



POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2

Your Voice
in *America!*

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Future PAC Newsletters will be sent out:

Deadline for submission	Publication date
Friday, June 2, 2017	Friday, June 9, 2017
Friday, August 4, 2017	Friday, August 11, 2017
Friday, October 6, 2017	Friday, October 13, 2017
Friday, December 1, 2017	Friday, December 8, 2017

"Your Voice in America" newsletter is published bimonthly by the Polish American Congress. The purpose of the newsletter is to offer PAC National Directors and PAC Executive Committee members the opportunity to share news and information about their state divisions and offices. The newsletter does not receive funds from any external source. The editor is Dr. Mark Pienkos.

Articles should be between 100 and 400 words. Some editing will be done to match our style guidelines and spatial constraints, as well as correcting grammatical errors. We do not send proofs for approval. When sending photos, please include captions with names, official titles. All submitted materials become the property of the Polish American Congress and may be used to promote the mission of the PAC. Materials will not be returned unless requested.

Articles are due according to this schedule. Send your submissions to PAC National VP for Public Relations, Mark Pienkos at markpienkos2012@gmail.com.

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www.facebook.com/pages/Polish-American-Congress

PAC to Meet in Washington, D.C.

The Polish American Congress will hold its annual meeting of the Council of National Directors in Washington, D.C. The meeting dates are September 25-28, 2017. Specific details will be sent to National Directors in the near future.

The PAC held its annual meeting in our nation's Capitol two years ago. Besides conducting regular business of the organization, a special day was set aside to make visits to House of Representatives and Senate to meet with key legislators to promote ideas and issues of importance to Polish Americans. The day was very successful. A similar day this September is planned.

Again, look for specific details in the near future. Please plan to attend!



President's Message

Dear Members, Officers, and Friends of the PAC,

Last month, our longtime employee, Dr. Barbara Andersen, resigned her position with the Polish American Congress. I appreciate her long commitment and service to the organization and wish her the very best in her future endeavors and hope she will continue to be actively involved in the organization.

Earlier this week in the company of Vice President Pierchalski, Secretary Kuzma, myself and joined telephonically by Vice President Bajdek in the PAC Washington office, we interviewed four highly qualified individuals. Please see the announcement below regarding the hiring of an Administrator, as well as a newly created position that will help our organization.

Responding to an invitation from the Long Island Division President, Mr. Worwa, I attended their monthly meeting. It's not often I have the opportunity to visit other areas and witness firsthand concerns and objectives of the division. I made several observations which I find necessary to address to the Executive Committee.

At the end of March, the annual election of officers was held in the Illinois Division, with a new president being elected. Congratulations to Mr. Miroslaw Niedzinski and his board of officers.



Frank J. Spula,
President

On behalf of the Polish American Congress, I invited candidates of Polish descent aspiring to Mayoral positions within the Illinois community. They were also given the opportunity to meet with the ethnic press. Most of them succeeded in their attempts for the office.

After attending various fundraisers, I would hope that more individuals would show support.

As every year, the State of Illinois recognizes Kazimierz Pulaski as a holiday. The Polish Museum of America hosted the reception attended by elected officials, including the Governor, State Senator, and many Congressmen as well as local representatives. This event is very well attended by the Polish American community. I had the opportunity to address the audience on behalf of the PAC.

That evening, the Illinois Division held a function to honor the Polish-American hero. These types of events underscore the relevance of our community and should be held in various divisions of the PAC.

I wish you success in your Divisions and an enjoyable spring.

PAC ADMINISTRATIVE VACANCY FILLED

+ POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT POSITION CREATED

The PAC Executive Committee is pleased to announce the hiring of an Administrator for the PAC office in Washington, D.C. The decision was made during a conference call meeting held on April 14, 2017. Klara Wisniewska was offered and has accepted this part-time appointment.

Ms. Wisniewska takes over the administrative responsibilities of long-time executive director Dr. Barbara Andersen who resigned her position in February. We wish Klara great success in her new responsibilities serving the PAC. Welcome Klara!

At the same time, the PAC Executive Committee is also pleased to announce the hiring of Mr. John Czop as the part-time PAC Director of Policy Administration and Development. This is a new position that will report to the PAC President and Executive Committee. It will include both coordinating the issuing of approved policy statements and implementation of policies.

John is a long-time PAC member and we wish him much success in his new responsibilities. John will also work out of the PAC Washington, D.C. office, and his home in New Jersey.

Additional information will be forthcoming on the progress both Ms. Wisniewska and Mr. Czop are making in their duties.

FROM THE DESK OF DEBBIE MAJKA, VICE PRESIDENT FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS



Tadeusz Kosciuszko

The year 2017 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of hero and patriot, Tadeusz Kosciuszko. He lived at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century (1746-1817). In recognition of his activity for the sake of peace, independence and democracy – the equality of people regardless of their skin color or religion – he is considered a national hero in Poland and in the United States. He emphasized the role of both practical and citizen education, so that men and women who regained freedom should be aware of their rights, but also their duties with respect to the freedom and welfare of others.

In Poland, Kosciuszko fought for the freedom and equality of all citizens: peasants, who had to work as slave-like serfs, Jews who were a religious minority, women, who had fewer rights than men, and other people who were not treated equally. He emphasized the importance and role of women in the society, which at that time was a very cutting-edge approach. He was a precursor of the development of national awareness in its modern sense, encompassing all social strata and groups. In his fight for freedom and independence, he favored peaceful solutions.

In acknowledgement of his activity for the sake of independence, peace and equality for all, Kościuszko is a national hero in Poland and the United States, and an honorary citizen of the French Republic. It is worth emphasizing that all views and ideas which he advocated remain relevant and important today.

During the American War of Independence, Kościuszko served as a colonel in the Continental Army. He designed and oversaw the construction of state-of-the-art fortifications, including those at West Point. Thomas Jefferson called him “the purest son of liberty I have ever known.”

And Jefferson, who is often quoted with his high regard for Kosciuszko, and whom Kosciuszko named the executor of his Will, sadly did not carry out the wishes of Kosciuszko that his property be used for giving Negroes their freedom.

*The following is the exact wording from
Tadeusz Kosciuszko in this famous document.*

Will of Tadeusz Kosciuszko, May 5, 1798

“I Thaddeus Kosciuszko being just in my departure from America do hereby declare and direct that should I make no other testamentary disposition of my property in the United States I hereby authorise my friend Thomas Jefferson to employ the whole thereof in purchasing Negroes from among his own or any others and giving them Liberty in my name, in giving them an education in trades or otherwise and in having them instructed for their new condition in the duties of morality which may make them good neighbours good fathers or moders, husbands or vives and in their duties as citisens teeching them to be defenders of their Liberty and Country and of the good order of Society and in whatsoever may Make them happy and useful, and I make the said Thomas Jefferson my executor of this.”

T. KOSCIUSZKO

Events have been launched in Poland to mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Tadeusz Kosciuszko, military commander and national hero of Poland and the United States. They were inaugurated Friday, March 24, in the Market Square of Kraków, the place where Kościuszko proclaimed the act of insurrection against Tsarist Russia on March 24, 1794. The bicentenary of Kosciuszko’s death is included in the 2017 UNESCO list of anniversaries.



Update on the New Kosciuszko Bridge:

Two large bronze plaques affixed to the Kosciuszko Bridge in 1939 shine brightly once again! The plaques, which are historic elements of the bridge, have been fully restored and will soon be placed back on the new bridge. Special recognition goes to the Victoria Consulting & Development, Inc. in Brooklyn for the professional plaques restoration efforts carried out pro bono.

The Office of Governor of NY State, Andrew Cuomo, has recently confirmed that the new Bridge will keep its name: The Kosciuszko Bridge. The opening of its first, eastbound part (under construction since 2014), is planned at the end of April 2017, and the specific opening date will be announced shortly. Once the old bridge is demolished, a new westbound cable-stayed bridge will be built on its site in the next three years.

The Kosciuszko Foundation wishes to thank the NYS Department of Transportation for its cooperation on the Kosciuszko Bridge project. For more information about the Kosciuszko Bridge, visit <https://www.dot.ny.gov/kbridge>.

The adjacent pictures show the process of removing the plaques from the old Kosciuszko Bridge. The same plaques, now restored, will be placed on the new Kosciuszko Bridge later this month.



CONGRATULATIONS NEW PAC STATE DIVISIONS!



On April 7, 2017, the PAC Executive Committee formally approved the membership of two newly organized PAC State Divisions! Approved applications and memberships for Florida and Missouri were granted.

Welcome PAC - Florida and PAC - Missouri Divisions! We look forward to your active participation in the Polish American Congress.



On the occasion of Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Day Join us for the opening of the exhibit

“They Risked Their Lives - Poles who saved Jews during the Holocaust”

April 24, 2017 at 6:00 pm

Georgetown University

Intercultural Center Galleria (McGhee Library)

Free Admission

Light refreshments will be served

Welcoming Remarks by Jacques Berlinerblau
Professor and Director of the Center for Jewish Civilization,
Georgetown University
Opening Remarks by Piotr Wilczek, Ambassador of Poland

Introduction to the Exhibition by Anna Sommer Schneider,
Adjunct Professor, Center for Jewish Civilization, Georgetown
University

“Whoever saves a single life, saves the entire world.”

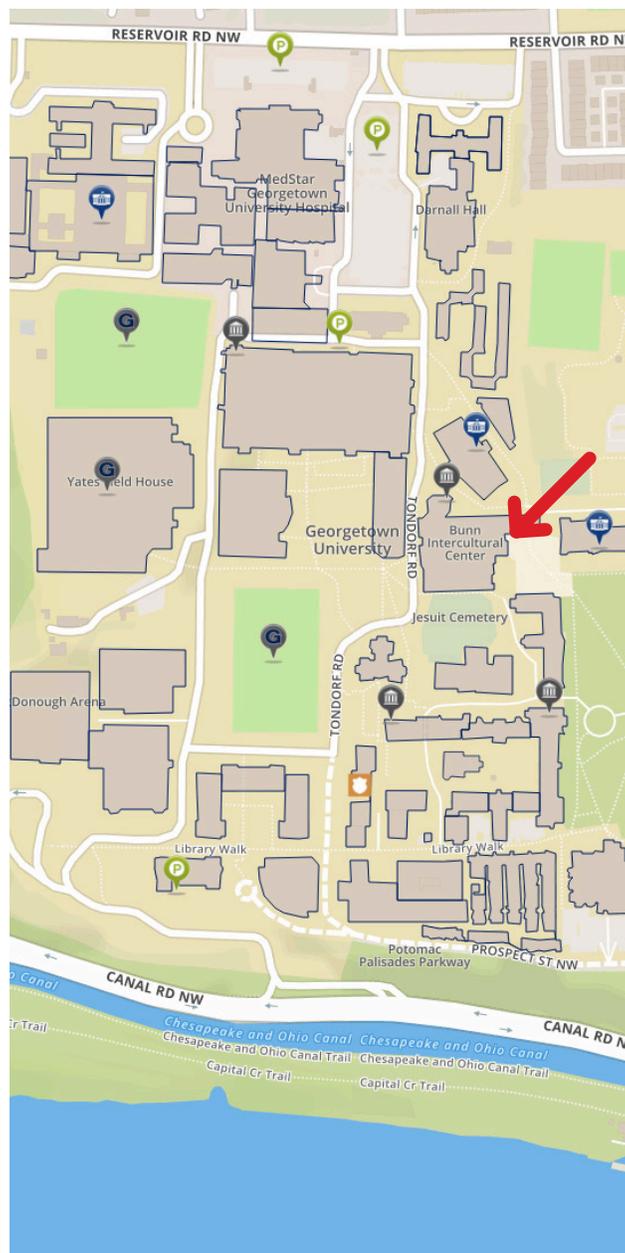
Poles, direct witnesses of German crimes against Jews,
were forced to experience the Holocaust in a horrific way.
They were not only subjects to the brutal terror of war, but
were also confronted with the cruel extermination of their
Jewish Neighbors.

In occupied Poland, unlike in the countries of Western Europe,
helping Jews was punishable by death. Despite this fact, there
were Poles who stood up to the evil and saved Jews. In the name
of helping others, they risked not only their own lives, but also
those of their families.

The exhibition is based on a unique collection of testimonies
from the Righteous Among the Nations as well as Holocaust
survivors gathered within the framework of the Museum of the
History of Polish Jews Polin oral history project “Polish
Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History.”

The exhibition is presented jointly by the Embassy of the Re-
public of Poland and Georgetown University's Center for Jewish
Civilization and Department of Slavic Languages.

The exhibition will be on display through April 28, 2017.





WORDS MATTER

Press Release - 1/26/2017

Washington – The Embassy of the Republic of Poland has released a new video explaining the importance of using correct terms to describe German Nazi Camps. The video stresses that all too often foreign journalists and writers inaccurately refer to World War II German Nazi Camps as “Polish Camps” or “Camps in Poland.” This is wrong.

“On the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day we pay tribute to the millions of victims of the Holocaust and German Nazi oppression. As we approach the 72nd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest and most infamous German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp established during World War II, it is imperative that we remind American journalists, educators and students alike about the importance of using accurate language to describe German Nazi Camps. It is not just a matter of semantics” noted Ambassador Piotr Wilczek.

The video is part of the Against “Polish Camps” Campaign, which the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been leading since 2004. The Polish Embassy in Washington, DC takes an active role in this campaign, reacting to offensive and false public statements about “Polish concentration camps/Polish death camps” appearing in the press. Each year our Embassy receives several dozen interventions requesting that inaccurate phrases be replaced with the following appropriate words:

“German Nazi concentration/extermination camp in occupied Poland” or “Nazi concentration camp/extermination camp in the territory of German-occupied Poland”

To view the video, please visit
youtu.be/uDpTcXQ8Na0
by copy/pasting into your browser.

Words Matter - German Nazi Camps



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POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS

Founded in May, 1944, the Polish American Congress is a National Umbrella Organization, representing at least 10 million Americans of Polish descent and origin. Its membership is comprised of fraternal, educational, veteran, religious, cultural, social, business, political organizations and individual membership. The Polish American community prides itself on its deeply rooted commitment to the values of family, faith, democracy, hard work and fulfillment of the American dream. We are present in every state and virtually every community in America, on various social, business and economic levels.

The Polish American Congress, an “umbrella” organization, is a federation of over 3000 Polish American organizations and clubs, ranging from national fraternal benefit societies, such as the Polish National Alliance, Polish Women’s Alliance, Polish Roman Catholic Union, Polish Falcons and others, including veteran, cultural, professional, religious and social associations, with aggregate membership of over one million. The PAC by-laws also provide for individual membership, as well as associate membership.

The PAC promotes civic, educational and cultural programs designed to further not only the knowledge of Polish history, language and culture, but to stimulate Polish American involvement and accomplishments.

The governing body of the PAC is the Council of National Directors, consisting of directors elected by their respective State Divisions or National Organizations and up to 10 at-large directors elected by the Council. Day-to-day operations are conducted by the Executive Committee elected by the Council of National Directors for a two year term.

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