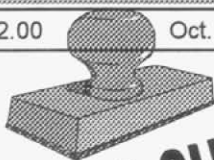




FIRST NATIONAL Meeting/Exhibition



A SUCCESS!

By: Hank Bieniecki

I am pleased to report that the First National Polonus Meeting/Exhibition held November, 22-24 in conjunction with CHICAGOPEX, 2002, deserves a two thumbs up rating. The only possible shortcoming was a few of the members who had indicated they would be there, were



*Members: (left to right) Front Row: Walter Holak, Beryl Pascavis, Robert Ogrodnik
Second Row: Hank Bieniecki, Casey Sadowski, Zbigniew Korszen, Art Walinski
Third Row: Conrad Straub, Vern Fox, Erv Mrotek, Roman Sobus*

unable to attend. However, those who did attend had a very pleasant experience. Members attended from as far away as Florida, Arizona, Canada, and Poland. They all indicated they are looking forward to our next National Meeting/Exhibition which will take place in 2004 (place and dates not yet determined).

The Chicago Philatelic Society (CPS), while initially concerned about

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1918-1919 Provisional Issues

Dr. Conrad Straub

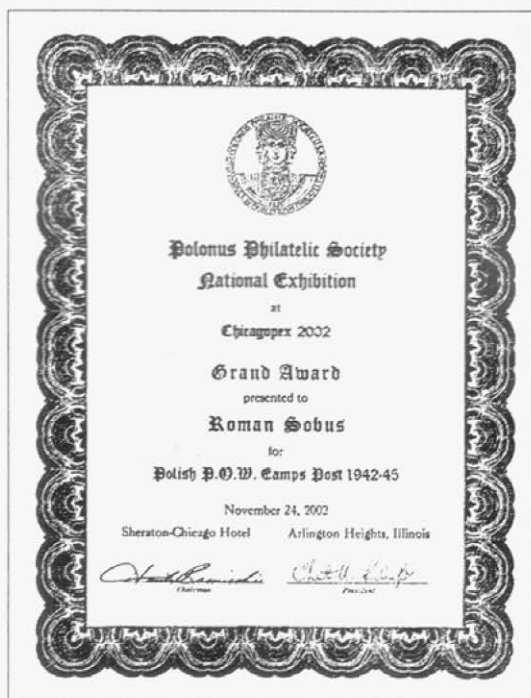
POW and D.P. Camps

Chris Kulpinski and Roman Sobus

moving the CHICAGOPEX venue from the downtown convention center to the Sheraton Chicago Northwest Hotel near the airport, discovered that this choice met with the approval of exhibitors, dealers, and attendees. The Sheraton was a first class facility that cooperated in every possible way to meet the needs of the attendees and provided excellent accommodations, dining and free parking at reasonable prices. In addition the CPS did a fantastic job of organization and provided Polonus with all the accommodations necessary for their exhibitions and meeting at no charge to our society. Your officers will be extending our thanks to CPS and will seek to associate our National meeting exhibitions in 2005 and 2007 with CHICAGOPEX.

Exhibitors And Awards

Three Polonus members exhibited their material of Poland in open competition with all other exhibitors at CHICAGOPEX. I am pleased to report that each of these exhibitors won an award. Those exhibiting and their awards were:



Roman Sobus exhibited **Polish POW Camps Post 1942-1945.** He received a Vermeil Medal from CPS and the Grand Award (a large hand cut Polish lead crystal vase, donated by dealer/member Terry Kurzinski) from

Polonus.

Casey Sadowski exhibited **Polish Postal Stationery.** He received a Silver Medal from CPS and the White Eagle Award from Polonus.

Chester Schafer exhibited **Poland Lublin Issues 1918-1919.** He

received a Silver Medal from CPS and the White Eagle Award from Polonus.

In addition Zbigniew Korszen, Warsaw, Poland was invited by CPS to exhibit his award winning 1918 Local Issues in the CHICAGOPEX Court of Honor. He received an honorary Gold Medal.

The excellent results of our exhibiting members should inspire those of you who thought about exhibiting, to actually do so in 2004. Roman Sobus never exhibited before, and he won a CPS Vermeil and the Polonus Grand Award. Our exhibiting members attended the judge's critique, held after the awards, and received advice on to how to improve their exhibits for future competition. All indicated that the critique process was of great interest and value. So start thinking about and preparing your exhibit for 2004.

Reception And Meetings

On Saturday evening Polonus held a reception for its attending members in the piano bar of the Sheraton. It was the first opportunity for all the members to gather in one location and get to know one another. The group had such a pleasant experience that we adjourned as a group to a local Tapas restaurant where we all participated in an evening of fine dining and excellent conversation that lasted until late in the evening.

Polonus held the following three events on Sunday:

10 a.m.-11 a.m. – Presentation by Conrad P. Straub, PhD on Second Provisional Issues (Germania) of 1918-1919.

This is one of the most complex philatelic issues, and Straub has been studying and documenting it for over 25 years. The first part of his article on this issue appeared in Bulletin #510, and will be continued in #512 and future issues. It is the only stamp issue originally produced by a country (Germany) for its own use, overprinted by that country for use as an occupation issue, and then overprinted again by the formerly occupied country (Poland) for its own use as a provisional issue. For those who love history, want the opportunity to look for undiscovered rarities in a dealer's stamp and cover stock, and yet want to collect material that is still reasonable in price, the Second provisional issue offers the perfect solution.

Noon to 1 p.m. – Presentation by Michael Melnichak, PhD on expertizing the Typographic Overprints of the 1919 Krakow Issues

Krakows are without doubt the best known and most popular issues of

Poland. Unfortunately the great majority of the Krakows offered for sale are forgeries. Most collectors do not realize that a majority of these forgeries were prepared within months of the issuance of the genuine stamps and therefore think that Krakows in old collections are genuine. Melnichak has studied this issue for 25 plus years and published a Monograph "The Typographic Overprints of the 1919 Krakow Issue of Poland" in 1990 based on traditional means of expertizing these overprints. The focus of his presentation was his subsequent application of scanners, computers, and specialized software to make very precise measurements of these overprints to determine with certainty, if they are genuine. Each genuine overprint is in effect similar to a fingerprint and if you have the proper equipment, the proper genuine reference material and the expertise, it is possible to say with certainty if a Krakow is genuine. Because of the need for reference material, it is in fact much easier to determine if a stamp is a forgery, rather than to state with certainty that it is genuine. For collectors the ability to recognize and avoid common forgeries is an important skill level they can realistically expect to develop. In most case, collectors will still need to rely on recognized experts to confirm that a Krakow is genuine.

Michael Schreiber, Editor, Linn's Stamps News attended Melnichak's presentation and commented very favorably on the both the presentation and the other valuable philatelic work being done by Polonus. (Following this article is a reprint of an article about Polonus by Schreiber.)

***2 p.m. to 4 p.m.: First National Meeting and Round Table Discussion
of the Polonus Philatelic Society.***

The meeting was chaired by our President, Chester Schafer. The primary focus of discussion was when and where the next National Meeting/Exhibition of Polonus would be held. The membership indicated that they were very pleased with associating with a large national show such as CHICAGOPEX, as this gave them the opportunity to see a large diverse number of exhibits and also visit a large number of dealers at the bourse held in conjunction with these national shows. A number of members viewed these events as an opportunity for a mini-vacation with their family. It was agreed that Polonus would not have a National show in 2003, in order to give the officers time to find, plan and promote the Second National Meeting outside of Chicago. The Chicago Chapter will hold its local Polpex Exhibition and Bourse at the White Eagle on 14, 15, and 16 of March, 2003. The theme will be the 25th Anniversary of the Pontification of Pope John Paul II. A large exhibit of material relating to the Pope will be displayed.

Membership Table

A Polonus Philatelic Society Membership Table was manned by members on Friday and Saturday. They passed out membership applications and sample Bulletins, and answered questions about our society for prospective members. I want to thank Roman Sobus, Erv Mrotek and Zbigniew Korszen for donating their time to this function.

Dealers Bourse

In addition to Polonus activities, attending members had the opportunity to visit a Bourse of approximately 65 dealers at CHICAGOPEX 2002. The following three member/dealers had booths:

Terry Kurzinski, P.O. Box 5845, Rockford, Ill. 61608

Kurzinski is primarily a bourse dealer who is active in the Chicago/Midwest area. His email is stampdlr1@aol.com. In addition to Polonus he is also a member of APS and USS. Terry was kind enough to donate the funds to purchase the beautiful Polonus Grand Award won by Roman Sobus. On behalf of all our members, I want to thank Terry for his generosity.

John Rudnicki, 25 Deforest Dr., Brampton, Ont, Canada L7A 2Y1

Rudnicki is primarily a bourse dealer who is active in Canada and the northern US. John is a new member of Polonus.

Bieniecki Int'l, Inc. P.O. Box 100, Granite City, IL. 62040-0100 –

Email: biistamp@charter.net.

I want to thank all the members who visited and patronized my booth on Friday and Saturday. As primarily a mail/email dealer I am always amazed at how hard bourse dealers have to work to get their material organized, get it to the shows, get it displayed, man their booths, and then packed up again at the end of each show.

Tentative Future Meetings and Shows Schedules

POLPEX 2003, March 14 to 16, 2003, White Eagle, Chicago, IL.

2004 Second National Meeting (dates and place to be determined)

2005 Third National Meeting in association with CHICAGOPEX

2006 Fourth National Meeting (dates and place to be determined)

2007 Fifth National Meeting in association with Pan Slavic Exhibition, Chicago



Polonus Society

Begins New Era

At CHICAGOPEX

The Polonus Philatelic Society is one of the oldest U.S.-based stamp-collector groups dedicated to the stamps and philately of a foreign nation. Its membership is approximately 200.

The society began in Chicago in 1939, and until 1999 its officers and directors were elected from the Chicago area. During this period the society hosted its own annual Polpex show and exhibition, and since October, 1940, it has published a small slick-paper, English-language journal to keep its members involved and informed. Issue No. 510 of the *Bulletin of the Polonus Philatelic Society* was published in October.

Polonus also offers stamp and cover expertizing, and it has sponsored and published other works on Polish stamps and covers.

During 1999–2000, the Polonus Society transformed itself into a national organization with chapters. It elected officers and directors from across the United States, and it created its own web site at www.polonus.org.

There's a Chicago chapter, of course, Polonus treasurer and bulletin editor, Hank Bieniecki, says that another is forming in New York City.

In addition to members located throughout the United States, there is a growing international membership in Germany, Poland, Argentina, Italy, England and Holland. [not part of article, but also Canada]

So far there are dedicated study groups established for the stamps, markings and mail related to prisoners-of-war camps and displaced-persons camps and for the provisional issues of Poland.

"Copyright 2002 Linn's Stamp News, Sidney, Ohio, USA. Reprinted with permission" (article by Michael Schreiber, Editor, first appeared in Open Album section of Linn's Stamp News dated November 11, 2002).

The stamps and markings of Poland are interesting and fertile collecting ground.

This includes the era when Poland was part of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, the annexations of Polish territory in 1918, the republic era of 1918-39, the people's republic that followed, plebiscites, the Free City of Danzig and Port Gdansk stamps, the occupations of World Wars I and II, revenue stamps, airmails, postal stationery, the stamps of Central Lithuania, the General Government of the Nazis, locals, military and fieldpost, and more.

Three stamps of Poland: a Russian stamp used in Warsaw, a provisional issue, and a stamp for the Polish offices in the Turkish Empire.



My worldwide collection (really, an accumulation) includes a modest number of older Polish stamps, a few of which are pictured here.

Shown at top is an 1865 Russian 10-kopek Arms definitive used in Poland. The stamp, with brown frame and blue Arms vignette, is unwatermarked and on wove paper. It bears most of a nice boxed "1" cancel of Warsaw.

Next is a 1917 bright rose Austrian military stamp that was overprinted in 1918 to become a Polish stamp. The black overprint adds the words "Polska

Poczta," a new denomination in Polish halerzy and a representation of the Polish national symbol, the white eagle.

This is a local stamp for Lublin, one of 78 locals that the *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* lists for Lublin, Warsaw, Krakow,

The bottom stamp started as a 25-fenigi olive-green Eagle stamp issued in 1919 for use in Northern Poland, but it is overprinted "Levant" in red for use in Poland's offices in the Turkish Empire.

The word "Polonus," according to the Polonus web site, "was reportedly created by Kopernik (Copernicus), the famous Polish astronomer, who, when attending the university at Padua, Italy, registered as 'Kopernik; nationality, Polonus,' "

The Polonus web site includes sections for members and guests. As of this writing, both areas are accessible to all, but soon a password and user name will be required to access the features of the member's section.

Through the guest portal, visitors can learn about Polonus, download a membership application, see new-issue stamps of Poland and read Michael E. Melnichak's supplemental work on the Krakow overprints of 1919. In 1990 the society published his 42-page booklet *The Typographical Overprints of the 1919 Krakow Issues of Poland*.

These overprints have been extensively counterfeited.

Melnichak now scans suspect stamps and uses the contrast enhancements of Adobe Photoshop Elements to isolate a clean image of the Poczta Polska two-line overprint for Krakow. The software's measuring capabilities help determine the genuineness of the overprint.

I'm not certain if my over-printed Polish stamps are genuine or not. But if I were to collect the pricier Krakow Provisional stamps in earnest, then I would join Polonus and get acquainted with its seasoned members.

The next Polonus national meeting after the one coming up is not finalized, but Bieniecki said it's likely to be held away from Chicago.

To contact Polonus write to Polonus, Box 100 (P), Granite City, IL, 62040-0100, visit www.polonus.org, or make plans to attend Chicagopex 2002 at the Sheraton Northwest in Arlington Heights.

If you know Poland collectors who are not members of our society, send their name and address to P.O. Box 100 (P) so we can send them membership information.

Camp Mail Documents

History of One Polish Family During WWII

By: Jan Niebrzydowski Translated By: Conrad P. Straub
Scanned and Re-formatted By: Erv Mrotek

World War II resulted in more than six million Polish citizens being deprived of their freedom by Germans and Soviet Russians. No Polish family escaped the horror of having one or more members interned in concentration camps, work camps, prisons, "oflags", "stalags", etc. Frequently family members were located in different German and Soviet camps. Camp regulations made correspondence with family members in these different camps extremely difficult if not impossible. Fortunately enough correspondence was possible and survived to document this terrible time. The correspondence illustrated and described below documents the fate of the Wijas family from Nowy Sacz, near Krakow.

Kriegsgefangenenpost

Oflag Postkarte
16
Geprüft

2574-13

Stanislaw Michael Wijas

Gebührenfrei

Absender:
Vor- und Zuname: *Stanislaw Stanislaw*
Gefangenennummer: *229*
Lager-Bezeichnung: *Oflag VII A - 92*
Deutschland (Allemagne)

Empfänger: *Stan Stanislaw*
Straße: *Lwowska 26*
Land: *Polen*
Landespost (Provinz usw.):

Photo 1 - Front and back of Official Post Card:

Military officer Stanley Wijas was imprisoned at Oflag VIIA, Murnau, Germany. On 26 July 1940, Stanley sent a card to his brother Michael Wijas in Nowy Sacz. The card, printed by camp authorities gives regulations pertaining to the sending of packages to prisoners. The card bears a rectangular censorship mark: Oflag VIIA/16/Geprüft.

Kriegsgefangenenlager
Oflag VII A

Datum: *26. Juli 1940*

Ze względu na nadchodzące lato, proszę wysyłać tylko artykuły trwałe nie ulegające zepsuciu. Cukierków w papierkach, orzechów, płynów w butelkach, chemikali i wszelkich past przysyłać nie wolno. Listów do paczek dołączać nie wolno. Specjalnie brak papierosów, tytoniu, niepsującej się żywności i zelówek.

Pisz zawsze bardzo wyraźnie.
Jestem zdrow i pozdrawiam serdecznie.

Wiadomość z dnia *9. lipca* otrzymano.
Paczka

Photo 2 – Front
and back of
Official Post
Card:

A camp card sent by Stanley Wijas from Oflag VIIA, Murnau to Michael and Martha Wijas in Nowy Sacz on 9 December 1940, as a Christmas greeting. At the bottom right side is a piece of "oplatek" (wafer) wrapped in a transparent piece of paper. This wafer is a piece of thin white bread, which is broken and shared on Christmas Eve to wish health and happiness during the coming year.



Kriegsgefangenenpost

An *Herrn Stanisław Hiebowicz i żonę Wijas*

Gebührenfrei!

Absender: Vor- und Zuname: <i>Stanley Wijas, Skisław</i> Gefangenenummer: <i>229/W.B.</i> Lager-Bezeichnung: <i>Oflag VII A - Murnau b. M.</i> <i>Deutschland (Allemagne)</i> <i>Murnau/Oberbayern</i>	Empfangsort: <i>Ku Sander</i> Straße: <i>Łowicka Str. 26</i> Land: <i>Łódź (Province Łódź)</i> Landesteil (Province usw.):
---	---

Dnia *9 grudnia* 1940

Po raz wtóry z niewoli i dalekiej obczyzny, z głębi serca pełnego wielkiej tęsknoty, ślę najlepsze życzenia i pozdrowienia na Święta Bożego Narodzenia, oraz życzenia Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku.

Stanisław Hiebowicz

Wiadomość z dnia otrzymałem.

Konz.-Lager Auschwitz

Folgende Anordnungen sind beim Schriftverkehr mit Häftlingen zu beachten:

1.) Jeder Schutzhäftling darf im Monat zweimal von seinen Angehörigen Post empfangen und an sie absenden. Die Briefe an die Häftlinge müssen auf leiblicher mit Tinte geschrieben sein und dürfen nur zwei Seiten je 15 Zeilen umfassen. Briefumschläge müssen eingeklappt sein. In einem Brief darf nur 1 Briefmarke à 12 Pf. oder 6 Pf. beilegt werden. Alle anderen sind verboten. Postkarten haben 10 Zeilen. Lichtbilder dürfen als Post nicht versandt werden.

2.) Geldsendungen sind nur durch Postweisung gestattet.

3.) Es ist darauf zu achten, dass bei Geld oder Postsendungen die genaue Adresse, bestehend aus Lager, Barackennummer, und Häftlingsnummer, auf die Sendungen zu schreiben ist. Wenn die Adresse fehlerhaft ist, geht die Post an den Absender zurück oder wird vernichtet.

4.) Zeitungen sind gestattet, dürfen aber nur durch die Poststelle des K.L. Auschwitz bestellt werden.

5.) Pakete dürfen nicht geschickt werden, da die Häftlinge im Lager alles kaufen können.

6.) Entlassungsgesuche aus der Schubstube an die Lagerleitung sind zwecklos.

7.) Gesprächsbeile und Besuche von Häftlingen im Konzentrationslager sind grundsätzlich nicht gestattet.

Der Lagerkommandant

Absender:

Name: _____

Geht an: _____

Häftl. Nr. _____



Postkarte

in Nowy Sacz

Ku Sander

Łowicka 3

Photo 3 - Front of
KZ Formula Post
Card:

Post card from the concentration camp at Auschwitz, dated 18 November 1943, to Nowy Sacz. This card was sent by Martha Wijas (number 7499) from the woman's

prison and bears the censorship mark: Geprüft/12/K.L. Auschwitz.

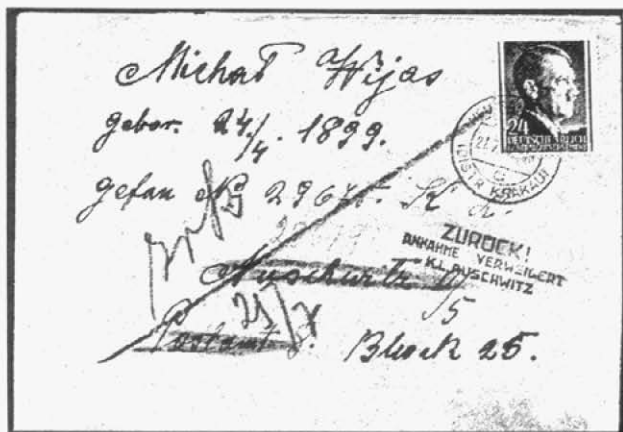


Photo 4:

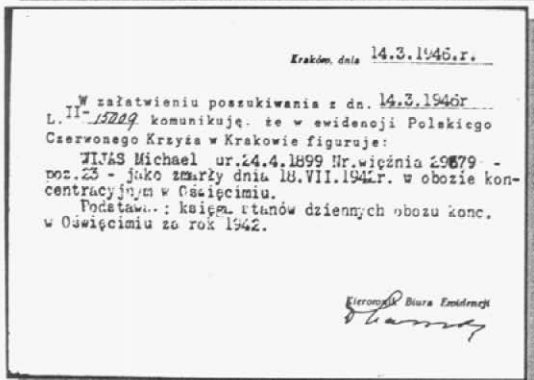
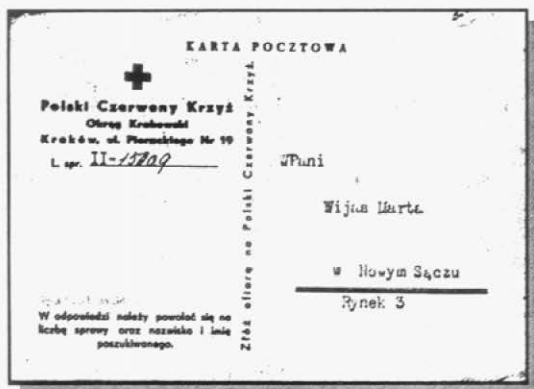
Cover from a letter from Nowy Sacz to Auschwitz on 21 July 1942 to Michael Wijas who was imprisoned at Auschwitz by the Germans. His number shown as 29675 on the cover was in error and was corrected in pencil to

29679. The letter was returned to the sender, as indicated by the prison cancellation stamp: ZURÜCK/ANNAHME/VERWEIGERT/K. L. AUSCHWITZ (This person is unknown at this prison).

Photo 5:

Special card from the Polish Red Cross, Krakow dated 14 March 1946, written to Martha Wijas in Nowy Sac, who survived Auschwitz. The card notes that her husband Michael died (was murdered) in Auschwitz on 18 July 1942.

All correspondence shown is in the author's collection.



A Visit With **FISCHER PRINTING** **Bytom, Poland**

By: Hank Bieniecki

During my two week trip to Poland in October 2002, I was able to schedule a meeting with Andrzej Fischer at his shop in Bytom, Poland near Krakow. It was a warm sunny day, and the old city square where Fischer's shop is located was lovely and filled with activity. The well organized shop sells all the catalogs (stamp, coin, currency) printed by Fischer, as well as stamps and coins. The stamp and coin sales are operated by associates of Fischer, whose business is printing a wide variety of high quality products. From the offices in the back of this shop Fischer and his son conduct the business of his printing company, which is located elsewhere in the industrial section of the city.

Fischer is a tall, thin, well dressed man who looks like a university professor, with his full beard and mustache. However his energy, constant stream of conversation, and ever present cigarette quickly make you realize he is in fact one of the new generation of highly motivated Polish entrepreneurs. After some discussions in the shop we adjourned to a fine restaurant on the square which specializes in dishes prepared from game animals. During a most pleasant dining experience, I was able to ask many questions about the Fischer Polish Stamp Catalogs and the new monthly stamp Journal "Przegląd Filatelistyczny" which is reviewed after this article.

FISCHER Catalogs

The Fischer Polish Stamp Catalogs have become the recognized standard stamp catalog of Poland. The contents of the catalog, including the pricing, are prepared and reviewed by a number of diverse and very knowledgeable philatelic specialists in Poland.

Vol. I is printed annually. The more highly specialized Vol. II is to be printed every two to three years. Vol. II will not be revised and printed again until 2004.

I advised Fischer that his stamp catalogs were of outstanding quality and were highly regarded and very much appreciated by Polish collectors outside of Poland. When Fischer asked if I had any criticisms of the catalogs I asked him why the pricing on Pre World War II Polish philatelic material were in line with world markets, and yet the prices on material from the 1950's to 1995 are very low given that there is no stock of this material available in Poland. He smiled and exhaled a cloud of smoke and said in that it was a result of the 1995 devaluation. The philatelists working on the catalog give great attention to the early and specialized Polish material. The 1950 to 1995 period for the most part has received little attention and pricing adjustments were done essentially by moving the decimal point. As a result many sets from this period are priced in Fischer at a fraction of their cost as new issues. They plan to have a group begin adjusting these prices starting with the 2003 catalog.

Przegląd Filatelistyczny

Just before my arrival, Fischer had produced Issue .1 of a new full color very high quality monthly philatelic journal titled "Przegląd Filatelistyczny", which is edited and written by a group of Polish Philatelists from the Krakow area. He gave me a copy and indicated that their objective was to produce a high quality philatelic journal which contained something for every level of collector from the beginner to the specialist. Based on the review that follows this article, it appears they have accomplished this objective.

Note

I have a limited number of copies sample of Przegląd Filatelistyczny and will make them available for \$1.00 P/H on a first come basis to Polonus members who may wish to subscribe to this journal. To keep shipping and distribution costs reasonable, Fischer will send this journal to Bieniecki Int'l, Inc for distribution in North America.



New Philatelic Publication

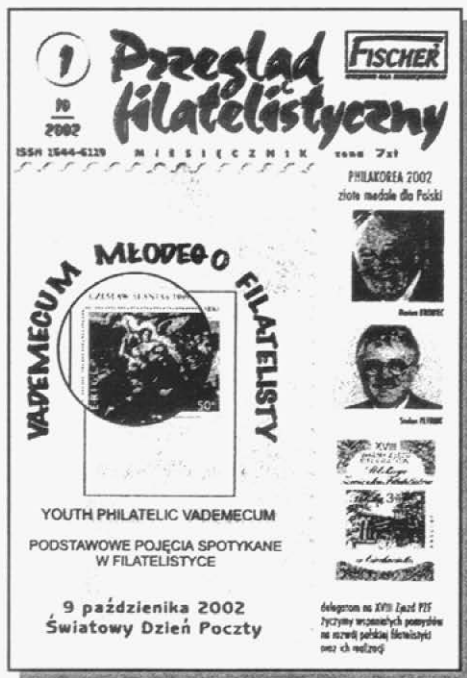
"PRZEGLĄD FILATELISTYCZNY"

The Philatelic Review

By: Stanley T. Wlodek

The first Polish publication devoted to philately was the "Polski Filatelista", the Polish Philatelist, published by the Philatelic Club of Krakow in the 1894 Galicja province of Austria. It is interesting to note that such a publication could not appear in the Russian or German controlled parts of Poland. In these areas of partitioned Poland, all Polish organizations, of any type, were forbidden. The newest Polish philatelic publication, "Przegląd Filatelistyczny", thus carries on a very long and proud tradition, and does so at an excellent professional level.

"Przegląd Filatelistyczny" is published by Fischer, whose excellent catalogues have done so much for Polish philately. It adheres to the same high standards of philatelic competence and high quality color reproductions as their catalogues. The first issue was published in October 2002. It is some 50 pages long, and of the same dimensions as their catalogs.



The organization of the publication is novel and attractive. It is divided into sections, each prepared or edited by an expert, and very well illustrated in color photographs that reflect the exact colors of the original philatelic material that they portray. These sections are:

- "Vade Mecum", philatelic terms and definitions, well illustrated.
- "For the Beginner", very useful comments for the young collector.
- "For the Inquisitive", articles of philatelic research and studies.
- "Postal History", the history of postal services.
- "For Not Just Judges", standards pertinent to exhibitions.

- "Hyde Park", provocative discussions, editorials and opinions.
- "Philatelic Auctions", describes recently sold Polish rarities.
- "Reviews", treats recent publications on Polish philately.
- "From Near and Far", philatelic notes of interest.
- "Miscellaneous", anything of world wide philatelic interest.
- "From the Life of PZF", news of the Polish Philatelic Organization

Each is well illustrated and highly informative. There is even a philatelic crossword puzzle and advertisements from stamp dealers and the Polish Post Office. The latter gives the postal rates for priority mail and the web address for the Polish Post Office: <www.poczta-polska.pl>. This site has a philatelic section that gives information on new issues, starting with 1990, in both Polish and English. The heart of the first, October 2002 issue is the section "For the Inquisitive", which contains five excellent articles:

"The Printing Process Used for the First Two Stamps of The Przedborz City Post-Typography and not Lithography" by L. Schmutz. A most amazing finding that the first Przedborz issue was printed by typography, is established with careful microscopy to refute the 70 year opinion, originating with S. Mikstein, that they were printed by lithography.

"Forged Perforations of the II Issue of the Dowbor-Musnicki Corps" by M. Z. Ways, continues S. Mikstein's original discussion of these forgeries, which stem from the much higher value of the perforated stamps.

"The Last Poznan Forgeries, the Leaders Issue" by J. Berbeka, continues the cycle on these falsifications dealing with the excellent forgeries of the first post-war issue, Fischer 339 to 341. As these forgeries have the same spacing and the same 45 degree raster as the originals, they are especially dangerous. Paper differences, particularly as observed under ultraviolet light, and the fact that the forgers copied only one stamp position for each value (position 4 for the 25gr, position 12 for the 50gr, and position 11 for the 1zł.) allows their differentiation from the originals. These forgeries often bear forged authentication signatures and appear on fabricated correspondence.

"Unknown Cancellations on the Leaders Issue of 1944", by S. Walisch, describes a provisional cancellation, in a square format, used in Trzydnik, Krasnik and Lublin.

"The September 1944 Lublin Issue, Hitherto Unknown Proofs of the Leaders Issue", by H. Monkos and L. Schmutz. Repeating some previously published data, this article presents a chronological description of the proofs produced during the production of this issue, Fischer 339 to 341.

The publication is, of course, in Polish. But, hopefully its excellence will encourage us to polish up our Polish. Polonus may be able to re-print some of the future key articles in English. 



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 the 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. Memberships 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

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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 100 (PS), Granite, IL. 62040

The Polish **POW** **Study Group**

By: Chris Kulpinski ctk85255@yahoo.com

Along with Roman Sobus, I have been asked to head up and help rejuvenate the old POW SG, and this challenge I eagerly accept.

It has been over 20 years since the group disbanded, but during its four years in existence it produced, via its newsletter, very valuable information, primarily because the information was in English.

You may wonder why bother, what is there to study? That's the wrong question. The question is what can you contribute.

Undoubtedly, the POW area is well documented, but we plan to expand the area of interest to include Displaced Persons Camps and Internment Camps. For that matter, why stop there. Why not all Polish military activity – Forces in Russia, ME, CMF, France and of course in England?

So, how are we going to do this? I propose the following. First, POLONUS will reprint pertinent articles from the old POW SG newsletter. We will cover all camps, and place the articles in some sort of logical sequence.

Second, there will be on the POLONUS Web Site various books, manuscripts and documents written in English that you can purchase and use as a source of information. There is much that is not available elsewhere, but will be once we get it up. It will be impossible for POLONUS Bulletin to print everything. We will gradually be putting these manuscripts and books up on the website by the end of the year. You will be able to download them and keep them on your hard drive, or print them out so that you have a hard copy. We will figure something out for those of you who are not computer literate.

Third, to promote this area of Polish collecting, we will encourage you to display your collections. As you are aware, POLONUS is planning to hold meetings and exhibits in connection with National Stamp Shows, similar to the way other national stamp groups get around. We should be able to get at least two displays of POW material at each and every one of these shows.

Fourth, we will educate judges as to what they are looking at. I have not figured this out yet, but if you have suggestions, or are a philatelic judge, please contact me.

What can you do? Easy. Participate. How? Get involved by asking questions on the website, by sharing information and by proposing topics that might interest you. If we know where your specific interests lie, that will influence us as to information we get into the Bulletin.

Write articles. There are no experts in this field. Those who were involved during this time period i.e. the War, are now gone. There are many who have information and that will be passed on to you. Some of it will be new, some will not, but in your own search, you may have found a tidbit that can be shared. Please do so.

Finally, don't think that all areas have been researched and there is nothing more to do. At this very moment, Roman Sobus is gathering information and copies of all the Woldenberg Postcards that have scenes imprinted on them. When he is done, that "book" will be available on the net. I can tell you now, its going to be over 50 pages of color prints. 

POLONUS FORMAT



REVISIONS

During the past couple of years we have been updating the format of the Bulletin. Beginning with #510 each feature article is being given a standardized header and will start at the top of the page. New issues, advertisements, and other features will be used throughout the Bulletin to fill any shortfalls at the end of feature articles. We trust these changes will enhance the readability of the Bulletin. Following are some of the future features to watch for:

Member's Notabilia

Will contain notices from members who want to communicate for purposes of obtaining/exchanging material or information.

Coming Events

Will list meeting dates for Polpex, Polonus National and other Polonia events.

Gems Of Polish Philately

Will provide illustrations and short descriptions of scarce Polish philatelic items rather than feature articles.

Intracamp Postal System Improves Conditions For Polish Prisoners Of War

By: Chris Kulpinski

(Reprinted from "Linn's" June 4, 1979)

This is the first of many articles that will be reprinted from the POW SG Newsletters. This article, about the postal system in the camps, has not been altered, other than to fit this page. I have given some thought to rewriting this and other articles, which will be re-printed. Some of the ideas do not flow well. However, I do not have the time to do so. Therefore, we will reprint and not re-write.

The defeat suffered by the Polish Armed Forces during the first campaign of World War II in September 1939 resulted in the imprisonment of Polish officers in several officers' prisoner of war camps (Oflags) in Germany.

After an initial organizational period, an increasing number of social, professional and cultural activities began to develop to fill the aimless months of these officers' prison camps.

The rather intense communal life, particularly in larger camps, led to the organization of an internal postal system.

The first POW camp to introduce a local camp post was Oflag IIC Woldenberg, built close to the town of the same name and located on the German Side of the 1939 Polish-German border.

Today, the town is inside Poland, as it was prior to the first partition of Poland in 1772, with the old Polish name, Dobiegniew, restored.

Camp Woldenberg numbered about 7,000 prisoners of war, of whom more than 6,000 were Polish officers. The camp consisted of more than 50 barracks, a score of administration and service buildings, meeting halls and spread over 60 acres.

It was the largest Polish POW camp in Germany and was almost a town by itself.

From the beginning, a system of barrack mail officers was set up, who were responsible for the distribution of mail arriving from the outside and for delivering the prisoners' outgoing mail to the German post office.

When mailing a package to the prisoner, the sender had to paste the second page of the form on the package. According to the International Convention on POWs, each prisoner was entitled to receive and send free of charge, one letter form, one post card and one package form each month.

Prisoners' outgoing mail, not written on forms, and also all letters, post cards and packages arriving from the outside, not written on officially required forms, were confiscated by the Germans.

This applied particularly to packages, the contents of which never reached the prisoner, unless the required form was attached.

Any correspondence from one POW camp to another - even on officially required forms - was strictly forbidden. All inbound and outbound mail, which was censored by the Germans, was free of any postal charges.

The existence of mail officers - one in every barrack - duty bound to deliver outgoing mail to the German post office, to receive and distribute any incoming mail, made it possible to handle intracamp mail as well.

This is precisely how intracamp postal service started and later became instrumental in the organization of the Polish Intracamp Post Office.

In Camp Woldenberg, under then existing conditions and in the absence of any guidelines, the first idea of issuing postage stamps was connected with the Board of the Widows and Orphans Fund, the only communal institution with sufficient authority to implement this idea.

It should be noted that, although there were professional postal employees and philatelists among the prisoners, the first postage stamps were issued through the efforts of rank-and-file prisoners who mainly wanted to improve daily living conditions.

Like many other camp institutions, the post office came into being when the need for it became universal. Even in a prison society, the need for saving time is a strong motive.

There were two libraries in Woldenberg, located in different buildings, one offering fiction, the other non-fiction pertaining to history, art, science, etc.

Or the idea might have been conceived by a customer of the camp barter shop, who also had to call repeatedly in order to find out whether his barter order had come through.

At this point, it would seem, in order to explain to those unfamiliar with prison camps, that one could acquire whatever one needed in a prison camp only through barter, which means only through exchange of goods.

For this purpose and with the approval of the Polish camp leader, the camp barter shop was organized and did a brisk business providing many articles of everyday use to those who needed them.

The idea could have been proposed by someone who had to cross the entire camp in order to convey some important piece of information received in the last mail to a friend or colleague in a distant barrack, only to find he was not at home.

These and many similar instances help to illustrate the need for efficient intracamp organizations.

Responding to the need, Polish officers in major POW camps found ways and means to organize the intracamp postal services, which greatly improved communications in the prisoners' society.

The four POW camps in Germany, holding Polish officers and

operating postal services during World War II for the periods indicated, were: Oflag IIC Woldenberg, April 4, 1942 to Jan. 25, 1945; Oflag VIIA Murnau, Nov. 6, 1942 to April 28, 1945; Oflag IID Gross-Born, Dec. 3, 1943 to Jan. 25, 1945; and Oflag IIE/K Neubrandenburg, Jan. 29, 1944 to June 22, 1944.

The internal post at Camp Neubrandenburg was liquidated following the merger of this camp with Gross-Born. Postal services at Woldenberg and Gross-Born ceased when the administration and inmates were evacuated before the advancing Soviet forces. The intracamp post at Murnau closed down when the camp was liberated by American units.

The postal issues of these four Polish POW camps constitute a very interesting chapter in worldwide philately. Polish stamp collectors in particular were confronted with an entire new group in the field of local stamps with a score of prisoner-of-war stamps being added to the numerous Polish town and local postage stamps issued during World War II.

The prisoner-of-war stamps are also listed in German catalogs. German philatelists take the view that the four Polish POW camps which issued stamps were situated within the borders of prewar Germany, and therefore, qualify as German. They consider these Polish stamps as a sequel to the British prisoner-of-war stamps of World War I issued in Camp Ruhleben.

Some of these issues are also of great interest and eagerly sought by topical collectors of Red Cross, Olympics, religion and military. 

Polpex 2003

MARCH 14, 15, & 16

Przybylo's White Eagle Niles, Illinois

*25th Anniversary of the Pontification
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