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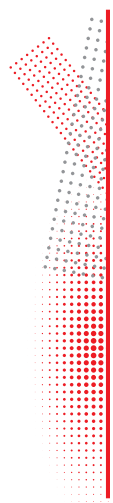
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dyngus daze

an eddytorial

In some ways it seems like it's been an eternity since our post Lenten celebration first took form here in the Queen City of the Lakes. Some folks in our burgh just assume that our parade and festival have always been around. Then again, there are those that are discovering this quirky observance for the very first time. Whether you are a veteran celebrant or a Dyngus debutante there's no debating it is one of the most unique ethnic celebrations of its kind anywhere in the world.

Although the springtime revelry known as Dyngus Day, began its association with our town back in 1961 when the Chopin Singing Society began hosting their legendary parties on Buffalo's old east side, it wasn't until 2007 when the very first Dyngus Day Parade processed through Buffalo's Polonia district, that the power of the pussy willow started to demonstrate its true strength and rejuvenating capabilities. We began this project for two reasons. One, we wanted to shine a positive light on a deteriorating neighborhood that had a significant role in the history of Polonia. Not just in our region but for the entire world as well. Secondly, and in many ways, the primary reason, the Dyngus Day Buffalo parade and festival seemed like a good way to get younger people that were generations removed from their Polish ancestry, in-

terested in their cultural heritage and learn about old world Polish customs and traditions. Albeit our modern day version of this ancient ritual has little resemblance to any type of activity ever witnessed in the motherland, we have embraced it and made it all our own.

Truth be told, such festivity is unheard of in Poland. In fact "lany Poniedziałek" or wet Monday, is pretty low-key back in the old country, except for kids occasionally unleashing a hose on unsuspecting bystanders or passers-by. Nevertheless, the old world observance that occurs in Western New York the day after Easter Sunday, now known here as Dyngus Day, has become as much a part of our community vernacular as lake effect storms and bleu cheese dressing. But in true Buffalo fashion we have taken it to a whole new level.

In some ways it seems like this years Dyngus Day was never going to arrive. After all the challenges we have faced over the last few years, this past winters harsh weather has compounded our weariness and sometimes made the hope of Spring feel as unattainable as drinking a shot of krupnik from the Stanley Cup.

Two back to back record breaking snowstorms can make a long, cold, dark winter seem even longer than a seven year olds backseat ride to an unknown vacation destination. Are we there

yet? You would think that after all these years here on the north coast we would be used to such occurrences and indeed we are. Quite honestly our sometimes-harsh winters are one of the main reasons why Buffalo, NY has become the Dyngus Day Capital of the world. Not only does adversity build resiliency and strength, but it also makes you appreciate the survival of the struggle. Winning against a strong opponent is always better than a mere forfeit.

In fact we have used the time that we were sequestered during the seasonal snow squalls to put together this years festival plans. Recruiting talent, coordinating venues, lining up volunteers and re-inventing a festival shuttle system in order to help attendees get the proper Dyngus dosage to treat their pussy willow fever.

Now finally, as has happened since God created the earth, the days are getting longer and ever so slowly the air is starting to feel slightly warmer. Just as it does every year while the sun casts its lengthening shadows on the barren landscape of the Niagara frontier, the catkins of the pussy willow branches signal the start of a new season as they pop through their protective layer. Waving as if they are flag bearers at the start of a parade. Like the trumpeters of a royal court announcing the beginning of grand pageantry,

we are now awakened by the sounds of birds singing in the morning rather than the howling winter winds. Soon the air will be filled with the sweet scent of blossoming trees and buzzing bees pollinating the pistils that will ultimately transform into delectable fruit. This is what our celebration is all about. New beginnings.

You see my friends, while much of the world laments over the way things were, here in the Dyngus Day Capital we dream of the way things will be. Some call it a fools errand to be so naively optimistic. However, we find inspiration and joy in anticipation rather than the depression and doubt of distress.

And so here we are once again, albeit this time everything appears a slightly bit altered. This year, not only are we celebrating the anticipation of springtime with all the hope and joy of starting a new season in Western New York, it almost seems as if the entire world is on the verge of starting over. We can't quite put our finger on it, but change is happening everywhere. You can feel it in the air. Even the sky looks different. Although to most people change is a scary thing because by its very nature, new means different, which means uncertainty, but it also, means discovery and possibility.

So as we prepare to shed the gray bleakness of winter and the adversity we have all faced over the last year, let us embrace the possibility of the future yet to be written. For this my friends, is what the spirit of Dyngus Day is all about. Perhaps the time has come for the whole world to realize what we have known for quite a while 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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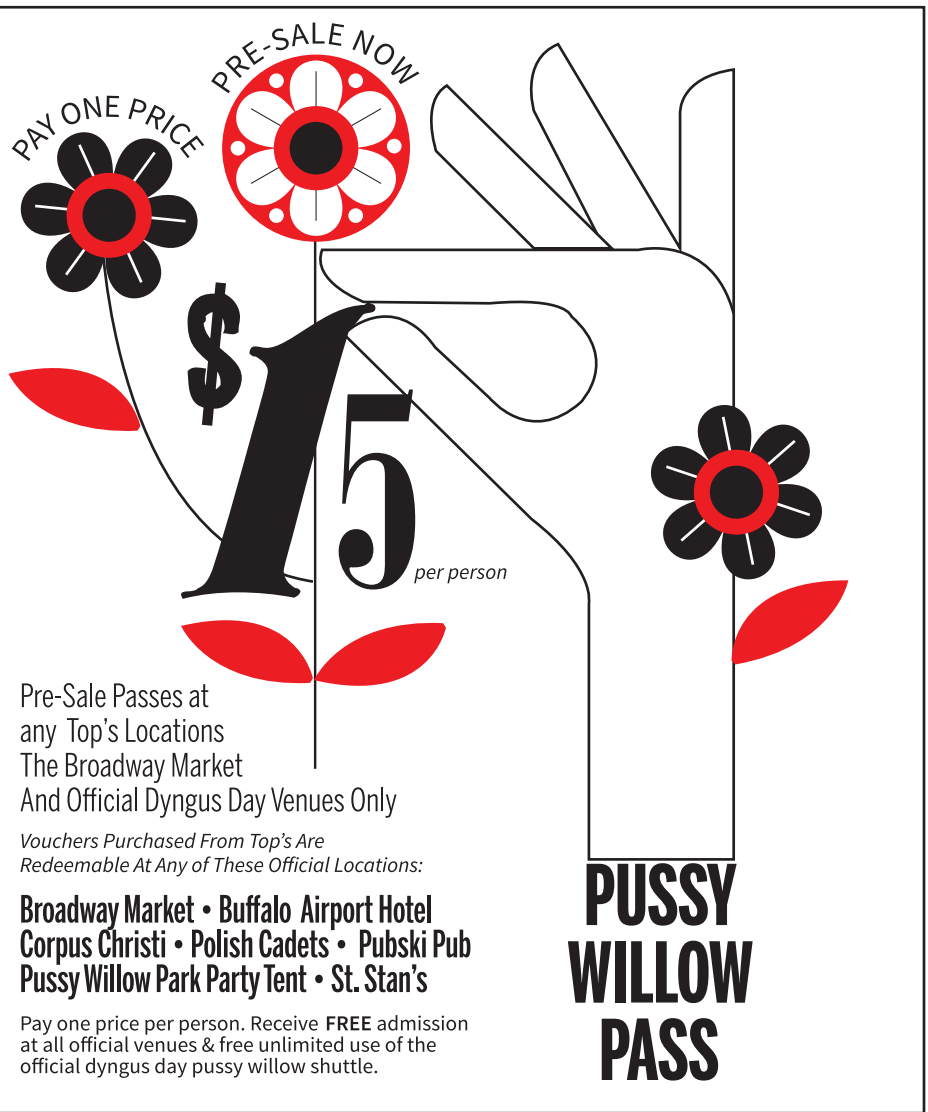
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VENU MENU

VENUE	ADDRESS	TIME	COST	INFORMATION
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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
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 Polka Sound System
THE BROADWAY MARKET	999 Broadway HISTORIC POLONIA 716-893-0705	NOON	FREE	Polish Beer & Food 12-5PM Authentic Live Music w/ Mon Valley Push
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 Polka 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 Krakowiacy 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
BUFFALO AIRPORT HOTEL	4600 Genesee Street CHEKTOWAGA 716-634-6969	NOON - 9PM	\$15 or Free with PWP	Live Music w/Dave Gawronski and Special Delivery Authentic Polish Dancers Polish Kitchen Specials
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 & Cross Border Klezmer Authentic Polish Dancers Authentic Polish Food & Beer
R BAR & GRILL	2139 Broadway SLOAN 716-894-1336	NOON	FREE	Authentic Polish DJ Traditional Polish Food Specials
POLISH CADETS	927 Grant Street BLACK ROCK 716-875-3211	1PM	\$15 or Free with PWP	Authentic Live Music Tom Mroczka and Music Box Krakowiacy & Lajkonik 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
MACKY'S SHAMROCK ROOM	1643 Bailey Ave. HISTORIC POLONIA 716-883-7383	4 PM	FREE	Live Music w/ Cross Border Klezmer Traditional Polish Food
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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 is 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 em-

braced 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 new growing season.

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The official definition of parade is; a large public procession, usually including a marching band and often of a festive nature, held in honor of an anniversary, person, event, etc.

In the case of the Annual Dyngus Day Parade, here in Buffalo, it could simply be defined in one word. FUN!!! What started out as a rag tag group of passionate Poles with a few flags, a couple of pickup trucks and a band on a trailer, has turned into a big splash of Polish pride surfing a sea of red and white. Floats resembling medieval ships, smoke spewing dragons, fire trucks with sirens blazing and hoses squirting, polka music blaring and families sharing memories and laughter as they stroll through the neighborhood waving to smiling crowds of young and old alike. Everyone from seasoned citizens to wide eyed urchins gather on the curbs to watch the festive springtime pageantry pass them by. Who doesn't like a parade? Not anyone that has ever been to the Dyngus Day Parade in Buffalo NY, that's for sure.

But this is not your typical parade. Our parade is about fun, and frivolity. If there is any show of strength it's the strength of friendship and family. The tug of the forgotten neighborhood where so many people once lived and worked seems to



draw people back, certainly to remember, but also to reinvent. This parade acts as a bridge from the past to the future. A generational gangplank allowing stories to become interactive. It's one thing for your Dziadzia to tell you about the fun he had with the Holy Name Society bowling team. It's another to actually go to the same lanes and do the same thing. An even better way to experience the parade is by participating in it. Whether it's building floats, designing costumes or just walking through the streets holding a flag or banner with your families name, the Dyngus Day Buffalo parade, is a great way to bond and connect with family and friends.

Relatives now gather 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 offspring. They do it as a way to share an ancestral bond, to instill in their children a sense of history, and dignity along with ethnic and familial pride. It's been inspirational to see this parade grow from the small group at its inception to one of the biggest annual events in the region. In fact the event continues to generate more partic-

ipation every year, not only from people and organizations that actually take part in the parade but onlookers as well. The crowds that lined the streets of the historic Polonia District have grown dramatically. This surge of humanity made it necessary last year to change the staging area and the actual route of the parade in order to make sure that residents and business owners of the neighborhood were not adversely affected because their streets were blocked for hours. It's even more important to us that everyone stayed safe while celebrating the arrival of the spring season. As such, we needed to alleviate the congestion that was created at certain points along the former parade route with big trucks and floats trying to make their way through large crowds gathered at intersections of a neighborhood that was originally designed when the preferred method of transportation was the horse and buggy. Although we still have horses in our parade, we now have trucks and trailers and cars and motorcycles and it became evident that the route needed tweaking to avoid those choke points to ensure the safety and well being of all those involved.

So we moved our parade division staging areas from the narrow side streets of the old neighborhood to the wide expanse of Memorial Drive. Parade participants now check in near the main-stage tent at Peckham and Memorial Drive but rather than cramming the floats onto Clark, Sears or Playter streets parade participants will line up on both sides of Memorial Drive the parade will proceed to Broadway. When the parade begins at 5:30pm it will turn west on Broadway to Fillmore Avenue. After the pussy willow procession ends, specta-



tors and or revelers can continue in their regularly scheduled Dyngus delights whether it be at one of the participating family owned taverns, Church halls or the massive festival grounds and tent.

Now if family, friends and fun isn't enough of an incentive to take part in the Dyngus Day Buffalo parade how about a chance to win some really cool prizes? As long as the parade continues to grow and reinvent itself, why not continue the fun and give all of our parade participants a chance to win some great stuff generously donated to us by our sponsors. This year anyone that registers to be part of the Dyngus Day Buffalo parade will automatically be entered into a drawing for a huge gift basket filled with everything from Sobieski Polish Vodka, Bacik imported foods, Official Dyngus Day swag, gift certificates from Happy Swallow, Polish Cadets and Tops, and much more. The winner will be drawn at our post parade awards party April 22nd at Polish Cadets on Grant Street at 7pm.

Critics complain that the neighborhood is not Polish any longer. The Poles fled and the area is different. Why do we bother?

We do it because we know who we are and where we come from. We are proud of our history and our ancestry! And undoubtedly, so are the thousands that gather to celebrate this annual affair regardless of their ethnic background. Whether you're riding a bike, on rollerskates, walking with a group or standing on the curb cheering with a pussy willow branch, 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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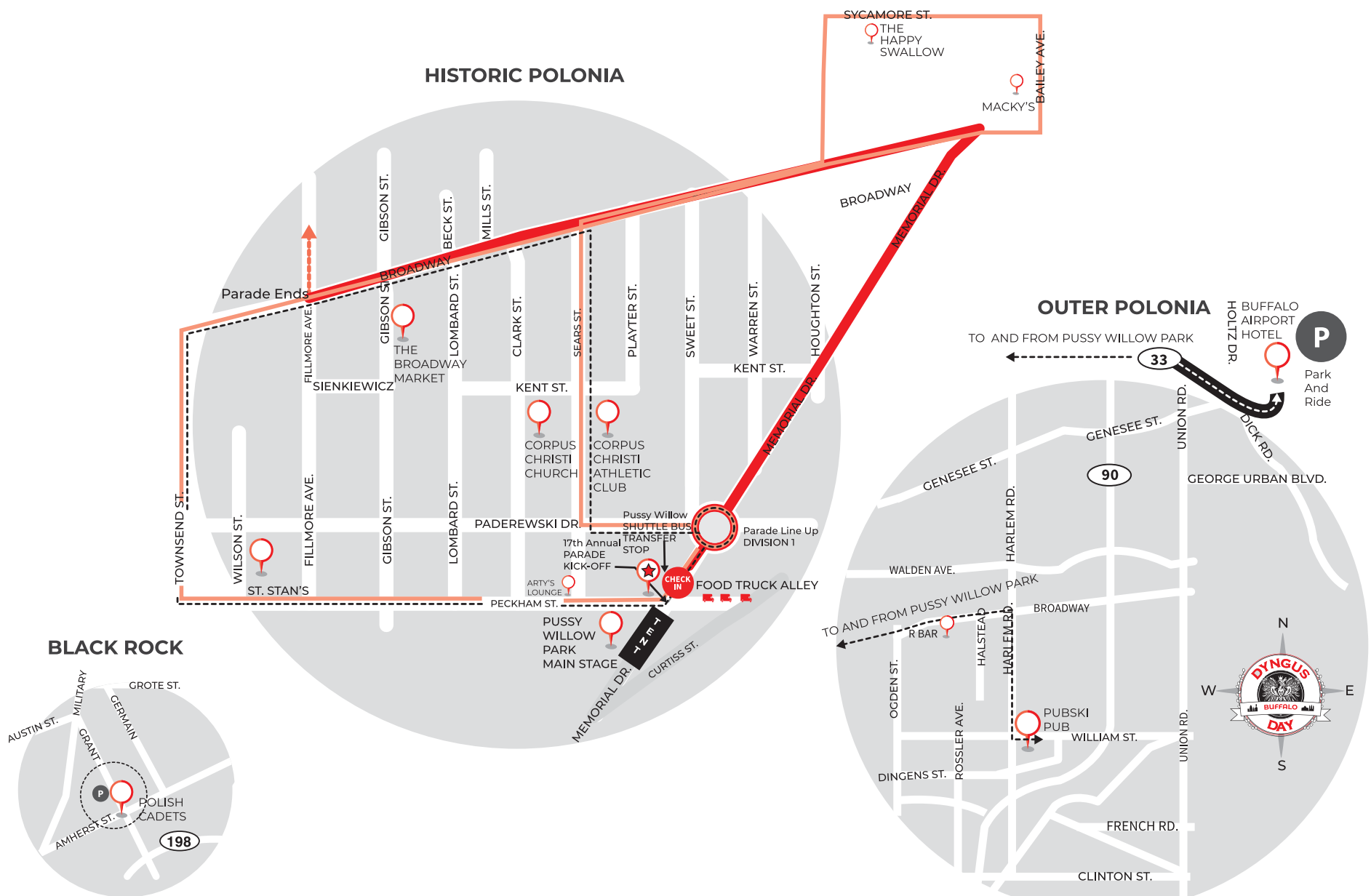


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1 Shuttle Bus looping Historic Polonia Departing From Pussy Willow Park Party Tent 4:30PM - 10:30PM	1 Shuttle Bus looping Historic Polonia Departing From Pussy Willow Park Party Tent 4:30PM - 10:30PM	1 Shuttle Bus looping Outer Polonia Departing From Pussy Willow Park Party Tent 4:30PM - 10:30PM	1 Shuttle Bus looping Outer Polonia & Polonia Departing From Buffalo Airport Hotel 4:30PM - 10:30PM	1 Shuttle Bus looping Black Rock & Polonia Departing From Polish Cadets 4:30PM - 10:30PM



KEY HISTORIC POLONIA | BLACK ROCK | OUTER POLONIA

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down at the friendly tavern

last call

Before social media was even thought of, people needed a way to exchange ideas and communicate with each other. As hard as it is to believe there was a time when people actually talked to each other more than texting. Rather than rely on digital images or electronic circuitry, people actually interacted one on one and face to face. It may be difficult to fathom, but once upon a time individuals would sometimes disagree or have political arguments that did not result in hatred or cancellation. For decades that type of synergy occurred in an environment most would consider obsolete today.

The neighborhood tavern was just such a place. An environment where workers could gather to share information, where friends could discuss the highs and lows of daily life, new immigrants could get help with translation or finding employment. The family owned neighborhood tavern, was that place. These "public houses" were the facebook and twitter of previous generations.

Honestly, if not for the proliferation of taverns and saloons, in close proximity to the clubrooms of the Chopin Singing Society in Buffalo's Historic Polonia District, Buffalo's Dyngus Day may have never gained the momentum that it did in the 1960's.

Sadly, government regulations, shifting demographics, industrial and transportation changes have made the neighbor-

hood tavern experience is as rare as a smile on a New York City subway ride. Once upon a time it was not unusual to find a tavern on nearly every corner of the city. Unfortunately, very few remain. However we are fortunate here in the Queen city to still have a few of these time capsules left. We are even more fortunate to have a couple of these meeting places be a part of our annual Dyngus Day festival. Places like the Happy Swallow, Arty's Grill, R Bar, Macky's, Pubski Pub, Porkys Amber Lounge, (the names alone are intriguing enough to warrant a visit) are all part of our festival family. But many more are long forgotten.

Places like the Cozy Corner Café, Broadway Grill, Warsaw Inn, and the R & L Lounge are nothing more than a distant memory for those still alive who remember when life moved at a different pace. When instant communication meant not having to share a party line telephone. In the last few years alone, a few places that held out longer than most, could not overcome the government ordered covid lockdowns and never reopened after being forced to shut their doors.

Thankfully, a few of these forgotten "joints" have been purchased by some young entrepreneurs and brought back to life recently. Macky's, Porky's and Pubski Pub were all resuscitated after being shuttered and left to languish in liquor limbo when

former owners passed away or went out of business. Unfortunately, these salvations are rare. For every one that's been saved or still hanging on, we have lost dozens that had to throw in the bar towel because nearby factories have closed or surrounding neighborhoods have deteriorated eliminating their former customer.

Wistfully we wonder, how long will we be able to gather in an environment free of expensive wine lists and trendy cocktail menus? Is the clock running out on places where we can shoot a game of pool or celebrate a special occasion by washing down a pickled egg with a cold beer? The fact that any of these places still stand, let alone do business, is nothing short of a small miracle. Nevertheless, in our community a handful of these "living museums" still exist.

So do yourself a favor. Next time you and your friends want to get together to watch a ball game or have a reunion of sorts, rather than heading over to your favorite suburban strip mall try a neighborhood gin mill. The next time you need to pack the kids up and head out to celebrate a little league victory or a good report card forego the chain restaurant and take them to one of the few remaining family owned taverns in Buffalo, NY for a fish fry or beef on weck. Sooner or later the kids will have to learn the power of horseradish for themselves anyway.

TAVERN SPOTLIGHT
Happy Swallow

Since its founding on the far east side of Buffalo stands an establishment that has witnessed a neighborhoods glory days as well as once being home to one of the largest social clubs in the city for decades. The Happy Swallow, established in 1949 by Leonard and Olga Napieralski, was still a very vibrant enterprise in 1967 when Dan Golimowski wanted to buy the place. However, being the patriarch of a young family meant that running a bar on the far east side of Buffalo probably wasn't the best idea at that time, so Dan passed on the opportunity. But twenty years later things changed. When the place went up for sale again, Dans son Tom, not only had grown up, he had gotten into the restaurant business after studying a culinary curriculum at Emerson High School, just a few yards away from the tavern on Sycamore Street and talked his Dad into buying it together. So they went into business as a team. Tom ran the kitchen, and Dan ran the bar. It was a perfect pairing

Even though by that time the neighborhood was showing some signs of neglect and suburban flight, there was still a somewhat intact business corridor surrounded by a dense residential area. But again things changed. Within a few short years the neighborhood went through a drastic demographic shift that saw residents and businesses flee without looking back. Nevertheless Dan and his family stayed the course and their business remained open weathering whatever obstacles life may have thrown at them. When Dan suddenly passed away in 2017 the family decided that they would continue the family business even though most

would have jumped at the opportunity to leave.

As noble as their intentions may have been, the last few years have been a true test of the family's commitment. As if being forced to shut down by the government because of covid fears was not bad enough, the family has had to endure the pain of unexpected illness' and sudden death as well as a devastating fire in July of '22, which forced some family members to flee with their lives. Unfortunately there was insufficient insurance protection which was calamitous for the families personal situation but also put the business and the building itself in a precipitous position. Nevertheless the Golimowski family once again faced the overwhelming obstacle that would have sent most running for the hills, and renewed their commitment to stay in business as best as possible.

Given the fact that the Happy Swallow is truly the last family owned tavern/full service restaurant left in what was once the most densely populated part of Buffalo and the second largest Polish colony outside of Warsaw, makes it extremely important to keep this place alive and operational. For historic purposes as well as the delicious fish fries they they have become famous for. As such, a gofundme account has been set up in order to help the family rebuild what was destroyed by the fire. Please consider helping to preserve this living history by stopping in for a hot meal or a cool drink. We promise that either way it will warm your heart.

If you would like to contribute to the preservation of this longtime neighborhood institution please visit gofundme.com/help-the-happy-swallow-survive



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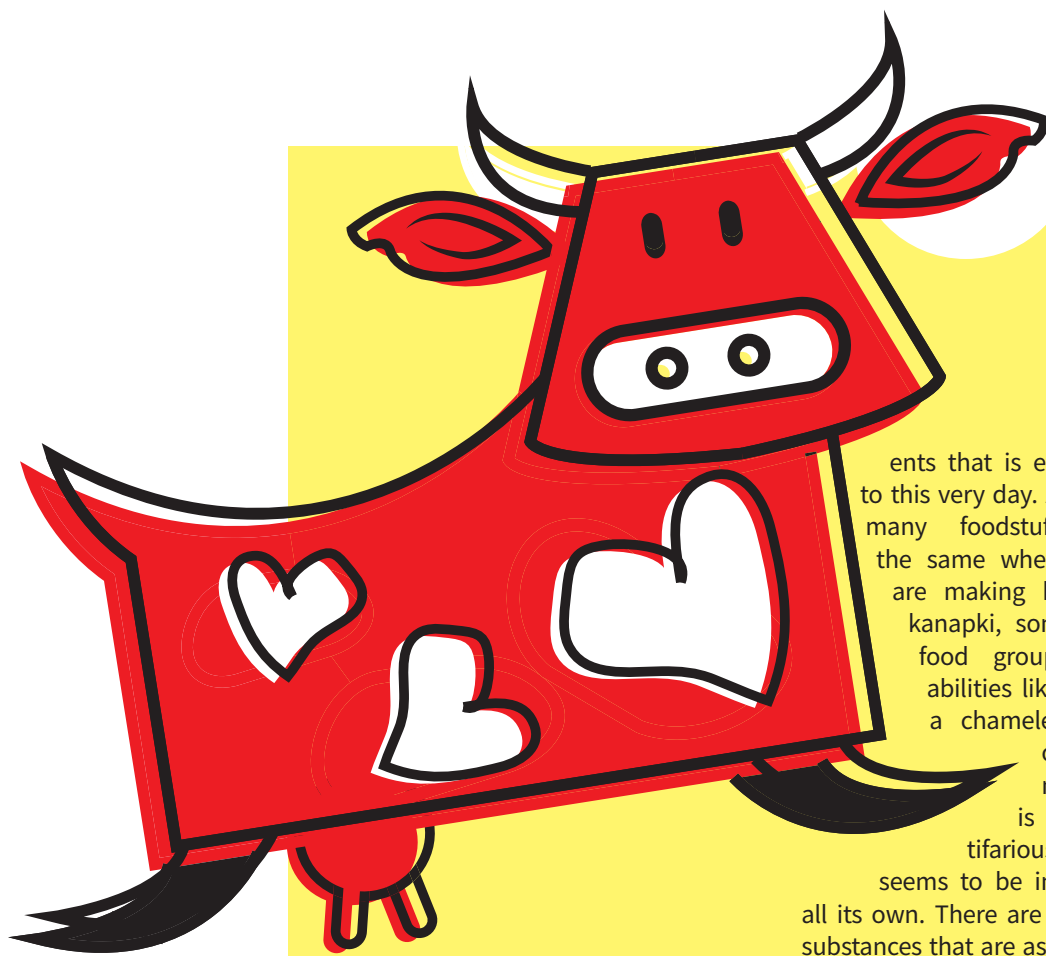
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TO SER WITH LOVE

When the topic of Polish food comes up what do you think of? Our guess is that most people might answer things like pierogi, kielbasa, kapusta, maybe even kiszka. But as we have discussed many times over the years, true Polish cuisine is as complex as the various regions and geography of Poland itself. The influence of various alliances, trade routes and conquering nations have left an imprint on food preparation and ingredi-

ents that is evidenced to this very day. Although many foodstuffs stay the same whether you are making kluski or kanapki, some basic food groups have abilities like that of a chameleon. But one raw material is so multifarious that it seems to be in a class all its own. There are very few substances that are as versatile as an ambidextrous accordion player and allow you to milk it for all it's worth. So as we continue our culinary conversation, lets take a stroll down mammary lane shall we?

While pork is used as an ingredient in hundreds of different sausages that all have unique flavor profiles, and grains can be used for sweet or savory sustenance, there's no questioning the diversity of dairy. Whether its raw milk, butter, cheese, sour cream or even yogurt, Poles the world over have had a fondness for the material that mammals manufacture to feed their young, since life began.

Maybe it's because we are mammals ourselves and most people began their dietary adventures with their own mothers' milk. If there were indeed such a thing as a super food, milk would have to land in that category.

Perhaps it's the enormous amounts of nutrients packed into each drop. Maybe it's the fact that regardless of the source, milk can be transformed

into so many different things it almost takes on the role of a magical food. No offense to magical mushrooms, but no other food on the planet can be reshaped like the precious life giving liquid secreted by the cows, goats and sheep of Poland. The alchemy that takes place to transform a plain white liquid into sweet butter or a tangy cheese is something that even Merlin himself would be incapable of duplicating. Just the sheer number of different cheeses available in Polish pantries is staggering.

The Polish word for cheese is ser. Now regardless of the ser source, it's pretty apparent that cheese is a serious staple of Polish cuisine. According to Wikipedia, Poland is the sixth largest cheese producer and has the eighteenth highest cheese consumption in the world.

The history of cheese making in Poland allegedly goes back to 500BC, when a cheese similar to mozzarella was produced in Kujawy. Although many Polish cheeses are similar to those found in other nations such as Rokpol which is similar to Danish Blue Cheese or Bursztyn which is comparable to Gruyere, there are those that are unique to not only the country, but to certain regions or animals. Oscypek, which is a smoked sheep milk cheese, is made exclusively in the Tatra mountain region. Nevertheless cheese is but one facet

of this mammalian nectars possibility. In fact all dairy products, as in cuisines throughout the world, could be considered our most important food group. Not only for their nutritional value but milks ability to change its texture and taste without losing any of its nourishing power makes it almost miraculous.

Another very important milk metamorphosis is the venerable śmietana or sour cream, which is made by adding lactic acid bacteria to sweet cream. While kids here in America grew up pouring milk over their cornflakes and sliced bananas while watching Bugs Bunny, kids in Poland are used to slathering sour cream over pierogi filled with blueberries, cherries, or strawberries while laughing at the adventures of Bolek & Lolek. A dollop of cool sour cream on a hot bowl of beet borscht adds a smooth silky texture that rounds out what is basically a thin broth and takes it to a whole different level. If you've ever had a forkful of mizeria, the mixture of thinly sliced cucumbers, dill and sour cream, you know first hand the transfigurational qualities of sour cream. Whether sweet or savory there are some dishes that would never make it to the tables of Poland if not for śmietana and its creamy consistency.

There is no debate over the importance of all dairy products in Polish cooking no matter

of this mammalian nectars possibility. In fact all dairy products, as in cuisines throughout the world, could be considered our most important food group. Not only for their nutritional value but milks ability to change its texture and taste without losing any of its nourishing power makes it almost miraculous.

There is no debate over the importance of all dairy products in Polish cooking no matter

THE BUTTER LAMB

lies down
on Broadway

what form they take. But at this time of the year the one form that is immediately indicative of the end of Lent is the one many families add to their traditional Easter basket. The butter lamb. Although there are not as many different varieties of butter as there are different cheeses, butter or masło, also comes in many different incarnations and is essential to the diet of Poland. Butter is a signature building block of Polish cuisine, with everything from kotlety to placki ziemniaczane (potato pancakes) fried in it. Butter is also used as a topping for vegetables as well as dumplings like kopytka, along with sugar and breadcrumbs or other flavorings.

Other than the types of grass that are consumed by the animals which source the milk for the butter, the real difference in the varying styles is the fat content. Varieties such as masło ekstra, masło delikatesowe or masło wyborowe should all contain at least 82% fat and a maximum of 16% water. Masło stołowe or table butter is a lower quality product as the requirements are not as restrictive.

When folks refer to a dish being a la Polonaise, they usually mean that it's cooked in butter and topped with breadcrumbs.

So whether you are filling pierogi with a soft farmers cheese, slathering a slice of fresh rye bread with sweet butter or swirling some buttermilk into a bowl of Chłodnik the nutritional benefits of milk and it's various forms is huge.

It's packed with important nutrients like calcium, phosphorus, B vitamins, potassium and vitamin D. Plus it's an excellent source of protein. Drinking milk and dairy products may prevent osteoporosis and bone fractures and even help you maintain a healthy weight. But even more importantly, is that it makes so many things taste better. After all isn't that the best part of that whole eating thing?

Smaczne!

The weeks leading up to Easter transform Buffalo's only year round public market into the first annual regional festival. Shopping for Easter food items at the Broadway Market has become a tradition for hundreds of thousands of families spanning multiple generations.

Why is the market the go to spot? A woman that sold chicken may have played a role. In 1963, Dorothy Malczewski opened a poultry stand in Buffalo's Famous Broadway Market, in the heart of the historic Polonia district.

The Easter of her first year in business she found her father's butter lamb mold in the attic that he had brought to America with him from Poland and started making butter lambs one by one. Dorothy created 5 different sizes of butter lambs and decorated them with a red "alleluia" flag signifying peace on earth, and a red ribbon representing the Blood of Christ.

The butter lambs went over so well that she began distributing them to other local stores, including Tops and others. The Malczewski Butter Lamb was born and became a tradition for everyone in Buffalo and surrounding cities.

The butter lamb tradition originates as far back as the middle ages. The lamb, represents Jesus and the butter lamb centerpiece closely unites the family Easter meal with the Eucharist.

Dziękuję Dorothy!

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4/2 Palm Sunday Apr 2 | 9AM - 5PM
4/3 - 4/5 | 8AM - 6PM
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Yes we know that Dyngus Day Buffalo is an annual springtime festival celebrating the end of Lent and WNY's Polonia history. But it's much more than just a party with pretty girls and handsome boys proudly wearing red and white being flirtatious with pussy willow branches and splashing water. It's also an opportunity for organizations and groups to generate revenue and awareness for their ongoing efforts and spread the word about their individual missions.

Many of the various festival venues whether they be, churches, clubs, or family owned businesses, rely on Dyngus Day as one of their biggest sources of fund raising every year. Over the years our post Lenten, party has helped churches to generate funding for badly needed repairs, private social clubs the ability to continue operation in the face of declining membership and family run businesses to stay open. Dyngus Day Buffalo has even helped buy sports equipment and classroom needs for various schools and youth programs. And though it's true that in this part of the world, a good party after a long, cold, grey winter will always draw people out to eat, drink and be merry, it's the volunteers who work these individual events that comprise our celebration which really make these parties come to life.

Without doubt, the biggest party of the festival happens in a location that most people would never

even think of. That's because one of the liveliest locations of the Dyngus Day Buffalo festival is normally a forgotten street in the shadow of what was once a busy railroad shipping center. But because of the efforts from scores of volunteers, every year we are able to transform this nondescript area, into a vibrant, colorful, tented festival grounds, with spectacular entertainment, offering authentic food, drinks and tons of fun for all.

While festival organizers have relied on the help of friends and family members for many years, it takes much more than a few relatives and associates to take on a herculean task such as this. This is not to diminish the contributions of families like the Feldmanns, the Gilmans and nearly the entire south towns McCarthy clan who have tirelessly volunteered their time and efforts for many years to make the party at "Pussy Willow Park" become a reality. Their time and dedication have been crucial in the growth of this ethnic celebration. Without the help of these families, this element of the festival never would have taken form (yes we know those names don't sound very Polish however the spirit of Dyngus Day transcends ethnic barriers, but that dear friends is a story for another day). This story is about contribution not ancestral ethnicity. So where do you go to find dozens of volunteers to create something of this magnitude?

Well this year we are fortunate enough to be able to rely on the extensive volunteers that are part of an organization known as Hospice Care & Palliative Care Buffalo.

This collaboration began with Heather Lakamp, who has been part of the Dyngus Day Buffalo volunteer efforts for years and just happens to be a nurse who works with Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo here in Western New York. Late last year, when planning for this year's festivities she suggested to the festival organizers that their volunteers, might be a good fit for the event. The organization is certainly no stranger to raising awareness for their cause through fun unique local events. For years, Hospice Care & Palliative Care Buffalo partnered with Artvoice the former regional newsweekly, to produce a citywide Mardi Gras event, which, is kind of ironic because we have always described Dyngus Day as a reverse Mardi Gras. Whereas Fat Tuesday is a celebration the day before Lent begins, Dyngus Day is a celebration the day after Lent ends. In any event this association is one that we are very excited about.

For those of you that are not familiar with Hospice and Palliative Care (HPCB), they care for individuals suffering from serious illness as well as their families and caregivers. They provide an integrative, holistic (physical, emotional, social and spiritual) approach to care

that focuses on the whole person, rather than on individual symptoms. Their knowledgeable and compassionate team helps individuals make choices about their care, educates professionals and communities about care offerings addressing quality of life, and supports those who are grieving.

Hospice originated in London during the 1960s by a nurse named Cicely Saunders and garnered the attention of some folks that were intent on establishing a Hospice in Buffalo. In 1978 Dr. Robert Milch along with nurse Charlotte Shedd decided to initiate 'unofficial' hospice home care services in Western New York. At that time, 120 volunteers were trained and 'hospice-type' care began to be provided. Dr. Milch functioned as volunteer Medical Director and consultant, and in 1993, he was appointed as the full-time Medical Director of Hospice Buffalo.

The organization transitioned and grew from an early grassroots movement to a nationally recognized and respected leader in providing care to patients and their families, challenged with life-limiting illness. Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo is proud to have been the first in the country to accomplish this and many more milestones along the way. This could not have been accomplished without passionate and determined pioneers whose legacy of commitment, volunteerism and advocacy is the backbone of Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo. Their legacy of dedication and support carries on today, with a growing number of volunteers and donors.

Since those humble beginnings back in 1978, a few dozen volunteers have grown to a force of nearly one-thousand individuals who not only assist in fundraising activities, like their annual Spring Bouquet Sale, or Memorial Walk at Canalside, but there are

many different ways that individuals can contribute to this altruistic endeavor.

"A majority of our volunteers are people that have been touched by the many services that we provide all over Erie county" according to Karen Pusateri Manager of Marketing and Communication for HPCB.

"Depending on the individual volunteers, talents and passions, we can pair them with patient visits or community events, like our Bouquet sale which has been in existence for the past 37 years, thanks to founder Kathy McGovern, who owns the Trillium's Courtyard Florist, and experienced firsthand the great work that HPCB provides through her father in law. This one project alone has allowed HPCB, the opportunity to raise over 7.1 million dollars so far. Other volunteer activities such as , visiting patients or helping them run errands are equally as important." "There are many ways people can help our mission. Obviously the fundraising aspect is crucial given that we're a not for profit agency however, helping a patient or their family simply by being there is just as significant. No matter what role they fill, they are all important."

So as we celebrate the beginnings of a brand new season lets do so knowing that our quirky celebration will be helping thousands of our fellow Western New Yorkers as they go through difficult transitions. A portion of all bar sales at the mainstage tent and all of the tips will directly benefit Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo in order to help them enhance programs that enrich quality of life for patients and families. So drink responsibly but tip heavily. And most importantly Dziekuje!

For more information about Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo and how you can get involved please visit their website www.hospicebuffalo.com.



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60 million congress

where we go one we go all

It all started with a dream about Puerto Rico. A sleepy REM induced vision of Poles sitting underneath palm trees, working together to achieve economic success while sharing an undying spirit of freedom and liberty with the world. Maybe it was a travel brochure he saw or maybe that pastelillos look like pierogi. Whatever spurred that drowsy tropical fantasy is irrelevant, but when Gregory Fryc woke up that day he knew he had to make his dream real.

The nocturnal vision he had was, one of "Poles" from all over the world working together. And so this event promoter from Brooklyn began assembling friends and associates to join him in a project he called "Pangaea" a fabled supercontinent that some believe began breaking apart into separate continents 175 million years ago forming the earth as we know it today. Since he emigrated with his family from Poland in 1993 after the fall of communism, this energetic entrepreneur knew first hand the benefits of Poles working together toward a common goal. His idea was to network Polish citizens with people of Polish ancestry around the world to create new opportunities as the economy of Poland started to shed the shackles of Soviet oppression.

So a few months after his equatorial dream Gregory organized an event in Miami to begin

a dialogue that would spread across the globe. In the beginning communication was a challenge. Social media was in its infancy. In 2012 people were not as connected as they are today. The iPhone was only a few years old and it was in May of that year that Facebook had its initial public stock offering. Nevertheless the dream slowly became a reality.

However after six years of struggling to organize events without financial support from sponsors or media partners, Pangaea, like the legendary supercontinent separated and dispersed. But in the summer of that year Fryc met Kamil Szymanski during a trip to Rzeszow Poland during a Polish American Congress convention. Kamil is president of the G2 Arena, a state of the art convention and exhibition center that had been built two years earlier just outside of Buffalo's sister city in Poland. Their conversation prompted a reigniting of the "dream" and a new organization was created. The new venture calls itself "60 Million Congress Global Polonia Summit". 60 Million refers to the amount of people on the planet that are of Polish ancestry. The current population of Poland is about 40 million with another estimated 20 million Polish Diaspora scattered throughout the world.

The duo became a trio with Zbigniew Klonowski a close associate of Kamils at the G2 Arena. This triumvirate has taken

the new collaboration to heights Gregory couldn't even dream of. The leading intention of the conference organizers is to provide a meeting platform to exchange ideas, initiate discussions, and find solutions that will lead to further development of business and political relationships that corresponds to the trends of the twenty first century. The 60 Million Congress also presents a unique opportunity to exploit the potential of the power network utilizing the Polish Diaspora, which is one of the largest and most widely spread ethnic groups in the world.

The programs of the Congress include expert discussion panels, diverse formal meetings with business leaders, Polish government representatives, community activists, local government officials and ambassadors. Participants take part in informal networking activities such as golf tournaments, cocktail receptions, and other special events. In addition to panel discussions each Congress session, examines various ways of working together with the Polish business community and cooperating with the Polonia power network as well as analyzing the chances of growing the Polish brand on the world map.

After World War II, a centrally planned socialist system was transplanted to Poland from the Soviet Union without any consideration for the differences in the level of



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development of the country, or its size, resource endowment, or cultural, social, and political traditions. The inadequacies of that system left Poland in an economic crisis in the late 1980s.

The institutional framework of the centrally planned economy was able to insulate it to some extent from the impact of world economic trends. As a result, domestic industry was not exposed to foreign competition that would force improvements in efficiency or to foreign innovations that would make such improvements possible. Above all, the isolation of the system kept domestic prices totally unrelated to world prices. As such, growth and entrepreneurship in fields such as industry and education were inconceivable. However the crumbling of the iron curtain fueled with the fierce spirit of freedom and liberty that is such a strong part of the Polish DNA changed not only the way that Poles conducted their economy but sent it into hyper drive. Now through these conferences, the 60 Million Congress aims to spread that inextinguishable Slavic resolve by uniting the Polish citizenry with their brethren throughout the world.

The dynamic of participants at these gatherings is remarkable in that the energy and enthusiasm exhibited by the attendees is immediately palpable. The exuberance of the Congress contributors exemplifies the seismic shift that has occurred in Poland since the fall of communism in 1989. The entrepreneurial opportunities and youthful population of modern day Poland have transformed the country in unimaginable ways just a few short years ago. Tourism alone has skyrocketed in unthinkable ways less than a generation ago. However based on the rapid growth of urban areas and transportation networks in the

country itself, the possibilities of collaboration in areas such as health, academia, entertainment, technology, manufacturing, etc are as limitless as one's imagination.

To date thirteen editions of the 60 Million Congress were organized in Miami, NYC, Buffalo, Berlin, Gdansk, Rzeszow, London and even more are being planned for 2023 and 24.

According to Klonowski, "we wanted to become a new international, intergenerational communication platform, to contribute to the integration of the Polish diaspora around the world. We hope our vision will strengthen our ties beyond business."

Gregory Fryc is very passionate when he describes the Polish spirit. "Our people are the spirit of freedom and perseverance. We overcame communism. The economy of Poland is now one of the fastest growing economies in the world. We are an example of how to work. We may be citizens of the world but our blood is Polish. Why not all work together?"

The emphasis may be on building strong business relationships but the sharing of culture and history are equally important. Zbigniew Klonowski adds, "a lot has happened in the last few years. 13 Congresses are behind us with new challenges and destinations ahead of us. Friendships have been made, in business and personally. Deals are being made. Polish and Polonia businesses are starting to merge. What we wanted to get started is happening". Whether you dream in Polish or in English, here's to dreams coming true.

For more info about the 60 Million Congress visit www.60mln.pl.



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a harmonic interlude

dyngus comes full circle

Many of us have been excited about this annual observance even before the Dyngus Day parade was born in 2007. But this year, there's something new to sing about. Because this year the Chopin Singing Society comes back to the East side for the first time in nearly thirty years. When you add in that they are partnering up with Saint Stanislaus the Mother Church of Western New Yorks Polonia, this party is sure to be memorable in many ways.

Back in 1961 Ted Mikoll was the president of a private social club called the Chopin Singing Society. Although founded in 1899, by the time that Ted took over at the helm, membership had waned. So he and his team embarked on a series of monthly parties to attract new members. That year Ted, his wife Ann and his brother Jim organized a party the day after Easter that involved a swieconka, polka music, dancing and pussy willow spanking. Over the next few years the party became legendary and soon many of the neighboring taverns and restaurants began holding their own events to capitalize on the growing phenomenon. But over the next 30 years the area changed, and the neighborhoods population moved eastward into the surrounding suburbs, the club shut its doors and sold their legendary clubrooms. Ironically the



building was demolished in 2014 on Dyngus Day.

When Chopin's left the east side, Saint Stan's picked up the pussy willow baton and carried on the tradition of staging a wet Monday event in an area that was once home to the second largest Polish colony in the world outside of Warsaw. John Marchese, then later Theresa Gonciarz, along with scores of volunteers knew how to throw a good party as well. Great bands and a familial environment helped St. Stan's keep Dyngus alive on the East side. The festivities inside the parish Social Center became famous in their own right. Legendary actor Frank Gorshin attended the springtime bacchanal once in 2001 while filming a movie in Buffalo and said "I never thought I'd have fun getting smacked with a tree branch, but I kind of liked it".

Although Chopins continued to hold Dyngus observances every year in various locations after they closed their clubrooms, the government imposed covid regulations prevented them from celebrating for the last three years. The mandates squashed St. Stan's as well when the whole world went on lockdown. Luckily, this year the two organizations realized there's strength in unity and it was time to pick up where they left off. They've joined forces to put together a full days worth of top polka bands, dancing food and fun. This party will be historical.



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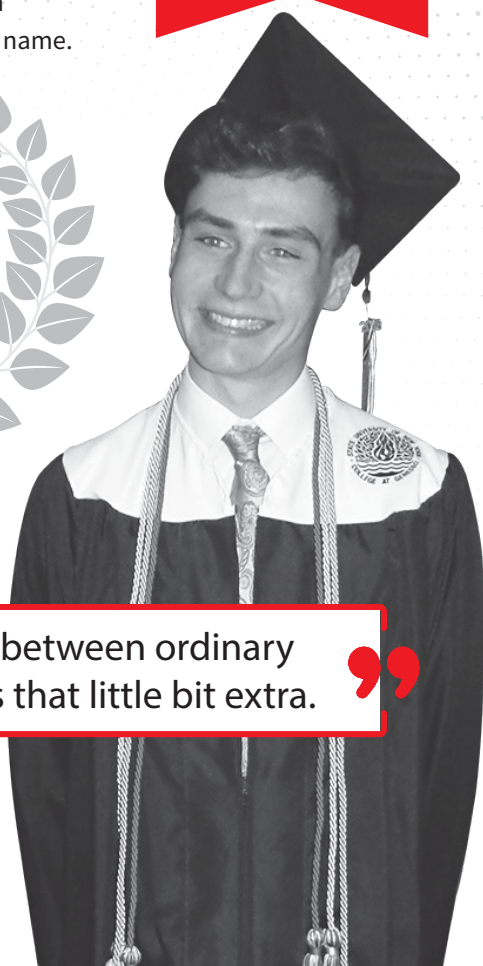
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dyngus day darlings

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, bounce house, 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 17th Annual Dyngus Day Parade-5:30pm
Accordions and flags, and floats and marchers and thousands of smiling cheering revelers having a grand time celebrating 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 Peckham and Memorial Dr. 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.

The memories of celebrating heritage, ethnic pride, community and family will last a lifetime... that's the best part. Well, the food and the music are pretty good too, and of course the parade. Everyone loves a parade.



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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 we are the Polka Capital of the universe. (At least on Dyngus Day it is). But first we need to go back to the beginning.

Although many consider Polka to be a Polish creation, the dance 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 20's. 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.

Although the origin can be traced back to one source, there are various styles of contemporary polka music, 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. 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 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 be surprising. Orchestras once led by the likes of Lawrence Welk, and Eddie Olinski, have been eclipsed by smaller combos with only five or six musicians making them more affordable than the ten or fifteen piece orchestras that your Gramma may have cut a rug to. That doesn't mean that style of polka music has disappeared. Not only does it still exist but, we

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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 your interests. Our Pussy Willow Pass admission policy, 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 Buffalo Airport 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 hotel. If you're smart you'll stay overnight and feel refreshed the next day.



Solid performers can be found all day long at one of our new venues the Pubski Pub formerly known as the Anchor Inn on William St near Harlem Rd. It's home to one of the coolest vintage barrooms anywhere



in the area. That vintage vibe combined with the youthful energy of new 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. In fact they're even starting the party on Easter Sunday night.

Don't forget about the little town of Sloan nestled in between the railroad tracks just outside of the Lovejoy neighborhood and home to one of our favorite family owned taverns, R Bar. Every year this place is filled with Dyngus Delight from morning til night. However, according to some regulars polka twirling happens here all year long.

If you are a fan of old school taverns and Historic Polonia is your preferred place for pussy willows, piwo and polkas, then you must visit Artys, Mackys and the Happy Swallow. These gin mills have been around for years 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 laughing and loving life spinning around the dance floor as they've been doing in those hallowed rooms for generations.

As the festival unfolds there are dozens of other polka bands to catch all over town. Check out our calendar in this guide or on www.dyngusday.com for a complete list of bands, venues, & more detailed information

Whether you are just listening, watching, participating as a seasoned hooper 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” 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 new-found home. However it’s equally meaningful to remember where you came from. What our ancestors did in the past, brought us to today.

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 heritage is to the people of Polonia.

IRENA WOSZCZAK

Irena Woszczak, was born and raised in the shadow of Saint Stanilaus Church on Townsends East Side by Zofia and Wojciech Woszczak, after they immigrated to Buffalo in 1958 after surviving WWII.

Upon graduating from St Stanislaus Grammar School, the Monsignor Adamski Polish Saturday School, Nardin Academy and ECC North with a AAS in Ophthalmic Dispensing, she went into business for herself. Irena opened Broadway Opticians inside the Broadway Market on June 1, 1992. Where today they serve the next generation of immigrants to the same area that her parents immigrated to.

She has served as a board member of the Broadway Market Management Corporation inc. and president of the Broadway Market tenants association, and for the past 6 years she has served as the Vice President of the Polish American Congress WNY division. Not content to simply make a difference in her own hometown, in 2021 she participated in a week long medical mission trip to Jalapa Guatemala where 750 patients in rural mountain villages were given access to medical needs they would never have had access to.

Keeping tradition alive is clearly something that Irena is passionate about, given the many cultural and culinary demonstrations she has been involved with over the years,

including , folk dancing, beekeeping, cooking classes at Websters Kitchen in North Tonawanda, Pisanki demonstrations on youtube with Father Czeslaw Krysa as well as sharing this wealth of experience with her niece Lily who will undoubtedly carry these traditions on to her descendants.

What does it mean to be part of Polonia?

Being part of Polonia has given me the opportunity to share the traditions and culture my mother passed down to me. It gives me great joy to show people of our community what our cuisine, traditions and culture are really all about.

Do you have any favorite Dyngus memories or recollections?

I remember the early days of this tradition coming alive in Buffalo. Seeing old friends in the old neighborhood , laughter and just enjoying the celebration of our customs.

What is your favorite Polish food?

I can’t say I have just one. Our cuisine is so rich in flavor and knowing the history behind most Polish recipes I savor them all . Ok maybe barszcz, or bigos? or perhaps meat pierogi? ..or pyzy Nope I can’t decide! What can I say? I’m a foodie!

What would you share with the youth of Polonia?

Know your family’s history and explore your roots. Their history and experiences are the most valuable gift they can give you .

Pussy willows or water?


The pussy willow.

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**GREGORY FRYC**

Gregory Fryc is a Polonia activist and entrepreneur. He is the President of Gram-X Promotions LLC, as well as the Pulaski Association of Business and Professional Men. Born in Mielec, Poland and emigrated to New York City in 1993. After graduating from Baruch College Zicklin School of Business in NYC in 2004 with an Accounting Degree he joined Prudential Financial and worked on Wall St for several years. In 2007 he started Gram-X Promotions, a marketing company that specializes in promotion of Polish culture. In the last fifteen years the company produced over 400 projects in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Florida, Connecticut, Toronto and other locations in the US and Canada becoming the top promotional agency for Polish culture in North America. In 2017 and 2022 Gram-X Promotions produced the biggest Polish shows in the history of New York City in the heart of Manhattan's Central Park.

Fryc founded the Pan-gea Network in 2009, which led to the creation of 60 Million Congress. The 60 Million Congress has a reputation of being the best non-governmental tool to connect with Polish people all over the world. He is also the chairman of the "Outstanding Pole Abroad Award committee in New York. This award is given to the most prominent Poles living outside of Poland by the "Teraz Polska" foundation and it is the most prestigious nongovernmental recognition awarded to Polonia. He initialized and managed the creation of the first Warsaw Uprising Memorial in the United States which was opened in Brooklyn, NY. in 2014 and the following year he became a co-founder of Invictus Veterans foundation which was created to help Polish veterans of modern wars.

Gregory was named "Man Of The Year" by the Pulaski Association of Business and Professional Men

which is the oldest Polish business organization in New York City. He also received a citation from the City of New York for his all time achievements. And was a member of the board of trustees of the New York based American Academy of Hospitality Sciences. The organization awards quality in luxury with the Star Diamond Award. Donald Trump was the ambassador extraordinaire of the organization up until becoming the President of The United States.

In 2014 he was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland by Bronislaw Komorowski the president of Poland and in 2021 he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland by President Andrzej Duda.

What does it mean to be a part of Polonia?

It means being a part of a community with a great and rich heritage. It gives me pride and it empowers me. Polish people have been in the US for over 400 years. Since Jamestown we have been building and enriching this land with our talents, with our hard work and we have always created beautiful family loving communities. Polonia has countless heroes and achievements in science, politics, sports, engineering, the military, media, social activism and more. You can find a Polish heroes and leaders in almost every sector of American life. It is a great responsibility to be able to carry this great Polonia legacy into the future and I am happy that I can be one of those leaders. I treat Polonia like one big family and I search for Polish roots and stories everywhere I go in the United States. Our story is a rich but vastly unexplored and unknown chapter of American history. We have so much to be proud of. I love being Polish and being part of Polonia.

Do you have any favorite Dyngus Memories or recollections?

My favorite Dyngus recollection is learning about Dyngus Day and it's

tradition. I thought someone was playing a trick on me when they said there is a Dyngus Day in Buffalo. When I learned about it I was very impressed and full of respect for Buffalo Polonia for conducting such a wonderful event and making it into a huge tradition. I still haven't been to Dyngus Day personally but this day is coming very soon.

What is your favorite Polish Food?

My favorite Polish food is Barszcz, schabowy and Bluberry Pierogi.

What would you share with the youth of Polonia?

I would ask young Polonia to not be afraid and take leadership in carrying Polonia into the future. Paraphrasing JFK "Don't ask what Polonia can do for you, ask what you can do for Polonia". US Polonia has hundreds of years of tradition, some of the once very reputable organizations are dying or are in big organizational and financial trouble. Some of them cannot be saved but many of them can. They need ideas, they need energy, they need entrepreneurial spirit - all of that is possessed by young people. Young Polonia can be a cure for many of those organizations, there has to be a will from the older generation to pass on the torch of course but if that does happen, young people should seize those opportunities. It's easier to create something new - it's hard to fix an old organization, but the only thing you cannot buy is tradition, that has to be inherited or passed on. We as Polish people have a 1000 year old tradition and our survival has allowed us to endure the darkest periods of history, there is no challenge that we can not conquer. There is no challenge that young Polonia cannot conquer and I wish for them to be brave, innovative and take responsibility for our tradition and our future.

Pussy willow or water?

I need to be awake at all times, a splash of water definitely fits my

preferences .

SISTER MARY JOHNICE RZADKIEWICZ

Sister Mary Johnice Rzadkiewicz is a lifetime East Side veteran. She grew up on Lord Street just about a mile from the intersection of Broadway and Fillmore Ave. on the east side of Buffalo and attended Holy Apostles Peter and Paul School and Bishop Colton High School, taught by the Felician Sisters. After her graduation from Bishop Colton High School in 1964 she entered religious life herself. Sister Johnice entered the Felician order and began her ministry as a teacher at various schools including St. Adalberts grammar school. At one point while studying at a Seminary in Philadelphia she felt a calling to serve the destitute of India in the model of Mother Theresa. Being inspired by the work of the Missionaries and Mother Teresa, Sister Mary Johnice listened to the invitation to serve the poor and traveled to Calcutta to meet her, the missionary encouraged Sister Johnice to go back to her neighborhood and "find your own Calcutta". Which is what she did.

In 1985 when St. Adalberts closed she formed the Response To Love Center, raised the money to buy the former school and has been ministering to the sick and impoverished people of the east side ever since. The name Response to Love comes from the constitution of her Felician order and their rule of life in a book with that title. The Center has become a mainstay of the area offering hot meals in their dining room and a food pantry for those in need as well as offering classes in English as a second language to recent immigrants which currently has an enrollment of 65 students from 9 different countries. In addition the center offers things like arts and crafts courses along with volunteer chefs offering cooking classes. All who come are welcomed by Sisters Johnice, Rose and Catharine, staff and over 120

volunteers. Sister Johnice invites you to visit and to "Come and See!"

If that's not enough, the small but fierce little nun has added crime fighter to her resume. She made national news recently when she thwarted two would be thieves when she came upon them trying to steal what they thought were copper pipes on top of the roof of her building. Although not big in stature she walked over after realizing she was witnessing a burglary in progress and kicked the ladder away admonishing the would be thieves as they jumped off the roof and fled. Once her adrenaline level had settled she said "thank you God, I was hoping to get a ladder for the center and had been praying that God would provide one." The Lord certainly works in mysterious ways.

What does it mean to be part of Polonia?

To be a part of Polonia is to belong to a community of strong faith, love and joy. From my earliest years, our family was blessed with the Polish spirit, heritage and culture. Polonia will be dear to my heart forever!

Do you have any favorite Dyngus memories or recollections?

Dyngus memory comes alive when I went to the Millenium Hotel to celebrate the festivities. My little niece was with me and I was so happy to share her first time ever to enjoy the Polish food, music and dancing.

What is your favorite Polish food?

My favorite Polish food is kielbasa and czarina. I do however make a great Polish barszcz for Easter!

What would you share with the youth of Polonia?

To the youth, I would say, love Polonia. It is a special heritage and treasure.

Pussy willows or water?

Pussy Willows





pussy willow power

the whole story from beginning to end

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 observance had been noted in traditional Polish neighborhoods dating back to the 1870s when the cities Polish colony began taking root, it was a low key observance back then. It was a chance for kids to play pranks by splashing each other or parents sprinkling their children with water to wake them the morning after Easter Sunday. Modern Dyngus Day in Buffalo had its beginnings much later with the Chopin Singing Society when they had their clubrooms on the East Side of Buffalo in the city's historic Polonia district. Judge Ann Mikoll and her late husband Theodore held a "Smigus Dinguś" themed party at the

Society's clubrooms on Kosciuszko Street in 1961. The idea was born after a trip to Poland where the Mikolls renewed their love of the colorful obscure customs of the Polish people. The event, originally meant to boost the declining membership of the society, soon became an annual event in Buffalo. Political and business leaders made their way to the Chopin's Clubrooms every year the day after Easter to begin the day with a ceremonial "swieconka" luncheon. Polka music was played throughout the building's meeting and bar rooms 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.

But as the neighborhood waned so did Dyngus activity in the city. Chopins left the Eastside

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

But by that time the younger members of Polonia were used to looking at other types of music and recreation. And Polka music was not part of what they were looking for. As the next generations of Poles became completely assimilated with modern American culture Polka music and old world style customs started to become obsolete and unhip. These were things your "Babcia" did. There was nothing cool about "Dyngus" back then.

That all changed in 2005 when the website DyngusDay.com was born. The following year 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 across the region, more people would show up to these parties and a younger demographic would be attracted to something that wasn't deemed hip by anyone under the age of fifty. The ultimate goal was to promote the unique ethnic, religious and cultural aspects of Polish culture throughout the world and the influence of Poles nationwide 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 making its way through the streets of Old Polonia.

As time went on, the number of parties in the Historic Polonia District expanded with more events and numerous family owned taverns getting in on the act again. In addition to the "old neighborhood" the suburban venues hosting sizable Dyngus Dances have more than doubled. As well as other city neighborhoods, like Buffalo's Black Rock and Kaisertown neighborhoods. There are now dozens of different festival sites that are officially part of what has turned into one of the most unique ethnic celebrations of its kind on the planet.

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 festivals in North America. Even when the government banned all public gatherings and would not allow us our parade because of Covid fears, 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 and may have angered some who thought that his uncontrollable laughter associated with the quirky customary rituals of the observance was insulting. However the resulting awareness and other national media coverage only fueled the growth of the celebration.

All this notoriety has born fruit. In addition to the growth of the festival, more people are now coming in by the busloads from places like Michigan, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, S. Ontario etc. It seems that Dyngus Day in Buffalo, NY has now turned into a tourist attraction. Who would've even thought that to be possible seventeen years ago? But as Buffalo continues to reconnect with its history, and more of us realize the potential draw of our areas cultural authenticity we now see the value of old world traditions.

The compelling stories about all the ethnic communities that settled

here, working the factories or railroads and raising families while striving to realize their American dream, appeal to a new generation and have revealed themselves to be powerful marketing tools for the city.

As a result of all these efforts, the neighborhood that was once home to this large Polish colony (and in fact the entire Polish American culture of WNY), has been experiencing a re-awakening of sorts. Many people now have a newfound appreciation of the areas potential. Additionally, because of the marketing efforts of dyngusday.com and their promotion of Polish culture throughout the years, an unprecedented swelling of Polish pride has taken place throughout the region.

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.

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