

Rochester Polonia News

Polish Heritage Society
Of Rochester

PO Box 17368
Rochester, NY 14617

A Non-Profit 501©(3) Organization

Polish Dances (continue...)

Program 3: the Accordion Jam Session is on Sunday afternoon, August 14, 2005. Bring your accordion or just come to enjoy the event on the beautifully landscaped grounds of the museum. It is an informal gathering of performers, teachers, students, and anyone else who enjoy playing the accordion and making or listening to Polish American music.

Rochester Polonia historian Kathleen Urbanic along with the planning committee and the RM&SC staff are well into the development of a Rochester Polish American exhibit titled: Keeping Our Heritage Alive. This is Program 4 at RM&SC and open daily to the general public for four months from September 17 - December 31, 2005. See for yourself how Polish immigrants to Rochester and their descendants have maintained an identifiable, cohesive community for more than 100 years. Interact with our multimedia programs and browse the many decorative panels and display cases brimming with illustrations and memorabilia portraying our heritage. And, drop in at the Arts and Cultural Council for Greater Rochester's folk arts family events taking place during the exhibit.

On October 29, Ray Serafin and his "Brass Magic" band are the featured performers at Program 5 - A Polka Dance and Polish Dinner. This event will be at the RM&SC Eisenhart Auditorium.

We wrap-up our Polish American Culture in the Rochester Community series for 2005 with "Wigilia" - our traditional program of Polish Christmas Eve customs, music, and foods presented on Saturday, December 3.

For further information on any of these programs, contact Frederic Skalny of the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester at 585-467-7405 or Michael Leach of the Krakow-Rochester Sister Cities Committee at 585-244-8067 (home) or 585-428-7319 (office).

Polish Heritage Society of Rochester



presents ...

THE POLISH AMERICANS: THEIR MUSIC AND DANCE

Frederic Skalny and Michael Leach

Rochester
Polonia
News

Volume 5, Issue 1

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The You've heard a lot about it. Now, it's time to see for your self. Join us on April 17 at the opening event of our six program series entitled - **Polish American Culture in the Rochester Community.**

The Polish Americans: Their Music and Dance - is our kick-off event featuring "The Knewz" - a group of Grammy Award nominees of the Buffalo polka band Dynatones who joined with the ever popular Buffalo groups - the Steel City Brass and Big Steve's Band.

We created this first program for the entire family to enjoy. It is filled with entertaining activities from live musical performances, tradi-

tional Polish dances and some insights into the historical changes in Polish American polkas. The whole family will have opportunities to learn about and dance to a variety of Polish American music. A special feature of this event is Rochester's Da Igramo Folk Ensemble presenting a suite of Polish national and regional dances. Refreshments will be served.

So, mark your calendar, tell your friends and meet us at the Rochester Museum & Science Center's Eisenhart Auditorium on Sunday, April 17, 2005, from 2-6 PM. Admission is only \$7 for the general public, \$5 for museum members, and free for children 12 and under.

This event is funded in part by the New York State Legislature, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Arts and Cultural Council for Greater Rochester

Members of the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester have worked long and hard with members of the Krakow Rochester Sister Cities Committee and the Rochester Museum & Science Center.

We planned this and the remaining programs especially for your enjoyment and to promote our wonderful Polish heritage to the greater Rochester community.

Program 2 is the accordion "Take Apart Club" sessions on March 19, April 16, May 21, and June 18. This is a family-focused, hands-on series of the museum's technology program in which children will learn the workings of the accordion, a key instrument in Polish American music. A wonderful bit of luck for us - 14 of the 22 accordions used for this project were donated by The Button Box of Sunderland, Massachusetts, a noted dealer of English and Anglo concertinas, button accordions, and piano accordions. "Their staff stuffed them into the owner's car and he delivered them to us as part of his Christmas visit to his cousin in Rochester," said planning committee member and co-chair of the Krakow Rochester Sister Cities Committee Mike Leach. "We were astounded by their generosity."

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Gawęda Góralki

Stasia Callan



It seems as if I left the mountains only yesterday; although, it was about four decades ago. It was a silent snowy day, and the mountains were veiled with large fluffy flakes drifting down slowly. The horses pulling the sleigh that was taking my mother and me to the train station were quickly getting covered with a blanket of snow, which they were shrugging off periodically. I was a teenager leaving for life's big adventure on another continent.

At that time, Communism was holding a tight grip on every aspect of life in Poland. Since my parents were not members of the Communist Party, there were few educational options open for me, so I left the country *za chlebem*, or in search of bread, as they used to say in the mountains.

My youngest brother, Bogdan, was about one year old when I left, and he would be the one whom I knew the least over the decades. As he became a teenager, he also ventured *za chlebem*, but his destination was Czechoslovakia and later Germany. I had visited my family periodically, but Bogdan was usually away. In the four decades of my life in the United States, I saw my youngest brother maybe two or three times, and one of those occasions was his wedding in 1987.

It was a traditional mountaineer wedding, with moving parental prayers and blessings before the young couple left for church. They were also presented with bread and salt, the staples of life, accompanied by poetry recitations and tears of joy and sorrow for children who were about to leave their families to venture on their own. That was the closest I personally experienced a traditional wedding from the region where I was born.

At the time of Bogdan's wedding, Communism was beginning to loosen its grip on life in Poland. Solidarity had established itself as a firm political movement leading toward democracy. It came like *halny*, the warm south wind that ushers spring into the region.

Through the 1990's, I visited Poland more often. Life was different then with both more and fewer economic opportunities. There were people who were quick and flexible, able to do very well for themselves in the emerging market economy, but there were also those who lost whatever financial security they had before. In my family there were also structural changes as my nieces and nephews began to get married and settle on their own.

In 1996, my mother, sister Krystyna, and her husband, Kazek Dlugopolski, decided to climb Giewont, the mountain with the cross on top, which can be seen from Zakopane. At the age of 75, it was going to be my mother's 12th climb and my 2nd. My climbing companions were much more physically fit than I, so I was a bit worried about my chances for success in this climb. I remember the sweat pouring down my face as I was competing with my mother who was briskly moving up the mountain. However, with a firm resolve not to be outdone by her, I made it to the top of Giewont.

I still remember the elation that carried me down the mountain and into town after the climb. The next day, however, I felt the effects of the climb in every cell of my body, but my sister Krystyna and I had to go shopping, because the day after I was scheduled to fly to Heidelberg for a conference. But that was not meant to be. While dragging my tired body down the Krupowki in Zakopane, I stepped in a hole in a sidewalk, fell like a heavy pine, and broke my foot.

I returned to Rochester in a wheel chair, but traveling like that was a novel and heartening experience, because of the attention commanded wherever I went. However, my very best wheelchair experience occurred in Frankfurt, where the German passenger assistants carried me into the plane like Cleopatra. There was a touch of glory in this.



Stasia Callan with Family in Zakopane, Poland

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PHSR WEB SITE

Gary Gocek

Welcome to our second quarterly review of interesting bits of Polonia found on the internet. This quarter's column focuses on Polish language resources on the internet. Send suggestions or comments to Gary Gocek, gary@gocek.org.

The PHSR has its own web site: <http://www.geocities.com/phsroch/>. The Geocities service is free and hosts millions of web pages. When you visit the site, you'll see some advertisements, which provide Geocities with the revenue to provide free web pages. The PHSR web pages provide basic PHSR information, the Rochester Polonia event calendar, the scholarship application, links to related web sites, and more. We welcome your suggestions and submissions. Text and photos and other images can be posted. Even audio and video files can be used.

If you're typing at your computer, and you know the Polish you want to type, you may be having trouble with the letters that use "diacritical marks", the accents and other marks that appear on or around letters. Your American keyboard doesn't show these characters, but there are ways to enter these into MS Windows applications.

For the occasional writer, you can "copy and paste" the special letters from this web page: <http://www.ogonki.agh.edu.pl/pn.html>. The short page will load almost instantly, and you can highlight the Polish alphabet letters by dragging your mouse across them. Use the Edit menu's Copy command or the Ctrl-C keyboard combination to copy the highlighted text into the Windows "clipboard". Then click in your word processing window or other application to choose the insertion point, and use the Paste command or Ctrl-V. The copied text will be inserted.

This copy/paste operation isn't difficult, but it's cumbersome for long texts. Also, not all English-based software applications can display the characters after you paste them. Specifically, Notepad under Windows 95 cannot, but most versions of Microsoft Word will work OK. Old versions of web browsers might not work.

The Character Map tool provides the ability to access characters not found on the American keyboard, but Microsoft Windows and computer keyboards sold in America are optimized for American and Western European users. So, you won't find all of the Polish characters in the Character Map window. It is possible to install Polish fonts into an American system. This can be awkward with an American keyboard, so I won't go into detail. If you want to experiment, you can find Polish-oriented TrueType font files in this ZIP file: <ftp://ftp.gust.org.pl/pub/GUST/contrib/fonts/qfonts/qpl.zip>. You'll need to un-ZIP the font files, and that's a common operation, but beyond the scope of this article. See www.winzip.com for ZIP software.

The frequent writer of Polish text on an American computer will need to install specialized software to ease the task. Go to www.google.com and search for "virtual keyboards". The type of software you'll use will depend on your exact needs, so just keep clicking until you find something with the features you require. I am not aware of *free* virtual keyboards for Polish text entry, but they might be out there.

The Rochester Polish Federal Credit Union

“Zgłaszam wnioszek o założenie kredytu unii przy tej organizacji”.

“I put forth a motion to form a credit union in this organization”.

With these simple words, said about 30 years ago, a historical movement was begun at a meeting of the Polish Veterans of World War II, Post 4, held at the Polish People's Home. The idea sprang from an appeal in the Polish language newspaper, the Nowy Dziennik, to Polonia and especially to Polish organizations to form credit unions. In order to do this, a petition by 300 persons had to be gathered to apply for a charter. Since the Combatants had only 60 members, the appeal went out to other Polish organizations, namely the Polish National Alliance, Council 27 and St. Stanislaus Roman Catholic Church. In one month, more than 300 signatures were gathered and sent to the National Credit Union Administration. On June 24, 1975, the NCUA officially approved the charter for the Rochester Polish Federal Credit Union. The beginnings were very austere, since there was no income to pay dividends. Board members, serving as volunteers, collected deposits at the credit union's first headquarters at the Polish People's Home. Later, guaranteed investments were made, producing some income to distribute small dividends. After some time, small loans were made to members, thus increasing their income.

There was a progressive educational process in becoming a semi-professionally run credit union. There were many bumps and obstacles that had to be overcome

before becoming a good credit union. It took years to become a good credit union, and more years to become an excellent credit union. Who says so? The National Credit Union Administration examiners who scrutinize our operation every 18 months. They gave the Rochester Polish Federal Credit Union the highest rating given a credit union. This was achieved through the sound policies of the Board of Directors, again, all volunteers, and most of all through the excellent management of the manager, Mrs. Margaret Urban.

The credit union was formed so that the Polish-Americans would have a place to save money and receive an attractive rate of return, and at the same time, a place where they could borrow money to buy a home or other necessities at very equitable terms. The Rochester Polish Federal Credit Union has always adhered to democratic principals and to the cooperative philosophy, which it still fosters, to the present day of “People helping People” and “Not for profit but for service”.

Today, the Rochester Polish Federal Credit Union has over 586 members, has assets of \$7,000,000.00 and owns its headquarters at 1325 Hudson Avenue. To date, the credit union has given out 1530 loans to its members, valued at over \$15,000,000.00. Undoubtedly, the original 10 Board members never contemplated figures such as these.

The Rochester Polish Federal Credit Union offers savings accounts; **fee free checking accounts**; Traditional and Roth IRA's as well as Coverdell Education Savings Account.

The credit union provides direct deposit of all payroll, social security and pension checks as well as direct debits of all sorts of bill payments. We sell money orders, traveler's checks; do wires all over the world, including money transfers to Poland and other countries. We provide public notary services. We can also finance your home and auto purchases, or refinance your current mortgage, home equity or auto loans, consolidate your bills, or provide you with cash for any other type of purchase or need, even send you on a luxurious vacation at very competitive rates.

We invite you to visit the Rochester Polish Federal Credit Union, where you will find friendly, courteous service from our teller, Halina Zygadlo, who is bi-lingual in Polish and English. The manager, Margaret Urban has an open door policy, where she is qualified to discuss financial options with you, inform you of all the services that are offered and yes, maybe even share one of her recipes with you. If you would like to become a member, please call Margaret at 266-5876.

What the Polish Heritage Society Means to Me

Jerry Rachfal

The thought of spring takes me back to growing up in Polonia in Niagara Falls and the major event of the season, the Celebration of Easter or Wielkanoc. Being a member of the Polish Heritage Society kind of makes those memories a lot more vivid as I realize how important it is to reconstruct that period. It was a time that literally can not be repeated when we look at life today. The Easter Season for me started with “Paczki Day”. We Americans refer to it as Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday) and I know that many of you have an even different name for it. The day was full of Babci's making wonderful doughnuts and you know what, they really did not need jelly or a lot of those other ingredients we add to doughnuts today - they were just plain doughnuts but without the doughnut holes. On Ash Wednesday, we went into the Lenten rules, and the older people had a lot more structure to the rules as they related to fasting; we only had to give up candy for Lent.

But it was really the Holy Week that is so vivid to me in my “Collective Memory”, a concept I learned about at a recent Skalny Center Lecture. Holy Thursday had Holy Trinity Church filled with people and every student in the school had a potted lily at their side. The lilies were carried in the procession to mark Holy Thursday and became part of an unbelievable floral arrangement on Easter Sunday. I often wondered where all the lilies were hidden for the period between Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday as the Church Main Altar was stripped as part of the ritual for Holy Week. What I do remember is that the altar bells

stopped ringing after the Choir sang the “Gloria” and as an altar boy, we carried wooden clappers in the procession. We called them “Clapki” as we had a tendency to try to make an “English word Polish” whenever we could. I found out later that the real name of them was Klekotki or Grzechotki; Klekotki I could buy, but Grzechotki is a real stretch.

We all visited seven churches and each one had its own type of tradition, be it Irish, Italian, Polish or German. But it was Holy Saturday which was for me the Holy Week Day I always remember. I was an Altar Boy and the ritual was to start the new church year outside the church with a new fire and a blessing of new water, in this case a large 55 gallon drum. Invariably, there were high winds at 6 AM in the morning, and those days, we did not have the flame lighters that you get at Chase Pitkin, but old fashioned matches. It was simply a hoot trying to light a fire with one match. In the end, I remember that we lit one match, and then lit the whole pack with it and tossed it in the kindling, and that is how the new church year fire was started. What I do remember most vividly was the number of elderly women who stood in line with their black babuska's (kerchiefs) on to dip their bottle into the new holy water and take a drink out of it before they left. Babci used to tell me that it was a kind of “good luck” thing to do, but I never drank the water.

While Easter Sunday was the Holiday, it was Holy Saturday Afternoon which was special. Lent ended at noon and you took the basket to church for Swie-

conka. The church simply smelled wonderful with the aroma of home made kielbasa; and a butter lamb (baranek) from the Broadway Market in Buffalo was one of the staples in the basket. I found out awhile ago that kielbasa at Easter is a Slavic addition to enhance the celebration; the links of sausage remind us of the chains of death which were broken when Jesus rose. All I know is that home made kielbasa covered with chrzan (horseradish) is absolutely a fantastic treat.

While Easter Sunday was a day of celebration, the real celebration was the next day. Dingus Day in the Buffalo area was a big celebration and it is still celebrated today. Unfortunately, I never really had the opportunity to celebrate Dingus Day. I left for college and never was home for the event, but just found a newspaper clipping from the Niagara Falls Gazette about it. The article features a picture of my Uncle Bill being given a love tap on the head with a pussy willow by my cousin, Joan, at a traditional Dingus Day Celebration. I would love to know the symbolism of the pussy willow, but I would think that it has something to do with spring and new life.

Wesolego Alleluja to you all, and I look forward to seeing you at St. Casimir's at the Polish Heritage Society's Annual Meeting on May 15.

Wigilia Program and Dinner at RM&SC - December 11, 2004

Ed Przybylowicz



The 3rd Annual Traditional Polish Christmas Wigilia Program and Dinner sponsored by the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester and the Rochester Museum and Science Center was another outstanding success. In earlier years the dinner was held at St. Casimir's Church in Irondequoit, but the popularity of the event outgrew the capacity of that facility. Each year the RM&SC celebrates ethnic holidays such as Kwanzaa and Hanukkah, and again this year the Polish Wigilia. A stage performance depicting a Polish Wigilia celebration was again wonderfully presented by the Witold and Grazyna Lawrynowicz family. This was followed by an evening Wigilia Program and Dinner at the Eisenhart Auditorium with over 200 people in attendance. Both events were open to the general public.

Cathy Orosz, anchor on Wake-Up Rochester (WHEC), interviewed Margaret Gorniak of Polska Chata about pierogi making. A large showcase in the foyer of the RM&SC prepared by Maria Weldy and Bobbi Przybylowicz displayed a creche and many memorabilia showing our Polish Christmas traditions. This display was seen by hundreds of museum visitors.

This year's Wigilia dinner consisting of several appetizers including sledzie (herring), the main course of losos (salmon), pierogi (filled dumplings), and various vegetables was concluded with a variety of desserts and coffee. The appetizers, fish, vegetables and desserts were outstanding and measured up to traditional expectations.

Dr. Ralph Jozefowicz was the Master of Ceremonies and kept the program moving on schedule. Dr. Ed Przybylowicz gave some background on the Wigilia traditions. The program started with live classical music by Sabina Slepicka and her young musicians. This opening was an excellent prelude to soloists Ania Weldy and Dawn Chmiel who sang Polish Kolendy beautifully. There was audience participation in a sing-along of popular Christmas Carols and finally, the anticipated Sw. Mikolaj appeared to share gifts with the children.

Christmas cards designed by children from the Polish Language School, a project spearheaded by Maria Weldy and underwritten by the Polish Heritage Society, were on sale as were Dawn Chmiel's CDs of religious music.

The event was a celebration of the Rochester Polish community and began the Christmas season in a way that led to many individual family Wigilia celebrations on the eve before Christmas Day. What better way to start the Christmas season?



Lawrynowicz family and Alinka Moksza presenting Polish Wigilia customs.

THE POEM

The poem had been kicking around in my head and it went through several versions, most of them not related to the final poem. I wrote a short essay following it in order to more fully explain my thoughts. I leave out specifics regarding the traits that have been passed down through generations so that the reader can make their own connections to their Polish past.

My grandparents died long before I was born. Konstanty passed away first and my grandmother, Joanna, buried him in a different plot than where she would be laid to rest. If my father ever knew the reason behind this, he never told us. We all laugh about it now. Even though I never knew my grandmother, when I visit her grave, I feel a closeness to her and a connection to the past. I think of character traits (*lessons learned but never taught*), good and bad, that have been passed down in my family for generations. These same traits I now see in myself and in my children.

THOUGHTS ON A GRAVE

(St. Casimir's Cemetery)

*it used to take
ninety nine of us
to screw in
a light bulb
long dead by then
you suffered through
ellis island
the move to bayonne
buried here beneath
a spoonful of
one of your sons
two of your daughters
passing on lessons
learned but never taught
and I haven't heard
a polish joke
in years*

Bob Drojarski

An Interview with Margaret Gorniak

Maria Weldy



Margaret Gorniak is a native of Swiebodzice in southwest Poland not far from Wroclaw. She came to Rochester in 1980 with her future husband whose parents lived in the city. Margaret decided this was a good place to stay and worked as a housekeeper for 3 years. Finally she set out to find a career and applied for a position at Mattel and Lee where she was offered a permanent job after passing the NYS real estate exam. This was the beginning of her successful career as a real estate agent. Margaret worked hard and studied long hours to pass the NY State Certification requirements and became a NYS certified real estate appraiser in 1989. Working as an independent appraiser, she eventually opened her own company - MG Appraisal Services and worked with banks and attorneys. She is still active in real estate appraisal.

In March of 2004 while driving home from work she had an idea about opening another business. She discussed the idea with her good friend Joseph Potocki and soon they became partners in a new venture – POLSKA CHATA. Within two months they found, remodeled and secured all the necessary approvals to open at

1965 E. Ridge Rd. in Irondequoit just before Easter.

To develop the business, they needed more distributors of various Polish foods and traveled to suppliers in Chicago, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. The inventory of products expanded from imported Polish and European delicatessen, top quality cold cuts, homemade soups, golabki to a variety of baked goods and frozen pierogies. Both Margaret and Joseph were pleased with how much they had done in so short a time.

Margaret always loved to cook and bake claiming that she inherited the desire from her mother. She also might have inherited charity from her family as evidenced in her charitable acts just after the bad flood in Poland 1997. Margaret spearheaded a fundraiser along with friends from St. Stanislaus church where they baked 150 poppy seed rolls to raise over \$1000 for flood victims in Wroclaw.

Margaret mentioned that catering is a growing part of the business – "there is a demand for trays of Polish cold cuts, soups and warm Polish meals. The biggest seller is the Polish plate for \$5.99 (golabki, pierogi, kielbasa, bigos, and a special mashed potato. The plate is a big lunch favorite of office workers in the East Ridge Road area, along with baked goods like babka (kuchen), poppy seeds rolls, blueberry buns and bread baked daily. Polska Chata and especially their selection of outstanding sausages was mentioned in the Democrat and Chronicle in February. The business has become very popular within less than a year. Perhaps, that is not only due to wonderful food and friendly service, but to the fact that many elderly often come to Polska Chata to ask for translations from Polish to English, names of the best plumbers, roofers and electricians. Young people stop by to ask for a job and customers come from as far as the Finger Lakes region.

Margaret does most of the cooking and she is getting good at modifying recipes her sister, Dorota Zajac, sends from Poland where she owns four grocery stores.

Margaret and Joseph are very happy with the first year in Polska Chata and are planning to expand their business. Margaret reveals a bit of secret – "Irondequoit is good, maybe we can start a shop with a dinner?" Margaret has two children, Melisa 21 who attends Fredonia College, and Arthur 9 years old in elementary school.

As a side note, Margaret came to the US with \$500 in her pocket and spent many nights sleeping on a mattress on the floor, but she had a great self-determination. It is wonderful to see her success grow and we wish



Rochester Polonia Calendar April - June 2005

- APR 3 SUN Polish Falcons Children's Easter Party at Ira Jacobsen Post, 621-3467
 6 WED Katherine Slepecki Piano Concert, 12 Noon, Hochstein School of Music, Free and Open to the Public – Reservations Required, 323-2106
 9 SAT PHSR Scholarship Luncheon, 12 Noon, Brookwood Inn, Pittsford, 586-7386
 13 WED Polish Falcons Seneca Casino Bus Trip, Members \$5, Non \$12, 381-0091
 16 SAT Annual Meeting of the Polish Credit Union - St Stanislaus Aud., 1 PM, 266-5876
 16 SAT Polish American Culture in the Rochester Community: Accordion Take-A-Part, RMSC 467-7405
 17 SUN PHSR, KRSC, RM&SC Co-Sponsors, Polish Americans Culture in the Rochester Community: Polish Americans -Their Music and Dance; 2-6 PM, RM&SC, Eisenhart Aud., 467-7405
 17 SUN Piano Recital by Stephen Beuss Sponsored by the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies, 3 PM, Strong Aud., Free, Open to Public, 275-9898
 21 THU Dr. I. Kalinowska, How to Travel – The East-West Encounter According to Mickiewicz, Skalny Lecture Series, 7:30 PM, Frederic Douglas Bldg, UR, 275-9898
 29 FRI Wreath Placing Ceremony - Bust of Kosciuszko, Sponsored by the Polonia Civic Centre, 12 Noon, Hall of Justice, Exchange Blvd, 323-2106
 MAY 1 SUN Polish Constitution Day Commemoration, Sponsored by the Polonia civic Centre, 11 AM Polish Mass, St Stanislaus Church and Auditorium, 323-2106
 1 SUN Polish Youth Concert and Art Exhibit, Sponsored by the Skalny Center/UR and the Polish Heritage Society, 1:30 PM, Strong Aud/UR, 275-9898
 15 SUN Polish Heritage Society of Rochester, Annual Meeting, 3 PM, St Casimir's Church Hall, 467-7405
 21 SAT Polish American Culture in the Rochester Community: Accordion Take-A-Part, RMSC 467-7405
 JUN 12 SUN St Stanislaus Family Picnic at Seneca Park, 467-3068



Katherine (Kasia) Slepecki, a Rochester native, performs a solo piano recital at Carnegie Hall, New York City, May 14, 2005. Ms. Slepecki earned this honor by placing as a finalist in the Artist International Competition in 2004.

Prior to her Carnegie Hall appearance, she will be in concert on Wednesday, April 6, 2005 at 12:00 noon at the Hochstein School of Music, 50 S. Plymouth Avenue. This concert is free and open to the public but tickets are required and may be reserved by calling the Hochstein Office at 454-4596. Inquiries regarding her May 14 performance may be directed to her mother, Sabina Slepecki at 421-0368.

Ms. Slepecki has previously performed solo concerts at the Hochstein, the Manhattan School of Music, Kilbourn Hall, the SUNY Brockport and the Polish Consulate in Washington, D.C, and at music festivals in such diverse venues as: Colorado, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Topolca, Hungary, Brzeg, Wroclaw and Diszniki, Poland.

Katherine holds a Masters of Piano Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, a bachelors degree from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, and has received numerous awards and honors, including: the Pulaski Scholarship from the American Council for Polish Cultural; 2004 Special Award of the Artists International 32nd Annual New York Debut Audition; finalist (third place) in the 2002 Lansing, Michigan National Piano Competition; 1995 winner of the David Hochstein Memorial Competition; first prize in the 1995 NYSMTA award in piano; winner of the 1995 Castle Scholarship; first prize in the 1994 Geneseo Concerto Competition for piano; and 1994 winner of the Killian Award.

Ms. Slepecki is the daughter of Sabina Slepecki who is first violinist with the RPO.