POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

PRESERVING OUR PAST SINCE 1988 SEARCHERS

NO. 55

WINTER

2010, ISSUE 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

For Your Information

2

President's Message and Potpourri

Przewodnik Handowly Translation: Jakób Pasek

Lost Parafii: St. Joseph's Church in Jamestown, NY

A New Database Available 9 to PGSNYS

Member Moments ¹⁰

PGSNYS 2010 in Review ¹⁴

Point and Click! 15 FamilySearch

Goings On 1 Around Town

Happy Holidays

Mesolych Swiat, Bozego Narodzenia i Szczesliwego Nowego Roku!



Opłatek for a Traditional Polish Christmas Eve Dinner, 'Wigilia'

PAGE 2



Please visit the Polish **Genealogical Society** of New York State's Web site: www.pgsnys.org

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Szopka, Polish Christmas Crèche



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The PGSNYS meets the second Thursday of each month in the Villa Maria College cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, New York, at 7:00 p.m.

Annual dues are \$15 (\$18 Canada, \$25 other countries), and membership entitles you to three issues of the Searchers and participation in the PGSNYS Yahoo Group. New members receive an information packet to help you get started. The expiration date of your membership is on the mailing label of the Searchers.

Please remit your membership dues by check or money order to:

PGSNYS c/o Chuck Pyrak 12 Grant Road Snyder, NY 14226

Please send any changes to your postal or e-mail address to PGSNYS at the above address or to cpyrak@roadrunner.com

If you are a member, but not receiving e-mail from the PGSNYS mailing list, please send an e-mail to cpyrak@roadrunner.com

For submissions to the <u>Searchers</u> newsletter, deadlines are as follows:

1st issue (Spring) - due February 15th for April mailing 2nd issue (Summer) - due June 15th for August mailing 3rd issue (Winter) - due October 15th for December mailing

Submissions to the *Searchers* can be sent by postal mail (c/o *Searchers* Editor,

12645 Route 78, East Aurora, NY 14052) or via e-mail to: editor@pgsnys.org or denise.oliansky@gmail.com

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SEARCHERS

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



David Newman

As 2010 winds down, we look back at an exciting year. Check out the 'PGSNYS Year In Review' in this issue for a list of the many opportunities we enjoyed to meet and assist the public with their genealogical research, as well as opportunities for our members to enrich their research skills and network with other genealogical and historical societies. We are pleased to report that our PGSNYS database collection has recently been updated with the addition of two new surname indexes from Niagara Falls: *Pzyegląd Tygodniowy* and Niagara Falls International Institute. In this issue is a description of the *Pzyegląd Tygodniowy*, and the Spring issue of the *Searchers* will in-

clude a description of the index from the Niagara Falls International Institute. Although not all our databases are searchable on the PGSNYS web site (www.pgsnys.org), any member wishing to have a database search conducted can either:

1) Send an e-mail to niewczyk@verizon.net with up to 5 surnames.

2) Send a SASE with the surnames to search to: Attn: David Newman, PGSNYS Database Search, 12645 Rt. 78, East Aurora, NY 14052

I hope you enjoy this issue of the *Searchers*. We received three personal stories from members that we think add a heartwarming and special touch to the issue. We greatly appreciate these types of contributions, and hope many more of you will consider sending in short articles about your genealogical research experiences or family history stories for publication in future issues of our newsletter. Until next year, Happy Holidays to all of our PGSNYS members and their families! ~ Dave Newman

POTPOURRI

WITAMY! TO NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

Stephen R. Ambor Gettysburg, PA Antoinette Rachel Sun Prairie, WI Paul Dlugosz West Seneca, NY

Mary Boblak Kenmore, NY

David Simmer Avon Lake, OH

Please keep PGSNYS member, Daniel Kij, in your thoughts and prayers. We wish him a speedy and full recovery.

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Our sincere condolences to PGSNYS member, Pat Rooney, whose mother passed away October 27, 2010.

PGSNYS has compiled a *Membership Directory* consisting of each member's name, phone number, and email address (if available). If you are a current PGSNYS member and would like a PDF copy of the Directory, please contact Chuck Pyrak at cpyrak@roadrunner.com.

PAGE 4



The *Przewodnik Handlowy* contains biographies of noted citizens of the Buffalo, New York Polonia community. Each forthcoming issue of the *Searchers* will present another biography translated from the original Polish article.

PRZEWODNIK HANDLOWY: JAKÓB PASEK

Translated by Agnieszka and David Newman

Jakób PASEK was born July 25, 1867, in the city of Monowice, county of Oswiecim in Galicya. His parents were Wojciech and Katarzyna (GRUBKA) PASEK. Jakób attended elementary school in the city where he was born. After school he would help his parents on their farm.

In 1888, Jakób joined the army and belonged to the 1st Regiment Calvary of Ulani. He served three years in the 1st squadron, 1st division, 4th unit. After the army, Jakób immigrated to Buffalo, New York in the United States, where a great number of our Polish brethren went for work. Jakób was a carpenter for "Erie Carshop" for seven years, where he saved his money to someday open his own business.

On July 29, 1895, Jakób married Agnieszka CIESIELSKI, daughter of Antoni and Franciszka CIESIELSKI in Transfiguration Parish. In 1900, he worked and lived in Buffalo.

In September 1900, Jakób moved to Niagara Falls, New York where he saw that Poles could have work and a future. Jakób PASEK built his home and saloon business at 1302 East Falls Street.



Pasek home and tavern

Because there were few Polish families that lived in the area at that time, he attended an Arian Church, and sometimes a Polish Church in Buffalo, but with no schools. The Franciscan priests from Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church in Buffalo came, but they did not think of building a Polish Church in Niagara Falls because there were too few families to support the expensive cost of building a church.

In October 1901, Szczepan CIESIELSKI convinced Father Piotr PITASS to travel to Niagara Falls from Buffalo to meet in the home of Jakób PASEK for the purpose of setting up a committee to begin various projects, one of which was to decide the patron of the new church. The committee decided on the proposal from Jozef STEC that the patron would be the Holy Trinity, and the committee started the Holy Trinity Society. Immediately thereafter, 21 members joined the Society. The committee voted to the Board: Jakób PASEK (President), Franciszek LACHCIK (Secretary) and Jakób STEC (Treasurer).

Shortly after, the parish committee selected who would be in charge of building a small church and school, so that the children of Polish families in the area did not have to be schooled in a room on the second floor of Jakób PASEK's house.

The parish committee chose the following delegates to ask the Bishop for permission to start a new parish: Jakób PASEK (1st Trustee), Jakób KASZYNA (2nd Trustee), Szeszpan CIESIELSKI and Jozef STEC. The committee made their request to Bishop Quigley, who granted them permission and appointed Monsignor Father Piotr PITASS to organize the parish.

Acquiring the permission to build the church was easy, but they did not have any land, materials, or money for building the new church. With the grace of God at their side, they decided to build the church on land belonging to Jozef STEC, but the cost of the building material would be entrusted to Trustees Jakób PASEK and Jakób KASZYNA. They hired a Polish contractor named Francisek MATUSIEWSKI from Buffalo, who was in charge of building the church according to their plans. Parishioners worked without payment and, although the land was heavy and cold, in just less than two months they built the church out of wood.

In 1902, during Lent, they had their first church service, but the committee had a problem with the church. Because the church had been built on a foundation of mud that hardened with ice during the Winter, in the Spring, when the ice melted, the soft muddy foundation destroyed the church. The church had to be rebuilt.

Jakób PASEK was founder of the Saint Francis Society, which was founded on January 22, 1902 at his home at 1302 East Falls Street. Jakób also was the founder and president of the Polish Ulani Society Number 1.

Jakób PASEK's children:

Cecylia, born November 3, 1897 Feliksa (a twin), born September 17, 1903

Jan Pawel, Born June 27 1905 Stefan Leon, born July 27th 1907.



Jakób Pasek z familią.

"In September 1900, Jakób moved to Niagara Falls, New York where he saw that Poles could have work and a future." Jamestown's Lost Parafii

by Gregory L. Witul

"For the past seventy-five years, St. Joseph's has only been a trivial footnote in the career of Rev. Maximilian Bogacki."



Rt. Rev. Msgr. Maximillian Bogachi

Introduction

The history of Polish churches in Western New York is one of the fields of study that Polonia has thoroughly covered. Historical texts such as the Przewodnik Handlowy (1909), the Golden Jubilee of St. Stanislaus Church (1923). and the Millennium of Christianity of the Polish People (1966) cover the early history of the Diocese of Buffalo Polish heritage. Polish Genealogical Society of New York State founder Mike Drabik compiled these sources into their seminal work. The Polish Parishes in Western New York.

These manuscripts covered every parish that had a hint of Polish influence, with the exception of St. Joseph's Church in Jamestown, NY. This Polish parish lasted only eight years (1927 to 1936) and garnered a whole three sentences in Rev. Thomas Donohue's 1929 *History of the Diocese of Buffalo*. For the past seventy-five years, St. Joseph's has only been a trivial footnote in the career of Rev. Maximilian Bogacki. This is the parish that Polonia forgot; until now.

The History of St. Joseph's Church, Jamestown New York

The Southern Tier has long been a destination for Polish immigrants. From Binghamton and Elmira to Olean and Salamanca, each of these cities have provided safe harbor to these strangers in a strange land. One of the last colonies to be established by the Poles was the one formed in Jamestown, NY.

Poles began settling in the Jamestown region in the earliest years of the twentieth century. The region was attractive to the immigrants for its abundance of employment opportunities in both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. To meet their spiritual needs, these early Poles went to the only Catholic Church in the city, St. Peter and Paul on Cherry Street.

The Polish community expanded to the point that they felt they needed their own priest and

church. In early 1928, Rev. Maximilian Bogacki was sent to oversee the establishment of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, a parish for the Poles of Jamestown. Father Bogacki bought a parcel of land at the corner of North Main & 21st Street to build his new church. On



Cornerstone

September 2, 1928, Monsignor Andrew Ignasiak traveled up from St. Stanislaus Roman Catholic Church in Erie, PA to lay the cornerstone for the new brick church.

Father Bogacki worked hard for his new church, but the parish started facing issues soon after construction was completed. The first major hurdle was the Great Depression. The closure of farms and businesses forced some of the immigrant population out of the area to find work.

As the Depression dragged on, the financial situation for the church only worsened. The beginning of the end for the parish occurred in 1934, when Rev. Maximilian Bogacki was transferred to St. Patrick's church in Fillmore, NY. By 1935, the problems with the finances had become insurmountable.

On November 26th of that year, Bishop William Turner and Vicar-

General Nelson Baker summoned the two lay trustees of St. Joseph's, Mr. John Jankowski and Mr. George J. Benbenek, to the Chancery to deal with the issues of St. Joseph's church.

A deal was struck where Sts. Peter & Paul would assume control of all St. Joseph's property and finances. St. Joseph's would no longer be a parish, but a mission of Sts. Peter and Paul. On January 1, 1936, the parish of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church of Jamestown ceased to be.

Even though the parish no longer existed, St. Joseph's still functioned as a Catholic Church. A priest from Sts. Peter and Paul would perform a Mass every Sunday morning, until at least the end of World War II. Baptisms, weddings, and funerals were still held at the church, and the children at Sts. Peter and Paul School used the location as well. But, even as a mission, the church suffered a slow decline. St. Joseph's served a dwindling congregation as families either had fewer children or left the area and older parishioners passed away. Finally, in 1970, the



South side of church with main entrance

"The beginning of the end for the parish occurred in 1934 when Rev. Bogacki was transferred to St. Patrick's church in Fillmore, NY."

St. Joseph's - Continued on Page 8

mission at St. Joseph's was closed, and the building was sold.

Epilogue

Some of the genealogical records of St. Joseph's are still available. When I contacted Sts. Peter & Paul the secretary said she knew that they had the wedding records and believed that the baptismal and funereal records were in the rectory somewhere. She also stated that parishioners from St. Joseph's would be buried in both Holy Cross and Old Catholic Cemeteries.



East side of church with cornerstone

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A New Database Available to PGSNYS Index of *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (*Polish Weekly Review*) Description by Peter Ames

Przegląd Tygodniowy (Polish Weekly Review) was a Polish language newspaper that was published in Niagara Falls, NY. It was first printed on June 30, 1920 by Anthony Lewandowski, a Niagara Falls resident. The newspaper claimed to be a "Representative Newspaper of the 25,000 Poles in the Cities of Niagara Falls, Tonawanda, Lockport, [and] Medina," as well as being "the Best Read Paper in Niagara Falls and the immediate vicinity." It was published weekly on Wednesdays from 1921-1931. Each weekly edition consisted of eight pages. The newspaper office was located at 344 Portage Road across from the Echo Club.

Przegląd Tygodniowy has been indexed from July 1928 (which is mistakenly labeled as June) through July 17, 1929 by Matt Parsnick. The index contains the names of individuals who were listed in the newspaper during that time period. It lists the date, page number, and the category heading of the article in which their name was listed. Listings include parties, church events, arrests, car accidents, along with classified ads. There are birth, marriage, and death announcements, as well as other events. The index contains the names of several businesses that advertised in the newspaper. Multiple ads for the same business usually are indexed only once.

The index contains over 8,100 entries and about 3,000 individual surnames, which are predominantly Polish. There are also Italian, English, Irish, and Scottish, along with many other ethnicities. Most of the people lived in Niagara Falls, but some are from North Tonawanda, Buffalo, or surrounding areas.

Editor's Note: PGSNYS will conduct name searches of the Index for members and also at the various events in which the Society participates throughout the year. If a name of interest is found, and kinship can be documented, Dave Newman will contact Peter Ames, who has copies of the newspaper and will locate and provide the article of interest for only the cost of copying and postage.

MEMBER MOMENTS

HOW I FOUND GOLD AT THE CHEEKTOWAGA POLISH FESTIVAL by Audrey Scott

This was the first festival I attended at the Cheektowaga Town Park. It occurred in July of 2009, and as a budding genealogy enthusiast, I was curious to see what was going on at the PGSNYS booth. I had heard they might help me in my family search. A gentleman, Mr. Daniel Kij, was standing in front of the booth encouraging passersby to inquire about Polish surnames. David Newman, the Society's president, took inquiries and searched on his laptop for surnames currently in Poland. I requested several of my family names and was thrilled to get printouts of where and how many people with the same last name currently resided in Poland. Some of my relative's names did not come up at all, apparently meaning that they moved to other countries or died out altogether, which left me somewhat disappointed and with more questions.

As I was studying my printouts, with my back to Mr. Kij, I heard a young man say to him, "How do you pronounce BROD-NICKI in Polish?" When I heard the name my ears immediately perked up, and I turned around to see who was asking about my maiden name. Daniel Kij, in his beautiful Polish dialect, said "BRRODNEESKI." Then the young man stated that his last name is family encountered great hardship, and he and his two siblings were put into an orphanage. When he was discharged from the institution, were from then on BRODNICK.

Well, this was my opportunity! I introduced myself to John, his wife, and baby son. We exchanged some family history, and it turned out that we were fourth cousins. His grandfather, Arthur

BRODNICK, and generations ago it was BRODNICKI. It seems that when his grandfather (born 1913 in Buffalo) was a boy, the the 'i' in his last name had been dropped, and he and the siblings

SEARCHERS POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

"We never know" when we are going to encounter treasures like these. Treasures can be found at any place, at any time." Brodnick, is still alive and has lived a fascinating life, living in approximately 27 places during his 97 years. He was the superintendent of the plant that manufactured the top secret first jet plane fuselage built at the Bell plant on Main St. in Buffalo in 1942-43. I met and had lunch with Arthur, his son Greg, Greg's son John, and John's baby boy - four generations. Needless to say, it was an enriching experience, and we now keep in touch.

We never know when we are going to encounter treasures like these. Treasures can be found at any place, at any time. Just keep your eyes and ears in tune.

CURBSIDE TREASURES by Barbara Golibersuch

It has been my family's goal since we started genealogy in 1977 to find as many pictures of our relatives as possible. As you know, this is no easy task, unless you just happen to stop at a garage sale and find a big box of old pictures at the curb just waiting for the garbage truck.

This happened to me in June. I was shocked at first to think anyone would throw away someone's memories. I could not get the pictures off my mind as I shopped, and on the way back to my car, I picked the box up and brought it home.

I was so excited, thinking maybe a member of our genealogical society might know the family. Most of the pictures were unmarked. Inside the box was a diploma from Villa Maria Academy, and a copy of a 1932 Burgard yearbook, along with a social security card. Imagine that. Also included were sundry wedding photos, a complete wedding album, and a funeral remembrance book with no name or date inside.

I brought the box of memorabilia to our August meeting, but had no luck identifying the pictures. I thought, "Now what will I do with them? I can't throw them out."

My cousin Rita said she would take the funeral book home and try to contact some of the people who signed it. With Rita's first call she hit paydirt. A lovely woman answered the phone and explained the pictures had been lost a long time ago. She was so happy. That evening I got a phone call from the woman's son. He was thrilled to find out the photos were safe. As it turned out, the son's dad was celebrating his 90th birthday the following day. The box was picked up the following day, just in time for the party.

Yes, the box of pictures was reunited with the proper family. I spoke with the woman a few days ago and she said the party



what you will find at the curb on garbage day."

"You never know

"It seems like only yesterday, I was anxious to finally be out of grade school and be all grown-up..." was great, and it was wonderful to see the old pictures again. Moral of the story, you never know what you will find at the curb on garbage day.

GRADE SCHOOL MEMORIES by Dolores (Szalasny) Konopa

The photo on the next page was taken in the auditorium of Transfiguration grade school located on Stanislaus St. here in Buffalo, NY. The graduation class consisted of two 8th grade classes, one of which was mine, and the other was that of my future husband, Dennis Konopa. We were friends from kindergarten through 8th grade, and got reacquainted in 1966 at the cosmetic counter of Dick's Drug Store on Broadway.

It seems like only yesterday, I was anxious to finally be out of grade school and be all grown-up...but yet, a part of me was sad that some of my classmates were not going to be with me at Villa Maria Academy, where I went to high school. We would be scattered among various schools in the Western New York area, some to Bishops Carol, Colton, Ryan, Timon, and Turner. Others went to the various public schools. Sad to say, I lost touch with all my classmates, except for Dennis, of course.

One memory of grade school I have is my mother walking with me to my first day in kindergarten. When we got there, she arranged for a couple of eighth-graders to walk me back and forth since she and my father ran a restaurant-bar business that served breakfast for the rooming house next door. I remember after a few weeks, I decided to walk home alone. I didn't think anything of it since there were crossing guards at the corner I needed to cross (Mills & Stanislaus), and it was a straight walk to our home at 23 Mills. I explained that to my mother quite proudly.

Another memory is from when I was in 1st grade. We were being taught to print. I found this to be boring, so I started to write like my mother had taught me at home. Sister was not impressed, and scolded me, "You have not been taught to write yet! In this class you will print!" At lunch time (back then you were able to walk home for lunch), I went home crying to my mother about what Sister had said. My mother told me to print at school like Sister wanted, and I could continue to write at home anytime I wanted!

PAGE 13



Dolores (Szalasny) Konopa, 5th row, 2nd from left; Dennis Konopa, 3rd row, 3rd from right **Transfiguration Grade School Graduating Class of 1960**

PGSNYS table at the Cheektowaga Polish Festival

PGSNYS 2010 YEAR IN REVIEW

2010 has been a busy year for PGSNYS, with several community events at which we were able to interact with the public and provide assistance to folks interested in beginning or continuing their family history research. These included:

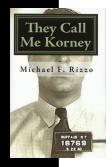
June 27: Lackawanna Community Festival, in Lackawanna, NY

July 17-18: Cheektowaga Polish Festival, Cheektowaga, NY

- August 7: St. Stanislaus Kostka Church Polish Arts Festival, Rochester, NY
- August 21-22: Corpus Christi 31st Annual Dożynki Harvest Festival, Buffalo, NY
- September 11: St. Gabriel's Church, PGSNYS Genealogy Fair and Boy Scout Genealogy Merit Badge event, Elma, NY
- November 23: PGSNYS president, Dave Newman, presented at the Family History Center Genealogy Day, Amherst, NY.

Several members participated in conferences offered this year, including the Western NY Genealogical Society meeting of local historical and genealogical societies on August 14th, and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Buffalo's Ancestry.com conference on October 17th.

Other activities for our members included two local cemetery tours and, of course, our annual PGSNYS picnic, which was held on July 10th. Many thanks to all who made these opportunities possible!



SPEAKERS AT OUR 2010 MONTHLY MEETINGS

APRIL 8th -Michael Rizzo, who recently published "*They Call me Korney*," discussed the little known history of the Polish gangsters from the Buffalo, Cheektowaga, and Depew areas present during the 1940's. We learned about the prohibition era and the events leading up to a stormy end for their gang.

OCTOBER 14th - Greg Witul - Polonias of the Southern Tier -Part I: Greg discussed the Polish communities of Elmira and Bradford, NY.

NOVEMBER 11th - Greg Witul - Polonias of the Southern Tier -Part II: Greg presented information on the Polish settlements in Binghamton, Endicott, and Johnson City, NY.

June 11-12: Polish Heritage Festival at the Fairgrounds, Hamburg, NY

POINT and CLICK! Laurel Keough presents ideas and links for web research

LDS Church – FamilySearch Website World's Historic Records Online http://pilot.familysearch.org http://beta.familysearch.org

If you haven't visited the FamilySearch site lately, it's time to check it out again. The fact that you can access millions of records from your home computer and for FREE, should motivate you to begin.

Some time ago, FamilySearch announced they would create online access to the world's genealogical records. Because of the immense scope of this project, it will take years to complete. However, volunteers around the world are assisting with digitizing efforts, and new technology has developed to make records on film available electronically. This means future changes to family history research are coming at an even faster rate than originally projected. Right now FamilySearch has 200 camera teams in 45 countries on any given day, and soon they will start digitizing in the field.

In August 2010, FamilySearch announced the addition of 200 million new searchable historic records added to their site, bringing the total number of records on the pilot site to 700 million. In the United States, FamilySearch is currently digitizing and publishing online Federal and State censuses, and State birth, marriage, and death records. These records are available at http://pilot.familysearch.org.

You may search your family names at the site or click on 'Search or Browse our record collection' to see a listing of all the records contained in this site. FamilySearch is currently in the process of moving all of these records over to the beta FamilySearch site by the end of the year, but for the present you should use both sites for your research.

Of particular interest to our PGSNYS members is the New York State Census for 1892 and 1905. Years ago, many of us spent countless hours rolling through miles of microfilm trying to find our ancestors in 1892 Buffalo or elsewhere in the state. This particular census did not contain the street names and were not indexed by name. Now, in just a few minutes, you can find your families.

Presently, there are no birth, marriage, or death records for New York State online. However, there were huge Polish populations in Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland. and you will find birth, marriage, and death certificates for those areas.



Winter 2010-2011 - Goings On Around Town

Thursday, December 9, 2010: PGSNYS CHRISTMAS DINNER, 6:00 PM, Villa Maria College Cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, NY.

Saturday, December 18, 2010: A POLISH TAVERN CHRISTMAS - partnering with area Polka musicians for an evening of 'Polka Caroling' at taverns in the historic Polonia district. Includes a wigilia-style dinner. 5 PM, \$45.00. Forgotten Buffalo Tours (716) 833-5211.

December 18-23, 2010: KRISKINDLEMART at the Broadway Market. Craft and Food Fair which features Santa, Concerts, Book Signings, Candy, Crafts, Baked Goods, Meats, Fish, Wine, Cheese, Spices, Salsas, Jams, Vegetables, Pottery, Pasta and even more vendors on Friday and Saturday. Address: 999 Broadway • Buffalo, NY 14212, (716) 890-0705 for more information.

Saturday, January 1, 2011: NEW YEARS DAY POLKA PARTY (Featuring the "New Direction") - 5:00PM - Potts Banquet Hall, 694 South Ogden Street, Buffalo - \$6.00.

Sunday, March 6, 2011: PACZKI DAY CELEBRATION (Featuring the Polish Heritage Dancers of WNY) - 12:00Noon - Hearthstone Manor, 333 Dick Road, Depew - Michelle Kisluk (716) 937-0032.

Thursday, January 13, 2011, February 10, 2011, March 10, 2011: Polish Genealogical Society of New York State (PGSNYS) monthly meeting, 7:00 PM at the Villa Maria College Cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, NY.

SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE 12645 ROUTE 78 EAST AURORA, NY 14052

PLEASE CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS