



PFDA NEWSLETTER FALL 2003

NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTED AT AUGUST 2003 PFDA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

During the PFDA membership meeting, held August 9th, 2003 in New York, a new board of directors was elected. Individuals elected to the board, including their board position and group affiliation, are as follows:

- President, Glenn Ramski (Syrena Polish Folk Dance Ensemble, Milwaukee, WI)
- Vice-President, Richard Jaminski (Wesoły Lud Polish Folk Dance Ensemble, Chicago, IL)
- Treasurer, Donna Skurski (Wawel Folk Ensemble, Detroit, MI)
- Secretary, Margaret Lorczyk (Polish American Folk Dance Company, Brooklyn, NY)
- Parliamentarian, Paul Lempitski (Krakowiak Polish Dancers, Boston, MA)

The current board wishes to thank and recognize past president Danny Dziadura, past secretary Michelle Kisluk and past Parliamentarian Stan Slopek for their work and commitment to the Polish Folk Dance Association of the Americas.

NOTES FROM GLENN

I know that shortly after the results of the board election in August some folks wondered what I might call my column. Some thought it might be something like "Brew City News" (because of Milwaukee's brewing heritage) or "Gossip From Glenn" (because it rolls off the tongue so easily). However, for the time being, I've decided to go with something a little less flashy.

A little background info for those who may not know me. Currently I serve as president of the Syrena Polish Folk Dance Ensemble of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, of which I've been a member since 1983. In 1984 I attended my first PFDA festival in Baltimore, hosted by Wschodnia Galicja. A year later I attended Łowiczanie's festival in San Francisco where I met my wife Diane, who was then a member of the Hejnał Polish American Dancers of Long Island. Since that time I've been able to participate in several other festivals. Like many of you, I've been able to develop great friendships with some wonderful people (my

wife being on the top of that list, of course!) from other Polish folk dance ensembles from throughout Canada and the United States. And like many of you I have some fantastic and often humorous memories of past festivals and concerts, all made possible by the Polish Folk Dance Association of the Americas.

The primary goal of the PFDA is the promotion and preservation of Polish folk culture in North America. However, on a more personal note the association also serves to create and strengthen ties of friendship and support between member ensembles.

Moving into the 21st century many of the member ensembles of the PFDA face some of the same problems now as they have since the association's beginnings over 20 years ago (fundraising, how to attract more male dancers, musicians, etc.). Some problems though, are relatively new. Like every other society Polish society continues to evolve in today's world and Poland is now poised to join the European Union. And while there have been many positive changes in Poland and its society over the past 14 years, the memory of our forefathers' traditions, customs, songs and dances grows fainter, as sometimes we have the resources to preserve them.

It's my goal over the next three years that the Polish Folk Dance Association of the Americas will become a stronger resource to members of the association. I'm hopeful that we'll be able to make it easier for groups to gain access to choreographers, music, songs, costumes and information and literature on Polish folk culture so that our members can continue and strengthen their efforts to promote and preserve Polish folk culture in their communities for years to come. -- Glenn

CONGRATULATIONS TO PAFDC

Congratulations and thanks go out to the Polish American Folk Dance Company of New York for hosting this year's festival held July 31st thru August 2nd (see following article). Special thanks and recognition go out to the festival committee especially John Niemczyk, Festival Chairperson, for their hard work which resulted in a fabulously organized and run festival that was enjoyed by the over 100 PFDA participants. Those groups that have organized past festivals realize the challenges that are involved in making such an event possible are many. However, the rewards are equally many, including stronger ties between participating groups and a renewed spirit to preserve Polish folk culture. DZIĘKUJEMY WAM PAFDC!

NEW YORK FESTIVAL A SUCCESS!

The 13th Festival of the Polish Folk Dance Association of the Americas was held in New York City July 31-August 2, 2003 and was hosted by the Polish American Folk Dance Company of Brooklyn, New York. Participants got to experience the sights and sounds of Manhattan and perform on a world-renowned stage.

After checking in at the dormitories of Columbia University, the extended weekend began with sightseeing including the World Trade Center site and downtown Manhattan, a boat cruise to Liberty and Ellis Islands, the Empire State Building and walks through SoHo, the South Street Seaport and Times Square. At night, festival participants enjoyed the Manhattan skyline at night aboard the yacht "Mystique" where they dined and danced until 1:00 am. Another night of Polish home cooking and dancing followed at Club Europa in the Polish neighborhood of Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

Over 100 PFDA members graced the stage at Alice Tully Hall at the world-renowned Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday evening, August 2nd in a Gala Concert of Polish Folk Dance celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the PFDA. Guests were greeted in the lobby to folk music played by the Polish American Folk Dance Company's Kapela Ludowa. The following groups participated along with the dances they performed:

Hejnał Polish American Folk Dancers of Long Island – Hempstead, New York (Wielkopolska, Lublin, Żywiec)

Krakowiak Polish Dancers of Boston – Boston, Massachusetts (Rzeszów)

Polish American Folk Dance Company – Brooklyn, New York (Opoczno, Kurpie, Tribute to Chopin)

Tatry Song & Dance Ensemble – Windsor, Ontario, Canada (Mazur from Straszny Dwór, Polka Warszawska)

Wawel Folk Ensemble – Detroit, Michigan (Rzeszów, Łowicz, Krakowiak)

Wesoły Lud Polish Folk Dance Ensemble of PRCUA– Chicago, Illinois (Eastern Kraków, Nowy Sącz, Opoczno)

They performed to a sold-out audience of 1,000 people! After a glorious 2-hour performance, the dancers received a standing ovation and congratulatory bouquets. A great time was had by all!

Videos of the Gala Concert are available for educational purposes on DVD and VHS for \$10. Please contact Mini Media at 917-478-7995. An order form is attached.

If your group would like to host the next Festival, please contact Glenn Ramski. It's a great way to promote Polish folk culture and make life-long friends.

CO NOWEGO U CIEBIE???

What's new with your group? Do you have an event coming up or is your group celebrating a milestone? Why keep it to yourself? Drop us a line and let us know - we'd like to hear from you. Simply send a brief description to Glenn at glennramski@yahoo.com and we'll include your group's happenings in the newsletter.

PLEASE UPDATE ROSTER INFO.

Please take time to make sure your group's contact information is current and updated in the roster attached to this newsletter. Doing so helps us to get PFDA newsletters and updates to you in a timely manner. Please e-mail corrections/updates to Margaret Lorczyk at MALORC@aol.com.

ARE YOUR DUES CURRENT?

Just a friendly reminder to send renewal dues for 2003 and 2004 to Donna Skurski, PFDA Treasurer at 31447 Merrily, Roseville, MI 48066 or email her at dntskur@aol.com.

LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD WEBMASTERS

The PFDA website is a great resource in accessing information on Polish folk culture and other ensembles within the association and throughout the world. However, it requires a bit of maintenance and updating from time to time. If you or someone within your group has experience in creating/updating websites and are interested in lending a hand on the association's website, please contact Glenn at glennramski@yahoo.com.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU???

The current board of directors is enthusiastic in making the PFDA a more valued resource to members of the association. However, before that can begin we need to hear from you. Specifically, we need input to the following questions:

- What could the PFDA do to help your group promote and preserve Polish folk culture?
- What areas would you like to receive help with or additional ideas on: visiting choreographers, music, stage presence or administrative ideas (i.e. member recruitment, fundraising, costume maintenance)

Please take some time to think about this and respond, as your input and ideas WILL determine what areas we will focus on first. **PLEASE E-MAIL YOUR IDEAS BY NOVEMBER 30TH, 2003 TO glennramski@yahoo.com.**