

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Meets every 4th Friday at SS. Cyril & Methodius Church Annex,
5800 W. Diversey Avenue, Chicago, IL

ISSUE NO. 452

Price: \$2.00

March-April, 1992

POLPEX 92 - A NON-COMPETITIVE EXHIBITION

March weather this year was mild and worked out well for POLPEX 92. The Polonus exhibition commemorated the voyage of Columbus which led to the Discovery of America. Sorry to say, we only had three frames of material relating to the theme which were shown by Richard Drews, the executive director of the coming World Columbian **STAMP EXPO 92**. This philatelic spectacular event will take place May 22-31, 1992 at the O'Hare Expo Center, River Road and the Kennedy Expressway in Rosemont, Illinois. Many out-of-town Polonus members will attend among which will be the world renown stamp engraver; our honorary member, Czeslaw Slania.

Since POLPEX 92 had a smaller amount of exhibits than usual, it was decided to make it a not-for-competition show. Every exhibitor received a special Columbus medal imported from Portugal. W. Poniecki



Out of Towners attending Beeba were (seated left to right): C. Straube, S. King and A. Wacinski. (Standing): S. Czarniecki, T. Sokolowski, L. Koncza, R. Strzelecki, F. Szebel, T. Maczynski, A. Walinski and S. Dobrzycki. (Photo: E. Blicharski)

showed two collections in 14 frames; F. Szebel also had two collections in 13 frames. Impressive collections were displayed by C. Straub, K. Zukowski and R. Strzelecki.

The numismatic exhibition presented by the Polish American Numismatic Association had an extensive display of Poland's Millennium material and Virtuti Militari medals.

We enjoyed the company of out-of-town members: C. Straub of Minnesota; Stanley King of Florida; A. Wacinski of Colorado and J. Kubicki of California.

Because of more publicity this year, the bourse was much better than usual. Dealers were most happy with sales. With the expense of putting on a show today being so high, the support of dealers assures a financial success to most shows.



JAN Z KOLNA

Small groups of Polonus members and friends gathered on Saturday evening at the Beeba - Banquet where they enjoyed the food and wine of Przybylo's White Eagle. Medals were distributed to the exhibitors and photos were taken.

If you missed the show, you can still purchase souvenirs. A limited amount of catalogs are still available which contain excellent articles on the Columbus Voyage and his predecessor Jan z Kolna who supposedly landed in North America in 1476 - sixteen years before Columbus.

Special Columbus postmark designed by L. Kawecki was approved by USPS. Souvenirs & prices are:

2 souvenir sheets with folder	\$1.50
1 souvenir card - mint	1.50
1 souvenir card - used with show cancel	2.00
3 different covers with show cancel	3.00
Exhibition program catalog	2.00

Available from: Polonus/Polpex 92, Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171.
Add \$1.00 for postage and handling.

—Fred Szebel

IN OUR MAILBOX

Dear Editor:

Every collector of Polish postal history would easily understand Mr. Poddubiuk's excitement, when he saw Wladyslaw II Jagiellon's letter, dated 1499 (Polonus Bulletin, No. 450).

However, this Bohemian King's

letters may not be as unique as they seem to be. As recently as April, 1991, an even earlier letter of King Wladyslaw II Jagiellon, was auctioned in Vienna. The letter, mailed from Prag to Eger, has the King's seal and is dated 1480.

—Adam S. Berestynski
Laguna Beach, CA



President Roman Strzelecki with other dealers at the Polpex Bourse.



Pres. Strzelecki presents PANA Pres. L. Koncza with an award for his Virtuti Militari exhibit.



Dealers: J. Kubicki of California (left), and A. Wacinski of Colorado (right).



Members' wives attending the Beeba-Banquet in a group photo.

Czeslaw Slania: miniatures in metal

By VICTOR SCHLICH

Reprinted from SCOTT STAMP MONTHLY

Czeslaw Slania, a bespectacled, owl-like-looking man, earns his living by thinking small. He's been like that ever since graduating from Krakow's Academy of Art in his native Poland. While he thinks small, he creates art masterpieces on metal. They are miniatures of big ideas, which are used to print postage stamps. He was 70 on October 21, 1991.

So gigantic have been his contributions to the world of postage stamps, that Sweden will honor his work with a special stamp issue.

Since he engraved his first postage stamp for Poland in the 1950's, Slania has applied his touch to more than 800 stamps.

His skills are so admired that he has been commissioned to work on stamps by the nations of Denmark, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Monaco, Ireland, Iceland, Great Britain, France, Jamaica, the United States, the United Nations and San Marino. Members of the Czeslaw Slania Study Group of the American Topical Association devote their philatelic energies to cataloging his works and ferreting out details of his life.

Eugene Wolosiewicz, president of the Slania group, said recently, "The fine details (of Slania's work), his style that is so recognizable, especially the ones that are, both, designed and engraved by him. This is where Slania excels. In fact, he prefers working that way. His portraits are magnificent, especially his women. The clothes, the flowing hair, the lips, out standing."

Upplysning: 6 november 1972

Efter fotografier

av Czeslaw Slania

Composé: Jan Magnusson

Slania

MUSIK I SVERIGE

42

FRANKERINGS
VÄRDE KR 9:90



STOD ÅT FRIMÄRK
SAMLANDET KR 160

PRIS KR 11:50

Slania won the prestigious Stoltz Award for best musical themed stamp of 1983 with the beautifully engraved center stamp of Sweden Scott 1473.

Engraving caught Slania's eye while a student at Krakow. He found he liked the challenge of working in a small space, and became an engraver for the Polish state printing bureau after graduation. His engravings were used to produce about 25 stamps for that nation.

Slania emigrated to Sweden in August, 1956 and sought work as an engraver with the Swedish Post Office. There were no openings and he worked for a while as a photo retoucher, yet he continued seeking work as an engraver.

He met with authorities of the Bank Note Printing Bureau of Canada, who were seeking an engraver to work in their North American headquarters. Slania was sorely tempted to accept the job offer, but he opted to remain in Sweden.

Slania's persistent visits to the postal authorities were finally rewarded in 1959 when Sweden's director of engraving fell ill, and he was offered the job on a temporary basis. His first assignment was a portrait of Gustaf Froding (Scott 559-561). More jobs followed, and in April, 1960 he was appointed to the post permanently.

His skills soon caught the eye of other Scandinavian postal authorities, especially his prodigious capacity for work. Engraving is tedious and time consuming work, demanding total concentration.

Despite this, Slania, on several occasions, has demonstrated his ability to work swiftly. The first came with the 1983 death of Sweden's beloved King Gustaf VI. Slania produced not one, but two stamp engravings (Scott 1021-1022) within the space of one week! At times like that he often works 21 hours a day.

He repeated that intense burst of energy in 1986, when he produced engravings for stamps marking the assassination of Prime Minister Olaf Palme (Scott 1601-1602).

Denmark began utilizing Slania's skills in 1962. His first issue for that nation was the Boerkop windmill issue (Scott 402). His tally for Denmark now stands at more than 100. In 1963, Greenland's postal authorities asked him to produce most of their stamp engraving, as well.

Slania sketched the ram's head for the Faroe Islands Scott 42 from a live model. Upon returning the next day to finish his drawing, he discovered the ram was not to be found . . . his model had been slaughtered between sittings.



They were so impressed by his work they recommended that Slania be appointed to the Danish order Knights of the Dannebrog. He received that honor on January 10, 1974, the same month he began work with postal authorities of the Faroe Islands, another self-governing entity of Denmark.

Engravers are vital to the productions of stamps, since they produce the tiny piece of metal from which a stamp ultimately is printed. The engraver's world is one of infinitesimal measurements and reverse images. He works from a piece of art work eight times the size of the finished stamp, but he looks at it only in a mirror which reverses the image.

A postage stamp engraving is similar to a woodcut, only incredibly more complex. Enormous precision and infinite patience are required since a single engraving the size of a postage stamp may contain as many as 30,000 lines and/or dots. Each is scribed on a steel plate with hand tools. No wonder it takes six to eight weeks to produce a single engraving.

Frequently, during the course of his work, the engraver pulls proofs to compare his work with the original art. Once the engraving is approved, it hardens in a



Above: Sweden's King Gustav VI Adolph was so impressed with Slania's handiwork commemorating the king's 90th birthday on Sweden Scott 981-985 that he appointed Slania as Royal Court Engraver.

Below: Fairy tale illustrator John Bauer was honored in 1982 with a set of four stamps, two of which—Sweden Scott 1392-1393 — were engraved by Slania.



Top left: Czesław Slania engraved this self portrait in 1981 on a non-postal label to celebrate his 60th birthday.



Far left: Sweden Scott 1010-1014 notes the centenary of the Nordic Museum located in Stockholm. Slania included his mother, planting potatoes in the center stamp.

Left: This 1981 stamp showing a Gyrfalcon in flight was very popular with stamp collectors. The stamp pictured here was signed by Slania in the selva.

Below: Slania has also engraved banknotes for several countries. This Israeli banknote features a portrait of Golda Meir.



A dramatic stamp issue from 1981, Sweden Scott 1386 notes Swedish films. Slania engraved the three higher value stamps on the right side.



sodium cyanide solution. The image then is transferred under high pressure to a soft steel roller. After hardening, the transfer roller is used to produce the printing cylinder, which can print up to 340 of the small format stamps.

The engraver's tools — a magnifying glass and a hard pick or scribing tool — have changed little since engraving originated in the mid-15th century.

Each engraver seems to have his own preferred method of working, however. Slania, for example, prefers to work at home, his studio bathed in the traditional artist's cold northern light. He enjoys listening to classical music as he works.

Despite the rigors of engraving, or perhaps because of them, Slania has a plucky sense of humor. He's demonstrated this several times in his stamps. His mother appears in a 1973 Swedish issue (Scott 1012) depicting a farm couple planting potatoes.

A Danish stamp (Scott 415) noting the centenary of Denmark's first business school depicts an accounting ledger whose open pages are filled with a number of different names. A sharp eye and a magnifying glass reveal the name A. E. Rasmussen on the left page, while R. Sundgaard shows up on the right page. Rasmussen and Sundgaard were officials in the Danish postal administration at the time.



Slania included a miniscule picture of himself in a third stamp (Sweden Scott 994). He appears as one of the skiers at the start of the Annual Vasa Run, the world's largest skiing event with up to 10,000 skiers making the run from Salen to Mora.

What does Czeslaw Slania do for a hobby? Believe it or not, he makes more engravings. Only these are of royalty, film stars or boxers, in short, anyone who attracts his fancy. Plus he's engraved banknotes for Brazil, Argentina and Israel.

Oh yes, on rare occasions, he has been found fly fishing. But engraving is his life.

One of Slania's most recent works honors the coronation of King Gustaf III. The Swedish 1991 stamp issue also features a label noting Slania's 70th birthday.

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

With the last Polonus Bulletin we notified members that Membership Dues for 1992 were payable as of the first of the year. Most of you responded and we are most grateful. We would like to remind those that have forgotten to send in their payment of \$16.00 so that you will remain a member in good standing and continue to receive the Bulletin. Dues should be mailed to: Polonus Treasurer P.O. Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171.

Łęki Szlacheckie Overprints

By STANLEY KRONENBERG

Łęki Szlacheckie is a very small town in the District of Piotrków, Poland, 76 km. due north of Kraków. In January, 1945, the German Occupational forces retreated and the Soviet Army occupied this region. On January 19, 1945, the postmaster of Łęki Szlacheckie overprinted German Occupational stamps to commemorate this event. A certificate issued by him on May 28, 1946 (figure 1) describes what was done. Its translation is:

Agencja Pocztowa - Kraków
Łęki Szlacheckie

Łęki Szlacheckie, dn. 28. V 1946.

Nr 98/46

Zaświadczenie

Niniejszym zaświadcza się, że w zakładach
agencji pocztowej w Łękach Szlacheckich w roku 1945 znajdowały się prototypy
drukarskie - a mianowicie 18 stycznia 1945 r. przez
przedstawicieli niemieckich i polskich agencji pocztowej
Leonarda i obywateli Jarosława Hanusiana
złożyli do drukarni niemieckiej, że w związku
z tymczasem obowiązującym w Łękach Szlacheckich
niemieckim i polskim obywateli "niemieckiej" przedstawicieli
150 niemieckich obywateli niemieckich - Polska Polska
Łęki Szlacheckie - to przedstawicieli niemieckich

niemieckich obywateli niemieckich:

50 sztuk po 8 gr 50 sztuk po 16 gr. i 50 sztuk
po 20 gr.

Łęki Szlacheckie niemieckich przedstawicieli
na niemieckich niemieckich i łęki Szlacheckie
Łęki Szlacheckie



FIGURE 1.

CERTIFICATE

This certifies that in the files of the People's Agency for the year 1945 there is a document written on January 19, 1945 by Leonard Ostas, the pre-war director of the People's Agency in the presence of Stanisław Jarocki. From this document it is evident that 150 postage stamps "General Gouvernement" were overprinted by means of a wooden die: "POCZTA POLSKA, ŁĘKI SZLACHECKIE, 1 zł." To commemorate the Liberation from the German Occupation.

The following stamps with the likeness of Hitler were overprinted: 50 stamps of 8 gr. denomination; 50 of 16 gr. denomination and 50 of 20 gr. denomination.

The income from the sale of these stamps was used to repair locks, replace window glass, et cetera, in the agency's building.

Seal of the
Agency

The Director of the Agency
Ostas

On January 21st, 1945, the Inspector of the Postal Subdirector ate arrived to take over the Łęki Szlacheckie Post Office. He forbade any further overprinting and confiscated the remaining occupational stamps. Most of the overprinted stamps were acquired by collectors but some were used for postage on registered letters mailed locally by the township of Ręczno. The stamps on such covers were postmarked in violet with the German postmark "Leki Szlacheckie" with the date of January 19, 1945 (figure 2).

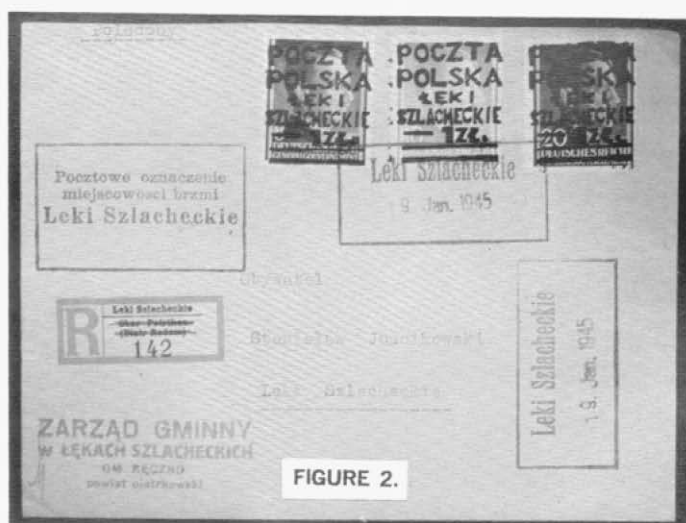


FIGURE 2.

Several forgeries of these overprints were made and are often offered to collectors as being authentic stamps. While authentic overprints occur only on 8, 16 and 20 gr. denominations, forged overprints were made



FIGURE 3.

also on occupational stamps with the likeness of Hitler of other denominations. Figure 3 shows an example of a cover with forged overprints and postmarks. These forgeries are easy to recognize by different details and dimensions of the overprints and cancellations (figure 4 and 5). Other forgeries exist which differ from those shown here. Most of these forgeries appear to have been made in the U.S.A.

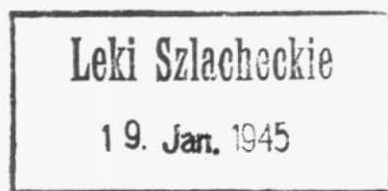


GENUINE OVERPRINT

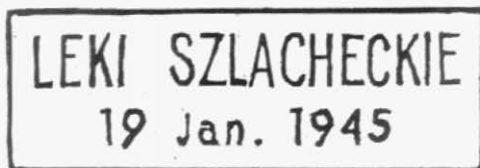


FORGED OVERPRINT

FIGURE 4.



AUTHENTIC CANCELLATION



FORGED CANCELLATION

FIGURE 5.

OLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Annual Dues which include a subscription to the Bulletin are \$16.00 (U.S. funds only) and should be sent to Polonus Treasurer, P.O. Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171. Membership Dues are payable by December 31st, for the next calendar year. New members will receive all the 'Bulletins' for the year in which they join. Changes of address, problems with receiving the Bulletin, should be addressed to: Polonus Philatelic So-

ciety, P.O. Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171. General matters pertaining to the Society, contribution of articles for the Bulletin, complaints, or general matters should be directed to the President.

The Polonus Philatelic Society is a Not-for-Profit Organization incorporated in the State of Illinois (1939). The opinions expressed by authors of articles appearing therein, do not necessarily reflect the views of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

NEW MEMBERS

Jerzy Matecki, #1431

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Chicago, IL 60647

Kazimierz Skucha, #1430

4844 S. Laflin Street

Chicago, IL 60609

OLONUS FLOAT

IN MAY PARADE

The biggest ever May 3rd Polish Constitution Day Parade took place on May 2nd in Downtown Chicago. Polonus float no. 89 participated in that parade. The expense was borne by Romuald and Irene Odrowski of the Polish American Philatelic Center, who sponsored the float.

LARGE SELECTION OF PRE WWII POSTAL HISTORY MATERIAL ON FOLLOWING TOPICS:

Pilsudski Legions, Polish-Soviet War, Military Mail 1921-39, Civilian Mail, WWII, Gen. Gouv., POW & Concentration Camps, Post WWII Early Censorships, also, Picture Postcards: Legions, Historical, Patriotic, Military and Views from Wilno, Lwow and Surrounding Areas.

Free Lists of Banknotes, Military Medals & Badges, Commemorative Medals Pre WWII and Recent, Some Books, A.K. Badges.

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COLOR POLAND CATALOG

The first ever catalog of Poland stamps printed in color has been published by "Filapol" of Sopot, Poland. The 232 page book has beautiful reproductions and shows valuations in U.S. \$. Available for \$15.00 postpaid from Roman J. Burkiewicz, Box 160, Frisco, CO 80443.

