

5TH POLISH WEEK IN WINDSOR November 9-16, 2013

5-ty Polski Tydzień w Windsor 9-16 listopada, 2013



Eagle from Coronation Sword, Szczerbiec (1320)

Celebrating 105 years of the Polish Community in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and the 95th anniversary of Poland regaining independence.



COMMENTS ON ACTIVITIES OF POLONIA WINDSOR

"I would like to recognize the members of the organizing committee, the sponsors, and many volunteers for sharing their rich Polish heritage with their fellow Canadians while building a better community for all."

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.

"On behalf of Embassy of the Republic of Poland, I commend everyone involved with this year's Polish Week in Windsor for reinforcing this energetic community and strengthening the image of Poland as dynamic, democratic and freedom-loving country."

Marcin Bosacki, Ambassador of Poland to Canada

"The fifth Polish Week is a significant event, a good occasion to celebrate Poland's rich cultural heritage."

Grzegorz Morawski, Consul General RP, Toronto

"The City of Windsor is privilege to have been twinned with the City of Lublin, Poland, for 12 years, and we know that our warm relationship, commercial, social and cultural, will continue and increase for decades to come."

Eddie Francis, Mayor of Windsor

"I am proud indeed that, since 2000, Lublin and Windsor have been brought closer, thanks to the specific ties of partnership. This has been reflected in numerous gatherings, joint initiatives and plans for a bright future."

Krzysztof Zuk, Mayor of Lublin, Poland

"Mozemy z duma zaprezentowac nasz polonijny wklad w rozwoj spolecznosci lokalnej oraz chlubna role Polski posrod rodziny narodow."

Rev. Zbigniew Sawicki, Proboszcz













Polish Week in Windsor 2013

For several centuries, those living on Polish soil were forced into emigration for political or economic reasons. Organized groups of Kashubes settled in Canada a hundred and fifty years ago. Our forebears always placed a high priority on the creation of a new society and the good of our new homeland. As Canadians of Polish heritage, we are heirs to one thousand years of Polish history, tradition and culture, as well as a deep belief in God. These values helped the Polish people to survive the hardest times of war and partition. That is why it is so important to promote our national values and the accomplishments of our ancestors, Polish immigrants to the Land of the Maple Leaf.

The present report has to do with the almost twelve-thousand-strong Polonia in the city of about 200,000 that is Windsor, Ontario, the most southerly settlement in Canada, across the river from Detroit, U.S.A. From November 9-16, 2013, after a break of five years, a committee, made up of representatives from almost all of the Polonia organizations in Windsor, organized the Fifth Polish Week in Windsor 2013. It celebrated two important events: the 105th anniversary of the settlement of Polonia in Windsor and the 95th anniversary of the liberation of Poland from partition. The Polonia celebration comprised more than twenty events, promoting Polish culture, history and tradition, as well as University and business meetings. It is worth emphasizing that events, inspired and organized by Polonia youth, were an important part of the week. There were also exhibitions about Sir Casimir Stanislaus Gzowski and "The Odyssey of the Wawel Treasures, 1939-1961". Among the promotional items that preceded Polish Week, it is necessary to note a beautifully printed, 64-page colour programme, a promotional video, photographs and information in The Windsor Star, Czas Polski/The Polish Times in Detroit, Telewizja Detroit/Detroit Polish TV, and Polish Studio TV in Toronto, as well as in social media and on Web pages.

The Exhibition, "Sir C.S. Gzowski"- Monday, October 28

Two significant events took place before the official start of Polish Week. The first of these was the opening of an exhibition about Sir Casimir Stanislaus Gzowski, our most eminent Canadian of Polish heritage, on the 200th anniversary of his birth. It took place in the Leddy Library of our University and a week later, on November 4, at Windsor's City Hall. It is a surprising fact that many people viewing the exhibition had not known about the enormous legacy, left by this famous individual. Thanks to him, we have the magnificent Niagara Falls Park and the International Railway Bridge, joining Fort Erie to Buffalo, U.S.A., still in use to this day. He was one of the creators of the central communication system of the newly formed Canadian nation (1867). Roads, canals and railways constituted the foundation for the development of commerce in this vast country. Colonel Gzowski also was a distinguished military strategist, defending freedom and order in the young nation. Today, many refer to him as "a Renaissance man of the XIX Century", since his interests and accomplishments went far beyond the "conventional" thoughts and achievements of the people of his times.





Meeting with City Council- Monday, November 4

The second event to take place on a Monday was the presentation of the programme for Polish Week 2013 and an invitation to the citizens of Windsor to participate in it, made during a meeting of the City Council. This event was of particular importance, on account of the 13-year partnership of our city with Lublin and the programme, jointly prepared with the City, for the stay of Lublin's Deputy Mayor, Grzegorz Sieminski, who paid an official visit to Windsor during Polish Week. Young people from the song and dance ensemble "Tatry" in folk costumes gave mementos to the Council members: the beautiful programmes of Polish Week, brochures about C.S. Gzowski, and Polish "treats". Greetings from the Mayor of Lublin Krzysztof Zuk and a promotional video for Polish Week were shown on a large screen. The meeting of the City Council was shown live on television and this was an additional advertisement for the celebration. It was good to hear the Mayor of our city, Eddie Francis, speak so very positively about the activities of the Windsor Polonia. We know that for many years the Council has appreciated the activities of our community in Windsor and beyond.



Anniversary Banquet- Saturday, November 9

The official opening of Polish Week took place on Saturday with the Anniversary Banquet in the hall, tastefully decorated with the national colours, at the 80-years-old Dom Polski. Participating in the banquet were: the Consul of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Janik, from Toronto; Jeff Watson, the MP for Essex, our federal representative; the newly elected provincial representative Percy Hatfield, MPP for Windsor-Tecumseh; as well as City Councillors Drew Dilkens, Chair of the International Relations Committee, and Alan Halberstadt. After the introductions of the VIPs, there was a performance by the song and dance ensemble, "Tatry", which is well known in Canada, the U.S.A. and Poland. The young people presented themselves beautifully in national costumes for the Polonaise and ended the performance with the Mazurka. After the official speeches, there was a selection of songs presented by "Polskie Nadzieje", a singing trio of children from the Zalewski family. As always, it was particularly important to thank all of the organizers of Polish Week in Windsor, especially its numerous sponsors. Emphasis was placed on the contribution by the Polonia Centre (Windsor) Inc., the principal sponsor of the event, with a donation accounting for nearly 40% of the budget. In the next part of the artistic programme, the Detroit pianist, Derek Szlauer, barely 12 years old, appeared and played a selection of piano pieces. As well, individuals with noteworthy service to Polonia were not forgotten and the Centennial Gold Medal of the Polish Community in Windsor was awarded to the following people: Drew Dilkens, Maria Filarska, Anna Krysa and Danuta Kus. The theatrical-vocal group "Plomien" brought the artistic performances to a conclusion with a selection of patriotic songs, always so sincerely received by the public. Many of the participants drew attention to the beautifully decorated hall, the excellent Polish dishes and the programme, which was presented efficiently by Katarzyna Dziedzic, a former Miss Canada International.



Celebrations of November 11- Sunday, November 10

Sunday began with the celebration of a Holy Mass for the Homeland, delivered at the Holy Trinity Church by the Parish Priest, Fr. Zbigniew Sawicki, with the participation of our veterans, standard bearers, Polonia organizations and many members of the Polish community. The young people presented themselves beautifully: members of the group "Tatry" in traditional costumes and the scouts in their uniforms. Next, in the cemetery at the monument to the Polish veterans, wreaths were laid and prayers offered. The present Minister, the Hon. Teresa Piruzza, MPP for Windsor-West, in particular addressing the young people, emphasized how important it is to preserve the memory of our veterans, who steadily are decreasing in numbers. She noted that she comes from a place, close to Monte Casino, such an important location for the Polish people. After the ceremony at the cemetery, wreaths were next laid at the memorial plague at the Dom Polski. The Annual November 11 Celebration followed in the Dom Polski. Canadians remember that on the 11th day of the 11th month and at the 11th hour, the war came to an end in 1918. We Poles remember that 95 years ago, Poland regained independence, after waiting 123 years for it. It is to be remembered that Canada played a specific role in assisting with the training of the 22,000 soldiers of Haller's Blue Army, which fought to free Poland from partition. After the bearing of the colours, about 200 guests and performers sang the national anthems. Children from the Polish Language School presented a recitation of historical importance. In the hall were their parents and veterans, by now few in number, who received flowers from the children. "Polskie Nadzieje", this time in folk costumes, the St. Cecilia Choir, and the younger members of "Tatry" also performed. The group "Plomien" brought the performances to a close with a selection of wartime songs and the Polonia March was sung with enthusiasm by everyone present, at the end of the celebration. Dorota Zalewska, the Chair of the Cultural-Educational Committee of the SPDL, prepared and led this beautiful patriotic programme.









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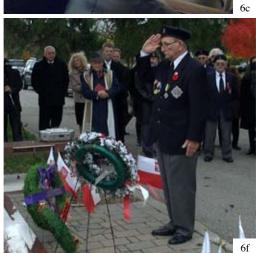
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Niedziela 10 listopad 2013 godzina 14:00 Dom Polski, 1275 Langlois Ave.

















Films, Flag-Raising Ceremony- Monday/Tuesday, November 11-12

On Monday and Tuesday, there were screenings of films, open to the general public: the patriotic "The Battle of Warsaw 1920" and the light comedy, "Last Minute". The screenings of the films each time brought into the Dom Polski several dozen viewers. On Tuesday, there was the next important ceremony of raising the Polish flag on the flagstaff at Windsor's City Hall. Once again, our scouts carried out the celebration with close attention to proper procedure. For the first time in many years, the Polish national flag was hung from the tall flagstaff, unfurled alongside the Canadian flag to the strains of Dabrowski's Mazurka.



The Exhibition, "The Odyssey of the Wawel Treasures, 1939-1961"- Wednesday, November 13

On Wednesday, at the Dom Polski, another extremely beautiful exhibition, "The Odyssey of the Wawel Treasures, 1939-1961" was opened. The exhibition underscored the gratitude of Poland and Polonia to Canada for keeping and saving from destruction or rifling by Hitler's forces many invaluable mementos of Polish culture. It consists of 12 panels, showing photographs of artefacts, such as "Szczerbiec", the royal tapestries, the oldest document written in Polish the Holy Cross Sermons, and the manuscripts of Chopin. All of these national heirlooms of the culture and the history of Poland were returned to their rightful place, Wawel Castle, after the Second World War.





Polish Cuisine- The Festival of Polish Cuisine- Thursday, November 14

Polish Week would not be Polish without traditional food from Poland. From noon on Thursday, there was an open buffet in the Dom Polski Hall. There were many eager to taste Polish dishes, both Poles and Canadians not of Polish heritage. Judging by the amount of food eaten and the amount of beer consumed, one could have gained the impression that the Polish Cuisine Buffet was a good feast for the palate.



Meeting at the University- Friday, November 15

In the morning hours at the city's University, there was a meeting organized and chaired by Dr. Frank Simpson, with the participation of the Deputy Mayor of Lublin, Grzegorz Sieminski, the President of our University Alan Wilderman and about a dozen professors and administrators, two of them of Polish heritage. During the course of the two-hour roundtable meeting, it was agreed that a limited number of projects, which might be taken to completion, would be specified for collaboration. The President of the University expressed his interest in a visit to Lublin, in order to forge a link with the institutions of higher education there. The Chair of the meeting accepted the role of coordinator of a working group.



Business Dinner- Friday, November 15

In addition to Polish culture, history and cuisine, an important part of the gatherings in Windsor was the XVIII meeting of business people. About 100 people participated in it. This annual event is an interesting one for the representatives of different Polish and Canadian businesses, representatives of Polonia, local ethnic groups, students and young professionals. As shown in the beautifully printed programme, the main theme of the evening was "Canada-Poland: Potential for a Long-Term Partnership". With the aid of a visual presentation, this theme was addressed by the Keynote Speaker for the evening, Grzegorz Sieminski, the Deputy Mayor of Lublin, Windsor's twin city in Poland. Grzegorz Morawski, the Consul for the Republic of Poland from Toronto commented on the topic from the perspective of Poland, while Joe Comartin, the federal representative from Windsor and Deputy Speaker in the Canadian Parliament, gave the Canadian point of view. The agreement signed between Canada, with its stable economy, and the European Union, in which Poland has a strong position and good economic results, provides a firm foundation for a long-term partnership. One of the more interesting examples, in which our nations can cooperate fruitfully, is energy. Poland has been seeking independence with regard to energy, while Canada is a world leader in the production of potash, uranium, hydro power, natural gas and crude oil. The major experience of Canada in energy can be employed in the interests of Polish energy needs. A very important part of the evening's programme was young Polonia, the abundant presence of which evidenced their interest in international cooperation. A special guest was the great-great-granddaughter of Sir C.S. Gzowski, Victoria Warwick, who mentioned several interesting facts about her great ancestor. Next, Anna Barycka presented the organizers of this year's and next year's editions of the Quo Vadis Conferences, 2014 in Canada, the U.S.A., and Australia. Kazimierz Chrapka, the President of the W. Reymont Foundation, a Polonia leader with many years of experience, emphasized with uncommon accuracy that an investment in youth is the most important undertaking for Polonia. He underscored very strongly that it is not appropriate to control young Polonia, but rather to encourage them in their aims and vision, to which they themselves give emphasis. Examples of this are the unusually ambitious and developing Quo Vadis Conferences. The young people applauded his speech with a standing ovation. Once again, individuals with records of particularly strong service were awarded the Centennial Gold Medal of the Polish Community in Windsor: Kazimierz Chrapka, Elzbieta Molcan-Gorzelnik, Grzegorz Sieminski, and Arleta Sziler. As usual, the programme was presented efficiently by Dr. Frank Simpson.



Young Polonia Day in Windsor, Part 1- Saturday, November 16

The entire Saturday, November 16, belonged to Polonia youth. The Polish-Canadian Students' Association of Windsor, in existence for the past five years, was the organizer of a number of interesting events. In the morning at the University, there was an interesting panel discussion, organized and led by Anna Barycka. The theme was the achievements of young Canadians of Polish heritage. The panellists were young people with different backgrounds: Katarzyna Rydel, the Vice President of the Young Polish-Canadian Professionals in Ottawa; Marek Rymarz, Chair of the Sponsorship Committee for QV Montreal 2013; Jacqueline Wojciechowska, Miss Canada Globe 13/14 from London; and Andrzej Dabrowski, the National President of PISK. Participation in the debate by about 30 people from Canada and the U.S.A. was evidence of the interest in and need for such a discussion. At the same time, a very pleasant meeting with students of the Polish Language School took place in the basement hall of the Holy Trinity Church. The meeting was prepared and presented by Sr. Elzbieta Mruczek, the Director of the School. Fr. Zbigniew Sawicki, Grzegorz Morawski, Grzegorz Sieminski, and Jerzy Barycki, President of the Canadian Polish Congress, Windsor-Chatham Branch. The youngest students, born in Canada, presented a short programme, speaking and singing in Polish. Next the grown-up graduates, who left the school long ago, Dorota Kruba and Irek Kusmierczyk, emphasized the fact that knowing the Polish language had helped them on their pathways through life.

In the afternoon, there was a lunch, dedicated to young Polonia: The following made presentations about their experiences: Natalia Mroz, Michelle Gajewski, and Irek Kusmierczyk, who is a candidate for the Windsor City Council. At the end, three Centennial Gold Medals of the Polish Community in Windsor were presented, but this time to young people for their work on behalf of Polonia: Anna Barycka, Michelle Gajewski and Natalia Mroz. As well, on this occasion, grants from the Millennium Fund of the CPC were presented to students. For the first time, these presentations were made publically in Windsor. Krystyna Gizowska was present at this meeting. She had travelled all the way from Poland to appear in a concert for Polonia. Grzegorz Morawski and Grzegorz Sieminski also shared their comments. Performances by the younger group from "Tatry" brought the meeting to a conclusion. The entire show was presented by Julia Kulesza, a remarkably pleasant student from the University of Windsor.











Gala Concert- Saturday, November 16

Shortly after the conclusion of the lunch, in a part of the Capitol Theatre, there was the Gala Concert of artistic groups from Windsor, with the participation of the popular singer from Poland, Krystyna Gizowska. At the beginning, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Grzegorz Morawski, said a few words and in conclusion, he decorated with medals of Service to Polish Culture two members of Polonia, who had been active for many years, Danuta Pogorzelska, founder and Director of the theatrical-vocal group, "Plomien", and Barbara Koczwara, Director of the committee, overseeing the almost 100 members of the group "Tatry". The young people from "Tatry", as usual, impressively presented their skill in dances that were both traditional and modern. Next there was a performance by the group "Plomien", which for 18 years has promoted Polish culture in Windsor and beyond in a varied and unique way. The trio "Polskie Nadzieje" performed a nostalgic song about the fate of the Polish immigrant.

The performance by the popular singer Krystyna Gizowska met with a very warm reception. Soon the entire audience was swaying and singing along to the rhythm of the popular songs. The performance ended to a standing ovation. Joanna Pogorzelska from Toronto, a long-time member and organizer of the group as a younger person in Windsor, presented the programme. The coordinator of the spectacle was Danuta Pogorzelska.









Young Polonia Day in Windsor, Part 2- Saturday, November 16

The day of young Polonia still continued. The next show was "Polonia's Got Talent" in the Dom Polski. About 20 young representatives of our milieu took part in it, presenting their artistic skills. The young people carried out their selection very efficiently and a jury picked the winners. There were prizes and group photographs. The chief organizer of the competition was Michelle Gajewski. Andrzej Dabrowski ran the show very effectively and members of the Polish-Canadian Students' Association helped in its realization. At the end of the evening, the young organizers held a discotheque; there was a lot of music, dancing and good times, which brought together about a hundred people. Many guests who had been strangers had fun together with the oldest representatives of the group "Tatry", which provided the opportunity for forming new friendships. Perhaps some of them will bring to fruition future joint projects.



Dinner Held by the City of Windsor for Honoured Guests, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland and the Deputy Mayor of Lublin- Saturday, November 16

In connection with the first visit to Windsor by the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto, Grzegorz Morawski, and the Deputy Mayor of Lublin, the twin city of Windsor in Poland, Grzegorz Sieminski, an official dinner was organized by the Windsor City Council in the palatial Willistead Manor. The gathering was led by the Chair of the International Relations Committee (IRC), City Councillor Drew Dilkens. Windsor has 12 twin cities. At Friday's Business Dinner, Mr. Dilkens had emphasized that Lublin is one of the most active and perhaps the most active of Windsor's twin cities. The following also took part in this very special gathering: Joe Comartin, the Hon. Teresa Piruzza, Percy Hatfield, Councillor Hilary Payne, other members of the IRC, Ms. Krystyna Gizowska with her group, and representatives of Polonia; Fr. Zbigniew Sawicki and Jerzy Barycki, the Chair of the Organizing Committee for Polish Week in Windsor. During the dinner, there were conversations about future directions for cooperation between our two cities, as well as about how the agreement signed by Canada and the EU might facilitate cooperation between Canada and Poland.



The Exhibition, "Sir C.S. Gzowski", at the Parliament in Ottawa- Monday, November 18

The official opening of Gzowski Year in Canada and the showing of the exhibition with the participation of the Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. D. Oxley, had taken place on May 30, 2013, in the Ontario Parliament, namely where ourcountryman had carried out his functions as Administrator of the Province of Ontario. On the invitation of Joe Comartin, Deputy Speaker of the Canadian Parliament and Marcin Bosacki, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Canada, on Monday, November 18, 2013, there was the official presentation of the exhibition in the prestigious Room 216-N of the Federal Parliament in Ottawa. After an introduction by Mr. Comartin, the following individuals spoke: Ambassador Marcin Bosacki; Representative Wladyslaw Lizon, Chair of the Polish-Canadian Parliamentary Group; Dawn Oxley, the great-great-granddaughter of Gzowski; and Jerzy Barycki, the President of the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor, who gave a short lecture on Gzowski. Among the guests were Grzegorz Sieminski, who took part in some additional working meetings, in connection with economic cooperation between Poland and Canada (CETA), with the participation of Marcin Bosacki; Wladyslaw Lizon; the Hon. Erin O'Toole, Parliamentary Secretary of the Minister of International Cooperation; Dariusz Manczyk, Minister Counsellor in the Embassy of the Republic of Poland; several representatives and senators. Grzegorz Sieminski also met with John Foran, Director, Natural Resources Canada. Returning to the exhibition, it was viewed by representatives and senators, who entered the room between their parliamentary meetings. Also present were three members of the Gzowski family and representatives of Polonia from Windsor, Toronto and Ottawa. In the evening there was a reception in the beautiful rooms of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, led by Dariusz Manczyk; Joe Comartin with his wife, honouring the group with his presence; and Grzegorz Sieminski. It was another occasion for continuing the conversations on Polish-Canadian cooperation.





Several Words to Sum Up

The work of preparing Polish Week 2013 went on for a long time, almost an entire year. In the Fifth Organizing Committee, coordinated by Jerzy Barycki, were more than 40 people, representing the entire Windsor Polonia. Thanks to the generous sponsors, especially the Polonia Centre (Windsor) Inc., which financed about 40 % of the budget of Polish Week, the celebration became reality. The generosity of the sponsors of Polish Week permitted the printing of 1,500 colour programmes. The patrons of the event were the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto and the Canadian Polish Congress, Windsor-Chatham Branch. TVP Polonia, which already broadcast the first part of a report about the early shows, was a Media Patron. It is also important to note the excellent technical support by Robert Budziosz and the invaluable Rafal Nowakowski, from Telewizja Detroit/Detroit Polish TV, who covered every event with his camera. It is recommended that interested individuals see the Programme of Polish Week, in which there is all related information, and the Website www.poloniawindsor.ca. It is not possible to list everyone, who worked on, represented, organized and promoted these events in the media, but it is important to emphasize their involvement and the results of it. All of them deserve enormous thanks and recognition, because in spite of their family and professional responsibilities, they found the time to do something valuable for others. It is important to underscore that the Polish People's Home Association and its President, Stanislaw Beben, took upon themselves a major part of the work, because most of the events took place in the Dom Polski. It is appropriate to give them especially warm words of thanks.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the purpose of Polish Week in Windsor was to show the accomplishments of the past, remembering the contribution of our previous generations to the building of Canada, as well as recognition for our veterans; thanks to them, we live in a safer world. We also thought about the present, about those around us and with whom we live every day. The discussions of cooperation between Poland and Canada, Lublin and Windsor, were an essential part of every meeting. As well, the most important thing of all was not forgotten: the future. Young Poloni participated fully in Polish Week in Windsor 2013. They prepared and realized their own events, with considerable success. This is the best way to prepare the younger generation for work in Polonia. They are our hope. It is enormously important that they learn to work together and jointly build up their potential and strength to take effective action. Examples of their successful work together are apparent and recognized worldwide in the organization over a five-year period of the Quo Vadis conferences for young Polonia leaders.

Ewa Barycka Windsor, November 26, 2013 Translated by Frank Simpson Windsor, December 1, 2013

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