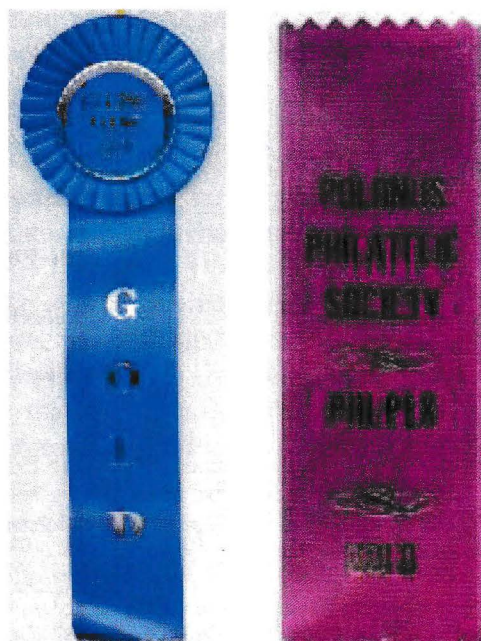




BULLETIN OF THE **POLONUS** PHILATELIC SOCIETY

532

FALL, 2008



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The Polonus Philatelic Society is a Not-For-Profit Organization incorporated in 1939 in the State of Illinois. The Society is organized exclusively for educational purposes with the objective of promoting Polish philately through the dissemination of information in the English language. The opinions expressed by authors of articles appearing in the Polonus Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

Membership: Members receive quarterly Polonus Bulletin, have complete access to the Society website (www.polonus.org), and participate in the services and activities offered by the Society. The two membership categories are: **Regular Member - \$25.00** and **Junior Member (under the age of 16) - \$10.00.**

Dues are payable in US funds no later than the end of March of each calendar year. New members will receive all the Bulletins for the year in which they join. Memberships are based upon a calendar year.

Dues and Changes of Address to be sent to: Polonus Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 489, Maryville, IL 62062. **Articles for publication** to be sent to the Editor.

Membership queries to be sent to the Membership Chairman.

General Society matters and complaints to be sent to the President. (see addresses above)

Bulletin Advertising:

- **Member to Member Ads** – Members have the opportunity to post ads to fellow members **free of charge**. Limit of 500 characters, defined as a letter, space or punctuation mark. Member's name and address are not included in this limitation.
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 - Half page copy ready ads:** \$50.00 per insertion
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Send ad copy to Editor and make check payable to Polonus Philatelic Society.

ABC's of Exhibiting

Chris Kulpinski

Over the past year, members who have never exhibited before have taken the plunge and gotten their feet wet. They were surprised and delighted with the results, and they will be exhibiting again.

Member **Gerard Menge**, has suggested that it might be of interest to others, both exhibitors and non-exhibitor, to see the mandatory synopses and title pages of award winning exhibits. As a matter of information for non-exhibitors, when an exhibitor sends in an application to exhibit, he/she must accompany the exhibit application with a synopsis page and a title page relating to the exhibit.

The synopsis page is only for the edification of the Judges. It is not seen by the public. In many cases, Judges do not know as much about your material as you do, so the page is to give them an idea of your exhibit, because they have to be prepared to judge what they are looking at. There are no hard and fast rules on the content of this page, but it is intended to be a free-standing document, explaining the exhibit and its material in a concise and comprehensive fashion; provide a basis for the appreciation of the challenge or difficulty involved in its creation and calling attention to the outstanding items and original research. In other words, it allows you to blow your own horn.

The title page, which is the first page of the exhibit, lays out the scope and objective of the exhibit. This is where the exhibit is described and story line defined as well as explaining the sequence and order of the exhibit. Its purpose is to let the viewer know what to expect.

Over the next several issues, we will be sharing these pages so that old and new exhibitors can see what others have done. In this issue, we will share the synopses and title pages of two collectors, **Roy Koczarski** and **Roman Sobus**, who have received Gold's for basically the same material – **Woldenberg POW Camp**. The only thing that these two exhibits have in common is the material; however, the synopsis and title pages and presentation differ. We are showing both so all may see that there are no hard and fast rules to getting high awards. The presented material is in its original format.

For a more detailed examination – from types of exhibits to being a judge, get the *Manual of Philatelic Judging* from the APS; www.stamps.org

Our next meeting is in Sarasota, Florida – Feb 6/8, 2009. This is an American Philatelic Society World Series Show, which means that the Grand Award winner will be invited to participate in the World Series of Philately. We are seeking some new exhibitors, so if you would like to get your feet wet, please visit www.sarasotastampclub.com to download an application.

Also, just to let you know, the Society is planning to set up a group of mentors that will help members learn how to get started in exhibiting. Look for more information in a forthcoming Bulletin.

Meanwhile, future shows will be held at -

2009 – SNSE – Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition (Sarasota) in early February

2010 – WESTPEX (San Francisco) in May

2011 – Philadelphia, Pa in September

2112 – Toronto - October

We invite you to participate – as an exhibitor and an attendee.

From the Woldenberg Exhibit of **Roy Koczarski**
This exhibit has won Gold awards at
WESTPEX 2007 - San Francisco and at the APS Show - Portland in 2007

Synopsis Page

CAMP POST IN WOLDENBERG OFLAG

PURPOSE OF THE EXHIBIT

THIS EXHIBIT COVERS THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF THE INTERNAL MAIL IN THE
POLISH P.O.W. OFFICER CAMP (OFLAG) IIC DURING WORLD WAR II – 1942 TO 1945.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Among the estimated 3 million P.O.W.'s in camps of the German Army, the Polish officer prisoners, numbering about 20 thousand, spent the longest time in captivity (67 months). At first (1939-40), they were dispersed in 28 camps, but later they were concentrated in five big camps. The camps were densely covered with barracks and divided in zones of restricted areas controlled by the Germans.

CAMP ACTIVITIES

The Senior Polish Officers of the camps, realizing the need of some activities to keep the men occupied, utilizing the high level of intellectual men, undertook some activities which organized the camp living. The social life developed intensively, particularly in areas of cultural life, like different courses, exhibitions, spectacles, libraries with reading rooms, and clubs developing the activities of literary societies, choirs, orchestras and sporting events.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The need for a means of communication became essential. In four of these camps, with the direction of German commands and with the reservation that the stamp designs were subject to their approval, prisoners postal commissions were formed in order to create an internal postal service to inform the prisoners of the different activities as well as notices of medical and dental appointments and possibility of sending personal messages and holiday greeting cards. This exhibit shows material from:

OFLAG IIC – WOLDENBERG

PRODUCTION OF PHILATELIC ITEMS

Most stamps were produced by carving wood dies which were used to print singly the number of stamps required. Initially the methods were crude, e.g., using a pointed nail to etch into wood taken from a kitchen stool. The papers ranged from lavatory rolls to margins cut from German newspapers and printer inks were made from artists' oil paints, until the Swedish YMCA and Red Cross adopted the camp posts by supplying proper paper, engraving tools and printing inks.

EXHIBIT PLAN

The exhibit is organized chronological in order of issuance of stamps, postcards and souvenir blocks. Also the attempt is made to group the material in following order:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| A. <i>Stamps, souvenir blocks, forgeries,</i> | E. <i>Illustrated postcards</i> |
| <i>Essays and color proofs</i> | F. <i>Semi postal labels</i> |
| B. <i>Pre-stamped postcards</i> | H. <i>Non postal issues</i> |
| C. <i>Standard and special event cancellations</i> | J. <i>Postal history</i> |
| D. <i>Internal mail - examples of usage</i> | |

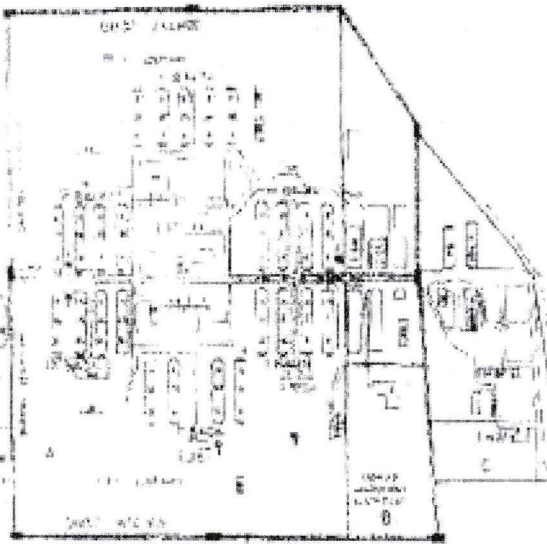
Major items are distinguished by RED colored mat.

TITLE PAGE

OFLAG IIC - WOLDENBERG

LOCATION AND SIZE OF CAMP

Offizierlager (Oflag) IIC was located near the town of Dobiegniew, not far from the Baltic Sea, in what is now Northwestern Poland (see map at right which also shows the location of the other three oflags). Woldenberg was the largest of the four Oflags and covered 65 acres. The Oflag was formed on May 21, 1940 with 5,985 Polish officers and contained 25 barracks (see layout below). Each barrack was divided into two sections with central lavatory. There were separate barracks for canteen, libraries, theatre, chapel and other similar facilities. Outside the barracks area was the main bath, detention center and infirmaries. Guards escorted prisoners entering these areas.



Beyond the main camp were storehouses and living quarters for guards and camp commanders. It was truly a small township vibrant with social, cultural and professional life.

WIDOW AND ORPHAN FUND

On March 18, 1942, the Fund made a written request to the Eldest of the Camp for permission to organize a specific mail service before the Easter Holidays. The big success of this enterprise (about 8,000 pieces of mail and complete sell-out of the first issue of stamps in few days), gave the organizers the idea to organize an internal mail service.

BIRTH OF INTERNAL CAMP POST

On April 7, 1942 the organizers made a request to the Eldest of the camp for permission to start a regular internal camp mail. Upon approval of the request, a Postal Commission was established which took charge in organizing the Camp Post, setting denominations of stamps, establishing rules and regulations and firm up distribution of internal mail. The postal service was officially started on May 7, 1942.

A complete set of Protocols (240 page document) supplied meticulously detailed information about every aspect of stamp production at Woldenberg. The scarcity of printing materials was offset by large group of talented designers, engravers and devoted group in stamp production.

From the Woldenberg exhibit of **Roman Sobus**.

This exhibit won Gold Awards at St. Louis and CHICAGOPEX, both in 2007.

Synopsis Page

Internal Camp Post at Offizierlager IIC, Woldenberg, Between 1942-1945

The purpose of this exhibit is to illustrate the progress of the internal post at Offizierlager (Oflag) IIC from its inception on April 5, 1942, to its final days in January, 1945, with a postscript on the evacuation march,

It is a unique event in postal history, where prisoners of war, overcame the restrictions imposed on them by their captors and fences of barbed wire. Maintaining relationships both old and new, became virtually impossible.

The internal post, which carried out all the duties of any post helped make life more bearable under the most difficult circumstances.

Functions included:

Setting postal rates.

Selling stamps.

Provided drop off points for outgoing mail.

Delivering mail at various levels of speed.

There has been some debate in philatelic circles as to whether the stamps produced at the camp are postage stamps or merely labels. The same arguments could then be made to the local posts of various cities. While not accepted outside the borders of the camp, the post performed as any local post. Postage was paid, the item was sent, and the article was delivered with utmost efficiency. It would have functioned in the same way if the distance had been fifty kilometers instead of fifty meters. Officers that had served as postmasters in civilian life assured that all protocols were observed.

The Internal post functioned with full approval of the German authorities which exercised final right of approval of topic and design.

This exhibit covers

Regular stamps

Postage due stamps

Post cards

Regular and occasional cancellers

Projects, proofs, essays, both accepted and those not approved by the German Authorities.

Items of a subversive nature (labels)

Illustrated Stationery Items

Reference materials used in compiling this exhibit are:

The Polish Prisoner of War Camp Posts by "Autolycus"

Caldra House Limited Press, 1994 (English)

Katalog der Lagerpost um 1945, Manfred G. Heber, 1983 (German)

Katalog Specjalizowany Znakow Ziem Polskich, Ruch-Warsaw 1985, vol.2 (Polish)

Poczty Polskie w Niemieckich Obozach Jencow, Jozef Machowski,

Ruch, 1963, vol.2 (Polish)

Katalog Znaczkow Poczty Obozowej w Dobiegniewie (Woldenberg IIC)

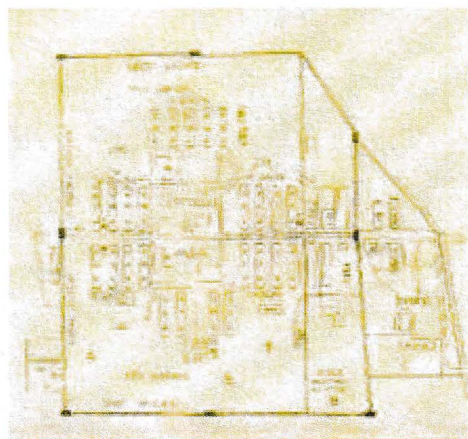
Pionier- Krakow, 1945 (Polish)

Polish Post – Seven Years War, HM Smith, USA, 1945 (English)

Internal Camp Post Between 1942-1945 At Offizierlager IIC- Woldenberg

A short, but most interesting chapter in postal history occurred in German Prisoner of War Officer Camps, housing some twenty thousand Polish Officers captured during the campaign of 1939. The largest of these camps, was Offizierlager IIC, commonly referred to as Oflag IIC. Situated near the town of Dobiegniew, in what is now northwestern Poland, near the Baltic Sea, the camp housed nearly 7000 Polish officers and up to 600 soldiers of lesser rank. The camp, covered an area of about 65 acres, upon which were built 25 barracks to house the prisoners, each divided into two sections, (a and b), divided by a small lavatory. In addition, the camp had separate buildings for use as a canteen, chapel, libraries, and other multi-use structures. This area was divided into several sections, with access between them restricted.

Outside the main compound, but within the boundaries of the camp, was the main bath, the detention facility, and two buildings serving as infirmaries. General access to this area was generally only under guarded escort. Outside this area were storehouses, living quarters for the guards and commander of the camp. Living quarters were assigned on a first come basis, more accommodating when the camp was first opened in May of 1940, less so when more prisoners were transferred from other camps.



Life in isolation, away from loved ones and family, back home, friendship was one of the saving virtues of military life. More often than not, even these, became severed, because of assignment to barracks in different sectors of the compound.

A request was placed, with the senior officer of the camp, in March of 1942, to permit a mail service for Easter of that year. On March 18, a formal request was made to the German Authorities, and permission was granted for a one time mailing over the weekend of April 5-6. Stamps were prepared, and the initial printing of some 8000 pieces sold out, prompting the camp Postal commission to request that the post become a regular service available to the prisoners. The commission received authorization to initiate service beginning on May 7, 1942, under the supervision of the camp's German Authorities.

The postal service remained in effect, until the camp was "liberated" by Soviet troops, on January 25, 1945. During that period More than 750,000 pieces of postal items, including: 43 stamps, 5 souvenir sheets, 6 pre-stamped postcards, 4 regular cancels, 23 occasional cancels, and countless illustrated cards of a free enterprise nature. Most amazing is the fact, that the topics depicted in these items, are most often of a strong cultural or religious nature, depicting events or persons from Poland's history, and its battles for independence, a fact seemingly lost on the prisoners' captors.

General Lucjan Zeligowski and the Republic of Central Lithuania.

By Ray Pietruszka

Central Europe at the end of World War I saw the rise of great military leaders. Generals who had a love of their country, a vision of the future and the iron will to implement their vision. Lucjan Zeligowski was such a man (**Figure 1**). He considered himself a Pole and a native of Lithuania. At that time, this was not a contradiction as the Poles and Lithuanians had lived together since the 16th Century and the establishment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He was a friend of Józef Piłsudski, a fellow Pole from Lithuania and shared Piłsudski's vision of a reunited Polish-Lithuanian Republic. In October 1920, he led his 1st Lithuanian-Byelorussian Infantry Division into the territory of middle Lithuania to establish a Polish-dominated republic to be called Central Lithuania.



Fig.1 General Lucian Zeligowski

To understand why he did this, one must first understand the complex nature of central Europe at this time. The region from central Poland through Byelorussia and the Ukraine had been part of the Russian Empire since the 18th century until the end of WWI. In 1920, it was a region with several nationalities fighting to recapture their national identity and become free nations.

The problem was that over vast areas, these different populations were hopelessly mixed together; Middle Lithuania was one of these areas. This region was inhabited by Lithuanians, and Byelorussians in the rural areas and Poles, Russians and Jews in the cities. In fact the Poles were the majority in most of the urban areas at this time.

The Lithuanian nationalists had incorporated the middle Lithuanian area into their new nation, ignoring that the Poles were in fact the majority and not the Lithuanians. This did not sit well with the new Polish Republic or with its leader, Marshall Piłsudski. The Poles desired to reunite all Poles under the White Eagle and to reestablish the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with Poland as the senior partner. Much to the Pole's surprise this was something the Lithuanians had no interest in doing.

General Zeligowski, with the blessing of Marshall Piłsudski, came up with a simple way of solving the problem. He announced that he was resigning from the Polish Army and returning home. There were just two small problems. First, his home was outside of Vilnius in middle Lithuania and secondly, he brought his entire division home with him. The Lithuanian Army was no match for a Pole division that had just defeated the Red Army so they wisely evacuated the area as the 1st Lithuanian-Byelorussian division liberated the territory.

The removal of the Lithuanian government and army permitted the leaders of the Polish population to establish a provincial government. Their hope was to join with Poland and Lithuania in a new commonwealth as was reflected in their first issue of stamps, which showed the historical arms of both Poland and Lithuania. An armistice between Lithuania and Central Lithuania was signed in November 1920, permitting the government to establish postal operations throughout the territory. This government operated effectively as an independent government for 18 months until elections were held for a parliament in January, which promptly voted for union with the Polish Republic on 24th of March, 1922.

During this brief period, the government operated a postal service and issued stamps.

These stamps commemorated the historic tie with Poland, its national landmarks and its liberator General Zeligowski and his division. For the Poles of Central Lithuania, General Zeligowski was their hero, the native son who came home and freed them. It must be remembered that most Poles were nationalists and wanted to be part of the Polish nation. Of the 60-odd stamps issued, three of them pictured the General. All of these stamps were issued both imperforate and perforated 11.5.



Fig. 3

this issue was created by etching the cross and surcharge value onto the die of the 1921 Pictorial 10 Mark stamp.

The 1st commemorative issue, the 1921 Pictorial set was issued on 2nd January 1921. The top value of the set, a 10 Mark brown and yellow stamp, pictured-a half length view of the General in full uniform.

This stamp could be used to pay the domestic specially delivery fee or the international letter rate and international registration fee, all of which were 10 Marks until 14 July 1921.

The second issue (**Fig. 3**) was the White Cross Surcharge of 1 May 1921

This was a semi-postal issue (**Fig 4**) to help collect funds for the Red Cross. It is interesting because it appears that the die for



Fig. 4



Fig 5.

The 3rd stamp featuring the General was the high value of the Anniversary of Central Lithuania issue in November 1921

This stamp, valued at 150 Marks, shows the head of General Zeligowski, without a hat, in brown and olive. This stamp did not have a corresponding postal rate, but appears to have been valued in anticipation of a postal increase that did not come about.

Printer's waste in the form of errors is common with this country as the Polish Post Office sold a large amount of it after Central Lithuania was incorporated in the Republic. **Figure 5** shows an example of the 150 Mark stamps with a doubled frame.

General Zeligowski withdrew his Army just before parliamentary elections in January 1922. After the incorporation of Central Lithuania into Poland, General Zeligowski continued to serve in the Polish Army, rising to the rank of three star general. In 1935 he left the Army and become a member of the Polish parliament. During WWII he served as a member of the Government in Exile. He died in London on 9 July 1947. His remains were returned to Poland and he was buried in Warsaw.

References:

Central Lithuania: Specialized Stamp Catalogue, by A.G. Pacholczyk, Stochastic Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1990.

Lucjan Zeligowski; Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2006.

Republic of Central Lithuania, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2006.

Camp Miranda de Ebro, Spain

Chris Kulpinski

The Spanish Civil War was a major conflict in Spain that started after an attempted *coup d'état* committed by parts of the army against the government of the Second Spanish Republic. The Civil War, which began July 17, 1936 and ended on April 1, 1939 with the victory of the rebels and the founding of a dictatorship led by the Nationalist General Francisco Franco.

Although Spain remained formally neutral throughout World War II, it remained ideologically aligned with the Nazis in Germany and the Fascists in Italy. Spain was anti-communist.

The supporters of the Republic, or Republicans, gained the support of the Soviet Union, while the followers of the Rebellion, *nacionales* (nationalists), received the support of the major European Axis powers of Italy and Germany and neighboring Portugal.

Supporters of the Republic, mostly communists, arrived in Spain and formed International Brigades, primarily for ease of communication, because of the various languages of the volunteers.

Records are not conclusive, but indicate that between 3,000 and 5,400 Poles fought in the Spanish Civil War. Most of them were communist sympathizers from countries outside of Spain. The only people from Poland were about 900 striking miners from Silesia. The other Poles came from various other countries in Europe.

The International Brigades that were formed by the various nationals often named their battalions and brigades after national heroes.

Jarosław Radwan Dąbrowski-Żądło, a 19th century Polish general was an obvious choice for the Poles. General Dąbrowski was involved in the January Uprising, a plot against Tsar Alexander II. Throughout the Spanish Civil War, the name Dąbrowski was used as the unit designation for units with a Polish connection or component. These include the Dąbrowski Battalion, the XIII International Brigade (also known as the 13th Dąbrowski Brigade) and the 150th International Brigade. Even today, in Poland, Polish veterans of the Spanish Civil War are known as the "Dąbrowszczacy".

With the defeat of the Republic various camps were established, including the Miranda de Ebro concentration camp, which was closed in 1947 and which was used to hold combatants from the International Brigades awaiting repatriation and, later, refugees fleeing from Nazi occupation, including Poles fleeing France.

The camp was located in the town of Miranda on the Ebro River, in the province of Burgos, Spain. In June, 1940, after the capitulation of France, Poles, attempting to cross the Pyrenees and trying to make their way to Portugal were captured and sent to the camp where they became part of an international mix of British, Belgian, Canadian, French soldiers as well as internees from the Spanish civil war.

Within the concentration camp discipline was strict and severe penalties were imposed for even minor infractions. The prisoners were allowed to correspond in their native language both within and outside of Spain. The Franco government did not recognize the internees as prisoners of war (POWs) and considered them as ordinary prisoners. As a result, the POWs had to purchase stamps from the camp canteen to use on any correspondence sent from the camp.

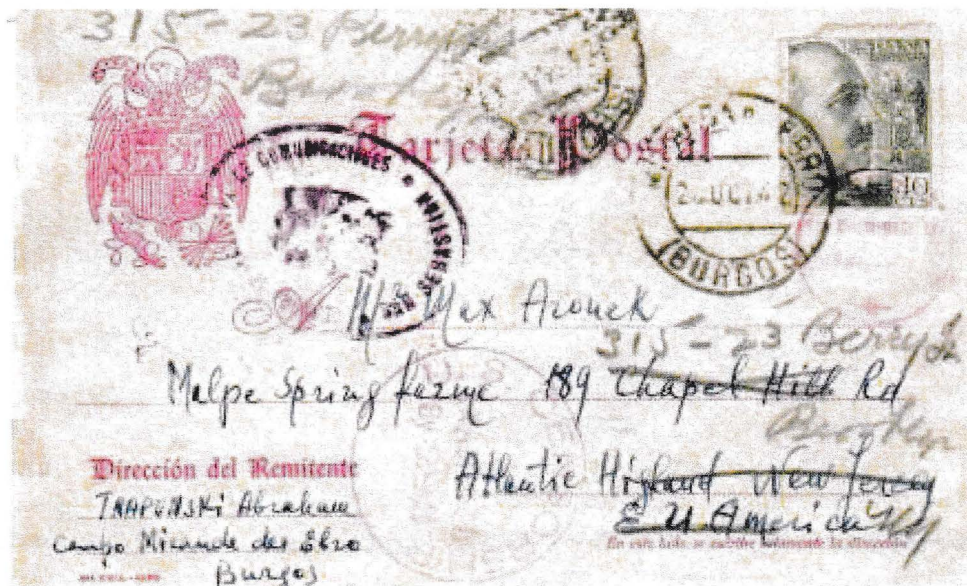
Censorship markings are found from San Sebastian, Barcelona and Madrid. These locations are coastal cities and therefore gateways to areas outside of Europe.

CENSURA GUBERNATIVA
BARCELONA

Typical Spanish
Censor markings

CENSURA GUBERNATIVA
San Sebastian

Any correspondence from the camp at Miranda de Elbro is rare. The only indication that the cover was mailed from the camp is the return address. There were no censorship activities at the camp itself.



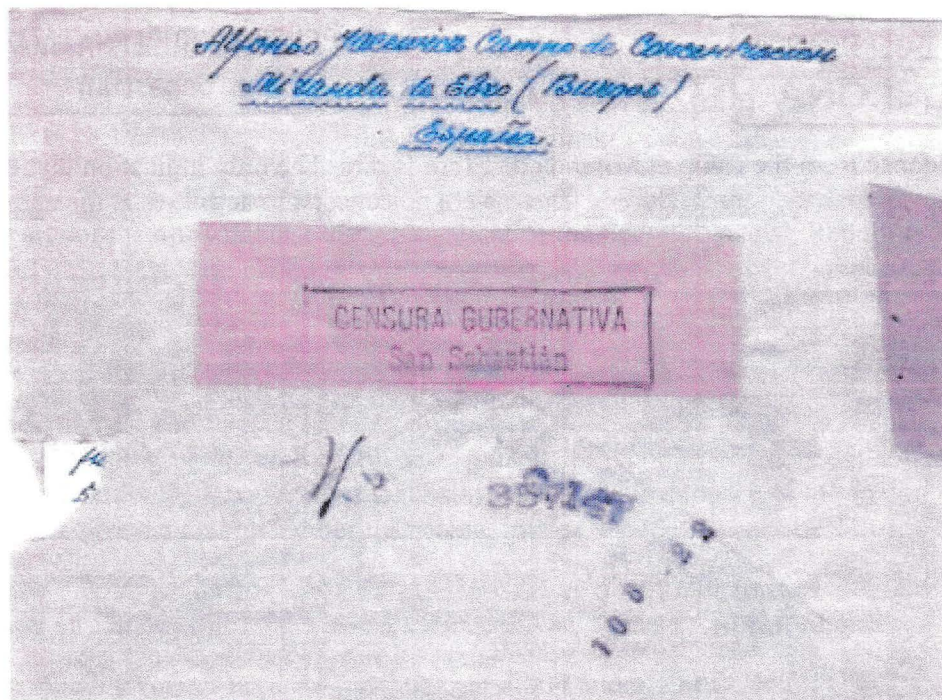
Although the date in the Miranda de Ebro cancellation is not clear, the card was written on October 18, 1942. Its destination is Atlantic Highland, NJ. There is a Highland, NJ machine cancel on the reverse. From New Jersey, the card was forwarded to Brooklyn, NY

The card shows an oval San Sebastian censor cachet, a town on the northern shores of Spain, next to the French border, as well as two US censor marks. The Spanish censor cachet reads *Censura Gubernativa de Comunicaciones *San Sebastian**



Scan courtesy of Jan Niebrzydowski

Postcard mailed to Helena Lübke in Switzerland. There is no apparent reason why the card was diverted to Madrid, since San Sebastian was the route into Europe.



Scan courtesy of Jan Niebrzydowski

Most mail from the camp were postcards. Envelopes were censored and sealed with a tape and stamped with the same device used on postcards.

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- Danielski, J., *Prisoners of War Held in Spanish Camps during the Second World War*, Filatelista, Number.13(472), 1975.
- Kaminski, A., *Correspondence from Miranda De Ebro Concentration Camp*, Filatelista, Number 3(917), 1999.
- Piekut, A., Z., *Reasons for Correspondence From Prisoners of War in Spain*, Filatelista, Number 10(888), 1996.
- Piekut, J., Z., *Additional information on Miranda De Ebro*, Filatelista, Number 6(920), 1999.

Camp Miranda de Erbo (Spain) and Camp Gurs (France)

As a follow-up to the article written in No. 527 issue of the Bulletin on Polish internees in France, I have found more information about the camps in France. There is a connection between Mirando de Ebro and the camps in France, Camp Gurs being the largest.

After Franco's victory over the Spanish Republic on April 1, 1939, many pro-Republic combatants, together with their relatives and other people who feared Franco's repression, fled to France. The French government built various camps to give shelter to these refugees. The most important camp was the one at Gurs, built adjacent to the city of Gurs, in the region of Aquitaine in the department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

At the start of the World War II, the French government interned Germans and citizens of other Axis Powers, as well as French nationals who were considered to have dangerous political ideas or who were imprisoned for ordinary crimes.

After the Vichy government signed an armistice with the Nazis in 1940, Gurs became a concentration camp for Jews of any nationality except French, as well as people considered dangerous by the government. Among these were "undesirables", which included citizens of countries who were in the orbit of the Reich, like Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and Poland. Poles, fleeing France after the French capitulation, were interned in these camps.

Polish Royal Post founded by Tuscan Merchant

Robert Lana

Reprinted from Linn's Stamp News, January 13, 1992

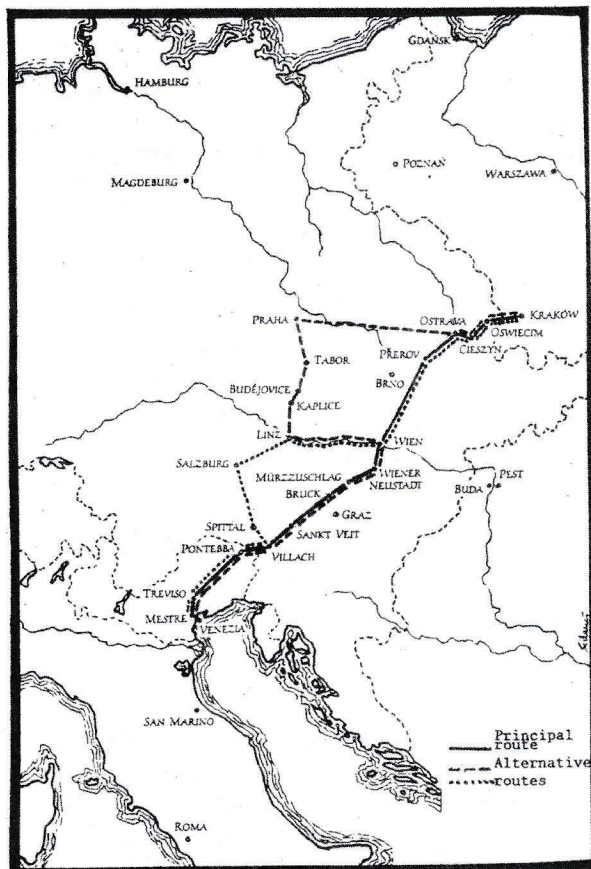
I have always been interested in postal history, and in my casual reading of philatelic literature in the Italian area, I occasionally come across an unlikely bit of information. Such is the case with the Italian involvement during the 16th century with the Polish royal post

Tuscan merchant Sebastiano Montelupi, who was called Montelupich by the Poles, immigrated to Poland in 1536. He settled in Kraków, where many of his compatriots had gone as merchants and businessmen.

This Italian business immigration to Kraków was undoubtedly a result of the queen of Poland being of Italian origin. Duchess Bona Sforza of Milan married King Sigismund II (the elder) in 1518. She encouraged the experienced merchants of Tuscan renaissance cities to come to her adopted land to stimulate the Polish economy.

Montelupi soon succeeded in becoming one of the most successful entrepreneurs among the international colony of Germans, Flemish, Walloons, Spanish, Hungarians, English and Scotch who made up the Kraków business community.

Since Poland was and is a very Catholic country, another reason for staying in close touch with Italy, besides the commercial one, was the frequent communication between the Polish government and church officials in Rome.



This double need inspired King Sigismund August, Queen Bona's, son, to enlist Sebastiano Montelupi, as Kraków's leading businessman of Italian origin, to organize the royal Polish post to Italy in 1557. It was the first organized international post in Poland.

Actually, a Piedmontese, Prospero Provano, initially organized and ran the post, but the most successful, long term development of the service was completed by Montelupi. He was appointed administrator of the Polish royal post in 1568.

The seat of the royal post was at Kraków, then the capital of Poland. It linked Wilno in Lithuania and Vienna and Venice in the south.

Each Sunday, couriers were to leave Kraków with the post and arrive in Venice within 10 days. The same expectations were in effect with the mail that left Venice, also on Sunday.

The principal and alternative routes used by the couriers during the 16th century, are shown on the map

Each postal courier was furnished with an emblem of the royal post, which incorporated the king's coat of

arms, a dispatch bag, a post horn and other sundry equipment.

The king, the chancellor, the under chancellor and the first secretary were exempt from postal charges. All others had to pay a fee of 3 groschen per half-ounce for mail from Kraków to Vienna, and another

3g for mail from Vienna to Venice. A half-ounce was the equivalent of 12.6 grams.

The post, although subjected to occasional delays, took one month, worked well. Ordinary correspondence, depending on quantity and weight, was placed in sacks or packages and loaded onto saddlebags of horses. Urgent or express mail was sent by a rider who changed horses at each stop and could be aided by a local carrier as well. The news of the death of King Stefan Batory was carried to Italy in such a manner.

In addition to the transport of mail and packages; money also could be sent through the Polish postal service.

The usual system was for a courier with the money to travel alongside the postal courier, who was guaranteed safe passage across international borders. He also acted as a bodyguard for money carrier and would defend not only the money, but the carrier as well.

How fast was this renaissance, or rather just post-renaissance, mail? A letter from Florence to Kraków took one month, rarely more. The fastest delivery time recorded between these two cities was 21 days. From Rome to Vienna, delivery time was from 14 to 32 days. From Prague to Rome, it was 33 to 49 days.

The Polish royal post operated under extremely difficult conditions. Torrential rains in spring and autumn, muddy and snow-clogged winter roads, and frequently broken wagons, all mitigated against the swift and regular delivery of the mails. And yet, the mail was delivered regularly and in a reasonable amount of time, if we remember it was the 16th century.

Groszy Overprints

James Mazepa



these are easily found in dealer's boxes.

On October 28th, 1950, the Polish government devalued the current zloty with the "new" zloty at the rate of one hundred old zlotys equal one new zloty. The deadline for conversion was November 6th. But the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs was unable to produce stamps in the new values in such a short time, so it was decided to overprint existing stamps with "GROSZY."

These overprinted stamps were in use from November 6, 1950, to April 30, 1952. During this eighteen-month period there were twenty-six different government approved *GROSZY* overprints, and even today most of

However, many towns either did not receive a hand stamp, or they wore out and had to be replaced. The postmasters took it upon themselves to make their own hand stamps. It is these local *GROSZY* overprints that are the key to a collection of the overprints. Twenty-two different local overprints are recorded. The most difficult are from Skolimów, a small village not on the map, Tomaszów, and the rarest is from Łoniów. Only one cover is recorded from Łoniów. This cover with a block of four was recently found in a lot of *GROSZY* covers and does prove that even today, rarities can still be discovered. The 2008 Fisher catalog lists for the first time all the recorded *GROSZY* overprints.



POW Study Group

Woldenberg Copernicus Issues

Roman Sobus

The year 1943 marked the 400th anniversary of the death of Nicolas Copernicus. He is considered one of the greatest astronomers of all time and one of Poland's most prominent citizens. His most famous work, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Celestium*, published in 1543, the year of his death, forever changed the perception of the known universe by showing that the earth and planets were in orbit around the sun instead of all celestial objects orbiting the earth.

Copernicus' life in Poland took him to places such as Torun, Krakow, Gdansk, Olsztyn, Malbork, and Frombork, places that were significant in the history of both Poland and Germany. Therefore it is understandable that when the POW's at Woldenberg proposed a series of three stamps to mark the anniversary, permission of the German authorities to issue stamps honoring the astronomer, consent was quickly granted. The stamps entered circulation on May 10, 1943.

Dies for the issue were designed and engraved in pear wood by Lt. Eugeniusz Pichell. All three stamps were printed individually using a primitive hand press on coarse white paper donated by the Swedish YMCA.



Fig. 1

The first stamp (Fig 1), with a value of 5 fennig, depicted the statue of Copernicus in the courtyard of the Collegium Maius of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. A total of 7680 stamps were printed ranging in shades from red to carmine-bronze.

The second stamp, (Fig. 2), with a denomination of 10f, illustrates a statue of the astronomer, this one in Warszawa, against a starry night sky with the constellations of the zodiac. A Total of 5590 were printed in dark blue.



Fig. 2

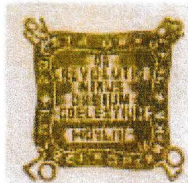
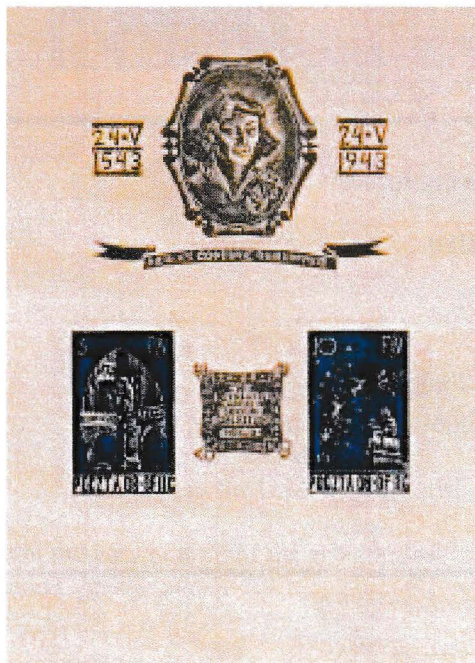


Fig. 3

The third and final stamp of the series (Fig 3), a denomination of 20f, is a representation of the title page of the work *De Revolutionibus Orbium*. 4200 of these small square stamps were printed in shades of olive.



◀◀◀ Fig. 4

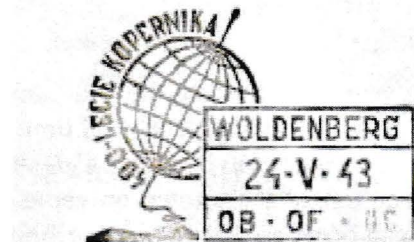
On May 24, the three individual stamps were used to create a souvenir sheet (Fig. 4) utilizing the original dies in changed colors, the 5f and 10f in blue and the 20f in dark olive.

The sheet was topped with a title plus a portrait of Copernicus with the dates 24-V-1543 and 24-V-1943 flanking it left and right, respectively. At the bottom a banner with the inscription "Nicolaus Copernicus Thorunesis," all in the olive color of the 20f, stamp was added. A total of 3147 were printed, with each sheet requiring separate impression from each of the multiple dies.

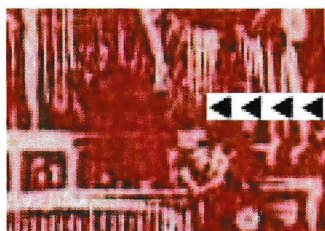
A special cancel was also prepared for the occasion (**Fig. 5**).



It depicted a stylized globe with the inscription “400 Years Copernicus” hugging its left edge. The cancel was designed by Lt. Pichell and engraved by B. Buczynski. It featured a fixed date of May 24, 1943.



Two interesting errors appear in the series. The first (**Fig. 6**), on the 5f value, is rather scarce, with only about eighty pieces known to exist. A small square artifact adhered to the die creating an imprint on the railing of the balcony just to the left of statue, and is known as “a rug on the balcony”.



Enlarged section of Fig. 6 showing error.



The second, on the 10f value, is quite a bit more common, and is the result of wear of the die (**Fig. 7**). The left part of the foot of the numeral “1” became separated and curved upward creating what appears as a crescent moon in the starry sky.

Fig. 6

Enlarged section of Fig. 7 showing error



Fig. 7 ▶▶▶



Due to its theme, this POW issue is in high demand from a wide spectrum of topical collectors. The entire series was withdrawn from circulation on December 31, 1943.

Articles and Manuscripts

We are looking for articles on the following topics:

- Plebiscites – Eastern and Upper Silesia, Marienweder, Olsztyn
- Errors and Oddities
- General Government
- Locals and Provisionals
- Any thematic issue – how about something on Pilsudski or Paderewski
- Flight mail – Glider, Rocket, Helicopter, Balloon, etc
- Provisional cancellations
- Your favorite interest

This is your Bulletin. Please contribute

LABELS AND CINDERELLA STUDY GROUP

Slania Engraved Millennium Label

Chris Kulpinski

I'm sure that we have all seen the green Polish Millennium stamp shown below and if you're like me, you wonder who produced it and where. Recently I came across this stamp in its entirety; that is in the sheet format in which it was printed. Studying the item, I saw that it was engraved by the famous Polish engraver, Czeslaw Slania. I didn't know, and I wonder how many of you know, that Mr. Slania engraved a label. Most interesting is the story printed, in Polish, at the bottom of the sheet, which reads



"The stamp commemorating 1000 years of Polish Christianity shows the baroque Royal Castle from the 16th century, the Column of Zygmunt, found in Warsaw, the 15th century gothic monastery of Jasna Góra at Częstochowa – the symbol of both the nation and the church – and the early gothic town hall of Wrocław, the birthplace of home rule. To the left of these architectural monuments are three medals, the crests of Poland, the Blessed Mother of Ostrobramska in Wilno (Vilnius today) and the city crest of Lwów.

Issued by the Polish Veterans Association of the United States, according to the design by Dana Jarry in France and executed by Czeslaw Slania from Switzerland. 1964."

The legend at the bottom reads:

Stamp commemorating a thousand years of Poland's Christianity and statehood.

Issued in the USA by the Polish Veteran S.P.K.

On the very bottom of the selvedge are the names of Dana Jarry and Czesław Slania



SOCIETY NEWS

Message from the President

Bob Ogrodnik

With the close of the Beijing Olympics and summer sprinting for the finish line, we are all probably anxious to get back to our philatelic activities. I hope the summer has been enjoyable to all and, in spite of the seasonal diversions of vacation, baseball and backyard BBQ's, you were still able to enhance your collections with some timely acquisitions.

The countdown to **Sarasota 2009** continues and as of this writing, there are **159 days left** until we meet at the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition (SNSE). I encourage our membership to seriously consider attending and exhibiting. Here are some of the reasons to attend:

- Meet with dealers specializing in Polish material
- See unique material in exhibits usually reserved for International Exhibitions
- Enter with your exhibit -sixty frames have been reserved for POLONUS members
- Attend POLONUS' annual meeting
- Visit the POLONUS library
- Network with POLONUS members and participate in informative meetings
- Attend a poolside reception at the home of our Chairman, Dr. Mazepa
- Escape one of the coldest winters on record (so much for global warming)

Our next bulletin will include a **Sarasota 2009 Attendance Form** requesting notification of plans to attend and exhibit. This will allow us to prepare nametags and information packets, as well as, have a count on the numbers of members for event planning. Please look for this in the next bulletin. In the interim, a prospectus and entry form may be obtained from website, www.sarasotastampclub.com, or request via e-mail from Dr. James Mazepa at jmazepa@comcast.net. Please make your plans early, as the show is very popular and frames sell out quickly.

We continue to make progress at POLONUS but I hasten to add, we have plenty of work ahead to meet our list of objectives. One of these objectives is to produce a **Membership Directory**, a summary of members, addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and collecting interests. In the membership survey of 2005, members responded favorably towards making available a **Membership Directory**. This information, available **only** to POLONUS members, would allow for a greater degree of interaction between members regarding mutual collecting interests, another value added for membership in POLONUS. With your cooperation we can have the **Membership Directory** ready for distribution at **Sarasota 2009**. Within the next 60 days, we will mail a **Database Validation Form** to the POLONUS membership requesting each member to review, to correct, to complete, or to simply validate the data that we currently have in our master database. Look for the mailing of this **Database Validation Form** under separate cover. I want to stress that none of the master database will be sold to third parties and the directory will be available for POLONUS members only. Let me hear from you if you have any questions, comments, complaints, and suggestions – call (314) 821-6130 or e-mail kprsl@earthlink.net.

Terry Kurzinski

I buy old stamps and Mail

P.O. Box 5845
Rockford, IL 61125
H 815-332-3264
C 815-262-9017 TKURZINSKI2002@YAHOO.COM

POLONUS Medal Display Stand

Bob Ogrodnik

We are pleased to inform our membership that POLONUS medals awarded to all multi-frame and one-frame exhibitors of Poland or Polish related material will include a handsome walnut display stand with plate on which will be engraved the exhibitor's name, the grade of the medal (i.e., gold, silver or bronze), and the name of the Philatelic Exhibition at which the medal was awarded. This practice was initiated with the awards made at CHICAGOPEX 2007. Pictured below is a POLONUS Gold awarded to **Chris Kulpinski** for his multi-frame exhibit.



POLONUS is one of the few philatelic organizations to present actual medals, as compared to the more common ribbons, for such exhibition awards. The medals were produced in Poland in limited edition to commemorate various events in Polish history. They are collectors' items in their own right. We thank our Chicago Chapter, and member, **Fred Szebel** for their help in acquiring a supply of these medals.

These stands have been forwarded to all winners that participated and won at CHICAGOPEX 2007 and at ROMPEX 2008 in Denver.

Be sure to get yours at our next gathering in Sarasota, FL.

Announcing the First Semi-Annual Przedbórz Website Awards

For Improvements to www.prz.ginsburgs.org

Sam Ginsburg

When I first discovered the 18 local delivery stamps of Przedbórz, I became fascinated by the variety of genuine stamps and forgeries, and in late 2007, published the www.prz.ginsburgs.org website, devoted to a) helping buyers, sellers, and collectors figure out whether a Przedbórz stamp was genuine or forged, and b) listing anything else I could find out about the town or its stamps.

While the project has been tremendously educational and entertaining, I have not received as many suggestions, corrections, or information as I had expected. I have received a lot of help, but I'm still eager for more info.

In an effort to encourage more suggestions, I have instituted the **Semi-Annual Przedbórz Website Awards**.

The awards are in two categories, and \$50 has been donated to Polonus in honor of each winner:

1. The "Suggestion Box" (AKA "Constructive Criticism") award for suggesting improvements to the site **appearance and usability**. Nominees may suggest more in-depth discussion of some aspect of Przedbórz philately or history, or improvements in navigation, graphics, appearance, etc.
2. The "Content" award for, providing translations, scans, links, leads, permissions, or answering questions to information related to the **content** of the site.

Many people made contributions over the first few months the site has been public, and they are all listed as award nominees below. (My apologies to anyone whose name is omitted due to my mental lapses.)

Suggestion Box Award - There were three nominees in this category: Chris Kulpinski, Edo Amin, and the winner, Hank Bieniecki, who among other things, pushed for more coverage of Przedbórz issues or sets, with a clearer introduction to the Identifier section, and an explanation of Issues 6-8.

Content Award - Listed in alphabetical order are the nominees: Ron Barany, Paolo Berentzen, Helmut Blaschczyk, Adam (Zbigniew) Chojczak, Tomas Frank, Michael Lenke, Joseph Matlak, Marek Misztal, Detlef Pfieffer, Roman Sobus, Fried Wittman, Jerry Zedlitz, and the winner, Hank Bieniecki, who provided 46 scans of Stanley Kronenberg's Przedbórz reference collection. As a result, www.prz.ginsburgs.org will be substantially improved and expanded.

Award Rules and Conditions are posted on the www.prz.ginsburgs.org website.

Paul Phillips writes to let us know that he has an eBay store for selling off his excess material and it is loaded with Polish covers. Several members have already found it and articles are flying off on direct sales overnight. The name of it is **PHILLIPS PHILATELICS/COLLECTIBLES**.

To find the site, go to eBay, click on the STORES tab and that will take you to Paul's store. Occasionally eBay has server problems, so if you don't see what you want, go to one of his items and click on his store site at the top right. That will take you to his home page.

Note from the Treasurer

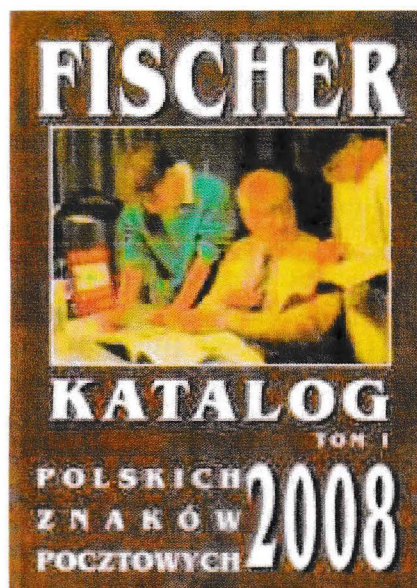
As of June, 2008 – Polonus Members can use PayPal to make payments to the society for dues as well any other society business such as purchasing past Bulletins or making Donations. This new service will be of special interest to our overseas members who have to pay high fees for international transactions and postage. When the 2009 Membership Dues Invoices are mailed out next February, PayPal will be listed as a payment option. Our account name is the same as the society e-mail address: info@polonus.org.

From Robert Sobisz:

I would like to congratulate you and your team on the great improvement in the Polonus bulletins. The change to the larger format is greatly appreciated due to the larger print and greater visibility. The lay-out and the color reproduction are really worthy of the word "Polonus Bulletin".

*I can realize how much work has gone into this improvement and I thought this should not go without positive comments from the members. I have talked to **Hank Bieniecki** on another matter and also asked him to extend congratulations to all concerned. Your article on the "Fantasy overprints on G.G." and other polish stamps was excellent and added new material to my Polish philatelic library. Keep up the good work! I will look forward to each new issue. Let me know if there are any new developments on the D.P. Camps and P.O.W. Study groups.*

To enhance your philatelic library and learn more about specific portions of Polish philately, visit the web-site – www.PolishPhilatelicLiterature.com and check out the 20 books available on various collecting areas. If you wish, please call or write Chris Kulpinski, 9350 E. Palm Tree Dr., Scottsdale, AZ or 480-585-7114.



Fisher Catalog: Katalog Polskich Znaków Pocztowych 2008 Tom 1
 Andrzej Fisher and Dr. Jerzy Walocha, editors

The long-awaited *Fisher Tom 1 2008* is now available and I must admit once it was in my hands I could not put it down. This is not a catalog in the usual sense, such as a Scott or Michel. It is truly an encyclopedia of Polish philately. The fact that it is in Polish does not diminish its usefulness for the English-speaking collector, except for the technical chapters at the end. The introductory section titled "Useful Information" is in Polish, German, and English, as is the table of technical terms and abbreviations. With a little practice one can easily navigate through the catalog.

Tom 1 begins with coverage of the pre-stamp Duchy of Warsaw period and goes on to price Russian, Prussian and Austrian stamps and postal history used prior to independence. Poland #1 is covered in depth, both as to varieties and cancellations.

It is not until page 49 that the catalog begins to list independent Poland, and starts with the first issue, the popular 1918 Monuments issue. The user has the choice to simply use the basic stamp information, or go in depth for each issue. The amount of detail is extraordinary for all issues. Any and all varieties are noted including proofs, and all are priced. *Tom 1* lists all government issued stamps including air mail, officials, postage dues, semi-postals, and booklets. It does not include locals, occupation stamps, stationery, flights, plebiscites and other such material. That is in *Tom 2*.

For the first time the Fisher lists and prices the complicated local *GROSZY* overprints and the even more complicated local provisional postage due overprints of 1919-1926. I understand that additional information in these areas will be published only every fifth year.

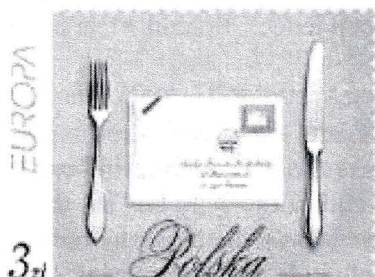
The catalog claims to be a retail catalog, and most United States collectors will suffer "sticker shock" at the prices. Yes, the poor exchange rate contributes to this. But the demand for quality material in Poland is the driving force behind this. There are extremes, however. For example Fisher lists a cover with the first Lublin issue 45 heller at 5000pln, about \$2300.00. One just sold on ebay for \$475.00. I believe some of the other postal history material of the early provisional is overpriced based on the market. However, the prices of varieties suggest "stamps" are more popular than "postal history." For example the varieties on many of the 1918-1919 Poczta Polska on Germania stamps and the Lublin issues have doubled from the 2007 edition, and I have heard that prices in Poland are above the catalog values. A word to the wise here is, buy what you need now. Also, the mint never hinged craze has caught on in Poland with 100% premiums for many MNH stamps of the pre-war period and the period immediately after the war.

This catalog belongs on the shelf of every serious student of Polish philately. This 470 page catalog is in full color on slick paper. In the past the binding has been poor and has not stood up to continued use. I hope this has been improved with the new Tom. I had the pleasure to meet with the editor, Dr. Walocha in Warsaw this summer, and he told me the printing of 5000 books is sold out. However, copies are available from Bieniecki International, POB 489, Maryville, IL 62062 for \$34.00 post paid.



Date of Issue	April 25, 2008
Sheet Format	12 stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Marzanna Dabrowska

Meteorological Phenomena - The four-stamp series issued on 25 April 2008 shows the beauty of meteorological phenomena through photographs of each of the groupings within this branch of science. These are: Hydro Meteors (Sand Blizzard) and Litho Meteors (Lightning) as 1.35 zł. stamps; and Photo Meteors (Rainbow) and Electro Meteors (Tornado) as 2.40 zł. stamps.



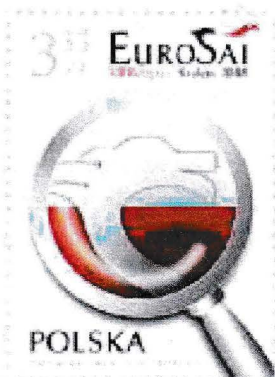
Europa

In 1956, the original member countries of the European Union initiated a joint issue

of the stamp with the word EUROPA and up to 1973, the issues had a common design with leading themes. Since 1974, only EUROPA as the leading subject remains and each country designs the stamps individually. Following in this tradition, Poczta Polska has issued a 3

zł. EUROPA stamp with the theme of "a letter". The designer of this issue placed the envelope with calligraphed address on a table between a fork and knife, replacing the plate and symbolically appeasing hunger. After all, "a letter" is a material record of communication, of moments to be remembered, of emotional expressions, and as such, it is a piece of art at the same time being a historical document, especially when the envelope has been postmarked.

Date of Issue	May 5, 2008
Sheet Format	16 stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Joanna Górka



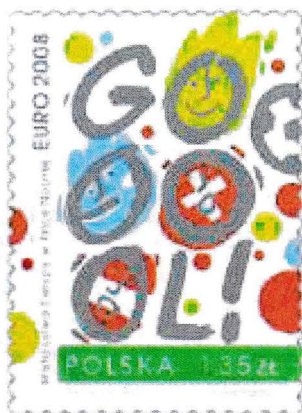
VII EUROSAI Congress in Kraków - EUROSAI

(European Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions)

This Congress is held every three years and the leadership is usually taken over by the host country. On June 2-5, 2008, Kraków hosted this congress and NIK (The Supreme Chamber of Control) has taken over leadership. The NIK is the most important state audit organization in Poland, subordinate to the Sejm (lower chamber of the Polish Parliament) and its mission is to promote economic efficiency and effectiveness in public services. On this occasion, Poczta

Date of Issue	May 30, 2008
Sheet Format	16 stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Anna Niemierko

Polska has issued a special 3.55 zł stamp with the Congress logo, a magnifying glass symbolizing the audit.

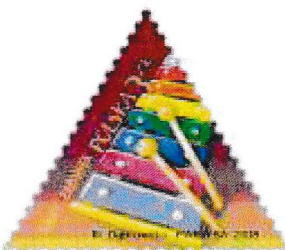
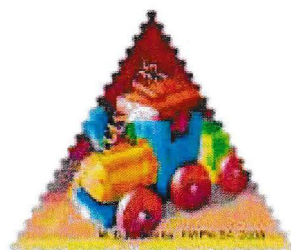


European Football Championship EURO 2008

European football (soccer) is the most popular game in

Europe and the European Football Championships are held every four years. For the first time in its history, Poland's national team has qualified for the championship round and in 2012, Poland (together with Ukraine) will host the championship rounds. On the occasion of EURO 2008, Poczta Polska has issued a 1.35 zł stamp illustrating crowded stadium stands full of shouting fans with painted faces.

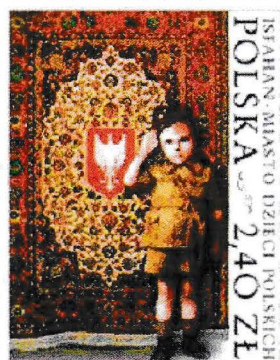
Date of Issue	May 30, 2008
Sheet Format	50 stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Anna Niemierko



Date of Issue	June 1, 2008
Sheet Format	16 stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Marzanna Dąbrowska

World of Toys

The second in a series of stamps with toys in a triangular shape, these two new issues feature a child's dulcimer as the 3 zł stamp, and a wooden "choo-choo" as the 1.35 zł stamp. The stamps were issued on June 1, a date celebrated as Children's Day.



Esfahan – the City of Polish Children

Located in central Iran by the foot of the Zagros Mountains, Esfahan was the capital city of

Persia from the end of the 16th and mid-18th century. It is now a great center for manufactured goods, famous for its Persian carpets. Poczta Polska commemorates the dramatic, sad and nearly forgotten fates of the Polish orphan children who received aid from Persian citizens during their flight from the former Polish eastern territories during WWII. Pictured on this issue, a 2.40 zł stamp, is one of the rescued children, Przemek Stojakowski,

in front of a Persian carpet with the Polish eagle motif in the center. Polish girls from the Esfahan School of Weaving had woven this very carpet in 1944.

Date of Issue	June 10, 2008
Sheet Format	16 stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Maciej Jędrzyk

NOTE:

The Polish Post is not indicating the Fischer numbers for the new issues as they did in the past, so we can not provide this information with the write-ups.



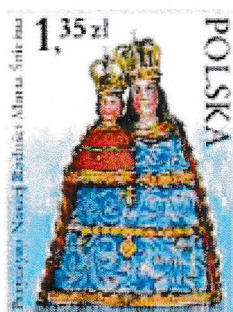
World Philatelic Exhibition EFIRO

2008 - EFIRO 2008, the Romanian Philatelic Exhibition, hosted the World Philatelic Ex-

hibition on June 20-27, 2008. In commemoration of this philatelic event, Poczta Polska has issued a 3 zł souvenir sheet (block) featuring an open

envelope, out of which a fragment of the Romanian Athenaeum building can be seen. Off the stamp's frame there is an image of a fountain pen and a postmark with an auroch's (European bison) head at the center.

Date of Issue	June 20, 2008
Sheet Format	Block of 1
Printing Method	Engraving and Rotogravure
Designer	Kuba Sowiński



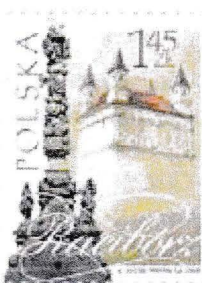
Sanctuaries of St. Mary – St. Mary of the Snow

Near the top of Igliczna

Mountain, in the Sudety mountain range, there is a small late-baroque church that serves as the sanctuary of St. Mary of the Snow. Poczta Polska has issued a 1.35 zł stamp on June 21st, the anniversary of Pope John Paul II's crowning the figure of St. Mary of the Snow, a wooden statue of St Mary with Holy Child and a folk copy of the statue from the Mariazell sanctuary in Austria.

The name of this sanctuary is connected with the legend from early Christianity, according to which, on August 5th snow had fallen in Rome right in the place where the first church honoring the Blessed Virgin should be built. This sign was earlier heralded by a dream shared by Pope Liberius and a Roman patrician Giovanni, who later became the builder of the church, known today as Santa Maria Maggiore or Santa Maria della Neve (of the snow).

Date of Issue	June 21, 2008
Sheet Format	16 Stamps
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Maciej Jędrzyk



Polish towns and cities – Racibórz

The "Polish towns and cities"

philatelic series began in 2002 with the issue of stamps related to Polish capital cities. Racibórz is the 18th town in this series. This issue commemorates the 900th year celebration of the city's history. The 1.45 zł. stamp features two

distinctive images. One is the renaissance tower (a prison) erected in 1574 and the other is a late-baroque Marian column, carved in sandstone by Jan Melchior Osterreich between 1725 and 1727. The later work had been commissioned as a votive offering to the Virgin Mary in gratitude for the end of the epidemic of 1715.

Date of Issue	July 1, 2008
Sheet Format	100 Stamps
Printing Method	Rotogravure
Designer	Andrzej Gosik

Have you had a chance to visit our web-site?

www.polonus.org