

# BULLETIN OF THE

# POLONUS

PHILATELIC

SOCIETY



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## **POLONUS HOLDS 2<sup>nd</sup> NATIONAL MEETING & EXHIBITION AT ARIPEX 2004**

*By Hank Bieniecki*

Mark your calendar to reserve February 20-22, 2004 to attend and participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Meeting & Exhibition of the Polonus Philatelic Society (**EXHIBITION**) to be held during and in conjunction with the ARIPEX 2004 at the Mesa Centennial Center, 201 N. Center, Mesa, AZ. Mesa is a suburb of Phoenix. The Mesa Centennial Center is about 15 miles East of Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport.

**POLAND EXHIBITS:** Polonus members who plan to exhibit at ARIPEX 2004 are encouraged to submit their Exhibitors Official Entry Form as early as possible. You received a copy of the Exhibitor **Official Entry Form** in August 2003 mailing.

**NOTE:** Address for Exhibitor Official Entry Forms has been changed. Please mail original directly to:

Frederick P. Lawrence, PhD, FRPSL  
ARIPEX 2003 Exhibit Chairman  
658 W. Douglas Ave  
Gilbert, AZ 85233-3219

**MEETINGS:** At this EXHIBITION the society will conduct a national membership meeting and arrange a social gathering (dinner or finger food & drinks) so that our geographically dispersed membership may get to know each other. The society's activities will depend on the level participation of our membership at the EXHIBITION. We need your input as soon as possible so that we can do the planning that is necessary to make our first national EXHIBITION a success. **Included with this Bulletin will be a form to complete and return before 15 January 2004 which indicates if you plan to attend the EXHIBITION and participate in the following types of society activities:**

# POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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Dr. Conrad Straub

*POW and DP Camps*  
Chris Kulpinski and Roman Sobus

*Aero - Philately*  
Dr. Jerzy Kupiec and Dr. Jerzy Walocha

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1. Attend National Membership Meeting to discuss the future of Polonus
2. Attend Polonus social gathering
3. Give a presentation regarding Polish Philately
4. Participate in an open forum at which members can ask and answer questions about Polish philately.

***It is important that every member complete and return this form so that we will also know who will not be attending the EXHIBITION. Completing and returning this form will require only a couple of minutes and 37 cents in postage. Your cooperation will be of great value to the society members who must plan the EXHIBITION activities.***

**ARIPEX 2004 DEALERS BOURSE:** 50+ dealers from all over the world are expected to participate in ARIPEX 2004 and will offer a wide variety of material. Bieniecki Int'l, Inc. will have a Poland Specialized table at the show. Additional information on sources of Polish philatelic material will be published in Bulletin #515:

**HOTEL ACCOMODATIONS:** The official ARIPEX hotel is the Sheraton Phoenix East (Mesa Sheraton) 201 N. Centennial, Mesa, AZ. It is located adjacent to the Centennial Center. The Sheraton Phoenix East is a first class hotel with plentiful FREE Parking. ARIPEX rates are \$115 for double occupancy. For reservations please contact the hotel directly at (800-456-6372) or 480-898-8300. **Be sure to mention ARIPEX 2004 to receive this discount rate.**

There are numerous other hotels in this area that offer a wide variety of rates. Later in this article you will find information on alternative hotels and activities available in the Mesa/Phoenix area.

## **REQUEST FOR EXHIBITION COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS**

**Attend the National Exhibition of the Polonus Philatelic Society and volunteer to serve on the EXHIBITION Committee.** Most committee work will be done by, email, phone and fax. Chris Kulpinski and other members from the Phoenix area will handle the majority of the on site pre-exhibition work. You can contact Chris via email at [ctk85255@yahoo.com](mailto:ctk85255@yahoo.com) or call him at (480) 585-7114.

Some volunteers may be asked to arrive in Phoenix one day prior to the EXHIBITION. Volunteers please contact Chris before 15 January.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PHOENIX & MESA AREA**

*By Chris Kulpinski*

Next year's POLONUS gathering will head west for a change of venue. Nothing could be finer than to be in Arizona in February, while the cold winds howl in the Midwest. Temperatures here are usually in the low 70's, with no rain, snow or sleet. When the sun goes down, temperatures drop and it might get as cold as the high 40 degrees by 4 am.

For those in the west, it will be a quick hop to Phoenix and a perfect time to hobnob with fellow Polish collectors from the East. For those in the East who have never been here, come and find out why Phoenix just passed Philadelphia as being the 5<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country.

To help you plan your trip, we will have a full lineup of things to do, places to shop and an alternative place to stay. The full information will be available at the POLONUS table, however, here is immediate info you need to plan your trip.

I did a quick inspection and the best alternative to the host hotel (Sheraton), will be the Best Western Mezona Inn, (1-800-528-8299) just a few blocks away. A king size bed there is only \$70.00, and that is at the height of the season. We will block out a number of rooms to guarantee availability.

In addition, we can arrange a day tour to the Grand Canyon, a ½ day tour on the mysterious Apache Trail or any number of other trips. A custom trip could also be arranged – shopping, local sight seeing, etc. The company I propose has custom vans with bucket seats and seats only 10 people for maximum comfort. That is an important consideration for long trips. The backs of the seats recline so that you can nap on the way home. If you have access to a computer, check out their web site – [www.detoursaz.com](http://www.detoursaz.com). We would want to co-ordinate any trips so that we could have the vans for ourselves.

The Fiesta Mall, is a short cab ride away, as is the Casino Arizona, on the Salt River Reservation. There are several historical museums in

the area, as well antique shopping and an outlet mall. More detailed information is available at [www.mesacvb.com](http://www.mesacvb.com).

Phoenix itself has an Art Museum, the world famous Heard Museum which is dedicated to the southwestern Indian cultures, a wonderful Science Center and an Arizona History Museum. There are multi-million dollar homes to see, the Biltmore Hotel with its Old World charm, and wonderful vistas from which to view the Valley of the Sun. Spring training will be starting and you might be able to catch a pre-season game for less than \$10.00! Phoenix information is available at [www.phoenixcvb.com](http://www.phoenixcvb.com).

Old Scottsdale is home to numerous galleries and trading posts that sell Navajo, Hopi and Zuni jewelry, rugs and pottery. It is also the home of the Sugar Bowl, a 50's ice cream parlor made famous by Bill Keane and his cartoon Family Circus. Scottsdale info is found at [www.scottsdalecvb.com](http://www.scottsdalecvb.com).

Tempe is a college town, home of the Arizona State Devils. A walk down Mill Street in the evening is almost like strolling along in New Orleans. A lot of little shops and a lot of people. A great place to grab a latte and watch the crowds. There is also Town Lake. It is a 2 mile man made lake in what once was the Salt River. There is a story to be told about what happen here! Tempe info can be found at [www.tempecvb.com](http://www.tempecvb.com).

If you want to play golf, this is the place. Just bring your clubs and we will make the arrangements once you get here.

Food – you can get a Philly Steak Sandwich or a Chicago Hot Dog and the pizza is good, but locals like the Mexican food. And no – it is not hot, but you can make it hot by adding salsa. Forget Taco Bell and try our local burritos, fajitas, tacos, enchiladas or carne asada. Your tummy will thank you!

All the towns mentioned above are within short distance of each other, though not walking distance. To really get around, you might want to rent a car at the airport and stay a few extra days. There is so much to do and see and best of all, it is easy to get around the area.

All this information will be available at our club table.

If you have specific questions contact me at [ctk85255@yahoo.com](mailto:ctk85255@yahoo.com), or call me at 480-585-7114.

## **BUYING AND SELLING ON eBAY**

*By Chris Kulpinski*

Lately I've been selling some stamps on eBay and I have found it to be a very interesting and rewarding experience. Through trial and error, I found out what works and what doesn't; where to set starting prices and how to deal with people who "buy" the item and then forget to send payment.

I am no different than any of you. I want to pay the minimum for what I buy, but get the highest price for what I sell. eBay gives you 24 hour access to a world market for buying or selling. That, however, does not mean that eBay is a perfect market and that the selling price will equal the true value of the item you are selling. Sales on eBay usually last between 3 and 5 days. Unfortunately the buyer who would pay you the most or a fair price may not be searching eBay during that particular period. When the sale period is over, the highest bidder is obliged to pay and you are obliged to ship after receiving payment. The high amount may be more or less than you expected, but the deal has been struck. If you would have put up the same item at some future date, you might have attracted more bids and therefore a higher price. But then again maybe, there would have been no bidders.

An advantage to dealing on eBay is the fact that you can see the item you are bidding on and every transaction is instantaneous. You can see minimum prices change and you can try to bid or raise your bid just before the lot closes. This has become common practice among bidders and to do this effectively usually requires a high speed cable connection.

I have sold over 85% of the items that I have put up for sale. I put them up for sale because I considered these items "excess" and I am happy to get 40 to 50% of catalogue. Most items sold, many for less than I was hoping to have received, but many items sold for higher prices.

Let me give you an example. Recently I sold 3 Hawaiian covers. I acquired them many years ago, thinking I might one day collect Hawaii. The catalogue value for the 3 covers was \$55.00. I priced them at 25% of catalogue, but I sold the 3 for slightly over \$100.00. Not bad. From all my experiences, I think this may have been an aberration and this brings me to the point that the highest price may not develop when your items are for sale. Most sales bring 1 to 3 bids. These covers

brought an average of 7 bids apiece. There was feverish activity during the last few minutes of the auction and that drove up the price. Obviously, these items were in demand and brought well over catalogue prices. Buyers were looking just as I was selling.

I want you to be aware of this because I have put up items for sale and did not receive one bid. I re-listed them again a week or so later and got 1 or more bids and, of course sold the stamps.

The items I sell are of no particular interest to dealers, and most of the collectors I know already have them. However, somewhere, there is someone who needs that item. In addition to the USA, I have shipped stamps and covers to Poland, Canada, Germany, England, Australia, Brazil, Pakistan, Spain, Israel, and of all places, Japan. The market is now world wide as opposed to the local stamp bourse or collectors meeting. These older venues, however, remain an important area where collectors can intermingle and exchange information and ideas.

Buying and selling on eBay is time consuming and it can become addictive. It is easy to get caught up in the frenzy of bidding. To me, most of the fun of collecting is in trying to find the item. Talk to dealers, go to shows, watch auction catalogues and mingle with collectors. eBay adds another dimension to the chase. Sit down at the computer late one night when you can't sleep and check out 10 to 15 pages of offerings of Polish stamps and covers. You can buy collections, individual stamps, mint sets, entire years of issues, back of the book items and covers. You also can spend 30 minutes checking out the offerings, only to find there is nothing you want. Next week you try again and there might be 5 items that interest you.

The "buyer beware" flag is, of course, always waving. Some of the better items may be advertised as "signed", but it is critical to know who they were signed by and if the seller offers a guarantee if the item is not genuine as expertization marks have been forged and some are meaningless. Better items sold "as is" usually bring low prices because of the risk to the buyer. On the other hand, it might be worth a 100 time more if it were genuine. Do you want to gamble? The item is not returnable if it is sold "as is". When buying this type of material, it is always preferable to know your dealer. Most of these items were forged within months of production of the genuine stamps. Therefore stamps in old collections offer the buyer virtually no assurance that the material is genuine.

There are times when items are misidentified. The starting price is set low, but knowledgeable buyers may quickly drive up the price. That is

## ABC's

were the frenzy of the chase takes over and you tell yourself that you must have that piece and you raise your bid. That is neither good nor bad; it is a big part of the fun of the chase. On the other hand, you may be the only one who has bothered to look and realize that the item is misidentified, place a bid and get a bargain at the low starting bid price.

eBay is fun and you may acquire some bargains. However eBay does not offer the added advantages of working with a knowledgeable and reliable dealer. Dealers have developed extensive networks of contacts plus they are frequently contacted by people wishing to sell their collections. If you provide your dealer with a list of what you are looking for, if he does not have it in stock, he will search for it and let you know when it is available. If the items you need requires expertizing, the dealer will typically make sure it is checked and signed before he purchases it or sells it to you. Typically he will guarantee that item for an indefinite period.

In the end, eBay, or any of the other auction sites, should just be another avenue to help you enjoy your hobby. If you have any questions about buying or selling on the internet, please feel free to contact me and as you travel along the pages of eBay. My user ID is [traveltourguide](#) and my email is [ctk85255@yahoo.com](mailto:ctk85255@yahoo.com).



The Polonus Philatelic Society is a Not-for-Profit Organization which was incorporated in 1939 in the State of Illinois. Its objective is to promote Polish philately via the dissemination of Polish philatelic information in English. The opinions expressed by authors of articles appearing in the Polonus Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

Members receive the Polonus Philatelic Bulletin quarterly, have full access to [www.polonus.org](http://www.polonus.org) and participate in the events and activities of the society. Annual dues are payable in US funds before the end of March of each calendar year. Membership categories are as follows:

**Regular Member:** \$25.00 payable in US funds

**Retired Member:** (retirees with restricted incomes) \$15.00

**Junior Members:** (under age 16) \$10.00

*\* continued on page 11*

## PHILATELIC WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

*By Erv Mrotek*

This is a new feature that will review Internet websites that my fellow Polonus members may find of value. Polonus does not endorse, receive support from, or provide support to, any of these Websites (with the exception of the very first one presented). Philately is very personal and the hope is that each of you will find some of the sites interesting and that they will enrich your philatelic experience.

One note before we start. Websites come and go, especially lesser-known sites, which often are developed and maintained by individual collectors like you and me. In preparing this article, I checked some interesting sites I haven't visited for a while and found that a few were out of service. So, be aware that a site listed here could be gone by the time you visit it. If that happens, I apologize, but please be assured that I do personally visit all sites at the time I write this feature.

Please email your ideas, thoughts, criticisms, and suggestions to me at [erv@mrotek.com](mailto:erv@mrotek.com).

**Polonus Philatelic Society Web Site:** <http://www.polonus.org/>

It would be a sacrilege to not present the website of the organization that started it all. The official Polonus website is currently a static website that provides information about our Society for non-members, an Index to the first 400 Bulletins and a very informative section on the 1919 Krakow Overprint issues prepared by Dr. Michael Melnichak.

Due to technical problems some features of the site expected to be available in August 2003 will not be available until January 2004. Members will then be able to gain access to the restricted Members Area. The first addition to be activated for members is a Question & Answer function. Members will be able to post questions regarding any aspect of Polish philately and their fellow members will be able to read and respond to those questions. This will be the first step in facilitating communication between our dispersed membership.

To gain access to the Member's area you will need a User Name and Password which will have to be registered. To register your User Name and Password write or email Hank Bieniecki at [biistamp@charter.net](mailto:biistamp@charter.net).

## WEBSITES

It's free, so there's no reason to procrastinate. Do it now!

**eBay Auctions:** <http://www.ebay.com>

Of course, I have to include the most popular website with philatelists, eBay. If you go to this site and scan the left-hand column, you will see the "Stamps" category. Click on it to see the wealth of items available to bid on. You can develop your own searches and save them in a section you define as "My eBay", which you will have to setup before you can bid.

Since I collect mainly POW Camp material, one of my favorite searches is: "(oflag, gross\*, neubran\*, murnau, woldenb\*)". Notice that you can use "wildcards" which, in this case, is the asterisk (\*). This tells the search to list anything that starts with the letters shown up to the asterisk, no matter which letters follow. So, "woldenb\*", for instance, would list items from "woldenberg", "woldenburg", or even "woldenbratwurst" if there was such a thing. Using wildcards allows you to find great items when the seller has misspelled the name. For instance, if I am searching for all Poland items, I use either "pol\*" or "pola\*". "pol\*" will pickup items listed for "poland", "polish", "polska", etc. Of course, it also picks up "polar", "polynesia", "polio" and other unrelated items of that sort. "pola\*" would not return "polar", but would also not return "polish" or "polska", so it's a tradeoff. Here's a hint, you can tell the search to "give me everything that starts with xyz\* except these items" by entering a search that looks like this: "pol\* -(polar,polynes\*)" (note the minus sign in front of the left parenthesis). If the title contains the words in the parenthesis, they will not be included in the returned list of items. Wildcards can be included in the exclude list too. In this case, I saw that Polynesia was spelled several different ways, so I excluded all of them by using a wildcard. Separate multiple words with commas.

**Polish Post:** <http://www.poczta-polska.pl/>

This is the Polish Post Office's official website. Although written in Polish, some material is presented in both Polish and English. It's a great place to see new issues.

**Fischer:** <http://www.fischer.pl/>

This is the Fischer catalog site. It is in Polish. Click on the right side of the introductory screen to get to the collector's section. If you

scroll down, on the right side there are some links to websites that may or may not be of value. I did not look at all of them. Personally, I did not find this site to be of much value to me, but it is the Fischer site so I wanted to include it.

**Poland Stamp Encyclopedia:** [http://www.home.zonnet.nl/ben\\_nieborg/](http://www.home.zonnet.nl/ben_nieborg/)

This is a Poland Stamp Encyclopedia. As the introduction states: "Stamp Encyclopedia Poland aims to provide online background information for the English speaking world about Polish history and culture displayed on Polish postage stamps." It is written and maintained by an individual in The Netherlands. Be sure to check out the "Want Lists" section too.

Unfortunately, for me, it contains dozens, and maybe hundreds, of links to other sites, many of which I may be writing about here in the future. But that is the nature of the Internet. One good link often leads to another. The chain is virtually endless.

**Translation Site:** <http://www.poltran.com/pl.php4>

This last site is an English-to-Polish and Polish-to-English translating system. It is not very good, but is a great idea. It is mainly a sales pitch for the company's products, but I have used it occasionally to figure out a word or phrase (unfortunately, I do not speak Polish). If anyone knows of a better site, please email me.



*\* continued from page 8*

**Charge Card Payments:** Members that pay their annual dues using a charge card will be assessed an additional \$4 banking fee.

New members will receive all the "Bulletins" for the year in which they join. All memberships are based on the calendar year.

(1) Dues, (2) Article for publication, (3) Changes of address, (4) Inquiries regarding and Applications for memberships, (5) General matters or complaints pertaining to the Society should all be sent to:

**Polonus Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 2, Maryville, IL 62062**

## **OBITUARY**

**Roman J. Burkiewicz**

*By Dr. S. T. Wlodek*

Born 1925 in Tarnow, Poland, Roman J. Burkiewicz passed away September 11<sup>th</sup> 2003, while undergoing hospice care in Evergreen Colorado. He was a prominent and respected stamp dealer, specializing in the philately of Poland and Eastern Europe. He is survived by his wife Anna, son Henry, of Prospect IL, and four grandchildren.

Roman Burkiewicz started his philatelic career as a youngster in Poland in the 1940's. During the Second World War he was a member of the Polish Underground Army, Armia Krajowa, escaping to Italy in 1944, where he joined the Polish Army in Exile under General Anders. After WWII he relocated to Wembly England and later to London. He and his wife migrated to the United States in the early 1950's, settling first in Granite City, where he joined Joseph Bieniecki at the specialized Poland philatelic firm, Bieniecki Int'l, Inc.

Next Roman and his family moved to Chicago. There he established a series of philatelic dealerships that specialized in the stamps and postal history of Eastern Europe, moving, as his business grew, to three ever larger store locations in the City of Chicago. In the early 1970's, he established Great Lakes Philatelic Auctions, expanding his philatelic scope to include the United States and other Worldwide philatelia.

Roman and his family moved to Breckenridge Colorado in the early 1980's, where he continued his original business of dealing in Eastern European material using the RJB Mail Sales business name. He was a member of many local, national, and international philatelic organizations, including the American Stamp Dealers Association and the American Philatelic Society. When he lived in Chicago he was an active member of Polonus and will be long remembered by his many Polonus friends.