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PRESENTS

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# the great awakening

an eddytorial

According to our friends at Merriam Webster the definition of the word transition is as follows, “a change from one state or condition to another”. In some ways this could be the very definition of Dyngus itself. For centuries Poland has been marking the “transition” from winter to spring with the unique custom known as Smigus-Dyngus or Dyngus Day, as we now refer to it here in the Queen City of the Lakes. In many ways however, our unusual post Lenten celebration is much more than just a date on the calendar or marker to indicate the end of a cold grey winter and the beginning of a warm green spring. Since the founding of the Dyngus Day Buffalo parade and festival back in 2007 we have been witness to numerous transitions, not only in our community wide celebration but we have seen the shift in our own perception and a culture as well.

Although our Polonia community has always been proud of the accomplishments and contributions that our ancestors have bestowed on the world, many younger members of our citizenry were unaware of those legacies and the profound impact that Western New York's Polonia has had on the entire Earth. It's understandable, given that many of today's Polish families' connection to Poland go back to the early part of the 20th century or even before that with the founding of Saint Stanislaus parish in the late 1800's. It's hard enough to keep track of our own endeavors as we make our way through the ups

and downs of our daily lives, let alone the things that our grandparents, great grandparents, and beyond deemed significant. And so as the Polish immigrants integrated into modern American society, the language, customs and traditions were replaced by those of their new home here in the new world.

But even in our celebrations' infancy it became apparent that the time had come for old and new, to take back the customs of our forefathers. Within the first few years of our pussy willow merriment it became quite apparent that the pride of our people hadn't gone away it had just been laying dormant as these Americanized Poles raised families in their new homeland. Although the younger members of our community hadn't personally experienced the extreme bias of earlier times, the prejudice experienced by generations of immigrants gave rise to the development of shame and embarrassment. The fallacious stigma assigned to the immigrated Poles and their subsequent offspring resulted in people denying their ethnic history and thus with each passing family cycle we found our progeny drifting further and further away from the practices of our ancestors.

The popularity of Dyngus Day Buffalo created a safe way to demonstrate the latent pride that many had been yearning for all these years. Nevertheless that is but one of the transitions that presented itself as a result of our splashing water and pussy willow brandishing.

The re-imagination of our cities far East side has begun to crystallize in a way that most would have thought to be a fools errand just a few short years ago. Beginning in the late 1960's the area that we now know as the historic Polonia district slowly became a virtual wasteland. Abandoned by former residents and business owners as well as being neglected by one city administration after another, an area that was once home to the second largest Polish colony in the world outside of Warsaw in many ways resembled a third world country filled with poverty and blight. But hope springs eternal. The last ten years have seen a surge in awareness for this area's potential and the opportunity presented by this perception. Younger members of the community found the grittiness of the former blue-collar neighborhood cool and hip. They are now regularly drawn to the remaining family owned taverns and historical churches. Tour operators regularly bring busloads of people into the area on urban explorations. Young entrepreneurs are finding affordable alternatives in locations they would never have considered a decade ago. Middle eastern Immigrants primarily from Pakistan and Yemen have formed entire communities in an area that most had written off as too far gone less than a generation ago. Repurposing abandoned homes, houses of worship and storefronts into viable entities. The transition is clearly visible with the millions

of dollars being invested in the redevelopment of the former Eckhardt Department store at Broadway and Fillmore, Union Stockyards Bank, Torn Space Theater, Central Terminal and Jericho Road Community Health Center along with the enormous undertakings that the Polish Churches in the area have taken to repair and restore their structures and antiquities. The change is quite palpable.

The transition however, is not limited to the former geographical home of Buffalo's Polonia or their personal identity or pride. In fact an argument can be made that a transition is taking place across the entire Earth. The fact that citizens from nations all across our earthly realm are banding together to take back control from corrupt politicians, corporations and bureaucracies to re-establish their freedom and sovereignty is a clear indicator that a shift in humanities consciousness is occurring right before our very eyes.

We are certainly not equating this worldwide raising of human frequency with the fact that people in Buffalo like to spank each other with wet pussy willow branches once a year but there is no doubt that the inhabitants of the entire world are experiencing a shift in real time.

Whether this transition results in more peace, love and harmony among the people of earth is a question that has yet to be answered. However, this we do know. The spirit of Dyngus is a transition that signifies hope, renewal and regeneration. In some ancient cultures and their calendars, the day after Easter is considered to be the beginning of a new year. The inauguration of a new cycle, a fresh start. So as we go through the travails of awakening and the shedding of our old ways, let us share with the world something that we here on the North Coast have know for quite sometime now. Dyngus is not just a day. It's a state of mind!

**Na Zdrowie!**  
**Eddy Dobosiewicz**  
**Dyngus Day Buffalo**

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Mission Statement  
Dyngus Day LLC in partnership with public and private organizations, provides marketing and event management support to Dyngus Day celebrations and participating venues throughout the Buffalo Niagara regions and across the United States. Dyngus Day, LLC promotes public awareness and branding of Buffalo N.Y. as the Dyngus Day Capital of the World.

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# VENUE MENU

VENUE	ADDRESS	TIME	COST	INFORMATION
PORKY'S LOUNGE	2028 Clinton Street KAISERTOWN 716-238-3461	8:00 AM	FREE	Authentic JukeBox Complimentary Kielbasa Sandwiches featuring Bacik Products
PUBSKI PUB	2437 William Street BUFFALO 716-464-3484	10:00 AM	\$15 or Free with PWP	Authentic Live Music w/ Buffalo Touch and Lenny Gomulka Authentic Polish Kitchen
HOFBRAUHAUS	190 Scott Street BUFFALO 716-939-2337	11:00 AM	\$15 or Free with PWP	Live Music w/ Polka Boyz and Nerds Gone Wild Authentic Polish Dancers
CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH	199 Clark Street HISTORIC POLONIA 716-896-1050	11:30 AM	All Are Welcome	Easter Monday Mass
ARTY'S GRILL	508 Peckham Street HISTORIC POLONIA 716-856-6027	NOON	FREE	Authentic Polish Food Authentic Polish Sound System
THE BROADWAY MARKET	999 Broadway HISTORIC POLONIA 716-893-0705	NOON	FREE	Polish Beer & Food 12-5PM Authentic Live Music w/ Polka Confetti Traditional Dance
CORPUS CHRISTI A.C.	165 Sears Street HISTORIC POLONIA 716-896-1050	NOON - 5PM [Free] 6-11PM	\$15 or Free with PWP [ 6-11PM]	Pre & Post Parade Parties Authentic Live Music w/ Mon Valley Push Traditional Dance • Authentic Food
ST STAN'S / CHOPIN'S	389 Peckham Street BUFFALO 716-854-5510	NOON	\$15 or Free with PWP	Live Authentic Music w/ Piatkowski Brothers and John Gora & Polka Country Musicians Krawiacy Polish Dancers
FOOD TRUCK ALLEY	Pussywillow Park HISTORIC POLONIA	NOON	Prices Vary	Polish Street Eats Food Truck Fare With Polish Flare
THE HAPPY SWALLOW	1349 Sycamore HISTORIC POLONIA 716-894-4854	NOON	FREE	Live Authentic Music w/Dave Gawronski 5-8PM Authentic Polish Kitchen
PUSSY WILLOW PARK DYNGUS DAY FESTIVAL MAIN STAGE	111 Memorial Drive HISTORIC POLONIA 716-833-5211	NOON - 11 PM	\$15 or FREE with PWP	Authentic Live Music w/ Jimmy Sturr Orchestra, Kielbasa Kings & also Polanie Authentic Polish Dancers Authentic Polish Food & Beer
M HOTEL BUFFALO	2040 Walden Avenue CHEEKTOWAGA 716-681-2400	NOON - 12PM	\$15 or Free with PWP	Live Music w/John Stevens, Live Wire, DD All Star Band & More Traditional Polish Dancers Authentic Polish Food & Bar
POLISH CADETS	927 Grant Street BLACK ROCK 716-875-3211	NOON	\$15 or Free with PWP	Authentic Live Music w/ Featherburn Tom Mroczka and Music Box Krawiacy & Radosc/Joy Dancers Authentic Polish Food & Beer featuring Bacik & Tyskie
MORLUSKI'S	10678 Main Street CLARENCE 716-407-3238	1PM	FREE	Live Music w/Docenko Bros & John Stevens Polka Band Authentic Polish Cuisine • Polish Bar
BUFFALO BAR & GRIILE	307 Louisiana Street BUFFALO 716-602-9724	4 PM	FREE	Authentic Polka Sound System Authentic Polish Food & Bar
MACKY'S SHAMROCK ROOM	1643 Bailey Ave. HISTORIC POLONIA 716-883-7383	4 PM	FREE	Live Music w/ Featherburn Traditional Polish Food
SOHO	64 West Chippewa BUFFALO 716-856-7646	5PM	\$15 or Free with PWP	Live Music w/ Kielbasa Kings Authentic Food & Drink Specials
18TH ANNUAL DYNGUS DAY PARADE PRODUCED BY DYNGUS DAY, LLC	HISTORIC POLONIA BROADWAY AT MEMORIAL TO FILLMORE	5:30 PM	FREE	New Parade Time AUTHENTIC FUN! Over 100 Floats & Participants All Dressed Up With Polish Pride NOT TO BE MISSED!

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SEE OUR CALENDAR ON PAGES 16 & 17 FOR COMPLETE DETAILS. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!  
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## what is dyngus day? a pussy willow primer

So, how do you explain to a novice, that there is a day every year when people actually chase one another while brandishing pussy willow branches, trying to swat each other to show their affection, then reciprocating that pursuit by dousing the other with water? While keeping a straight face that is.

Well, it's really quite simple. Just picture Fat Tuesday on the other end of Lent. It's just a party signifying the end of Lent the day after Easter, as opposed to the day before lent starts on Fat Tuesday. The ancient roots of the post Lenten bash known as Dyngus Day had their start in pagan rituals signifying the beginning of the growing season but over the centuries, those rituals have evolved into a whole different experience. Especially in Buffalo, NY.

Historically a Polish-American tradition, Smigus-Dingus or as we call it, Dyngus Day, celebrates the end of the often restrictive observance of Lent and the joy of Easter. Over the decades, here in Western New York, Dyngus Day has become a wonderful holiday to celebrate Polish-American culture, heritage and traditions.

There are many stories that attempt to explain the origins of the day. Many Polish religious customs date back to pre-Christian, Slavic practices. The custom of pouring water is an ancient spring rite of cleansing, purification, and

fertility. The same is true of the complimentary practice of switching with pussy willow branches. Since 966 A.D., Dyngus Day has been associated with the baptism of Prince Mieszko I. Tradition states that Prince Mieszko I along with his court were baptized on Easter Monday when he adopted Christianity as the national religion of Poland. Thus, Dyngus Day and its rites of sprinkling with water have become a folk celebration, in thanksgiving for the fact that the first king of Poland was baptized into Christianity, bringing Catholicism to Poland. In more modern times, the tradition continued when farm boys in Poland wanted to attract notice from the girls of their choice. It was customary to throw water and hit the girls on their legs with twigs or pussy willow branches, cologne was used instead of water, by the more gallant lads. The ladies would reciprocate by throwing dishes & crockery and Tuesday was their day of revenge, imitating the same tactics. These days they would probably be arrested for such frivolity. **Where's Dyngus Day celebrated?**

Buffalo, NY is officially the Dyngus Day capital of the World, hosting the largest concentration of festival locations, polka bands and Polish traditions in the nation. Although the custom of such a quirky post Lenten celebration is based in Polish tradition,

this city, situated on the south eastern shores of Lake Erie, has truly embraced this ancient custom and made it its own. Some smaller events have been exported from Buffalo into other communities where Polish-Americans have settled however there is no dispute that if you truly want to Dyngus there is no other place than Buffalo to do so. Ironically, it's not widely observed in Poland. But we're working on it.

### **Pussy Willows or water?**

This is a yearly debate among Dyngus Day revelers. The tradition holds that on Easter Monday boys would sprinkle the girls with water and tap them with pussy willows. On Easter Tuesday, the women would return the favor. At modern Dyngus Day parties it is common practice that both men and women trade water splashing and pussy willow spanking equally.

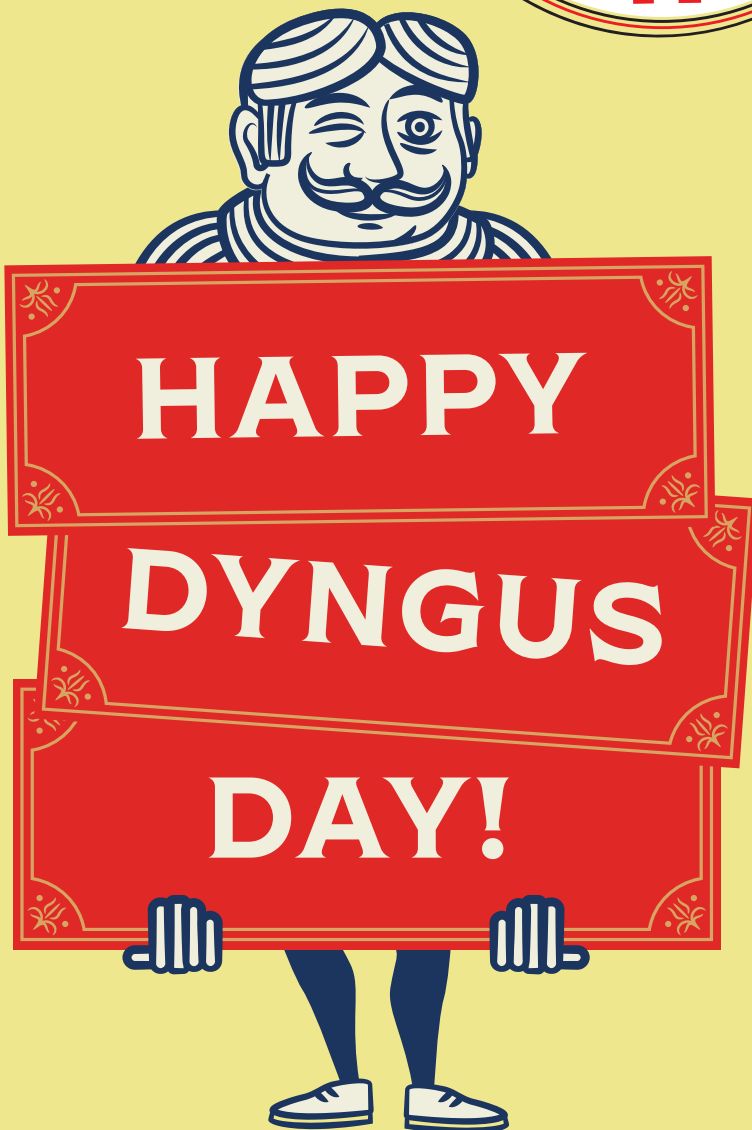
### **Why use pussy willows?**

Pussy willows play a major part in Buffalo's Dyngus Day celebrations as men and women flirt with playful "taps." Branches of the plant are used, as the pussy willow is one of the first "budding" plants of spring. This like the use of water is directly related to the emerging "life" associated with a brand new growing season.

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## ready set march

spring forward

Every parade begins with one step. Since that first procession through the historic Polonia District back in 2007, the Dyngus day parade has turned into more than just a line of marchers and decorated cars. Meandering through the streets surrounding the Broadway market and the historical churches, as the participants gather, you can feel the pride of the former descendants of the neighborhood, and even more so from their children and grandchildren who may have never experienced this part of town when it was a vibrant densely populated neighborhood filled with churches, taverns, social clubs, railroads, industry and a business district that rivaled that of downtown Buffalo for well over a half century. The emotion surges through the streets as marchers gather into formation and cars and floats get in line ready to blast polka music and unfurl their banners, flags and polish pride. This annual springtime march is now the reason that so many organizations join together months before, to discuss and to plan. What will they do this year? How can we make it bigger, better and bolder than we did last year? Do we need to create signs? What about music? Will we need costumes? Should we get a trailer for a float? These are all legitimate concerns for some groups that take their involvement in the parade seriously. Every year seems to be a new



challenge for families that use the parade as a reason to instill pride into their children while teaching them about their families history or organizations that just want to share their message with the community and maybe get new people involved in their missions. Still, most do it simply because it's fun. It's hard to be miserable and solemn when you are decorating a truck with balloons and pussy willow branches.

Some people like James "Corky" Johnson of the Polish Cadets in Buffalo's Black Rock neighborhood take it on as a personal mission. A mission to not only top the previous years award winning effort but as a way to continue in what he and his wife Wendy have turned into a quest to help make their club in Buffalo's second Polonia on the shores of Scajaquada creek, the best that it possibly can be and share the vintage clubs mission with a whole new generation of individuals. Since their first foray into float building, the Polish Cadets submissions have been as wide varied as a medieval ship, smoke spewing dragons, WW2 era tanks, enormous beehives and gargantuan vodka bottles. Whatever their theme happens to be for the year, the one constant of their approach remains the same. Go big or go home!! With "Corky" it's a personal source of gratification. Not simply a marketing tool for one of the oldest Polish Clubs in the area, with the Pol-

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ish Cadets, it's personal! Being part of the Dyngus Day parade is a source of satisfaction and self regard as well. "Every year is the best, just to see and hear the people screaming and cheering when they see us coming down the street is awesome. I love that, he said recently. We have and always will have, the best. I want to put us on the map worldwide with our floats". "We will not go gentle into that good night" as was evidenced a few years ago when the axle and wheels on their 700 pound vodka bottle broke and they literally carried/dragged their creation the remaining two thirds of the parade route to make sure the throngs saw their unique entry. They must be doing something right. They have won an award every single year they've been in the parade!



Other organizations like the Ironworkers Local #6 use the planning, preparation and construction of their annual float entry, as a way of bonding their community together by gathering what surely must be the largest harvest of pussy willow branches in the world every year in preparation of their float submission. These folks are serious about their pussy willow pruning. In fact, they keep the location of their pussy willow orchard a highly guarded secret that even Wiki Leaks would be hard pressed to reveal. The effort seems to bear fruit as evidenced by their multiple "Best Use of Pussy Willow" Awards given out by parade judges year after year. They were even acknowledged on national television by Anderson Cooper of CNN in his personalized greeting during one of our Dyngus Day TV specials a few years ago.



As much fun as they have participating in the Polonia procession, Joe Barnashuk Ironworkers #6 administrator takes his duties as the organizer of the Local's entry each year quite seriously "We put so

much effort in our floats every year because it's a way to show all the members of Ironworkers Local 6, their families and our community what our Polish heritage is all about plus we have a blast while doing it!". It is no small task however creating something of this magnitude. This is no little red wagon with some white balloons tied to it. "Over the month leading up to the parade, we have about 10 to 15 people who help put the float together and take it apart. On Dyngus Day, we have between 100 and 150 members and their families participate and march in the parade.

Entire families now gather together from all over the world to take part in the revelry. The Easter holiday gives loved ones an added reason to reunite in WNY and stay the extra day or two to take part in something that not only draws the clan together, it creates life long memories for them and their progenitors offspring. They do it as a way to share a familial bond. To instill in their children a sense of history, and a connection to a rich cultural tradition, maybe even to show their kids that there are more ways to have fun other than video games or texting each other on their electronic devices. Now, children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends can participate in something that connects them, their shared lineage. And even if it's only once a year, it's a start. These families are obviously proud of their ancestry.

And undoubtedly, so are the tens of thousands that gather to celebrate this annual affair regardless of their ethnic background. Whether you are riding a bike, on roller skates, walking with an organization, or standing on the curb watching and cheering while waving your pussy willow branches, it doesn't matter if your DNA proves your lineage from somewhere other than Eastern Europe. Because everybody's Polish on Dyngus day.

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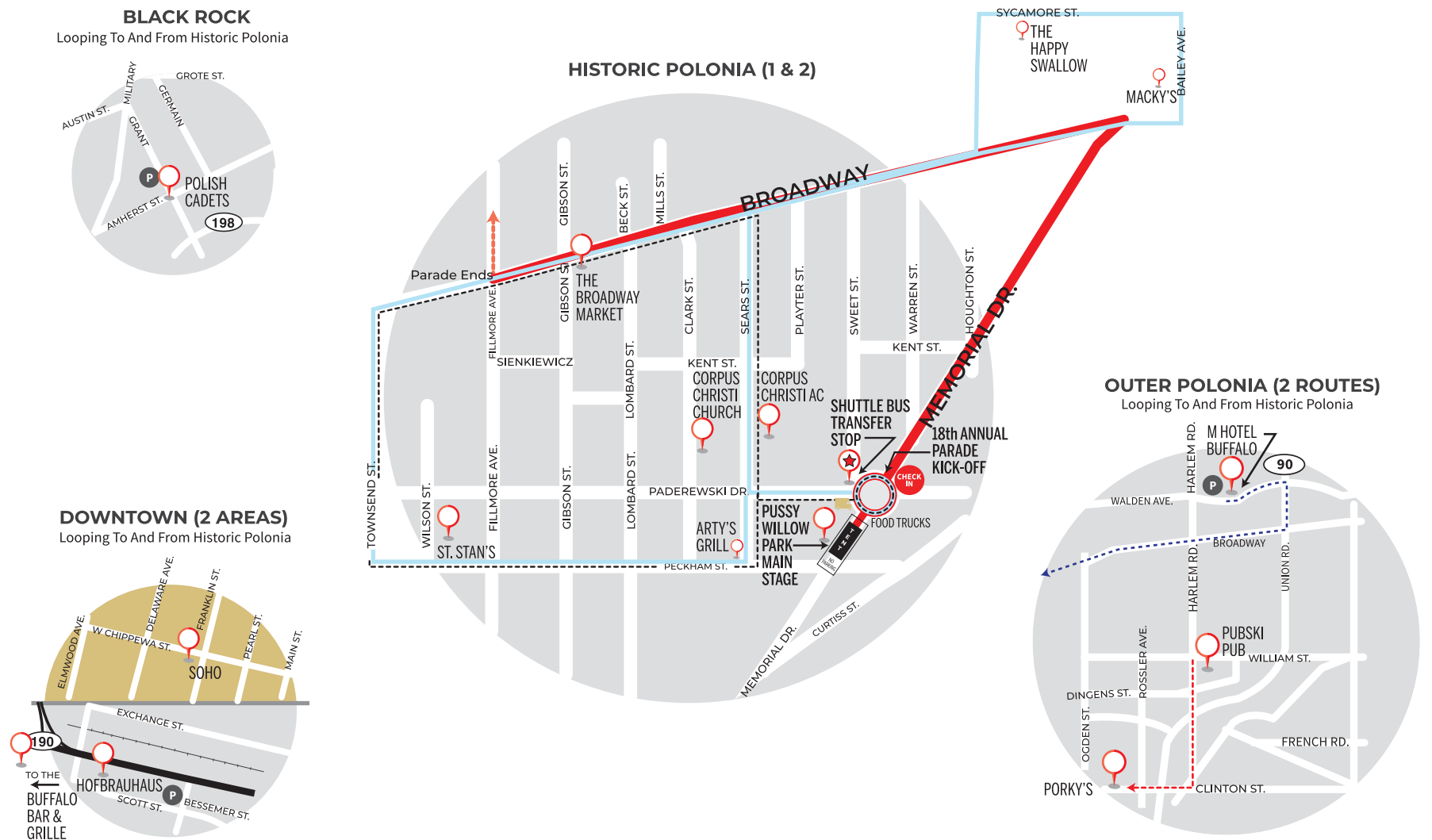


# PARADE EXPRESS & SHUTTLE SYSTEM

PARADE TIME 5:30PM HISTORIC POLONIA MONDAY, APRIL 1ST 2024



HISTORIC POLONIA 1	HISTORIC POLONIA 2	OUTER POLONIA	M HOTEL BUFFALO	BLACK ROCK	DOWNTOWN 1	DOWNTOWN 2
<p>Shuttle Stops Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pussy Willow Park Party Tent</li> <li>Corpus Christi</li> <li>Broadway Market</li> <li>St. Stan's</li> <li>Arty's Grill</li> </ul> <p>1 Shuttle Bus looping Historic Polonia Departing From Pussy Willow Park Party Tent 2PM - 10:30PM</p>	<p>Shuttle Stops Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pussy Willow Park Party Tent</li> <li>Corpus Christi</li> <li>Happy Swallow</li> <li>Macky's</li> <li>Broadway Market</li> <li>St. Stan's</li> <li>Arty's Grill</li> </ul> <p>1 Shuttle Bus looping Historic Polonia Departing From Pussy Willow Park Party Tent 2PM - 10:30PM</p>	<p>Shuttle Stops Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pubski Pub</li> <li>Porky's Amber Lounge</li> <li>Pussy Willow Park Party Tent</li> </ul> <p>1 Shuttle Bus looping Outer Polonia &amp; Historic Polonia Departing From Pubski Pub 2PM - 10:30PM</p>	<p>Shuttle Stops Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M Hotel Buffalo</li> <li>Pussy Willow Park Party Tent</li> </ul> <p>2 Shuttle Buses looping M Hotel &amp; Historic Polonia Departing From M Hotel Buffalo 2PM - 10:30PM</p>	<p>Shuttle Stops Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polish Cadets</li> <li>Pussy Willow Park Party Tent</li> </ul> <p>1 Shuttle Bus looping Black Rock &amp; Historic Polonia Departing From Polish Cadets 4PM - 10:30PM</p>	<p>Shuttle Stops Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hofbrauhaus</li> <li>Buffalo Bar &amp; Grille</li> <li>Pussy Willow Park Party Tent</li> </ul> <p>1 Shuttle Bus looping Downtown 1 &amp; Historic Polonia Departing From Hofbrauhaus 4PM - 10:30PM</p>	<p>Shuttle Stops Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soho</li> <li>Pussy Willow Park Party Tent</li> </ul> <p>1 Shuttle Bus looping Downtown 2 &amp; Historic Polonia Departing From Soho 4PM - 10:30PM</p>



**KEY** HISTORIC POLONIA | BLACK ROCK | OUTER POLONIA

PARADE ROUTE	SHUTTLE BUS ROUTE HISTORIC POLONIA	SHUTTLE BUS ROUTE HISTORIC POLONIA 2	SHUTTLE BUS ROUTE M HOTEL BUFFALO	SHUTTLE BUS ROUTE OUTER POLONIA	BUS TRANSFER STATION	VENUE LOCATION	PARADE CHECK-IN PARADE KICK OFF
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# P A R P

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CULTURE  
MUSIC &  
HISTORY**

YOUR HOST  
ANDY "ANDRZEJ"  
GOŁĘBIEWSKI




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## miami nice

polonia's philanthropist

While we celebrate Western New York's Polonia every year by chasing each other around with the frivolity of an obscure tradition from the "old country" we must remember that we are not alone in the preservation of traditions and culture. The customs and traditions of Poland are important to transplanted Poles regardless of their current geographic location and there are many other Polonia communities all over North America. Some are widely known and strongly identify as communities with Polish affiliations. Places like Chicago, Hamtramck (outside of Detroit) and areas of Brooklyn in many ways resemble communities in Poland. Still others are not so readily known to have such Slavic citizenry. Case in point, Miami Beach, FLA.

It's understandable that most people would conjure up images of Cuban or Latin American communities in the Miami area rather than a Polish one. It's highly doubtful that the first thought anyone would have when discussing the land of palm trees and white sand beaches would be, that this tropical paradise could be home to one of the strongest sources of Polish cultural promotion outside of Warsaw. Yet that is exactly what we have in the American Institute of Polish Culture, which was founded by Lady Blanka Rosentiel in 1972. But we must travel a bit further back in time to know this whole story. In the late 1930's a small

group of Poles that had settled in the South Florida area formed the Polish American Club of Miami. Back in the days before we had cell phones or the internet, ethnic social clubs like this acted much like social media does today. The PACM was a place where expatriated Poles could gather to exchange ideas and share information. It was also a gathering spot for social interaction and entertainment. The original clubhouse was a modest one-story structure but it served the purpose it was built for. And that was to be a home for a small but tight knit community where members could share the customs and traditions of their ancestors. However as time went on and societal norms changed, the role of clubs like these diminished. Whether it was south Florida or south Cheektowaga the significant role that ethnic clubs once filled for recent immigrant communities fell by the wayside as these colonies blended in with the fabric of their new home in the United States. Eventually time took its toll and after the structure fell into disrepair the club/banquet hall was demolished in 2018 and the dwindling membership considered selling the property. That's where Lady Blanka stepped in.

But who is this Lady Blanka?

Blanka Rosentiel was born Blanka Wdowiak in Warsaw a few years before the beginning of World War 2. In 1944 during the Warsaw Uprising, her father was taken to the

Auschwitz concentration camp while she, her mother and one of her two brothers were forced into slave labor in Frankfurt, Germany. In 1945 the Allied troops liberated Blanka, her mother and brother, but unfortunately her father perished while imprisoned. After the war the family did not return to Poland as it was under Soviet rule but eventually they moved to Brussels, Belgium where she was a cabaret singer and art student while waiting for sponsorship to the United States. She eventually moved to America in 1956 and met her future husband Lewis Rosentiel in 1963 who was the founder and chair of Schenley Industries. They married four years later. Mr. Rosentiel was an avid fisherman and yachtsman who introduced his new bride to the splendor of Miami where they would often visit during winter to escape the frigid weather of the northeast while living in Greenwich Connecticut. Eventually settling into the Miami community, she became involved with the small Polish community in and around Dade County. Although the permanent residents of Polish ancestry were small their numbers were bolstered seasonally by the influx of vacationing Polonia citizenry looking for wintry warmth every year. Blanka's philanthropic spirit was initially influenced by her husband's generosity when in 1968 he decided to start supporting worthwhile causes by giving

historic meeting place



## THE BUFFALO BAR & GRILL

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away over one hundred million dollars after his retirement. Among the beneficiaries were Brandeis University, the University of Notre Dame and the Mount Sinai Hospitals in NYC and Miami Beach.

In 1972 when Blanka Rosenstiel founded The American Institute of Polish Culture as a non-profit organization the goal was twofold. First, to share with Americans the rich heritage of Poland which has contributed in so many ways to the history of the U.S., and second, to promote the scientific, scholarly, and artistic contributions of Polish-Americans. But it also awarded various scholarships annually, established the Kosciuszko Chair of Polish Studies at the University of Virginia, sponsored hundreds of lectures at numerous educational facilities, and began organizing the Annual International Polonaise Ball, which served as the main fundraiser for the Institute and recently held its 52nd edition. In addition the AIPC established an International Film Festival along with publishing and the translation of many books about Polish culture and history. In 1975, in collaboration with the University of Miami's School of Music, she presented the First National Chopin Piano Competition of the United States in Miami. The success of this competition inspired Rosenstiel to establish the Chopin Foundation of the United States in 1977.

"My mission is to teach the world the rich history of Poland and it's influence on the planet. I'm thankful to be in this position. I have no children, so what else would I do? I realized that many of Polish ancestry did not know the true history of Poland. Their historical knowledge was primarily that of their own family. Perhaps they would recall how their Babcia made delicious pierogi or where their families originated from, but the true history of the nation and it's struggle to survive even



when it lost its sovereignty was not taught or readily known to most of the world."

And so after her husbands passing in 1976 she embarked on a philanthropic perambulate that continues to this very day with her latest project being the reimagining of the site where the original Polish American Club of Miami once stood. Lady Blanka was not about to let the property be sold and its history evaporate into the ether or the distant memory of the few surviving members that may have once attended functions years ago. So for the past six years she has embarked on a task that she feels is her duty to not only the Polonia of Miami but for all of the United States regardless of their ancestry. Under her leadership plans have been unveiled for the construction of the Polonia World Center, a multi level glass and steel tower, on the site of the original Polish American Club of Miami, which would offer homes, commercial ventures, and more. The completed project will include 40,000 square feet of office space, ground floor retail as well as a 20,000 square foot event and exhibit space.

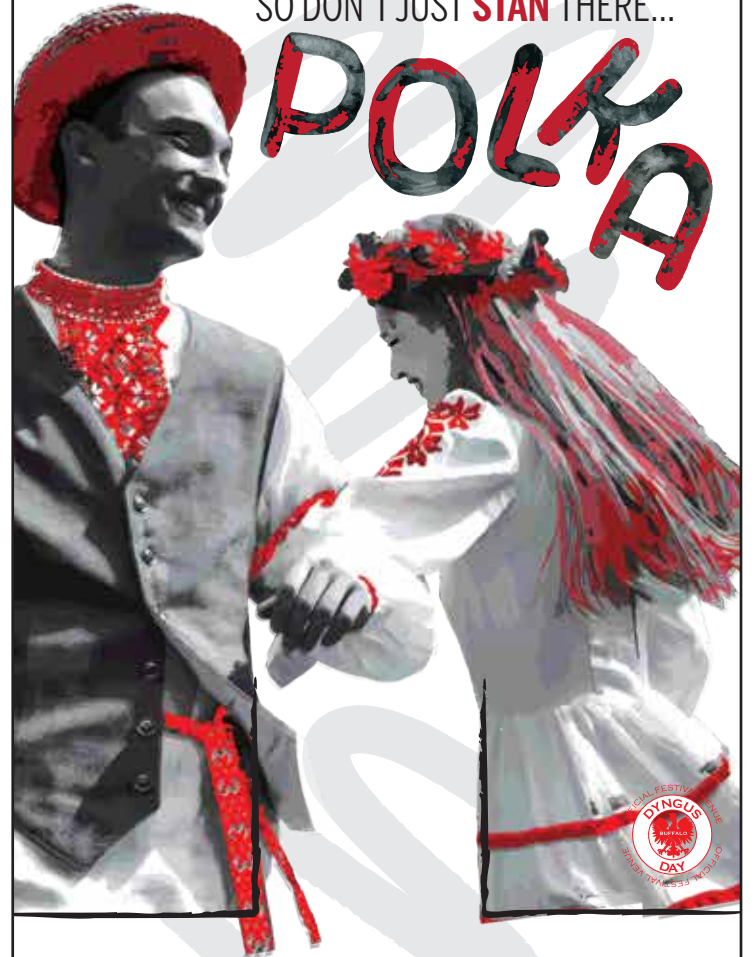
"The Polish American Club of Miami is the oldest club of its kind in Florida as such we have a duty to share the story of our people with the world and this project will help us in that endeavor. When I first came to Miami there were more mosquitoes here than there were Poles, however Polands story and it's impact needs to be shared with everyone. We gave the world Kosciuszko, we gave the world Pulaski and Chopin and we have much more to give. This new home for our club is a good place to tell that story. I am very lucky to be able to help. I love what I do and I have no plans of stopping anytime soon".

Mother Church of Polonia, **ST. STANISLAUS PARISH** presents...

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Country  
Musicians

The Piatkowski  
Brothers  
All Star Band

John Gora  
and  
Gorale

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POLISH  
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LUNCHEON**  
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**LIVE POLKA  
MUSIC**  
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## Easter MARKET

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### Easter Bunny Arrives

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### EASTER FESTIVAL HOURS

March 17 **9AM-4PM**  
March 18-23 **8AM-5PM**  
Palm Sunday  
March 24 **9AM-5PM**  
Holy Week  
March 25-27 **8AM-6PM**  
Holy Thursday  
March 28 **8AM-7PM**  
Good Friday  
March 29 **6AM-7PM**  
Holy Saturday  
March 30 **6AM-5PM**  
Easter Sunday

**APRIL 1**  
**DYNGUS DAY**  
Open at 8AM  
Live Music  
From Chicago  
Polka Confetti  
**12PM-3PM**  
Authentic Dance  
Radose Joy  
Polish Beer & Food  
**12PM-4PM**

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# A REEL FISH TALE

Ask most folks about Polish cuisine and they immediately envision pierogi, kielbasa, kapusta and other hearty traditional eastern European staples. But if we waded out a bit farther from shore we uncover elaborate recipes utilizing the wealth of culinary components found below the surface of every lake, stream, river and sea that permeate the Polish landscape. As significant as some of the heartier foods preferred by Poles all over the world are, things like pork and rustic breads, various fish recipes were developed over the centuries as well. Not only because of the long lasting and restrictive periods when meat was off the menu at various times throughout the year, but because of the wide variety of seafood found beneath the waves of Poland's waterways.

From Gdansk to Krakow and all points in between, whether you prefer the briny bounty of the salty sea or the abundance of aquatic life found in the many freshwater lakes and streams that saturate Poland's boundaries, there's a cornucopia found beneath the waves.

According to Stanisław Czerniecki, an old Polish Court kitchen manager who authored Compendium Ferculorum, which is the oldest Polish cookbook from the 17th century, chefs at manor houses prepared deep sea fish as well as fresh

water fish in all possible styles – raw, smoked, salt cured, and dried... salmon from the Danzig Bay and from the Dunajec River, common sturgeon, trout, sterlet, common barbel, stone loach, grayling, vimba, bullhead, eel, a variety of river fish, great sturgeon, herring, Venetian caviar, Turkish caviar, Danube herring, grouper, flounder, plaice, pike, Danube carp, large- and medium-sized carp, perch, crucian carp, bream, tench, stockfish, Atlantic cod, Baltic cod, amernice, oysters, turtles, snails and crayfish .... And so the evidence is clear that aquatic livestock is a key component in the authentic Polish diet.

As important as any stuffed dumpling or cabbage leaf. Not only for the overwhelming availability of the dorsal finned den-



izens of the depth, but the cultural and religious significance of our sunken sustenance. Plus it tastes absolutely fantastic!

In many cultures all over the world, religion has had a dietary influence. Whether it's, the amount of food, the types of ingredients or the times that meals are taken, the theology of a culture has affected nutritional habits of nations for thousands of years. Poland's adoption of Roman Catholicism as its national religion by Mieszko I in 966AD obviously affected the consumption of fish with the restriction of meat on Fridays, however there were other long lasting and restrictive periods when meat was off the menu like the traditional Christmas Eve "Wigilia" dinner, which excludes meat from the various dishes and instead relies on seafood, grains, fruits and vegetables. The period of time from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday known as Lent was another part of the calendar that Poles abstained from ingesting meat as a food source, There was even a Lenten saying "Okres postu, w dzień i w nocy, zawsze zachwyca smakoszy" which translates into "Fasting season, day or night, always gives gourmets delight".

The Christmas Eve table featured pike, as well as carp, eel, and salmon from the Vistula River. Salmon was served as one of the Christmas Eve dishes to King Jan III Sobieski in 1695, for example. Foreigners visiting Poland noticed that the art of preparing fish dishes was

extremely sophisticated. In the years following, fish was also valued on Polish menus, but it was cooked not only according to old Polish recipes but also Czech, Hungarian, Dutch, English, Moravian, and

French ones. Hence, savory fish custards or soufflés, various types of fish balls, fishcakes and fish caserroles were often prepared.

In view of such an abundant selection of fish, carp although much appreciated in Polish cooking, was not the most important fish to be served on Christmas Eve. That designation might point to the pike. Many Western New Yorkers are undoubtedly

familiar with this mild tasting fresh water species because of the proliferation of tavern fish frys and the abundance of that type of fish in our local waterways. However long ago Polish gourmants conjured up ways of preparation that were a tad more intricate than simply dipping filets in batter and frying them in hot oil. Not to diminish the appeal of a

good old fashioned fish fry but as we have discussed in many conversations over the years, Polish cuisine is an intricate combination of ingredients and preparations

incorporated due the various cultural influences resulted riviages royales from other nations.

Pike à la polonaise was a delightful preparation that was one such dish, which made old Polish cuisine famous in Europe. The recipe was cited in cookbooks of various countries between the 16th and 18th centuries. The Polish character of the dish manifested itself with a spicy flavor achieved by adding items such as pepper, ginger, saffron, and nutmeg. Other

ingredients, namely peas, croutons,

onions and parsley root, were liquidized in order to prepare a thick, wine-based sauce.

In the times of the Enlightenment, during the mid 1700's Paul Tremo, court chef to King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, developed a milder version of the dish.

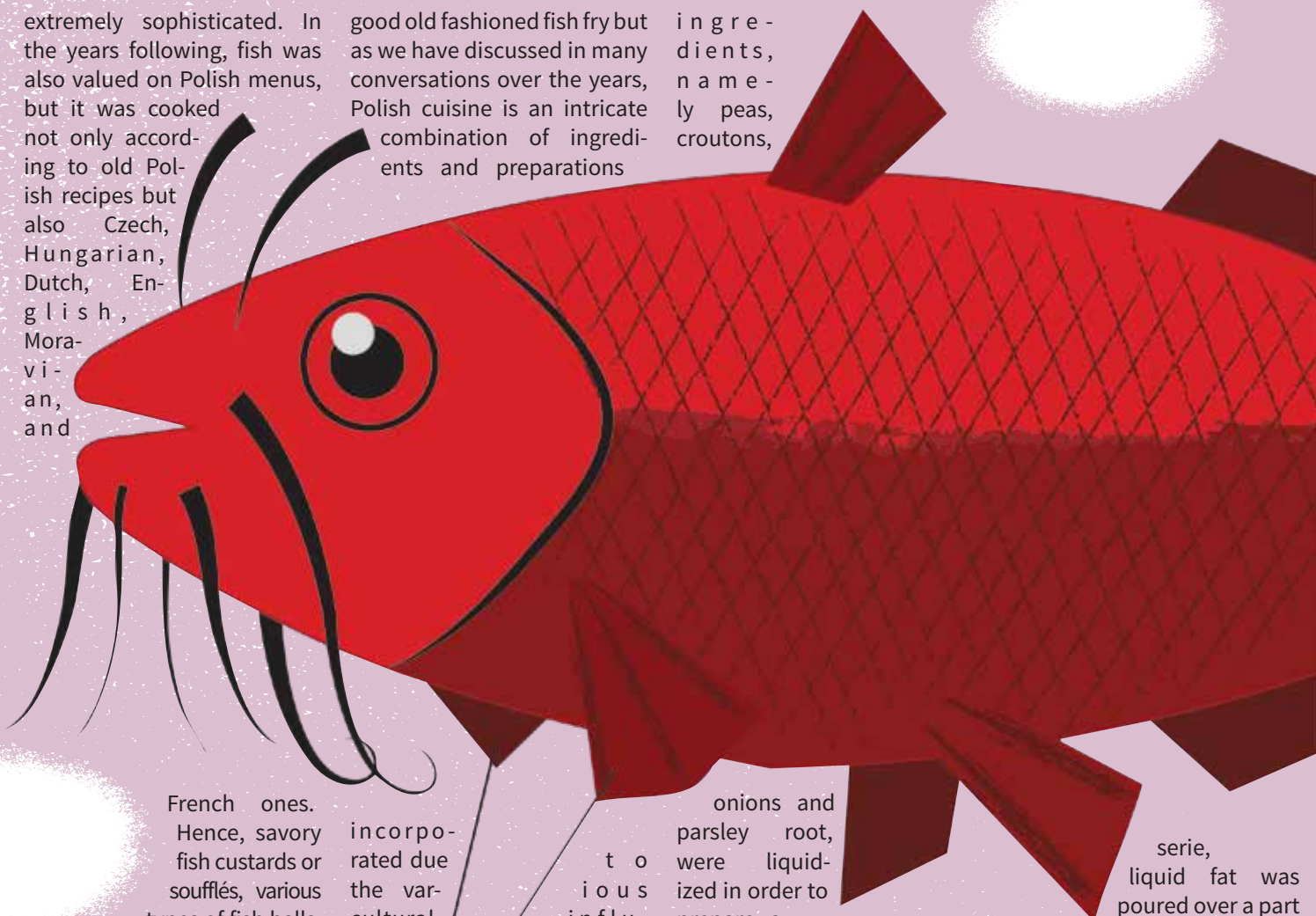
The pungent profile of the original preparation was diminished, by reducing the amount of spice in line with the governing Enlightenment rules.

Another famous 17th century recipe is pike served whole, which is even mentioned in Pan Tadeusz the epic poem written by Adam Mickiewicz... "As the pike was skewered on the horizontal spit of a rotis-

serie, liquid fat was poured over a part of it while another part of it was covered with a cloth on which vinegar was poured; the part that was to be roasted was treated with fat only at the very end."

But frying and roasting are not the only methods used to prepare fish for consumption. Any one that grew up in a traditional Polish household knows that pickled herring or śledzie, whether in cream or wine is an essential food found on most tables in Polonia to help usher in the new year.

So next time you're in the mood for some truly authentic Polish Cuisine, we offer you this suggestion. Cast your net further than you may have in the past and look beyond a bowl of bigos, a platter of pierogi or some kotlety. Take a deep dive into unfamiliar territory and remember that there's plenty of fish in the sea.





# dyngus da

## BUFFALO NY - DYNGUS DAY CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Pussy Willow Pass Vouchers available at all Tops Supermarkets. \$15 passes can be purchased at any register. Vouchers purchased from Tops are redeemable at any of these official locations: Broadway Market, Hofbrauhaus, M Hotel of Buffalo, Corpus Christi Church, Polish Cadets, Pubski Pub, Pussy Willow Party Tent, SoHo and St. Stanislaus BM RC Church.

Pay one price per person. Receive FREE admission at all official Dyngus Day Buffalo Venues and FREE unlimited use of the official Dyngus Day Buffalo Pussy Willow Shuttle.



april 1 2024

## Sunday, March 31

Pre-Dyngus

### OUTER POLONIA CHEEKTOWAGA

#### M Hotel

Pre-Dyngus Kickoff  
21 and Over  
Live Music with Lenny Gomulka's  
Chicago Push and Seven **5PM**  
2040 Walden Ave, Cheektowaga  
Outer Polonia  
716-681-2400

#### Pubski Pub

Pre-Dyngus Party  
21 and Over  
Live Music with Buffalo Touch  
and Special Guest  
Johnny Karas **7PM**  
2437 William St, Cheektowaga  
Outer Polonia  
716-464-3484

## Monday, April 1

Dyngus Day

### HISTORIC POLONIA EAST SIDE BUFFALO

#### Corpus Christi Church Easter Monday Mass **11AM** Pre-Parade Party

Family Friendly  
Kids Activities & Games  
All Day DJ

#### Noon-5PM

Authentic Food  
Polish Bar Serving  
Polish Beers and Wine  
Cracovia Folk Dance Troupe  
Admission \$15 or Free  
with Pussy Willow Pass  
Kids Free **Noon-5PM**

Corpus Christi Athletic Club  
169 Sears St, Buffalo  
Historic Polonia  
716-896-1050

#### Corpus Christi Church Post Parade Party

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Live Music with  
Mon Valley Push **6PM**  
All Day DJ

#### Noon-10PM

Authentic Polish Food  
and Desserts  
Polish Bar Serving  
Polish Beers and Wine  
Admission \$15 or Free  
with Pussy Willow Pass  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Party Begins **6-11PM**  
169 Sears St, Buffalo  
Historic Polonia  
716-896-1050

#### The Happy Swallow

Family Friendly  
Dyngus Day Party  
Live Music with  
Dave Gawronski **5-8PM**  
Authentic Polish Kitchen **Noon**  
Authentic Polish Bar  
Admission Free  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **Noon**  
1349 Sycamore St, Buffalo  
Historic Polonia  
716-894-4854

#### Arty's Bar & Grill

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Polish



# Day

Sound System  
Authentic Food  
Admission Free  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **Noon**  
508 Peckham St, Buffalo  
Historic Polonia  
716-856-6027

## The Broadway Market

Family Friendly  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Music  
Polka Confetti **Noon-3PM**  
Traditional Folk Dance  
Radosc/Joy from Ontario **3PM**  
Polish Beer, Food and More  
**Noon-4PM**  
Admission Free  
Doors Open **8AM**  
999 Broadway St, Buffalo  
Historic Polonia  
716-893-0705

## Pussy Willow Park Main Stage

21 And Over  
The Sturr of the Show  
Authentic Polish Food by  
Polish Cadets featuring  
Bacik Kielbasa  
Food Truck Alley  
Live Music with Kielbasa Kings  
from Dearborn MI **Noon-3PM**  
Live Music with Polanie  
from Ontario **4PM-7PM**  
Polka Legend  
Jimmy Sturr Orchestra  
featuring Johnny Karas  
& Chris Caffery **7-10PM**  
Special Guests Radosc/Joy and  
Cracovia Folk Dance Troupes  
Official Dyngus Gear Sold Here  
Admission \$15 or Free with  
Pussy Willow Pass

Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **Noon**  
Parade Line-up Starts Here  
145 Memorial Dr, Buffalo  
Historic Polonia  
716-833-5211

## St. Stanislaus BM RC Church

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Traditional Swieconka Luncheon  
**Noon- 3PM**  
Traditional Folk Dance  
Krakowiacy Dancers  
From Eugenia Dance Studio  
Authentic Live Music with  
The Piatkowski Brothers  
All Star Band  
Polka Country Musicians  
John Gora and Gorale  
Authentic Polish Food  
Authentic Polish Bar  
Admission \$15 or Free with  
Pussy Willow Pass  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **Noon**  
389 Peckham St, Buffalo  
Historic Polonia  
716-854-5510

## Macky's Shamrock Room

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Polish Food  
Polish Drink Specials  
Live Music with Featherburn **7-9**  
Pre-Parade  
Doors Open **5PM**  
Admission Free  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
1643 Bailey Avenue  
Historic Polonia  
716-883-7383

## 17th Annual Dyngus Day Parade

Family Friendly  
Polonia on Parade  
Over 100 Participants/Floats  
Admission Free  
Parade Blessing  
and Kickoff **5:30PM**  
Broadway at Memorial Drive  
near Pussy Willow Park  
Party Tent  
Historic Polonia

## OUTER POLONIA

KAISERTOWN  
**Porky's Amber Lounge**  
21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Polka Juke Box  
Complimentary  
Kielbasa Sandwiches  
Polish Drink Specials  
Admission Free  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **8AM**  
2028 Clinton St, Kaisertown

Outer Polonia  
716-238-3461  
CHEEKTOWAGA  
**Pubski Pub**  
21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Live Music  
Accordian Music with Tim Kubiak  
**10AM-Noon**  
Buffalo Touch **1-5PM**  
Lenny Gomulka and  
Chicago Push **6-10PM**  
Authentic Polish Food  
\$5 Bloody Mary and Mimosa  
Specials **10AM-Noon**  
Admission \$15 or Free  
with Pussy Willow Pass  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **10AM**  
2437 William St, Cheektowaga  
Outer Polonia  
716-464-3484

## M Hotel

Official Hotel of Dyngus Day  
Buffalo  
Live Music Poolside **Noon**  
with John Stevens Double Shot  
Live Music in Ballroom **6-Midnight**  
Featuring Live Wire from WI  
Dyngus Day All Star Band  
and Special Guest Appearance  
Dr. John Valby  
Authentic Polish Food  
Polish Spirits  
Polish Beer  
Admission \$15 or Free with  
Pussy Willow Pass  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **Noon**  
4600 Genesee St, Cheektowaga  
Outer Polonia  
716-634-6969

## BLACK ROCK

**Polish Cadets**  
Family Friendly  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Live Music  
Featherburn **1-4PM**  
Tom Mrocza & Music Box **4PM**  
Traditional Folk Dance  
Krakowiacy Dancers  
from Eugenia Dance Studio  
and Radosc/Joy Folk Dance Troupe  
Polish Bar  
Authentic Polish Food Specials  
Admission \$15 or Free  
with Pussy Willow Pass  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **Noon**  
927 Grant St, Black Rock  
Outer Polonia  
716-875-3211



## CLARENCE Morluski's

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Live Authentic Music with  
Docenko Brothers **3PM**  
The John Stevens  
Polka Band **6:30PM**  
Special Dyngus Day Menu  
Polish Beers  
Polish Spirits  
Photo Booth  
Free Admission  
Doors Open **3PM**  
10678 Main St, Clarence Hollow  
Outer Polonia  
716-407-3238

## DOWNTOWN BUFFALO SoHo

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Polish Food  
Polish Drink Specials  
Live Music with  
Kielbasa Kings **5PM**  
Admission \$15 or Free with  
Pussy Willow Pass  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
64 W Chippewa St, Buffalo  
Outer Polonia  
716-856-7646

## Buffalo Bar & Grille

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Authentic Polish  
Sound System  
Authentic Food  
Admission Free  
Doors Open **4PM**  
307 Louisiana St, Buffalo  
716-602-9724

## Hofbrauhaus

21 And Over  
Dyngus Day Party  
Live Music with  
Polka Boyz **Noon -3PM**  
Traditional Folk Dance  
Cracovia Polish  
Folk Dance Ensemble  
Nerds Gone Wild **7PM**  
Authentic Polish Food  
Admission \$15 or Free with  
Pussy Willow Pass  
Official Pussy Willow Shuttle Stop  
Doors Open **11AM**  
190 Scott St, Buffalo  
716-939-2337

## Post Dyngus

May 3, 2024  
**Polish Constitution Day**  
Live Polish Folk Music  
Polky from Toronto  
Free Admission  
St. Stanislaus Community Center  
389 Peckham St, Buffalo  
polishartsclubofbuffalo.com



**HOFBRÄUHAUS  
BUFFALO**

**Join us for  
Dyngus Day fun!**



**190 Scott St, Buffalo, NY 14204  
Open 11am - 9pm**



**PUSSYWILLOW PASS**  
Dyngus Day Buffalo once again offers the Pussy Willow Pass program to maximize your Dyngus Day Delight.

Purchase a \$15 admission at all Tops Supermarkets or any participating Dyngus Day Buffalo Official Festival Site and receive a wristband (\*or voucher for wristband) good for free admission to any other participating venue all day and night and unlimited use of festival shuttles

(\*vouchers purchased at Tops may be redeemed for bracelet at any official venue on day of, or Broadway Market Dyngus Day stand prior to Easter)

## turn the street around

love to hear construction

There was a time when life in Western New York centered around Lake Erie and the mouth of the Niagara River. Even before the Erie Canal existed, Iroquois and French fur traders set up outposts here to conduct commerce. It seems, the area was always destined to become a transportation hub. When the Canal was completed in 1825, Buffalo was poised to become a point where goods from the heartland made their way across to the Eastern seaboard. However the most important material to transport were the cheap immigrant laborers searching for opportunity here in America. When the railroads connected with the waterways everything accelerated rapidly.

Eventually this new population began an expansion that took these immigrants further away from the shores of the lake and river. When the Poles began swarming in by the thousands, they primarily converged on an area east of downtown, which eventually became a city within a city. This was due to its' strong business corridor which centered around the intersection of Broadway and Fillmore. That area is pretty much the geographic center of the city so it was relatively easy for citywide residents to hop on a streetcar and shop at the Broadway market or browse for bargains at stores like Neisners, Kobackers, Sears, Lucki Urban, Zoltes, Liberty Shoes, Rudas Records or the most famous of

them all Sattlers Department store located at 998 Broadway. Broadway Fillmore was one of the busiest intersections in the entire country.

From the early 1900s through the 60s the business district flourished. Stores were packed with customers everyday, as were the taverns and restaurants that seemed to be on every corner throughout the neighborhood. Throughout it's existence the area maintained an identity as that of a Polish community with many stores conducting business in Polish. Even as most other immigrant neighborhoods eventually blended in and became "Americanized" the Far East side maintained its Polonia identity. This continued particularly because of a huge wave of new immigrants that made their way here from Eastern Europe following World War 2. So as other ethnicities had already "homogenized" the Poles had a brand new batch of residents starting the cycle all over again.

All of this began to change in the late 60s. The civil unrest and violence that stemmed from the social strife gripping the nation began taking a toll on the once vibrant neighborhood and people began a suburban flight that accelerated as the affordability of cars and the affluence of post war America allowed easier mobility and better housing. Plazas and malls started to become popular and the traditional "Main Street" business model

started to become obsolete. With the loss of customers to the new suburban shopping centers as well as the residential base moving away, the stores started closing, and within a few years the mighty Broadway Fillmore neighborhood turned into a virtual wasteland.

Scavenging absentee landlords took advantage of the remaining residents fears to scare the elderly into selling their homes for pennies on the dollar. The result was devastating to the area, neglected properties being rented without improvements or upkeep to a poverty stricken segment of the population which attracted crime and blight. Boarded up storefronts and abandoned homes only reinforced the perception of danger.

In any event an area of Buffalo, NY that was once the most densely populated part of the city had turned into a vast wasteland. However, all was not lost. Even though our so called "leaders" allowed structures to deteriorate or be demolished there remained enough infrastructure to demonstrate potential redevelopment to people with vision.

One of those individuals with foresight was Fadi Dagher a former surgeon turned developer who moved here in 2003. He started investing in real estate years ago but took it to another level when he partnered with a Middle Eastern hospital company to buy the Grand

Island Holiday Inn in 2013. When he sold that investment he purchased an office complex on the waterfront as well as a massive project on Main street in Buffalo's medical corridor. But he also saw the potential of Buffalo's east side when his company Cedarland Development purchased the land at 998 Broadway which was once was home to Sattlers along with the iconic art moderne styled Eckhardt building at the corner of Broadway and Fillmore that once housed a Sears Department store. A property that is currently undergoing a multi million dollar mixed use renovation. Although he didn't grow up here Dr. Dagher sees the potential in our city. "I am very excited about Buffalo's future. I see new businesses opening here and more and more young people moving here every day. This city has a bright future."

Another revitalizing factor in the neighborhood turnaround is something that created the district to begin with, people from elsewhere searching for the American dream. Although the recent surge of new immigrants onto the streets of historic Polonia is not as large, they are also not of Eastern European origin, the new wave is primarily Muslim. Over the last ten years there has been an influx of middle Eastern families that have transformed entire blocks. Word spread that properties were cheap and abundant in parts of Buffalo so people began moving here. They started purchasing homes that the city couldn't give away only to rehab them and use them for what they were initially built for, to raise families. It may not be quite as evident as other areas of the city just yet, but things are looking brighter for this old neighborhood. As Dr. Dagher puts it "we may not bring it back to where it once was, but together we will bring this district to where it should be. That's my commitment to Buffalo."

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## eugene dyczkowski story

the reality of abstract

While many of us are aware of the proliferation of people with Polish ancestry in Western New York, few of us realize the impact that many of the Poles that settled into the Buffalo area, played in national and world events. For example Ignacy Paderewski, the world-renowned concert pianist and statesman made frequent visits to Buffalo to enlist the help of our Polonia in his quest to regain sovereignty for Poland. Or the fact that the Polish American Congress, one of the largest advocacy groups in the nation got its start here on the eastern shore of Lake Erie. However there are other unsung heroes whose legacy reverberates to this day. One of those heroes is someone most have probably never heard of, yet the fruit of his efforts flourishes all over the country to this very day.

On May 1 in 1899 Eugene Dyczkowski was born in Philadelphia. His father Andrew had emigrated to the US when he was only 16 years old where he subsequently studied music at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music and eventually became a noted church organist. Andrew met Pauline Kornacki who was part of the choir. They married and started a family. Eugene was the second of eleven children.

At the ripe old age of five Eugene first demonstrated an ability to draw, when on a chalkboard, he reproduced a boat under a bridge that he saw with his father earlier that day. The young artist was en-

couraged by his father and even took a correspondence course from noted cartoon satirist Eugene Zimmerman who lived near Elmira, New York while he was still in his teens. His artistic career was interrupted due to a near fatal accident that rendered his father unable to play the organ and forced the young Dyczkowski to work in order to support the family. Being the second oldest child in a large household meant that Eugene's artistic career would need to take a back seat in order to help support the clan.

Eventually his father healed to the point where he was able to play music again and found a job as an organist in Niagara Falls, New York. So the family relocated to the Cataract City in 1917 where Eugene found work, bottling beer, coal breaking, steel factory work, and even inspecting artillery shells for the British government. Around that same period he took a trip to NYC where he saw paintings being exhibited that were selling for a thousand dollars each which was much more than he could ever make working in a factory. So even though he had never used real artists materials he purchased a few canvases, some paint, brushes and started to create.

After saving up six hundred dollars he entered the Albright School of Fine Arts as a part time student and studied under George Wilcox. Four months later he received a scholarship allowing him the opportunity to take more art courses and study

full time. Upon his graduation he got a job as the supervisor for the commercial advertising department at Victors furniture store, but after just one year the need to express himself artistically became his main focus so he quit the day job and dove into his art. In 1924 he began exhibiting with the Buffalo Society of Artists, one of the oldest art organizations in the United States, which made it possible for his work to be shown with more accomplished artists. His work was singled out as "outstanding" in a review at their annual exhibition and opened doors to even more exposure.

In 1933 after exhibiting at the Worlds Fair in Poznan Poland he returned to the Albright Art Gallery as the Assistant Educational Director and simultaneously began teaching at the Buffalo Art Institute. As the Great Depression took its toll on the nation, many artists including Dyczkowski found work through the Federal Arts Projects of the WPA (Work Projects Administration). In 1938 he produced two panels for the entry foyer of Burgard Vocational High School and the following year he painted a mural for the Officers Club at Fort Niagara. But in 1940 this advocate of realism in art took issue with the growing popularity of different art forms. The increasing influence of Modernism, Cubism and Abstraction was growing rapidly and he publicly claimed that some of the artists in these movements might be suffering from schizophrenia. As part of

his protest he submitted a deliberately bad painting for a juried show that he signed “Noga Malowane” which is Polish for “Painted With Foot”. The painting was selected for exhibition in the Albright Gallery and printed in the catalog under his pseudonym, which received widespread media attention when the prank was revealed.

In 1944 Dyczkowski was given a one-man exhibition at the Albright and he would stay involved for many years to come, but his influence resonated beyond the borders of the Niagara Frontier. A year later in 1945, Eugene Dyczkowski became a founding member and first president of the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo. He believed that Americans of Polish ancestry needed to conserve and interpret their Polish heritage in order to take their proper place in American society. His actions began raising the awareness of the fine arts in Polish American communities nationwide. As a result of his efforts in Buffalo, a Polish Arts Club movement began in areas of the country that were then populated by Polish Americans, and people started forming their own local clubs. The promotion of Polish culture took root and began to bear fruit. Three years later he was elected as the first president of the American Council of Polish Cultural Clubs.

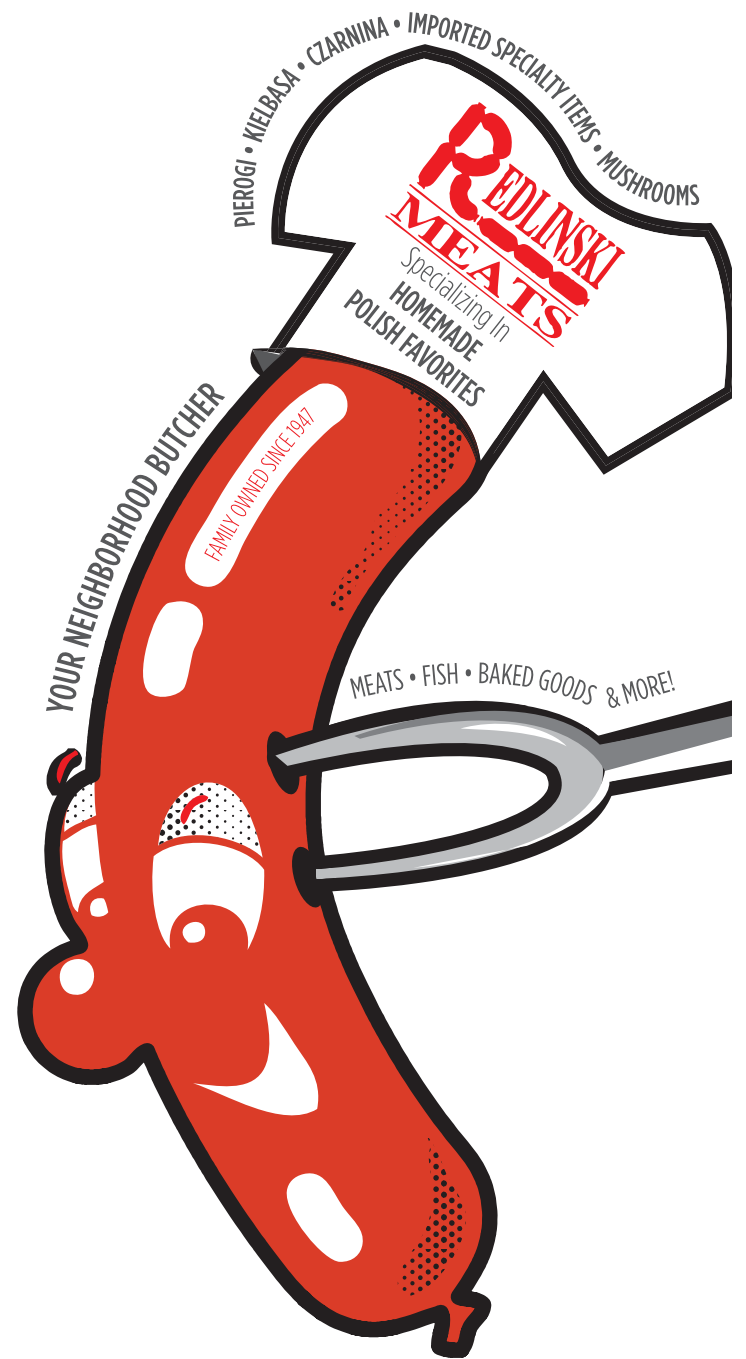
By the 1950’s he did a complete turnaround by denouncing his earlier realist works and took issue with his strict academic training. He admitted to “deliberately painting fake abstractions” years ago only to find “I could express myself better in that form than any other.” “To me, abstract painting is an adventure. I paint them without reason, making new forms and color schemes, and organizing them into pleasing groups.” He once said “elimination of realistic subject matter allows complete freedom of expression in pure design”. Although many who are familiar with his realistic works would disagree with his self criticism as being too critical and harsh.



It took quite a bit of courage, years earlier for him to give up a lucrative career as a commercial artist to devote himself entirely to the fine arts, however it was just as courageous to renounce his earlier work and change his style of painting. It was a demonstration of raw personal honesty. Nevertheless he began to explore all basic facts about composition, line, color, and design, which is the essence of a good abstract painting. Mr. Dyczkowski not only adapted but he excelled in the style that he had previously ridiculed.

For the next 30 years he continued to be actively involved both locally and nationally as a painter, lecturer and teacher. In 1982 he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement award from the Polish Arts Club in Buffalo and in 1987 an exhibition of his paintings was held at the Fine Art Gallery in Niagara Falls, New York. It was during that showing that the Polish Arts Club purchased one of his oil paintings and presented it to the Burchfield Penny Art Center in his honor. It remains in the Artists Polish Heritage Collection at the Center. In addition his works can be found in the collections of the Rockport Art Museum and the Tennessee Museum in Nashville.

The Polish Arts Club of Buffalo remains active to this day. They have located 35 Dyczkowski paintings and are currently looking for a place willing to stage an exhibition of his work. In addition they stage a variety of events (lecturers, reading, musical events, film showings, social events, etc.) that provides the Western New York public with the opportunity to savor Poland’s rich culture and heritage and to discover the contributions of the American Polonia. All of the Club’s events, which are scheduled in a variety of venues in the Greater Buffalo area, are open to the public, which is cordially invited. Membership in the Club, currently stands at about 200, and is open to all who find Polish culture and heritage of interest. Visit [polishartsclubofbuffalo.com](http://polishartsclubofbuffalo.com).



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For as long as Dyngus Day Buffalo has been in existence, we have heard from hundreds if not thousands of people the same criticism. The weather! Why can't we have Dyngus Day in the summer time? There is no doubt that meteorologically, early spring can be an unstable time of the year in our neck of the woods. If anyone cares to do the research into local historical weather data, you will see that over the years we have had all kinds of weather occurrences, everything from brilliant sunshine and balmy temperatures to heavy monsoon type rain and whiteout flurries. But just like the Fourth of July can't be celebrated in October, the ancient observance of Smigus-Dyngus is inextricably linked to the end of Lenten restrictions. Even if you argue that the celebration dates back to the honoring of a new sun cycle and growing season, we can't change the way the sun moves. So Dyngus day stays where it is on the current calendar. However an area like Western New York, which has one of the highest percentages per capita of people with Polish ancestry should not be compelled to just one ethnic exposition.

Such was the thinking a few years ago when Jim Lawicki, the president of the Polish American Congress, WNY division contacted the Town of Cheektowaga to suggest an expansion of their legacy summertime gathering after the government ordered lockdowns prevented

such an event for two years. Mr. Lawicki then asked us at Dyngus Day Buffalo if we would be willing to take on the formidable task of not only resuscitating the festival but rebranding it and marketing the ethnic exhibition as a regional event.

Which is why three years ago Dyngus Day Buffalo began working with the Town of Cheektowaga and the Polish American Congress to produce the annual Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival. The three day fest has been around for nearly fifty years however in the last few years, the CPAAF has grown not only in its square footage, but in its offerings as well. Obviously the warmer climate of July allows for a different type of wardrobe than the beginning of April but it also allows for various demonstrations and activities that we wouldn't be able to even consider during our springtime celebration. Cooking and crafting demos, kids activities, live music, authentic food, ethnic dancers multiple outdoor stages, an open air Mass, vendor marketplaces, are just some of the offerings that we have put into place since we began our collaboration with Cheektowaga and the PAC. Last year we even had medieval sword fighting demonstrations!

For those of you from outside of the Niagara Frontier, or not familiar with our region, Cheektowaga is an eastern suburb of Buffalo. After World War 2 many families began the flight from the tight quarters of an urban

existence to the "burbs". The Town of Cheektowaga offered affordable modern housing and other amenities, which were extremely attractive to those residents. This resulted in a massive resettlement that produced a community where families of Polish lineage comprised the biggest demographic group. The construction of a beautiful town park, which included a large outdoor amphitheater and picnic shelters created an ideal location for a summertime gathering. So in the late 1970's a Slavic celebration began that over the last two years has expanded and grown into a regional attraction.

So for those of you that may not have the stamina to brave the post winter seasonal elements of Buffalo, NY or perhaps you suffer from a debilitating pussy willow allergy, fear not. There are ways to revel in your Eastern European ancestry even if your ancestry is from Asia or South America.

The rise of Polish pride since the inception of the Buffalo Dyngus Day Festival and Parade, not only make such a summer celebration logical, it makes a great bridge from one Dyngus to the other. It's also another great excuse to lure your family, friends and loved ones to come back home for a visit. So mark the last weekend in July on your calendar and start spreading the news. The Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival will take place July 26-28 at Cheektowaga Town Park, 2600 Harlem Road Cheektowaga NY.

# dyngus day darlings

what to do with the little squirts

We know Dyngus Day parties can get boisterous, and some might think twice about taking members of the younger set to experience first hand the Polonia pageantry that takes place on the day after Easter. But, think again, there are plenty of things to do and see for kids of all ages.

So stick a pussy willow branch in the stroller and teach the children what it is to be Polish and proud! Here's where to go with your lil nuggets.

## Historic Polonia

At the corner of Clark and Kent aka Superman corner stand the towering spires of Corpus Christi Church. The awe-inspiring interior, features some of the finest ecclesiastical art in the city. A special Dyngus Day Mass begins at 11:30 am. After Mass, stroll over to the brick building directly behind the church. Inside the Corpus Christi Athletic Club there are bowling alleys, plenty of games and coloring contests for your little crumb crunchers as well as plenty of food to fuel all that activity regardless of your age. Try the pierogi pizza!

At the Broadway Market the old-fashioned concept of selling farm fresh, exotic and unusual products here has remained unchanged since the Market's inception in 1888. If you have only visited this venerable Polonia institution during Holy week to pick up provisions for your Easter Basket, this is great opportunity to check out some of their offerings without having to wait



in long lines. This place might just take you back to when you were a dyngus day darling. Let your little crumb crunchers gaze at all the delicious chocolates and sweet treats displayed. Get the kids some Charlie Chaplin or sponge candy and don't forget the Broadway Market is open all year long.

## The 18th Annual Dyngus Day Parade-5:30pm

Accordions and flags, and floats and marchers and thousands of smiling cheering revelers having a grand time celebrating the Polish Pride has propelled this procession to such powerful proportions that people have been planning their participation with great anticipation. In other words it's grown. The parade kicks off at the corner of Broadway and Memorial Drive at 5:30pm.

## Blackrock

The Polish Cadets 927 Grant St. have been providing social activities for Poles of all ages since 1899. One of the oldest social clubs of it's kind in the nation, Great live polka music, and delicious homemade polish food in the heart of Buffalo's secondary Polonia neighborhood. Old school cool.

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## the polka story

once upon a time there was a little twirl

Not only is Buffalo the Dyngus Day Capital of the World but, based on the amount of musical talent assembled at all the different festival venues that are part of this unique celebration, a strong case could be made that the Queen City of the Lakes is the Polka Capital of the universe. (At least on Dyngus Day it is). But let's not get ahead of ourselves. First we need to go back to the beginning.

Although many consider Polka to be a Polish creation, the dances origins are actually attributed to Bohemia. The invention of the step is credited to Anna Slazak, a farm servant at Elbstein near Prague. Based on local Slavic folk music, 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 hopped over the "pond" to the US and it remained a dominantly popular dance in Europe as well as in North America until the 20th century, when it was displaced by ragtime jazz, and the dance crazes of the Roaring Twenties. In fact the polka music that we know today here in North America is really an American creation that combined elements of ragtime and traditional Polish folk melodies. You would be hard pressed to find contemporary polka music anywhere in Poland because it's really as American as the blues.

Polka did, however experience resurgence in popularity

here after WWII, when many Polish refugees moved to the US, adopting this Bohemian style as a cultural dance.

Although the origin can be traced back to one source, there are various styles of contemporary polka music all of which are American inventions, one of the styles found here is the North American "Polish-style Polka", it's roots are in Chicago. Two sub-styles are; "The Chicago Honky" (using the clarinet and one trumpet) and the "Chicago Push" (featuring the accordion, concertinas, bass, drums and almost always two trumpets). North American "Slovenian Style" is fast and features piano accordion, chromatic accordion, and or diatonic button box accordion: it is associated with Cleveland. North American "Dutchmen-style" features an "oompah" sound often with a tuba & banjo, and has roots in the American Midwest. "Conjunto-style" polkas have roots in northern Texas and Mexico and are also called "Norteno". Traditional dances from this region reflect the influence of polka-dancing European immigrants. The polka is also one of the most popular traditional folk dances in Ireland, particularly in Sliabh Luachra, a district that spans the borders of counties Kerry, Cork and Limerick. Many of the figures of Irish set dances, which developed from Continental quadrilles, are danced to polkas. Introduced to Ireland in the late 19th century, there are today hundreds

of Irish polka tunes, which are most frequently played on the fiddle or button accordion.

In the 1980's and 1990's, a new genus began to emerge a fusion of polka & rock, sometimes referred to as "Punk Polka", "Alternative Polka" and Team Dyngus' newly coined description, "Rock and Rolka." a style of music that was popularized by the Denton, Texas ensemble, Brave Combo. Often characterized by playing traditional polka melodies or contemporary songs to a high energy polka beat. This genre of polka not only attracted a new generation of listeners it encouraged interest in some of the classic long time polka icons as well. Legendary performers like Marion Lush, Lil Wally and Frank Wojnarowski all found new audiences thanks in part to younger people discovering this new style.

But there's another type of polka sound, the big band orchestra. We're sure most people under the age of seventy are not used to the sounds of a big band orchestra but there was a time when a multiple member group containing a dynamic horn section, led by a charismatic band leader was the norm. Although primarily associated with jazz oriented acts like Count Basie, Glen Miller, Benny Goodman, and others, the full sound of a large musical ensemble lends itself perfectly to polka music. Considering that polka music, as we know it was spawned from the marriage of folk melodies and ragtime jazz, this should not

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be surprising. Orchestras once led by the likes of Lawrence Welk, and Eddie Olinski, have been eclipsed by smaller more affordable combos with only five or six musicians making them much more affordable than the ten or fifteen piece orchestras that your Gramma may have cut a rug to. But that doesn't mean that style of polka music has disappeared. Not only does it still exist but, we have the best in the nation as part of Dyngus Day Buffalo again, the one and only Jimmy Sturr and his Orchestra. With more than a hundred different recordings that have earned him 18 Grammy awards and 5 Gold albums he continues to dazzle audiences throughout the world. He's recorded with the likes of Brenda Lee, Willie Nelson, Alison Krauss, Bela Fleck, Charlie Daniels, Arlo Guthrie and many more. If you have never seen Jimmy Sturr live in concert you will be blown away by his versatility, his style and his energy! The Jimmy Sturr Orchestra and special guests take the mainstage inside the tent at Pussy Willow Park right after the parade.

Now, if adventure and exploration tickle your fancy, there are a myriad of other musical styling's to suit all of your interests. Our one price Pussy Willow Pass and shuttle service, make it easier than ever to go from place to place. There is so much entertainment to choose from it's hard to know where to start. So why not start bright and early?

A great place to start things off would be at our newest official venue The M Hotel. Not only is it the official hotel for the festival, it's also a great place to start because they have live music and authentic polish dancers throughout the day starting at noon. Plus, they are a transport hub for our pussy willow pass shuttles with tons of parking. Which means you can start early, grab a bite, get into the pussy willow spirit of things, hop on a bus, head over to the parade, catch a little more dyngus delight then head back to the ho-



tel. If you're smart you'll stay overnight and feel refreshed the next day. In fact there's so much going on at the M they're even starting the party on Easter Sunday night with a pre Dyngus kickoff party.

Solid performers can be found all day long at one of our favorite venues the Pubski Pub on William St. near Harlem Road. It's home to one of the coolest vintage barrooms anywhere in the area. That vintage vibe combined with the youthful energy of owner Matt Burdzy plus the tented back deck and the top polka talents of the Buffalo Touch and Lenny Gomulkas Chicago Push, promise to make this one powerful polka party indeed. Pubski will also stage an Easter night pre-Dyngus dance.

If you are a fan of family owned taverns and Historic Polonia is your preferred place for pussy willows, piwo and polkas, then you must visit Arty's Mackys and Happy Swallow. These places have been around for decades and tradition has seeped into the very rafters of the buildings. Don't forget to make an appearance at the Corpus Christi Athletic Club. This historic church hall will be packed with polka lovers of all ages. And don't forget about our new venues as Dyngus day goes downtown. SoHo presents the Kielbasa Kings, and Hofbrauhaus will feature the Polka Boyz for all your Dyngus dancing delight.

As the festival unfolds on Monday there are dozens of other polka bands to catch at venues all over town. Check out our calendar in this guide or on our website [dyngusday.com](http://dyngusday.com) for a complete list of bands, venues, and more detailed information

It doesn't matter whether you are just listening, watching, participating as a seasoned hoofer or a new comer to the dance floor, rest assured that this European form of aerobics can be enjoyed without Dramamine by everyone, and one thing is for sure, in the Polka Story, everyone lives happily after!

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## profiles in polonia

prominent poles ponder the past

“Polonia,” the word refers to the Diaspora, (the people of Polish origin who live outside Poland). However in our experience, it is much more than that. Polonia is a collective sharing of experience, of tradition, of culture, of food and celebration. Just as with most immigrant communities that took hold in the United States after a generation or two we find that many become “Americanized” and old world traditions seem to wane. The native language becomes a distant memory. Customs crumble, the folklore fades and old world styles melt away or blend into the new way of life. It’s logical that in the land known as the great melting pot, different cultures blend and eventually become homogenized. Adopting new ways in a new land are important. It demonstrates solidarity and a willingness to adopt the ways of your newfound home. However it’s equally meaningful to remember where you came from. What our ancestors did in the past, brought us to today.

But the importance of Polish customs and traditions cannot be understated. The ability to hang onto observances that are thousands of years is what helped our ancestors keep the Motherland alive. When Poland technically did not even exist for over one hundred years. The rituals, the music, the language, the faith, the foods, all kept alive by Poles throughout the world as they fought to regain their sovereignty. That’s how strong our heritage is to the people of Polonia.

### REV. COLE WEBSTER

Although Cole Webster grew up in Amherst NY his family ties have historic connections to St. Florian and Assumption Church in Black Rock. Even though they drifted away from Catholicism toward various Protestant denominations he realized early on that being Polish and Catholic were synonymous. His love for the culture eventually brought him back to the faith of his ancestry.

After graduating from Buffalo State with a degree in hospitality and tourism, followed by a stint with Hart Hotels, he felt a calling that pointed him in a different direction and brought him to the halls of Christ the King Seminary where he earned his Masters in Divinity.

Ordained as a Catholic priest in 2017 he soon found himself as the Parochial Vicar at Sts. Peter and Paul parish in Hamburg, a temporary administrator at St. Aloysius and Pastor of St. Peters in Lewiston. In 2023 Fr. Cole Webster was assigned the formidable task of shepherding the Greater East Buffalo Family of Parishes (St. Stanislaus, St. Kanty/Adalbert, St. Katharine Drexel, St. John Gualbert, in collaboration with Corpus Christi and the Pauline Fathers). This seems to be a role he was born for and according to Fr. Cole “I have no plans on moving again”. His goal is to have all of the parishes grow and thrive while working together to share our faith and culture as well. “We have such a beautiful history

and legacy we can share with everyone regardless of their background. All are welcome to be part of our family”. The challenge is how to bring new life and energy into separate communities that now act as one? Nevertheless his positive energy is infectious and there’s no doubt he was put into the right place at the right time to take on the task of being the spiritual guide for all of historic Polonia in WNY.

### *What does it mean to be part of Polonia?*

It means being part of a community with a common interest in all things Polish. We have a rich Polish heritage to be proud of here in WNY. It’s the stories, hard work, and faith of our ancestors that make us who we are today. They’ve passed down a rich legacy of Catholic/Polish traditions, exquisite places to worship, and coming together as a community, which we should be proud of and preserve for future generations.

### *Favorite Dyngus Day memories?*

My favorite Dyngus memories are when the parade was in its infancy. The Great Hall in the Terminal decked in Red and White, vibrating to Polka beats. While Dyngus Day celebrations have evolved over the years, there is nothing like experiencing the East Side come alive as I imagine it was in yesteryear. People walking from venue to venue, meeting friends and family, church halls packed, and a palpable sense of Polish pride that brings us together every year!

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***Favorite Polish food?***

I love potato and cheese pierogi, don't forget the sour cream. Also smoked Polish Sausage, ketchup being another must.

***What would you share with the youth of Polonia?***

As the pastor of historic Polonia, I would hope today's youth never forget why we celebrate in the first place. Pole's know how to have a good time, but what happens between Pączki Day and Dyngus Day is the reason for our celebration. It's only after a 40-Day Lenten look into the core of who we are as human beings, that we can rise with Christ to truly have become someone new! A priest I know would always say, "We have to go through Good Friday to get to Easter." It's by participating in the mystery of our faith that gives us all the reason to celebrate.

***Pussy willows or water?***

Pussy Willow! I've Dyngus'ed a number of times when it's been cold and wet, I do what I can now to stay warm!

**ELZBIETA ZAWITKOWSKI ORLOWSKI**

"Ela" immigrated with her parents and siblings to the U.S. from Namyslow, Poland when she was ten. It was hard to leave behind friends, family and "Misiu" her dog. Though she was grateful to have been sponsored by her, uncle Wladek and his family in Auburn, NY, she missed Poland. Eventually she met new friends that also emigrated from Poland and attended Polish Language School. She became a member of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, joined The Krakowiacy Dancers of Rochester and represented the United States in the World Polish Folk Dancing Festival in Rzeszow. She went on to earn a B.S. in Elementary Education and an M.S. in Education. Daughter Noelle Elizabeth was born in 1986. This retired educator presently lives in Wilson, NY. with her husband Christian. They co-own Happy Daze Orchard and Happy Daze Tours

and are proud grandparents of Christian Joseph (C. J.) and Elizabeth Renee.

***What does it mean to be part of Polonia?***

It gives me a sense of pride...a connection to what I left behind. In 1979, I was hired by Sr. Rosalie and Msgr. Gabalski to teach at St. Stanislaus School. Later my husband and I were hired to become instructors for a Polish Folk Dance Group. In September I will be celebrating 45 years of being part of Buffalos Polonia. Polonia. It's the fiber of my being.

***Favorite Dyngus Day memories?***

I recall being at my Ciocia's house in Skoroszow for a big family Easter celebration. Everyone contributed to this special day. The next day her dining room table was filled with leftover food from Easter ... all homemade. Her guests had an extra day of feasting on this delicious food because Monday was a National Holiday in Poland. On Easter Monday or Lany Poniedzialek, the guys would fill their pails with water and try to sneak up on the girl each liked. They drenched them with water and smacked their behinds with pussy willow branches. It was a fun outdoor activity and also a sign of New Life! When I arrived in the US we made some modifications... if I was the first one up I would sneak to everyone's bedroom and spray water on my sleeping siblings' faces. That shocked and startled them. Then it was then their turn to get me.

***Favorite Polish food?***

What is your favorite Polish food? It's hard to choose just one because my Mamusia was an amazing cook. In Poland she gave private cooking classes so I've become more critical of the food they call "Authentic Polish Food". I love soups such as barszcz postny, or barszcz with vegetables and beans, zurek, flaczki, pork aspic...

***What would you share with the youth of Polonia?***

When I was a teacher I was proud to share Polish culture

with my students. I taught them Polish Folk Dancing, singing Sto Lat, making pierogi, and how to make simple wycinanki. If you have Polish roots embrace them, be proud of your heritage, learn the language, support Polish Organizations, travel to Poland, and do research on your Polish ancestors...Record stories of the oldest members of your family...they may have interesting memories to share with you. Document as much as you can for the future. Make copies of old photos, become your family's historian. Allow their legacy to live on!

***Pussy willows or water?***

Pussy Willow or Water? I accept and value both. The pussy willow shows new life in nature, after a long winter sleep. I even decorate my Easter Basket with a few pussy willow branches. Water is a symbol of purification.

**EDZIU KUTAS**

Born in 1966 twelve years after his family opened the Warsaw Inn on Broadway in the heart of Buffalos historic Polonia district. When Edziu was 12, the family moved their restaurant to Union Rd and named it Polish Villa. He began his career as a dishwasher but quickly learned every aspect of the industry. Eventually he realized he had a knack for the cooking side of the business. Ultimately he and his family decided to open a second location on Harlem Rd. with Edziu in the kitchen. It soon became a popular spot for the delicious authentic cuisine and beautifully hand-crafted interior, but also for it's lively atmosphere. Some of the biggest names in Polka music packed the dance floor at PV2 as happy patrons burned off calories generated by this gregarious gastronomic genius. He credits his longevity in the industry to being influenced by his Mom, Irene but also to his many other "Moms" like Sandy Makowski, Pat "Ozzy" Odziechowski and Grandma Freda Korcz that helped him along the way. Edziu and his wife

Rosanna continue to feed those that yearn for proper polish provisions through their Polish Villa Food Truck and their involvement in many community causes. "Jedzie boat" as Edziu likes to say, meaning "keep the ship afloat and continue moving forward".

***What does it mean to be part of Polonia?***

Caring and sharing. Not that those traits are exclusively Polish, however I was raised to help others and I was obviously raised in a Polish household so I just associate that with my upbringing. If you see someone that's down you help them up. That's what I was taught. I think Polonia could be much stronger if we all worked together.

***Favorite Dyngus Day memories?***

Back in 1998, Chopins had moved from the East side to the old Big Apple Supper Club and we were handling the catering. Eddie Blazonczyk and the Versatones were on the bill along with Jerry Darlak and the Touch, and the place was rocking. We went through 77 kegs of beer that night. It was a bittersweet day because it was the first Easter after my grandfather passed. Sad that he was not there for the celebration but joyous knowing how proud he would have been to see such a gathering take place without any incident. Just a lot of love in the air... and the smell of kapusta.

***Favorite Polish food?***

Beet barszcz with uszki.

***What would you share with the youth of Polonia?***

Be proud of your heritage. Stand up and be strong. No matter what your problems are or how hard some things may appear. Don't be a victim. You can overcome anything with a positive attitude. Whether its relationship issues, work, whatever, it's all temporary. Everything is possible if you have the right frame of mind. Poles are unstoppable. It's in our DNA.

***Pussy willows or water?***

Pussy willows.





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From an old world tradition to a modern ethnic festival, Buffalo's Dyngus Day celebration has turned into one of the largest, cultural events anywhere in the world. But it wasn't always that way. Here's how it all unfolded...

Although the post Lenten custom had been noted in traditional Polish neighborhoods dating back to the 1870s, Originally it was a minor observance. Basically kids sprinkled each other with water on Easter Monday. Much later, modern Dyngus in Buffalo had its beginnings on the East Side of Buffalo at the Chopin Singing Society clubrooms. Judge Ann Mikoll and her late husband Theodore held a "Smigus Dingus" themed party in 1961. An idea born after a European trip, where the Mikolls renewed their love of the colorful customs of Poland. Originally meant to boost the declining membership of the society, the party soon became an annual event. Political and business leaders made their way to "Chopin's" every year the day after Easter to begin the day with a ceremonial "swieconka" luncheon. Polka music was played throughout the building and there was plenty of revelry to be had by all. Because of the quirky nature of the associated traditions i.e. the splashing of water and swatting with pussy willow branches, the party turned into a highly anticipated yearly affair.

Chopins left the Eastside in the early 1990s & moved to new clubrooms in the eastern suburb of Cheektowaga where they tried to attract a whole new generation of Polonia.

But by that time, younger members of Polonia were used to looking at other types of music and recreation. And Polka music was not part of that. As the younger Poles assimilated with modern American culture, Polka music and old world customs became obsolete.

In 2005 Dyngus Day Buffalo was founded with the goal of shining a positive light on a forgotten neighborhood and a misunderstood culture. The hope was that by providing marketing and organizational support to a number of combined events, more people would show up to these parties and a younger demographic would be attracted to the unique observance. The ultimate goal was to promote the ethnic, religious and cultural aspects of Polish culture throughout through this quirky celebration that was now known as Dyngus Day. In 2007, the streets of the Historic Polonia District were once again filled with polkas and pussy willows as the Inaugural Dyngus Day Parade was organized.

Attendance in 2019 was estimated at over 100,000 for Dyngus Day events across Western New York making it one of the largest, one-day ethnic fes-

tivals in North America. Even when the government banned all public gatherings and parades, thousands showed up to cheer on our very slow moving motorcade.

A lot of attention was drawn to Buffalo's Dyngus Day by the reaction of CNNs Anderson Cooper a few years ago that angered some who thought he was insulting. However the resulting awareness and national coverage only fueled the growth of the celebration.

People now come in by the busloads from all across North America. It seems that Dyngus Day in Buffalo, NY has turned into a tourist attraction. And as Buffalo continues to reconnect with its history, more of us realize the potential draw of our areas cultural authenticity and the value of old world traditions.

After all this and more than a half century of polkas and pussy willows, no other city on the planet can claim to celebrate Dyngus Day like we do in the Queen City. That's why Buffalo, NY is the Dyngus Day Capital of the world. It has turned into a point of civic pride not only for Buffalo's Polonia but all of Western New York. Thank you for participating in history as we continue to spread the story about Dyngus Day and the heritage of Buffalo's Polonia. Dziękuję bardzo!



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