



NEWSLETTER

POLISH CULTURAL CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD, INC.

Established 1976 www.polishculturalclub.org September 2025

An Affiliate of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC)

***Note from the Editor:** My apologies for not issuing a June Newsletter. With a recent update to Microsoft 11, the Publisher program I was using has been discontinued and I have had to recreate a new template with new challenges. The format needs some further tweaking, but it will bring everyone up to date.*

MEET OUR 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

2025 Jennie Marconi-Javorski Scholarships were awarded to the following recipients during a ceremony held on June 11. Each received a check for \$1,000. **Nathan Dhillon** of Oakdale, CT who will attend Northeastern University in Boston to study Environmental Engineering (John Martinson Honors Program); **Patrick Kot** of Berlin, CT who will return as a Sophomore to the University of Connecticut--Storrs majoring in Computer Science and Engineering; and **Thomas Suchowolec** of Torrington, CT, who will enter Boston University to study Pre-Public Health and Pre-Law interests. These young men have proven themselves to be excellent scholars, exceptional leaders, and inspiring role models of Polish heritage.



L to R: Gini Pudlo, Nathan Dhillon, Patrick Kot, Thomas Suchowolec, Ursula Brodowicz, and Lilia Kieltyka.

FRAN PUDLO RECIPIENT OF THE 2025 ACPC FOUNDERS AWARD



L to R: Celia Larkin, ACPC President; Fran Pudlo; Lilia Kieltyka, PCCGH President

Buffalo, NY was the location of this year's ACPC's 77th Convention held from July 30 to August 2. At the Banquet on August 1, Fran Pudlo, one of several honorees, was awarded the prestigious Founders Award which is presented annually to an individual who has consistently worked for the benefit and advancement of the ACPC, its affiliates, and Polonia. She was nominated by our Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc., an organization she has served in various capacities for 25 years. She is also a member of the ACPC Membership Committee and was recognized for her involvement with SS. Cyril and Methodius Church.

In her remarks, Fran made mention of several individuals who touched her life and provided inspiration. High on the list was Anna-Mae Maglaty who was an exceptional mentor and dear friend. Also Lilia Kieltyka, who as President of the PCCGH has set an example of spontaneity and fun while working to broaden horizons and connections in Polonia at large. And most important her sister, Gini Pudlo, who never fails to support her endeavors. As Fran stated, "she is the one who makes all the difference and is the wind beneath my sails."

Fran is extremely grateful and touched by this award and very proud to bring recognition and honor to our Club as well as to all of CT Polonia. She considers it to be a great tribute to our members and hardworking team of volunteers. She is still on Cloud 9!

**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN***Lilia Kieltyka, President*

I hope all of you had a summer to remember! The highlight for this Club, hands down, was that our very own member, Fran Pudlo, received the ACPC Founders Award at the July/August ACPC Convention in Buffalo. We are all proud that Fran was singled out for this prestigious award and celebrating it with her in Buffalo was precious.

The Convention served as a very informative and fun gathering, since many Polish organizations from around the country were represented. Buffalo has a lot to offer and is certainly an architectural gem. We learned a lot about how important Poles were in that part of upper state New York during the 19th century, but we, too, have a lot to showcase for ourselves here in the Greater Hartford area.

As the editor mentioned, we are working on reformatting the template of this newsletter, so please be patient as we work through this. In the meanwhile, we have been trying to keep members up to date with current news and events by e-mail, and thank our Public Relations Chair, Carol Bogon Phelan, for this effort.

Happy Fall!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual Dues: \$25 per member / \$40 dual or household / \$20 student

Payable to: PCCGH

Mail to: Virginia M. Pudlo
33 Worthington Road, Glastonbury, CT 06033-1372

Tel.: 860-659-0356 E-mail: francespudlo@att.net

2025-2026 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President: Lilia Kieltyka
Vice President: Ursula Brodowicz
Secretary: Frances Pudlo
Treasurer: Caroline Kieltyka
Historian: Virginia Pudlo

Board Members:

Patricia Archie (Honorary), Marek Czarnecki, Edward Farley (Honorary), Florence Langridge (Honorary), John Majdan, Michelle Maglaty Mostello, Carol Bogon Phelan, Juliana Story, and Nancy Yiznitsky

**2025 LITTLE POLAND FESTIVAL –
A GRAND EVENT**

With bright sun and warm temperatures, the Little Poland event on Sunday, June 8 brought out an impressive number of fans of Polish heritage. Over 30,000 people filled the Broad Street area of New Britain and enjoyed the variety that 125 vendors had to offer. Our Club's booth on the grassy area outside Sacred Heart Church provided a bird's-eye view of all the proceedings. Thanks to Lilia Kieltyka, Ursula Brodowicz, Fran Pudlo, and Gini Pudlo for their representation at this event.

**PCCGH LAUNCHING A NEW VENTURE:
MINI-SZOPKA WORKSHOP**

David Motak, renowned international szopka artist offered the PCCGH the opportunity to take over the "Mini-Szopka Workshop" that he created and taught successfully for many years. Excitedly, Lilia Kieltyka, Ursula Brodowicz, and Fran Pudlo traveled to Pittsburgh, PA in mid-July to meet with Dave, to see how the class is conducted, construct a mini-szopka of their own, and pick up supplies to carry the project forward. It was a fun and engaging experience, especially since a mini-szopka can be completed in just a few hours.

Since szopka making has been a major element of the Club's mission for well over forty years, this workshop will add a new dimension in promoting this beautiful art tradition. We are grateful to Dave for this transfer, which will always be a testament to his artistry and legacy. This mini workshop will be offered in 2026 for both children and adults to enjoy.





POLISH HOLIDAY FAIR (SZOPKA)

Sponsored Jointly by: **THE LADIES GUILD OF SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS CHURCH
AND THE POLISH CULTURAL CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD, INC.**



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2025

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**SS. Cyril and Methodius Church's lower Hall
63 Popieluszko Court – Hartford, CT**



FREE ADMISSION

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

This year marks the 5th Annual Polish Holiday Fair (Szopka) held in collaboration with the Ladies Guild of SS. Cyril and Methodius Church in Hartford. The Ladies Guild will once again offer homemade frozen potato/cheese pierogi for sale, a delicious luncheon menu, pastries, vintage jewelry, and raffle. The PCCGH is happy to welcome a large number of favorite vendors and crafters for holiday shopping, as well as some new ones. Of course, our Club table will be filled with a variety of Polish import and craft items, so please stop by and browse. The centerpiece is always the beautiful display of szopki from our previous competitions. Please plan to attend and bring family, friends, and guests – it's always fun to reconnect. Proceeds from the Ladies Guild offerings benefit their Church projects and all proceeds from the PCCGH table benefit the Jennie Marconi-Javorski Scholarship Fund.

Vendors and Crafters: If you know of any vendors or crafters who would be interested in participating in the Fair, please contact Gini Pudlo at 860-930-2547 or e-mail: francespudlo@att.net, especially if they have a Polish connection. There is still room and she will be happy to reach out to them. Tables are \$30.00.

NEW ENDOWED CHAIR IN POLISH AND POLISH-AMERICAN STUDIES AT CCSU



Dr. Karolina Kołpak

On August 14, following an international search, CCSU announced the appointment of Dr. Karolina Kołpak as the next Stanislaus A. Blejwas Endowed Chair in Polish and Polish-American Studies. Dr. Kołpak brings an impressive record of scholarship, teaching, research, and a commitment to an interdisciplinary and inclusive

approach to Polish, Polish-American, and Polish-Jewish studies. Our Club President, Lilia Kieltyka, served as a member of the CCSU Search Committee.

Over the past 50 years, the Polish Studies Program at CCSU has grown into one of the most significant university-based initiatives of its kind in North America. The program owes its existence to the generosity of Connecticut's Polish-American community (including the PCCGH), which successfully raised significant funds that were matched by the State of Connecticut. This led to the program's official establishment at Central in 1974.

NEWSFLASH – CLUB MEMBERS

Heartfelt condolences are sent to the following:

The family of Karin Gottier who passed away on July 28, 2025
and

Irene Underwood whose husband, Tom, passed away on August 14, 2025.

NEWS FROM FORMER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Felicia Woron received a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Connecticut on May 12, 2025 and began her 4 year residency in OB-GYN at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY.

Maya Wieckowska graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Molecular and Cell Biology on May 11, 2025 and will enter a four year program at UConn's School of Dental Medicine.

Jessica Szaro recently received a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Animal Sciences from the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign and will start a five year Veterinary program in Poland in October.

Matthew Gwara graduated from the University of CT with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Management.

VODKA LORE FOR THE CONNOISSEUR (TRADYCJA HISTORYCZNA)

In the world of fine spirits and wine, classic premier brands often come from specific regions of countries that reflect their authenticity and time-honored traditions. For example, the finest single malt scotches hail from the Highlands of Scotland, and the Bordeaux region in France is home to several of the world's finest wines. The same is true of two highly coveted Polish luxury vodkas – Belvedere and Chopin – which originated deep within central Poland in the small region of Mazovia, reputed to be the birthplace of vodka in 1405.

In the rich heartland of eastern Europe, Mazovia is unique in that the art of handcrafting vodka is practiced as it was over 500 years ago. Here the making of fine vodka is a proud legacy handed down from generation to generation. In their distilleries the work is unhurried. The importance is placed on how it is done, not how fast. It is about making vodka slowly, by hand, in small batches, from a single select ingredient of choice – wheat, potatoes, barley, millet, beetroot, molasses, even pumpkin. But with a grain-based vodka, the finer the grain, the finer the vodka.

Dating back to the sixteenth century, the finest grain vodkas have been made from rye. Different theories abound as to why, but many vodka connoisseurs insist that when rye is distilled it yields a subtle sweetness and soft character that other grains simply cannot duplicate. Strikingly different from the approach used by other fine vodkas, which often use a mix of grains, **Belvedere Vodka** uses a single ingredient – Polish rye.

While rye is one option for vodka, potato is another – specifically the Stobrawa potato which has the flavor and ideal starch level to help create **Chopin Vodka**, giving it a distinctive Old World character and subtle sweetness. Of course, using hand-picked Stobrawa potatoes makes producing Chopin considerably more expensive as well. For example, 10 pounds of naturally grown Stobrawas yield but one bottle of Chopin.

As per 500-year-old tradition, both Belvedere and Chopin are distilled in small batches -- fires are stoked, exact temperatures maintained, with each batch passing strict taste standards. Many years of experience have taught that more than four distillations strip vodka of its character, while three or fewer leave too many impurities. It is for that reason that four separate distillations are the optimum number for Chopin and Belvedere. That, combined with a proprietary filtering process, which gently cleanses the spirit by capturing microscopic particles, ensures the vodkas' soft, creamy smoothness.

Tasting techniques: Swirl the liquid around the glass, then inhale the aroma. If it is a well-crafted vodka, you will be able to identify subtle, pleasing notes, such as the green apple aroma of Chopin or the faint vanilla nose of Belvedere. Next take a sip. A true luxury vodka will reveal its complexities slowly, without burning or harsh aftertaste.

Some Polish Lore: To celebrate the birth of a daughter centuries ago, an oaken cask full of vodka was buried and unearthed only on the daughter's wedding day. By then, of course, the vodka would have mellowed.

Centuries ago Polish hospitality was legendary. For example, it was not uncommon for a host to remove a wheel from their guests' carriage and hide it in an out-building so they could not leave.

Some Polish Toasts:

Na zdrowie – Cheers

Za pomyślność – “to prosperity and success”

Za nas – “To us,” is often used to toast a special occasion

Do dna – “to the bottom,” used when drink is to be consumed in one swallow

Source: Millennium Import Co., Minneapolis, MN 1998



IGA ŚWIĄTEK BLOWS AWAY AMERICAN OPPONENT FOR WIMBLEDON WIN

Poland's Iga Świątek beat her American opponent, Amanda Anisimova, in the most one-sided Wimbledon final in 114 years. Scoring 6-0, 6-0 in only 57 minutes, Iga won her sixth Grand Slam title and became the first woman to win a Wimbledon final by that score line since Dorothea Lambert Chambers beat Dora Boothby in 1911. Świątek also becomes only the second player in the Open Era to win without dropping a game after Steffi Graf beat Natasha Zvereva at the 1988 French Open.