Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon,
PHC Chairman and President

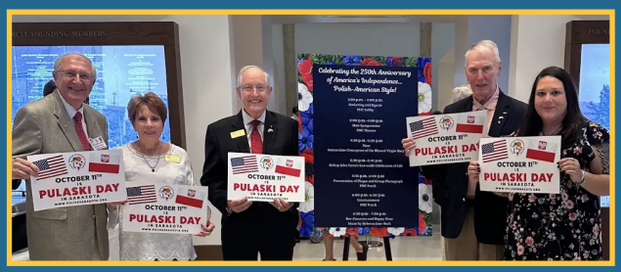
Polish Heritage Month for October 2026 began with our Oct. 3rd celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the United States, the 95th Birthday observance of Bishop Yanta, and the Fifth Anniversary of the opening of the Polish Heritage Center. The symposium took place in the Center theater and was live streamed for interested parties. Dr. Mark Pienkos of Sarasota, Florida spoke on Poland's contribution to the United States and its historical significance in helping America thrive for 250 years. Dr. Piotr Przybylski, Main Specialist in Scientific Documentation at the Road and Bridge Research Institute in Warsaw, Poland, gave a virtual presentation on the Polish Diaspora in Texas – Historical Settlements and Recent Activities. Beatrix Czerkawski, MA, Historian/Tour Guide for the Polish Museum of America in Chicago, spoke of Poland – The Texas of Europe – and why our Polish American Alliance matters. I was honored to share the legacy of Bishop John W. Yanta, founder of the Polish Heritage Center, and the impact his life has had on so many people and issues at the local, state, national and international levels. All of these presentations are available at our website, polishheritagecentertx.org.



The Mass in honor of Bishop Yanta was celebrated at the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church. Fr. Wieslaw Iwaniec and Debbie Labus Pawelek, organist and choir director, led hymns in both Polish and English. Fr. Wieslaw offered a prayer at Bishop Yanta's grave, and the participants were then entertained in front of the Center by the Wawel Dancers Grandmothers' group and Rebecca Jane, a talented and accomplished accordion player. Karnes County Judge Wade Hedtke also presented a plaque celebrating the event. The attendees then enjoyed a reception in the Center.

Many thanks to Alice and the PHC staff along with our docents and volunteers from the Panna Maria 4H club and all the sponsors of this event: Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey, Karnes County Bank 1901, Panna Maria Historical Society, Falls City National Bank, Dorothy Yanta & Family, HEB, Vivian Janysek and Vivian's Victorian Country, Hattie Amsler and the Hobson Store, Panna Maria Men's Club, and Marian Laskowski with Falls City Beaver & Beaverette Photography.

Polish Heritage Month wouldn't be complete without the Parish homecomings and festivals which showcase family recipes and quality food with the assistance of so many volunteers that make it a true homecoming. I am always amazed at the turnout and the number of volunteers who keep alive this wonderful part of our Polish Heritage.





Oct. 3 at the PHC









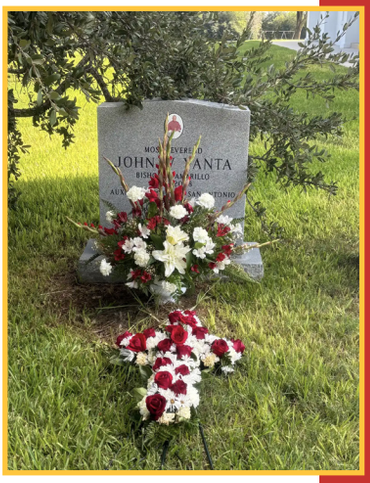
















250 Years of America: The Polish Contribution

By Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

A VIP reception was held at the Presidential Suite in Union Station in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, September 24, 2026. The event launched the official inauguration of the nationwide educational initiative of the Polish American Congress, 250 YEARS OF AMERICA: THE POLISH CONTRIBUTION.

Distinguished leaders from the United States and the Republic of Poland, members of Congress, members of the Diplomatic Corps, and representatives of the Polish American community gathered for an extraordinary celebration honoring remarkable contributions of Poles and Americans of Polish descent to the history, freedom and prosperity of the United States.

With great pride, a delegation of seven from Panna Maria, Corpus Christi and College Station represented Panna Maria, the oldest, permanent Polish settlement in the United States. Attendees were PHC Executive Director Alice Poore; Board members Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey, Susie Kotara and Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, who is also Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Texas; Lauren Robinson, Library/Archives Director of the PHC; Dr. Martha Respondek and Larry Haas. Delegates covered their own travel and lodging expenses to support this historical event.

A very special thank you to the following individuals who sponsored the tickets for the VIP Reception: Adrian and Cynthia Yanta, Lambert and Rosalee Titzman, Dr. Martha Respondek, Larry Haas, Susie Kotara and Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey. Their support made it possible for the Panna Maria delegation to participate in this historic national celebration.

***Visit our website to view the first installment in the new documentary series highlighting Polish contributions to the United States.









Adult Polish Cooking Class

JOIN IN ON THE FESTIVITIES AS WE MAKE
POLISH CHRISTMAS COOKIES!
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED.

Admission: $50 per person

Saturday, November 21, 2026
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Please RSVP by 4 p.m. on Friday, November 10, 2026
Email: christinag@polishheritagecentertx.org
Phone: 830-310-8612
FB messenger: Polish Heritage Center

Polish Heritage Center
13909 FM 81
Panna Maria, TX 78144

THE
POLISH HERITAGE CENTER
AT PANNA MARIA

13909 N FM 81
PO Box 25
Panna Maria, Texas 78144



PHC Hours: Tues. – Sat. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
www.polishheritagecentertx.org
(830) 310-8612

The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization.

TAX ID: #46-0561240

News from the Heritage Communities

