colonel of the mushrooms.

All were eager for the orange-agaric; this, though of more modest stature and less famous in

Whether you enjoy the savory richness of the spore bearers or just enjoy them as shelter for your garden gnomes, there’s no question that they have influenced Polish diet and culture in a profound way. Although the Poles certainly do not claim to be the only ones that extol the benefits of the prolific parasites they most certainly have found some great things to do with them. And most of them, like so many other things that our Slavic ancestors did, involved eating.

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But first of all what are they? Mushrooms are as mysteriously unique as they are delicious. While often thought of as a vegetable and prepared like one, mushrooms are actually fungi, a special type of living organism that has no roots, leaves, flowers, or seeds. Technically speaking, mushrooms are not vegetables. In fact, technically speaking, mushrooms are not even plants! Mushrooms do not require either soil or light in order to grow. All that’s

required is decaying organic matter of some kind, including the kind found in decaying wood, or decaying leaves. While mushrooms can be cultivated, they easily, grow wild in many regions of the world due to their unusual and fairly simple growth requirements.

Button mushrooms have grown wild since prehistoric times, having been consumed as food by the early hunter-gatherers. Since ancient times, mushrooms have been thought to have special powers. The Egyptians thought that they granted immortality, and since only the pharaohs were felt to be worthy of this gift, the common people were not even allowed to touch mushrooms, let

alone eat them. In ancient Rome, people oftentimes referred to mushrooms as *cibus diorum*—food for the gods. The folklore of many cultures, including Russia, China, and Mexico held that eating mushrooms could give someone superhuman strength.

Historians are not entirely certain about the time period in which humans first began cultivation of mushrooms for food, but this cultivation most likely began in Asia, involving cultivation in China, Japan, and India.

Mushrooms are popular in many countries, including Poland, because of their excellent taste, aroma and variety. They can grace even the sim-

the

# SPOREY

## STORY

song, is still the most

delicious, whether fresh or salted, whether in autumn or in winter. But the Seneschal gathered the toadstool fly-bane.”



plest dishes such as scrambled eggs. Delicate mushrooms such as kania (parasol mushroom), maslak (bolete), kurka (chanterelle), pieczarka (white mushroom) and rydz (saffron milk cap) are great for soups, sauces, and meat dishes. Perfectly suited alongside meats are heartier types like fried borowik (boletus) or podgrzybek (bay bolete). Mushrooms are also suitable for omelettes, pizzas and tarts, as well as an addition to filling pierogi.

In Poland, where a very strong tradition of mushroom hunting exists, mushrooms grow wild in forests and have been collected from time immemorial. The one called boletus (in Polish: ‘borowik’ or ‘prawdziwek’) are recognized as one of the noblest, and usually used for filling Christmas Eve ‘uszka’, or traditional Polish pierogi. Another example of delicious fungus is chanterelle mushroom (in Polish: ‘kurka’, sometimes ‘liszka’ or ‘pieprznik’) adored by Poles as well as others. An exquisite preparation for scrambled eggs are made with gently fried chanterelle. Another Polish dish that makes use of ‘kurka’ is a special and delicious sauce served with pork neck and sirloin or pike perch. On the other hand, parasol mushrooms (in Polish: ‘kania’) fried in a coating constitute the delicacy on the Christmas Eve table in many Polish homes. And these are just three examples. For countless generations, mushroom picking has remained a national pastime in Poland. In a good season, with the right weather conditions, a family can gather enough for an entire year. What isn’t used at once is canned, brine-cured, pickled, or dried for the months ahead. Mushroom hunting is an activity well-known to Slavic nations (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Russia and others). It is also popular in Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark) and in some countries of Mediterranean Basin. Outside Europe Koreans, Japanese and Canadians pick

mushrooms as well. Mushrooms are hearty and filling. Preliminary research suggests increasing intake of low-energy-density foods (meaning few calories given the volume of food), specifically mushrooms, in place of high-energy-density foods, like lean ground beef, mushrooms can be an effective method for reducing daily energy and fat intake while still feeling full and satiated after the meal.

The statement that mushrooms are “all flavor and no nutrition” or that they are non-fattening and therefore a perfect diet food is only partially true. Nutritionally they are low in protein but they help to strengthen the immune system as they contain plenty of vitamin PP, provitamin D, minerals (notably zinc and copper), some B vitamins, and glycogen, a substance that promotes the body’s natural functions and the leading source of selenium an essential antioxidant. They indeed have very few calories and someone who ate nothing but boiled mushrooms would certainly lose weight. But the butter, cream, and other such embellishments with which they are often prepared definitely undermine their low-calorie status.

But no matter how you slice them (pun intended!), mushrooms are simply great eating. Smacznego!

**Pick a Peck of Portabellas**

Picking wild mushrooms is a great way of enjoying nature and stocking your pantry at the same time. However, Beware!!! Many poisonous types of mushrooms look edible. Make sure you have an experienced forager with you to be able to discern the beauty from the beast, lest you want a mushroom meal to be your last. Or you can just go and buy some. The days of canned button mushrooms being your only choice are a distant memory. These days most supermarkets and farmers markets offer everything from fresh porcini, crimini, shiitake and portabellas to exotic truffles.

**Traditional Polish  
Wild Mushroom Soup**

Serves 8-10

- 6 oz. dried Polish mushrooms
- 12 large dried shiitake mushrooms
- 3 c beef stock or broth
- 5 medium ribs of celery, chopped
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 5 carrots, chopped
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 cup orzo
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp flour
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
- salt to taste

freshly ground black pepper  
Rinse dried mushrooms, place in 2 cups cold water, soak 4 hours or overnight.

In a large pot, bring stock to a simmer. Add celery, onions, and carrots. Strain mushrooms, reserve soaking liquid. Add strained soaking liquid to soup.

Chop hydrated mushrooms into 1/4-inch pieces, add to soup. Add sliced cremini mushrooms.

Cover and cook the soup until the vegetables are tender, for an hour.

Bring soup to a boil, stirring constantly, add orzo.

Reduce heat to a gentle boil, stir occasionally to prevent pasta from sticking, until orzo is cooked through, about 6 to 8 minutes.

Meanwhile, make a roux: Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat.

Add flour, cook, stir constantly until smooth, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Remove 1 cup broth from soup, and add roux, whisking constantly until it’s slightly thickened and free of lumps.

Stir thickened liquid into soup. Add chopped parsley dill.

Add 1/4 cup thickened soup to the sour cream and whisk constantly until completely smooth, for about 3 minutes. ●

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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 celebration is the creation of a multi sensory experience that shares the richness of Polish traditions and culture in a very approachable manner. 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 people of all ethnicities 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. Whether it's your first taste of our event or not, every aspect of our festival has been planned to rekindle a sense of adventure and discovery. 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 op-

portunity 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 Poland's 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 nalesniki or perked up to a polka.

Speaking of polkas, we are very excited about this years festival entertainment and think you will enjoy it as well. 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 as well, as we pay homage to some true polka legends. 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. After the formalities of welcoming all of our special guests we jump right into the colorful pageantry and youthful exuberance of the Krakowiacy Dancers from Eugenia Dance Studio followed by the

acclaimed "Special Delivery" a great "foot stomping" polka band based right here in the Nickel City and we know you'll love these fan favorites.

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 one of the most popular polka performers in North America, John Gora and Gorale from Burlington Ontario. This four time grammy nominee is always a crowd favorite and fun for polka fans of all ages.

Later, on Saturday we are thrilled to present a very special group from Minnesota led by the renowned Larry Trojak of Dynatones fame. They call themselves "Live It Up". This was the title of a classic polka LP by the legendary polka icon Lil' Wally Jagiello which makes sense because their entire performance is a tribute to the Polka King himself. Their repertoire consists entirely of hits and deep cuts from Lil' Wally's library utilizing Jagiello's own arrangements. "Live It Up" is without a doubt the most authentic recreation of the celebrated impresarios works and they have been receiving rave reviews all over the nation.

On Sunday we continue celebrating the giants of the genre with "Luscious Polkas" another very special tribute band. This one honoring the late great Marion Lush featuring Lush's long time band



member Jack “Whitey” Ryniec. Seasoned polka fans of course know Whitey as an original member of the legendary Buffalo band “The Dynatones” before he became a key member of Marion Lushs’ White Eagles in the mid seventies. Whitey along with Larry Trojak (his former bandmate from the Dynatones), have put together a polka all star lineup that includes Al and Rob Piatkowski, Gary Krupski and Mark Kohan, that will undoubtedly be a highlight of the weekend.

Sunday evening we are really looking forward to the first time performance at our festival from “Seven” one of the best bands to hit the polka scene in recent years.

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 Oberk 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 fantastic dance troupes with the inclusion of “Krakowiacy” of Eugénias Dance Studio from Orchard Park, The Polish Heritage Dancers and “Polonez” Polish Canadian Folk Ensemble from Hamilton, Ontario. Polonez will be accompanied by the very talented Kasiapela folk group. These groups have delighted audiences all over the world and we are happy 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 of our traditional musical offerings. Father Brian Zieleneski will lead us in a traditional celebration of the Eucharist along with musical accompaniment from the renowned Chopin Singing Society. This year our Mass Intention is for Father Czeslaw Krysa longtime chaplain of the Polish American Congress and Rector of Saint Casimir Oratory, who passed away suddenly this past June.

In addition to the various performances on the Kwik Fill Pol-Am Pavilion amphitheater stage we have another stage located right next to the Taste of Polonia food court tent loaded with top notch talent all weekend long, including the accordion wizardry from the likes of Dave Gawronski of the Forgotten Buffalo Orchestra and International Polka Association inductee Al Piatkowski, along with Frank Reino of “The Polka Boyz”, an intimate choral performance from the “Chopin Singing Society”, and the very popular “Korona Band” from Southern, Ontario. As a very special treat on Saturday evening we present one of the most talented and versatile accordionists we have ever come across, Elena Stenkina. Elena now makes her home in Philadelphia but her extraordinary performance at this year Dyngus Day Buffalo mainstage not only resulted in the wildly enthusiastic crowd demanding an encore it also called for an immediate invitation to be part of our summertime Slavic celebration. Do not miss her performance. She is a must see!

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 a full entertainment listings and schedules please visit our website [polamartfest.com](http://polamartfest.com).

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# a knight to remember

poland's living history

If you were to ask most people what they thought of high school history class, the response from a few might elicit some form of a yawn. Although we know some students are enamored with learning the chronicles of yesteryear, many find the study of antiquity difficult to relate to. Honestly how do you explain what it was like having to prepare a meal of wild boar over an open fire to someone that grew up using a microwave oven? However we've found that if history is presented as something tactile most people can't get enough of learning about what came before. That is exactly what Helena Masiorski thought too, when she created Polish Living History, Inc, an organization comprised of several historical groups that share a common passion for Polish History. These groups literally make history come alive by setting up re-enactments of significant time periods in Polands days of yore spanning from the 1600's to the 20th century.

Rich Golazewski of the "Banner of Jasna Gora" group became fascinated with Polands history after seeing the movie "Fire and Sword" based on the trilogy written by Henryk Sienkiewicz, detailing life in 17th century Poland. Rich had already been involved in re-enactments at various Renaissance Fairs in the Tri-State area and found Polands history to be captivating but not widely known outside of Poland itself. So in 2009 he and Casey Zachowski



formed a group dedicated to authentic re-creations, of Polands history at ethnic festivals.

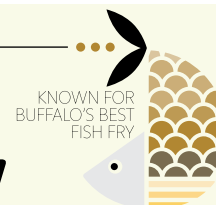
Helena was first introduced to the Banner of Jasna Gora organization while working at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Dylestown, PA during their annual Polish American Family Festival and Country Fair. After retiring she wanted to bring the individual parties together, under one umbrella organization as they all had the same goal of bringing Polish history to life. So she started Polish Living History, Inc .

Depending on the actual location of any individual event and the local laws; festival goers might experience actual horseback cavalry exercises, black powder weaponry or broadsword demonstrations, along with a traveling museum showcasing , ancient weaponry, suits of armor and audio visual presentations, telling the story of Polands history in a way that people could relate to. According to Helena "We make it experiential, not just informational". Nevertheless theres much information to be gleaned from these antiquity enthusiasts.

Make it a point to visit the traveling Polish Living History Museum and Banner of Jasna Gora encampment adjacent to the Saint Casimir Cultural Village at this years Polish American Arts Festival.

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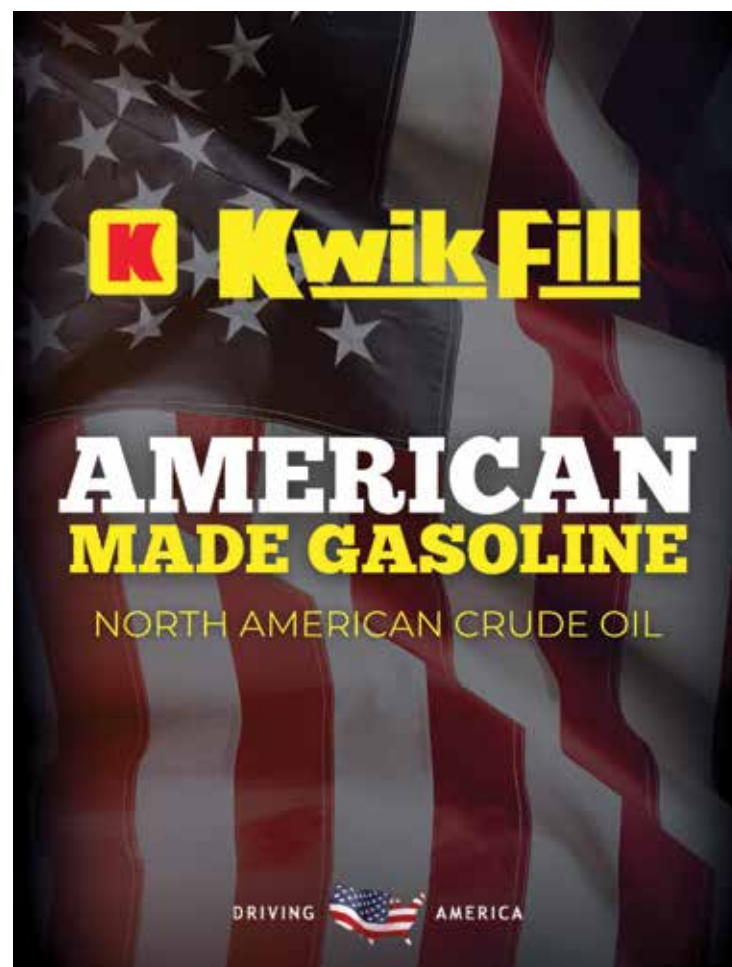
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In 1954 Bell Telephone Laboratories introduced the very first solar panel. That same year Elvis Presley was born. While scientists worked to improve the efficiency of their invention and Gladys Presley sang lullabies to her newborn, another baby was born in Niagara Falls, NY to Stanislaw and Zofia Magdziak Krysa. They named him Czeslaw Michal. He grew up in a very Polish neighborhood in the “cataract” city and was immersed in the religion, customs and culture of his family’s ancestry.

This exposure obviously had a profound impact on young Czeslaw because it eventually resulted in his enrollment into a Polish seminary and his choosing a vocation in the priesthood. And so in 1980 he became Father Czeslaw Krysa after his ordination by Bishop Edward Head and was assigned to St. John Gualbert Parish in Cheektowaga. But this was no ordinary priest. After his term at St. Gualberts he took on the role of episcopal vicar and pastor at churches in Arcade, Delevan, Machias and Dunkirk, NY. Eventually settling in as rector of St. Casimir’s Oratory in Buffalo’s Kaisertown neighborhood in 2011.

Fr. Krysa took his love of God and tradition and merged them into a powerful tool for evangelization. He often said “to be Polish is to be Catholic” the two were intertwined. During his tenure as shepherd of the flock at the church in “Kazimierzowo” he began to gain a loyal following of families and individuals looking for an authentic experience, both culturally as well as spiritually. Not just simply



a place to fulfill a weekly mass obligation but a community that steeped itself in the beauty and depth of what it meant to be a Polish Catholic even though many of his followers were neither Polish nor Catholic.

As traditional as he was, to some he appeared very non traditional in his methods of reaching out and sharing the love of God to the community. His homemade Krupnik based on an old family recipe became the spark for a fundraising event that became an annual Krupnik festival and the inspiration for a series of videos that not only shared the “how to” of things like the art of pisanki egg writing and palm weaving but also the meaning of such traditions. He authored books on Polish Easter and Christmas traditions and became the go to source on authentic Polish customs.

It was his in depth knowledge of tradition and the sacred bond between faith and culture that made him such a valuable resource to our community. However it was his bigger than life personality, his unwavering in his convictions, his love of singing and his kind heart that made him a force.

In May of this year he celebrated 45 years of priesthood. A month later we celebrated his life with a memorial Mass at his beloved St. Casimir Church. There are certain people that come into our lives and leave an indelible impression. Father Krysa was one of those people.

Wieczny odpoczynek racz mu dać, Panie. May he rest in peace, and may his example continue to inspire us.



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A Tribute to Li'l Wally  
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**SUN 27** LUSCIOUS POLKAS  
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IPA Hall Of Famer  
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**SAT 26** ELENA STENKINA  
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**SUN 27** KORONA BAND  
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and Kasiapella  
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