

Kopernik Memorial Association Newsletter

Member of Polish American Congress
American Council for Polish Culture
Kosciuszko Foundation
Oneida County History Center

The Kopernik Memorial Association is a 501c3 not for profit organization. Please consider a tax deductible donation to the Scholarship fund.

Website: cnykopernik.com

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Spring Newsletter 2024

Issue 36

Wesołego Alleluja



Zdzisław Jasiński Palm Sunday Mass 1891

„Chłopi: A Spectacular Adaptation

by Stas Kmiec

Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!” (“Praised be Jesus Christ!”) — these were the words that the readers of *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* magazine read on January 18, 1902, more than 122 years ago. It was the first installment of Władysław Stanisław Reymont’s *Chłopi*. Once compiled, the four-volume novel (*Jesień, Zima, Wiosna* and *Lato*), published between 1904-1909, would earn the author the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1924.

The well-known *starodawne* phrase is also the greeting of the beggar woman Agata to the Parish Vicar in the opening of the 1972 Polish television serial *Chłopi* (*The Peasants*). The approximately 11-hour, 13-part epic was watched with great interest by every household in Poland. (continued on page 3)

BULLETIN BOARD

Mon. May 13, 6:00 KMA Meeting PCC

Mon. June 10, 6:00 KMA Meeting PCC

SUMMER RECESS for July, August

Mon. Sept 9, 6:00 KMA Meeting PCC

Sun. Oct 20, 1-3 PM New Cultural Center Open House display *Polish Armed Forces in the Military Theater in WWII. Focusing on the battle of Monte Cassino, Italy and Falaise, France*

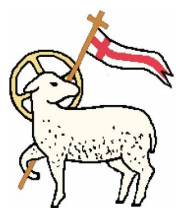
EASTER TRADITIONS

PALM SUNDAY WORKSHOP

MARCH 24, 2024



BUTTER LAMBS,
PALM WEAVING,
PISANKI



SUNDAY, MARCH 24 marked another successful Palm Sunday workshop for the Kopernik Association. The spacious gym at Holy Trinity school was again the site for this year's event which as always includes butter lamb making, Pisanki (Polish decorated Easter eggs), palm weaving, a variety of children's crafts and activities with lots of room for the kids to run in the other half of the gymnasium. Plenty of families were on hand, including many grandparents with their grandchildren



happily sharing these age-old traditions with the next generation. Thanks to Janice Lyszczarz and Carol Armitage who demonstrated the art of butter lamb making, Michelle Holbrook at the palm weaving table, Barb and Rafe Mickler presenting pisanki and Dawn Pellerin staffing the chil-

dren's craft table, Denise Tan for the hand created children's craft and to all of our additional volunteers including Ed Nowak, Rich Noga, Dan Jadowski, Stan Ossowski, Val Elacqua. Thank you Denise Tan for designing the lovely Adirondack chair and all who supported our raffle. The raffle will be on Sat May 25. We are grateful to Fr. John Mikalajunas and the good people of Holy Trinity for partnering with us in this important work of preserving and sharing our Polish heritage.



Adirondack Chair Raffle

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Red Wooden Adirondack Chair Raffle

The singular design of Polish Wycinanki makes this chair a the one of a kind conversation piece that highlights your heritage while bringing charm to your backyard! *DRAWING May 25th*

Thanks you for your support!

Chłopi: A Spectacular Adaptation continued from page 1

Director Jan Rybkowski decided to adapt this extraordinary book to the screen. He did not try to force his own interpretation of the Reymont work. Rather, he remained faithful to the content and character of the book.

IT IS THE STORY ABOUT the Boryna family and other inhabitants of the village of Lipce in Central Poland's Łowicz region at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries in all its colorful diversity, wealth and poverty. The Borynas are farmers, and their son is expected to follow in the family tradition. The already prickly relationship of the father and son is strained to the breaking point when both fall in love with the same woman.

In Lipce, people live piously, work hard, endure their fate humbly and deeply believe in divine justice. Both in the novel and in the film, the life of peasants is inextricably intertwined with the rhythm of nature and the liturgical rhythm – related to both the Catholic and the seasonal calendars. Covering 10 months, it begins at the end of September and ends at the end of July.

The story is played out against a richly detailed period backdrop. Authentic costumes and props from the era were used, belonging to the village inhabitants, many of whom appeared as extras.

In the 1970s attendance at cinemas was steadily dropping off. Television was developing rapidly, along with the production of films and serials – many were of a very high artistic standard giving young directors and cameramen a chance to make a debut on their own.

While shooting the footage, Rybkowski crafted a shorter version for cinemas utilizing a storyboard with a narrower perspective – focusing on the two most important characters, Maciej Boryna and Jagna Paczesiówna. The 2¾ hour theatrical film premiered in 1973.

The reason for the film was the fact that at that time most people had small black-and-white television sets, which would not allow them to experience visual impressions related to the colorful attire, the decoration of peasant huts, and shots showing nature or the uniqueness of the folklore scenes.

I INTENTLY WATCHED THE FILM version on DVD first ... wow! Then, I devoted myself to a marathon viewing of the lengthy series ... spectacular! It is a cinematic and cultural masterpiece, capturing this moment in time with such respect and authenticity! I can't recommend the full version enough.

All the stories, traditions, customs, rituals, work activity, gestures, proverbs, superstitions, and mindset that my parents and grandparents told me about and the pride they instilled in me are in this microworld of old Poland. The culture that I studied abroad and since, along with religious holidays and folk festivities are fully on display. *Chłopi* is a portrait of our family ancestors — those who remained on their native land and those who, as a result of social transformations in Poland, left the countryside.

The 13 episodes are titled: *Boryna*, *Jarmark (the Fair)*, *Zrękowiny (Handshake)*, *Wesele (Wedding)*, *Gody (Winter Solstice/ Mating)*, *Ogień (Fire)*, *Bór (the Forest)*, *Gospodynie (Women's Circle)*, *Wielkanoc (Easter)*, *Śmierć Boryny (Boryna's death)*, *Scheda (Inheritance)*, *Powroty (the Return)*, and *Zemsta (Revenge)*.



The basket-blessing scene from the *Wielkanoc (Easter)* episode. The series, adapted from Władysław Stanisław Reymont's masterpiece, is a portrait of our family ancestors — those who remained on their native land and those who, as a result of social transformations in Poland, left the country.

THE EPISODE "EASTER" is a real feast for the eyes. Original customs, palms, *pisanki* Easter eggs, decorations, and the contrast between the table setting at Boryna household and the wealthy landowning Dziędzic family. You won't find such beautiful and refined shots of Easter customs in any other Polish film.

The pussywillow palms are decorated with sprigs of boxwood (*bukszpan*), the typical Easter evergreen. In earlier scenes, Christmas and winter rituals are particularly shown in great detail.

Filming was conducted in the authentic, properly "aged" villages of Lipce, Pszczonów, and Strzelcew near Łowicz. In addition to professional and accomplished actors, residents of the towns appeared as extras. The older hosts were eager to support the film crew with advice, stories, costumes, and period props.

Jan Rybkowski admitted in one of the interviews that he wanted to recreate the reality

Chłopi: A Spectacular Adaptation continued from page 3

described by Reymont as faithfully as possible: “This is the last moment when it was possible to photograph the remains of folklore that is disappearing before our eyes.”

It is an enlightening education. As depicted, there are colloquial expressions, curses, angry responses, and proverbs that you would never learn in Polish school.

Costume designer Marta Kobierska’s goal was to be guided by the descriptions of clothing in Reymont’s novel. Some attire was constructed by the Artistic Handicraft Cooperative in Łowicz, but the vast majority were original costumes brought for the film crew by people living in the Lipce area.

The value of the film is greatly enhanced by the acting performances of Władysław Hańcza as Boryna and Emilia Krakowska as Jagna.

Krakowska brilliantly conveyed the role’s exuberant and lively temperament and is a luminous presence, even when silent. She showed Jagna as a character alienated and not understood by the community.

In the role of the patriarch of the family and village, Hańcza balances a mix of stoic pride, stubbornness, and fiery command. The scene of Boryna’s death is iconic — impressionistic, archetypal, and mystical.

Jagna’s overbearing, opinionated, and “holier-than-thou” mother Marcjanna “Dominikowa” Paczes is a force to be reckoned with. As portrayed by Jadwiga Chojnacka, she is a deliciously powerful villain. I have encountered such a woman at least twice in Polish circles and the interaction is not pleasant.

There is also no shortage of morally beautiful attitudes. Kuba takes care of young Witek, teaches him prayers, is honest, modest, hard-working, and humble. Tadeusz Fijewski, who played the supporting character built a moving, sometimes lyrical, sometimes almost terrifying character of the poor farmhand.

Hanka (sensitively and later forcefully portrayed by Krystyna Królówna) steadfastly defends her family, patiently fights for her husband’s love, takes care of her father-in-law, and is resourceful, hard-working, and faithful.

The film is complemented by Adam Sławiński’s soundtrack of atmospheric musical themes. This is supplemented by Church hymns, but it is the glorious folk music by Janusz Kaźmierczak and his folk *kapela*, the regional folk songs and *przyśpiewki* that gives the scenes a pulse and drive.

The stunning wedding sequence manages to capture each moment of ritual in a whirlwind of movement and color. Customs include the gathering procession to the church, bread and salt greeting, money plate, and the next day *poprawiny*, among others. With the traditional song “Oj chmielu, chmielu,” the solemn transition to married woman status, *Oczepiny* is beautifully depicted.

I was addicted and mesmerized by this serial adaptation; perhaps you will be as well.

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Article reprinted from The Polish American Journal with permission

Digitally processed DVD versions of both the series and film version are available. Be certain to order one that is playable on your country’s system.

The 13-part series (in the beige box) can be purchased for Region 0 and playable on newer Blu-ray and DVD systems. Available on eBay



The Kopernik Scholarship Committee is accepting applications for 2024
Please visit our website at cnykopernik.com for complete information. The following criteria will be observed:

1. Applicants must be at least 25% Polish in ancestry.
2. Students must have completed at least one full year of college by June 2024 and have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA.
3. Applicants must be full-time students.
4. Each recipient will be awarded \$1,000.00 at the annual Scholarship Awards event on October 12, 2024. Recipient must be present or forfeit the scholarship award – NO EXCEPTIONS.
5. Please submit one letter of recommendation from a college professor and a copy of all your official college transcripts including your Spring 2024 semester grades. **The application must be received by June 21, 2024.**
6. A point system of rating will be used. Winners will be notified by August 31, 2024.
7. Past recipients of the scholarship award are not eligible to apply a second time.

MEMBER FEEDBACK

The association received this lovely letter from Christina Maziarz Puleo after our 50th Anniversary Newsletter, We thought we'd share it with you! It reads:

To the Kopernik Association
Utica, NY

2/7/24

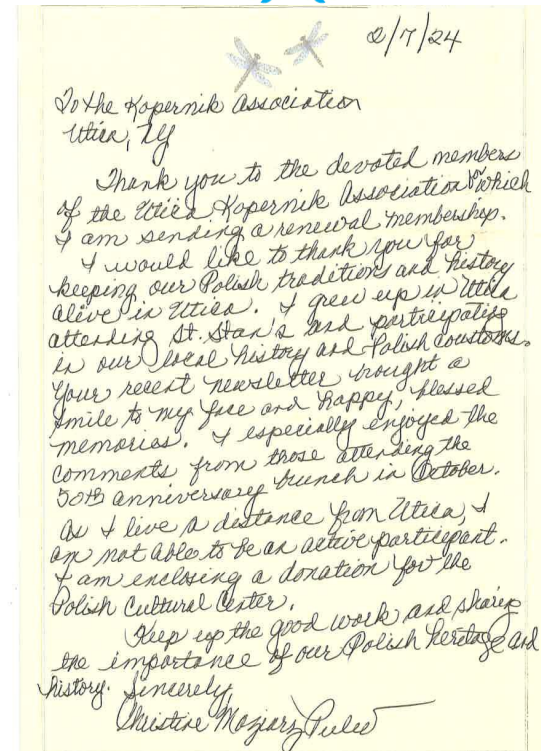
Thank you to the devoted members of the Utica Kopernik Association for which I am sending my renewal membership.

I would like to thank you for keeping our Polish traditions and history alive in Utica. I grew up in Utica attending St. Stan's and participating in our local history and Polish customs. Your recent newsletter brought a smile to my face and happy blessed memories. I especially enjoyed the comments from the 50th anniversary brunch in October.

As I live a distance from Utica. I am not able to be an active participant. I am enclosing a donation for the Polish Cultural Center.

Keep up the good work and sharing the importance of our Polish heritage and history.

Sincerely, Christine Maziarz Puleo



MEMBERSHIPS 2024

*indicates ACPC dues

Michelle Beagle John & Patricia Biernat *Helen Chomin * Mary Currie Irene Czuryla
*Fr. Paul Drobin *Valerie Elacqua Beth Evans Lorraine Fava * James Gemza Jane Godlewski
Richard Guzda Gerald Guzski Kimberly Hanna Helen and Michael Hayduk *Dennis & Sybil Johnson
Mark Kantor *Stephen Karbowski Joseph Kowalczyk Lawrence Kozlowski Charles Kupiec
*Edward & Krystyna Lambrych *Thomas & Ewa Lawrence * Mary Ann Lepkowski
*Theresa Mack *Robert Maziarz Sue Misiaszek Karen Neary *Richard Noga *Ed Nowak
John Ossowski *Bernard Peplinski Ginger Pieloch Camille Pryputniewicz *Christine Puleo
Ted & Joan Rajchel *Diana Raymond Ellie Selwach Pat Siuta *Gary Sroka
*Edward Starczewski Constance Vendetta * Kay Venitelli Dr. Theodore Wadas
Barbara Walerski James Wasielewski George Weaver Theresa Wojnas

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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Thanks for Renewing! 2024

ELECTION RESULTS

Officers Richard Noga -President
Gary Moszak- Vice-President
Valerie Elacqua –Treasurer
Dan Jadowski - Corresponding Secretary



THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT WITH
OUR FUNDRAISING!



Kopernik Association Membership Application



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Individual Membership..... Renewal New Member.....\$15.00 \$ _____

*Add American Council for Polish Culture Membership.....\$5.00 \$ _____

Student Membership.....\$5.00 \$ _____

I am interested in making a donation to: Polish Cultural Center \$ _____

Scholarship Fund \$ _____

Association's Operating Fund \$ _____

Association Year: January 1 - December 31, 2018 **Total:** \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: **Kopernik Association** Mail checks to: **P.O. Box 911 Utica, NY 13503**