THE TEMPERATURE RARELY DIPPED BELOW 75 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT in Poland this year and temperatures in the 90s made for some very uncomfortable days. Judging from past experience, long gone are the days when Poles complained of a heat wave when temperatures reached the mid-80s and there was rarely a need for air conditioning. Nevertheless, the degree in the change in weather patterns no way compared to the remarkable changes in the physical and social landscape of the country today. Opinions may vary whether many of these changes benefit Polish society on the whole; still, it is difficult to deny that they are most impressive.

Despite the many economic challenges facing the country, a new energy is evident. Once seriously neglected villages have been given a much needed make-over, modern office buildings and shopping malls constructed, highways built, historical monuments renovated and churches beautifully restored. Those who have participated in previous Polish Center heritage tours could not help but notice the profound changes.

This year, there were 19 participants, including the Polish Center’s executive director, Staś Radosz. An especially amiable group of people from Georgia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts was provided with a comprehensive introduction to Poland and its people, past and present, from July 26 through August 7, 2013. Staś stayed on to remain a while longer in Poland. The heritage tours strive to be both entertaining and educational. This year’s participants included: Edward Bonk, Jr., Christine Chartier, Denise Clark, Helen Grabowski, Carolyn Kielec, Joseph Kielec, Michael Lipski, Alberta Martin, Francis Martin, Cynthia Moran, Dorothy Morrison, Nicholas Polanichka, Mary Ann Polanichka, Carol Pugh, Jeanne Taylor, Josh Taylor, Mary Young, and William Young.

Since the goal of every Polish Center tour is to feature some lesser known region or topic associated with Poland and its people, not much time was scheduled initially for visiting Warsaw once arriving in the capital. The spectacular Polish Military Museum however, was not overlooked. Nowhere in Poland is it possible to experience the spirit of Polish history under one roof as you can here. It is, perhaps, the best introduction to the definition of the word “Polish”.

This year, we selected to visit the Świętokrzyskie region, an area of the country often neglected by commercial tourist routes. Located in south central Poland, it is an ancient land of castles, natural attractions, as well as extraordinary traces of pre-historic industry. Accommodations in the renaissance town of Sandomierz became the starting point from which our adventure began. Our travel itinerary included Paradise Cave once inhabited by a Neanderthal family, a presentation of life during the iron age, a glimpse of an ancient Slavic god discreetly confined to a space behind an altar in a 15th century village church behind a 400 year-old oak, a medieval castle with a specter of a lady in white, palaces, vodka tasting.
The Polish Center is sponsoring a Polish family research tour of South-Eastern Poland, in keeping with its mission to aid and encourage people to discover and learn. If successful, this may become the first of a number of genealogy research tours to specific regions of the country sponsored by the Polish Center. The proposed program is tentatively scheduled for early May 2014 and depends upon the number of individuals willing to participate.

We begin with South-Eastern Poland because the greatest number of Polish American families trace their roots to this region, once referred to as Galicia. Those considering taking part in this adventure will need to be prepared beforehand by investigating which villages are of interest to them and whether the documentation they are searching for is located in the national archive in the city of Przemyśl. They will also need to be prepared to bring with them to Poland a digital camera with extra storage and a laptop computer.

The tour leader and research guide is Mr. Alan Horbal, licensed genealogist and adjunct professor of genealogy at Williams College. Ms. Aleksandra Kacprzak, a Polish professional genealogist will also serve as research guide.

Mr. Horbal has been conducting free introductory classes in genealogical research at the Chicopee Public Library (co-sponsored by the Polish Center). It is suggested that those interested in taking part in the research tour take advantage of these classes. Mr. Horbal’s beginner genealogy classes are presented in the Chicopee Library Computer Lab afternoons from 3:00 to 4:30 pm and evenings from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Registration, e-mail and basic computer skills are required.

It is expected that genealogy tour participants will depart Chicopee for JFK Airport and arrive in Rzeszów, Poland. After dinner, a meeting to set-up research teams, determine needs, and rest the group will go on to Przemyśl and the National Archives. There will be three days of research scheduled in the Przemyśl archives. The group will then return to Rzeszów from which each participant will be able to venture out individually within a three day period to visit family and villages of interest. The program ends with three nights in Kraków. After enjoying the tours of the city and its environs, participants may stay on their own or depart from Kraków directly to JFK in New York.

For further information please contact Mr. Ronald Lech at the Polish Center (e-mail polishcenter@elms.edu or phone 413-592-0001).

THE MISSION OF THE POLISH CENTER:
To collect and preserve historical objects representative of the material culture of the Polish people in America and Poland; to prepare exhibits of historical and cultural materials; to help individuals locate information about Poland and the Poles in America; to offer lectures, conferences, seminars, concerts and other events which promote an interest in Polish and Polish-American culture; to become a living monument that celebrates the contribution of the Polish people to the arts, economy and the sciences; to provide learning resources and programming.

The Center cooperates regionally with the initiatives of other institutions and cultural associations and seeks to maintain a strong working relationship with them. It aspires to be a national organization.
The mystery to making a proper Polish style kielbasa was revealed in May this year as the Polish Center sponsored a kielbasa making contest between culinary students from Chicopee Comprehensive High School and Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (Northampton). The Center’s promotion of the contest was a newly instituted component of its educational program thanks to a generous grant acquired from Hampden Savings Bank. The program was managed by board members Michael Pise, Gregory Bernat, Joanne Gruszkos, and Linda Friedrich. Judges Gregory Bernat, Mayor David Narkiewicz of Northampton, Polish Center Board President Joseph Topor, Glenn Welch (President of Hampden Savings Bank, and Hampden Savings Bank Vice President of Marketing Rick Debonis judged the final products according to taste, texture and presentation. As Polish culinary expert and owner of Bernat’s Polish Deli and Bakery, Gregory Bernat was invaluable to the success of the contest, which the Polish Center hopes to repeat in the future.

Unintentionally, but perhaps true to tradition the two schools produced two very different kielbasas. It was very difficult to decide which product was the best. Both were good, but very different. Chicopee Comprehensive produced a kielbasa based on more time-honored recipes while Smith Vocational presented a creative biała kiełbasa (fresh and not smoked) with cheese and jalapenos. The winner of the contest was Chicopee Comprehensive; however, Smith Vocational students, though obviously disappointed, were far from being failures. The schools and their students must be praised for their talent, hard work and interest.

Whenever possible, the Polish Center has tried to promote its image by setting up exhibits and participating in programs in the greater Springfield-Greenfield-Hartford area as well as New York State. For example, the Polish Center displayed its traveling exhibit at the Little Poland Festival in New Britain on April, 28 2013. The event was sponsored by the Polonia Business Association and attracted more than 6,000 people who enjoyed a day filled with Polish food and entertainment. Our display attracted many curious eyes and questions about our mission and exhibits and earned us many new friends and supporters.

Polish Center volunteers enjoy visiting schools and senior centers in order to talk about its mission and activities. There may be some, however, that are not aware the Polish Center has been selected as a convenient meeting place for their boards to conduct business or for their activities. Such organizations include the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts, the Kosciuszko Foundation New England Chapter, the Polish Junior League of Massachusetts, the Polish American Congress, and the Polish Women’s Alliance. On occasion, we have welcomed family reunions, birthday parties, a wedding reception, special office get-togethers, and more.

A few of our board members made sure the Polish Center was represented in the Chicopee Memorial Day Parade May 27. Mark Germain, husband of board member Alicia Germain, took on the job of wearing the Center’s rather heavy winged hussar’s armor. Onlookers no doubt appreciated the candies provided by Bernat’s Deli and Bakery that were tossed to them.

The Polish Center has had the opportunity to show its film about Wojtek the Polish Soldier Bear a number of times. It has been invited to do so again for the Society of Polish American Culture at the Elks Lodge in Chicopee November 18. For a history of the bear, you may wish to refer to our last newsletter or purchase a book about this incredible animal at the Center.

Those who attend the 2013 Genealogy
The Polish Center will offer adults with limited English proficiency an opportunity to learn English communication skills. Lessons address the needs of daily living as well as the language for the work force. Skills covered include speaking, pronunciation, simple conversation, reading, following directions, writing, spelling, simple sentence structures, and some grammar.

Classes are led by professional teachers Ms. Adelle Love and Ms. Rose Dachowski. Class size is limited to 10 people and scheduled Monday evenings September, 16 through November 4 at 6:30 pm. A nonrefundable donation of $20 to the Polish Center is required for participation.

Groups interested in participating in the parade are asked to gather in Northampton at the former Blyda/Lia Honda lot on King Street. Participants are asked not to join in while the parade is in progress because it interferes with police traffic control. For further information please call Mr. Jerry Budgar at 413-584-2964 or write e-mail gbudgar@rcn.com

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday November 16, 2013
MassMutual Center
1277 Main Street
Springfield MA 01103
Honoring
Congressman Richard Neal
for his dedication and continued support
to the Western MA community

Master of Ceremonies: David Bartley
For more information contact the Polish Center
413-592-0001
e-mail: polishcenter@elms.edu

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE OFFERED ONCE MORE

The Polish Center will offer adults with limited English proficiency an opportunity to learn English communication skills. Lessons address the needs of daily living as well as the language for the work force. Skills covered include speaking, pronunciation, simple conversation, reading, following directions, writing, spelling, simple sentence structures, and some grammar.

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Mr. Stanislaw (Staś) Radosz

POLISH CENTER HOURS

1 TO 5 PM DAILY EXCEPT FOR MAJOR HOLIDAYS AND INCLEMENT WEATHER. Special arrangements may be made for other hours and days by calling in advance.
Phone 413-592-0001.
E-mail: polishcenter@elms.edu Website: www.polishcenter.net

We recommend that non-member visitors to the Polish Center galleries donate a minimum of $10 per person to the museum. Special privileges to members apply.
YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT to us because it allows us to continue our work throughout the year. The Polish Center is a unique institution which depends on individuals such as yourself, businesses, various organizations, and foundations that value its mission to safeguard Polish and Polish American history for future generations.

We have been fortunate to have many generous friends who allow us to continue our operations. Membership dues, commemorative gifts and unspecified donations help fund the day-to-day operations of the Polish Center. Remember, all donations to the Polish Center are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Help us move forward.

The Polish Center of Discovery and Learning is an association of dedicated individuals committed to providing learning resources and programming to benefit a broad spectrum of the community interested in Polish culture.

A wonderful opportunity to
“EMBRACE YOUR HERITAGE”

Please let us know if you prefer not to receive newsletters and other information from the Polish Center in the future. Due to increased costs in printing and postage, we must limit our mailings to special donors and members.

Please ask about memorial opportunities
Choose to name an area of the Polish Center after your family
or someone especially important to you, a fraternal organization, or enterprise.

THE SUCCESS OF THIS VERY SPECIAL CENTER depends on a continued strong expression of interest and support by the College and people like you — the friends of Polish culture! We invite you to become a supporting member (or renew your membership) of the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning at Elms College. Please encourage others — friends and family—to support the Polish Center.

Choose from the following:

- (Chopin Circle) $1,000 and above
- (Copernicus Circle) $100-$249
- (Kosciuszko Circle) $500-$999
- (Matejko Circle) $50-$99
- (Sklodowska-Curie Circle) $250-$499
- (Mickiewicz Circle) $35-$49

My Name _____________________________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________________________________
City, State and Zip ___________________________________________ Phone __________________
I would like to receive newsletters and other messages from the Polish Center by e-mail ___Yes ___No
My e-mail address is __________________________

The Polish Center is a 501(c)(3) organization.
Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.
Polskie Centrum Naukowe jest organizacją niezależną i niedochodową.

Please ask about special gift giving (check the box). In addition to special gift giving, families and businesses have an opportunity for commemorative sponsorship of rooms and galleries in our new home.

Please return to:
 Polish Center
 33 South Street
 Chicopee, MA 01013
CELE
POLSKIEGO CENTRUM NAUKOWEGO

Zbieranie i przechowywanie przedmiotów o tematyce historyczno-kulturalnej polskiej ludności w Stanach Zjednoczonych i w Polsce.

Po zrealizowaniu celów, pragniemy stać się żywym pomnikiem czczącym pamięć polskich emigrantów i ich potomków jako współczesnych mieszkańców życia kultury, nauki i ekonomii tego kraju.

Organizowanie wystaw, warsztatów naukowych, wykładów i seminariów

Udzielanie pomocy osobom szukającym informacji i materiałów pomocniczych o Polsce i Polakach w Stanach Zjednoczonych.

Udzielanie wsparcia osobom dążącym do wprowadzenia polskich tematów do programów nauczania i utworzenie baz danych informacji dotyczących Polski i Polonii.

EMBRACE YOUR HERITAGE

POLISH CENTER AT THE CHICOPEE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE