



Fall 2009

Inside...

- October Events 3
- Volunteer Party 4
- Gardening 5
- Polish Fest Sponsors... 8



THE POLISH CONNECTION

is a newsletter for donors and friends published quarterly by

Polish Heritage Alliance, Inc.

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Polish Fest 2009

by Lidia Sobierajski, Polish Fest Director

Hundreds of dedicated volunteers and thousands of volunteer hours made Polish Fest 2009 a wonderful celebration of Polish and Polish American culture. Despite the more than two inches of rain that fell throughout Friday's Opening Day, more than 5,000 people enjoyed the festivities. Rain soaked the Easter Seals walkers but didn't dampen their spirits as they enjoyed the food, sights and sounds of Polish Fest prior to their annual "Walk With Me" event.

Polish Fest's mission of promoting the best that Polish traditions and culture have to offer came to fruition in our beautiful Cultural Village, organized by Polanki, the Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee. Throughout the village, fest goers were able to observe Polish folk artists demonstrating their craft and watch local Polish artists creating and displaying their works. They could also talk to experts about genealogy and travel to Poland, explore special exhibits, and listen to live presentations and cooking demonstrations in the Taste of Polonia tent located just north of the main gate.

Nine new food vendors joined this year's festival offering a variety of new Polish and American food, as well as several kid-friendly food items. The Sukiennice Marketplace was overflowing with a variety of vendors, Polish Fest souvenirs and the Mały Sklep featured a variety of Polish food products available for purchase. The 11th Annual Chopin Youth Piano Competition showcased many outstanding pianists with seven of the ten winners later performing at a special encore performance held in July at the Polish Center of Wisconsin.

Continued on page 4



From the Executive Director's Desk

by Cindy Lemek

With the Polish Center's 10th anniversary coming up next year, I have been thinking about the Polish Center and its place in our organization's history and in our shared cultural heritage. The Polish Heritage Alliance grew out of Polish Festivals, Inc., which was established to celebrate the traditions and culture of the Polish community and to eventually build a Polish community center.

The Polish Center means many things to many people. For some, it symbolizes the years of hard work, hours of time and all the blood, sweat and tears that it took to build a center for the Polish community. For others, it's a place to come and enjoy all types of activities and events showcasing Polish traditions and culture. Still others see a beautiful banquet hall for celebrating a wedding, a birthday, an anniversary or the memory of a beloved friend or family member who has passed away. When the family booking the hall is of Polish descent, having their event here enhances their families' connection to their ethnic heritage.

For other Polish organizations, the Polish Center is a home for their meetings, events, and other activities. Some people come in to visit the Polanki Library, while others use our genealogical resources to learn more about their family tree.

For other people, like me, the Polish Center represents a connection to my Polish heritage. It is a place where I have learned a great deal about my family's traditions, and I found out that what I thought were little family traditions actually have a connection to a much larger family of Polish immigrants.

Continued on page 3

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Hours

OFFICE:

Monday-Friday
9 AM-5 PM
or by appointment

LIBRARY:

Tuesday 12-2 PM
Wednesday 6-8 PM
during Center events
or by appointment

President's Message

Greetings,

This is the last time that I will have the opportunity to address you in this column. My term as your President comes to a close this month.

Looking back over the past 5 years, I believe that PHA has been able to achieve a measure of stability.

- Decreasing our mortgage balance from \$2.24 million to \$610,000 and performing annual audits has increased our financial stability. These audits also provide us with financial transparency to members and donors.
- Diversifying our Board with persons from the business community and a variety of professions has improved our decision making and increased stability on the Board.
- Staff turnover has been reduced. We have a very competent and dedicated staff: Cindy Lemek, Lidia Sobierajski, Tony Jacobs, Heidi Dietrich, Dave Hart and Grazina Moloney. This has helped to stabilize us and provide a sense of continuity.

Cultural events have increased and have become more varied. Numerous facets of Polish heritage and culture have been featured including art, music (jazz and classical), cuisine, literature and language. Polish beer and vodka have also been touted at tasting events. Of course, this list is not exhaustive.

As PHA continues to grow, we need to keep future needs in mind. Here are some areas that I feel merit attention:

- Planning our financial future. A Development Committee should be constituted to undertake this. We need to determine our future needs, how the money can be raised, and how the Board can assist with raising funds.
- Marketing the PCW as a venue for events. Although bookings are up, we still have unused capacity. Our Executive Director has made efforts here, but Cindy already has enough on her plate. We need a person whose sole task is to increase business volume at the Center.
- Keep Polish Fest on a sound financial footing. The Festival is what originally brought all of us together. Hundreds of volunteers labor long hours to produce it. Our challenge is to increase financial stability so that weather-related risks can be minimized.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your President. I have enjoyed the help of volunteers, staff and Board members. We have worked together to promote the understanding and appreciation of our Polish heritage, developing friendships and sharing experiences along the way. Sto lat!

Fran Wasielewski
President, Polish Heritage Alliance

MEMORIALS

We appreciate the generous
contributions received
in memory of

Jim Champagne

Lori Wojcik

Marian Stawski

Karen Stawski Warner

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.

**Jim was a long-time volunteer
at our Fish Fries.**



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Continued from page 1

Every member of our staff, every board member and every volunteer works hard to keep the Polish Center a beautiful facility which welcomes everyone to learn about Poland and Polonia. We all strive to offer services, events and activities to be enjoyed by all.

Now I would like to extend an offer to you. Please take a moment to let us know what the Polish Center, Polish Fest and/or the Polish Heritage Alliance means to you. Whether you have memories of family outings to Polish Fest, have volunteered for the organization, or just enjoy coming in to see the gardens or pick up the latest fliers, we'd like to hear from you. You can mail in your submissions, fax them or send an email to info@polishfest.org. Please make copies of any photos you would like to submit. We will be unable to return photos to you. A selection of the replies we receive will be printed in the newsletter throughout the next year in celebration of the Polish Center's 10th anniversary.

Cooking, Polish Style

Mondays, Oct. 5-26 • 6:30-8 p.m.

Learn to make a variety of traditional Polish dishes. Our special "chefs" will demonstrate cooking techniques, share recipes and provide samples for you to taste. Classes are \$10 per class or \$35 for all four classes.

Registration is limited, so sign up early!



October 5 –
Soup (grochówka/pea soup) & Salads
Gene and Mary Jo Swider

October 12 – Kiełbasa
Tom Radoszewski

October 19 - Pierogi
Danuta Kurczewski

October 26 – Zrazy (beef roll-ups)
Crocus Restaurant's Ela Wasielewski

THE POLISH CENTER OF WISCONSIN PRESENTS...

Pianist Michał Korzistka

Thursday, October 29, 2009 • 7 p.m.

Pianist Michał Korzistka is a professor at the University of Silesia in Cieszyn, Poland. He has performed concerts and participated in numerous competitions and festivals in Poland and abroad. He recorded archival materials for the Academy of Music in Katowice and for Polish Radio's Program II, as well as taking part in the recording of music by K Szymanowski for Polskie Nagranie (Polish Recordings).

Prof. Korzistka's program will include piano music by Fryderyk Chopin, Karol Szymanowski, and Wojciech Kilar. His eleven-year old daughter will join him on the violin for Grażyna Bacewicz's "Concertino for violin and piano."

**TICKETS: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door
\$2 discount for PHA members**

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Warsaw Village Band

Friday, October 30, 2009 • 8 p.m.

PITMAN THEATRE

on the Alverno College campus
3431 S. 39th Street, Milwaukee



The Warsaw Village Band makes music haunted by the ghosts of the old country. They travel throughout Poland to discover and record older musicians playing ancient songs held by the vestige of memory. Their music summons primal earth-dwelling spirits into the 21st Century for a sound that is intense, driven, virtuosic, and when

they perform, time and breath stop. Warsaw Village Band has been described as "fierce, passionate folk music with a real edge" (*The Irish Times*), "one of Europe's most intriguing, adventurous bands" (*The Guardian*), and "the Polish Pogues" (*Songlines*). Learn more about Warsaw Village Band at warsawvillageband.net.

Tickets are \$22 at the box office (414-382-6044) or online at alvernopresents.alverno.edu

PHA members can get a 15% discount by ordering through the Polish Center. Call 414-529-2140 to place an order.

PHA is also offering a dinner and concert package. For \$35 per person get a fish fry buffet at Crocus Restaurant and a ticket to Warsaw Village Band. Dinner at 6 p.m. Please note this does not include transportation to either the restaurant or the Pitman Theatre. **Reservations must be made before October 19, 2009.**

Polish Fest 2009

Continued from page 1

This year's rainfall on both Friday and Sunday of the Festival obviously contributed to a drop in attendance of about 6,200 from the previous year. Unfortunately, this had a substantial negative impact on ticket sales, as well as food and bar profits. There are numerous ways in which we can measure the success of our festival including the following: attendance figures, beer sales, food sales, gate sales, feedback from our attendees, etc. It is a time like this which reminds us of why we do what we do. Milwaukee is known as the City of Festivals, and we should be very proud of Polish Fest and what it has brought to our community. Holding Polish Fest is part of the mission of the Polish Heritage Alliance, Inc. The dedication and cooperation of our volunteers, the quality and details of our exhibits, the authenticity of our folk dancers, the professionalism of our performers, the talent of our Chopin Competition finalists, the celebration of our Catholic mass, and so much more all comes together in this wonderful three day celebration of our culture. It is the goal of the Polish Heritage Alliance to educate and share our culture with the community, and it goes without saying that we should be very proud of who we are and what we have accomplished.

I would like to thank everyone who helped make Polish Fest 2009 a success. Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who work so hard on the festival all year round. Thank you to our sponsors for their financial support of our mission. Without their financial and in-kind support, we would not be able to make our goal a reality. I am very fortunate to have the privilege of working with a very dedicated group of volunteers, the Polish Heritage Alliance Board of Directors, the Polish Fest Managing Committee, Polish Fest Chair-people and Polish Center of Wisconsin staff that help make our festival a true celebration. Thank you!

Please mark your calendars for next year's festival on June 18-20, 2010 as we celebrate the 29th Annual Polish Fest! Visit www.polishfest.org for more festival information.

Children's Activity Area At Polish Fest Wish List

You can help to make the Children's Activity Area a success by donating the following items:

- Cardstock & paper – white and colored
- Prizes of various values for different ages
- Prizes from children's meal at fast food restaurants
- Large pieces of fabric appropriate for backing or completing a quilt
- Poly-fill for filling quilt
- Any arts or crafts supplies: beads, crayons, magic markers, stamps etc.



Donations of home baked cookies or other bakery will be appreciated for the bakery sale at the December Holiday Bazaar on Sunday, December 6, 2009. Please call Camille Shaw at (414) 475-5124 for more information.

Any of the above donations will help the committee to have a successful children's area at Polish Fest 2010. Help pass on your Polish heritage to the next generation.

PHA Thanks Its Volunteers



Thank you to everyone who attended our 2009 Volunteer Thank You Party "You're An Essential Piece." We had just over 280 people in attendance to enjoy a buffet prepared by Jack Norman Catering.

Special thanks to the planning committee who made this event possible: Diane Holytz, Gloria Shire, Linda Pinkowski, Cindy Lemek, Lidia Sobierajski and Heidi Dietrich. The committee put together small plants for table centerpieces, gathered door prizes and made sure that each attendee's name was hanging on a window or door around the Polish Center on a hand made puzzle piece. Another thanks to Rich Tyszka and his Polish Fest souvenir team for having a variety of Polish Fest items for sale at the party.

The Polish Center and Polish Fest would not be able to function without the help of all of our volunteers. Our volunteers truly are "the essential piece" to the success of our organization.

Wildflower Gardens by Valerie Lukaszewicz



The native wildflower gardens, at the south entrance off 68th Street, are starting to take shape. This is the first year for the flowers and seed that were planted last fall. So far about 90% of the new flowers survived their first winter.

Weeds do outnumber the small plants and are a big problem. There is a very specific technique for weeding this garden due to the fragile nature of the seedlings. That's why I am having professionals from Prairie Future Seeds do this work. I also had 312 new plant plugs put in for next year. These have to be watered for 14 days to help establish the roots. Dave Hart, the Polish Center's Handy Man, does most of this. Sandy Je'Taime and I fill in the rest of the days.

It will take at least three years for the native wildflowers to outnumber the weeds. Be patient. What now looks like a bunch of weeds will turn into a colorful, beautiful prairie.

Garden FYI

John Saltz started the season with his annual trimming of the white hydrangea bushes behind the Polish Center. This is why the flowers always look so lovely in the summer. The next job for the Garden Committee was spreading the mulch in the front and side of the building. Sandy Grzeskowiak, Sandy Je'Taime, Eric Zillgitt and Valerie Lukaszewicz thought that this would take the entire Saturday to do. Along came David Rutkowski and his crew of four workers and a Bob Cat. After five hours of working, the job was completed.

Weekly, Eric and Roberta Zillgitt, removed garlic mustard and other weeds from the area behind the parking lot. They now are spreading mulch which was given to us by David Rutkowski (RutBird Enterprises, LLC). Judy Free, Sandy Je'Taime, and Valerie Lukaszewicz worked weekly on weeding, trimming and planting bushes, and planting flowers around the building. Thanks to Rita Michalak and Judy Free for once again donating colorful annuals to enhance our flower gardens.

Fall is the time that we plant bulbs for next spring. Any bulbs, plants and/or monetary donations will be appreciated. We are always looking for new members for the Garden Committee. Call Valerie at 421-2406, if interested. Please patronize RutBird Enterprises since David Rutkowski donates his workers, equipment, mulch and time to help the Polish Center. Let's give him our support.

Special Thanks

Thank you to American Transmission Company for the donation of computers, monitors and laptops to the Polish Heritage Alliance. They have donated computers to us in the past to replace some of the older models used by Polish Center staff. Some of the new computers have been installed in the Polanki Library to replace outdated computers used for cataloging books and genealogical research.

Thanks also go to PHA member, Eric Zillgitt. Eric is a member of our hard-working Garden Committee, and he is also an accomplished woodworker. After seeing our wish list in an earlier newsletter, he built a bench for our patio and a beautiful box for the large plant in our foyer. We appreciate all the time and work put into these items.



Book Discussion November 8

The next book discussion will be held on Nov. 8 at 1:30 p.m. in the Polanki Library at the Polish Center. The featured book will be *Testaments: Two Novellas of Emigration & Exile* by Danuta Mostwin. The book is 102 pages, and it can be ordered through Amazon.com or other booksellers.



Danuta Mostwin's fiction bridges the divide between Poland and America, exile and emigration. Mostwin and her husband survived the ravages of World War II, traveled to Britain, and then immigrated to the United States. Mostwin devoted her scholarly career to the study of immigrants trapped between cultural worlds.

Winner of international awards for her fiction, Danuta Mostwin here offers two novellas, translated by the late Marta Erdman, which are the first of her works published in English in the United States. Deeply melancholic and moving in its unsentimental depiction of ordinary people trying to make sense of their uprooted lives, *Testaments* presents two powerful vignettes of life in immigrant America, "The Last Will of Blaise Twardowski" and "Jocast."

This publication provides an introduction to Mostwin's work that will ensure that she is recognized as the creator of one of the most nuanced and deeply moving pictures of emigration and exile in Polish-American literature.



Dave

RutBird Enterprises, LLC



Donna

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Concrete, Block & Brick Work ■ Retaining Walls

Dave Rutkowski
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Donna Bird
Cell: 414.403.3157

Dziękuję

Thanks to everyone who supported our summer fundraisers: the Polish Beer Tasting in July and POLAM-Polish Center Golf Outing in August. Both events were well-attended and enjoyed by all.

Attendance for our Beer Tasting was up over our 2008 event. More than a dozen beers were available for sampling, and tasters enjoyed a hearty buffet of both Polish and American food while being entertained by Jerry Halkoski on accordion and two performances by the Syrena Polish Folk Dance Ensemble. Our thanks to Crocus, Polonez, Jack Norman Catering, Klement's, Camille Shaw, Lidia Sobierajski and Diane Holytz for donating food for the buffet, and to JAW Properties and Miller Coors Imports for donations of beer. Michael Krass very generously donated his time and talent by engraving the glasses given away at the event. Thanks also to our Polish Center volunteers – we simply couldn't do this event without them.

On August 3, we joined forces with POLAM Golf Charities to put on the POLAM-Polish Center Golf Outing. This was POLAM's 40th year of holding a golf outing to raise funds for charity. We partnered with POLAM for the first time and we look forward to working with them again in 2010. Seventy golfers participated in the outing at Tuckaway Country Club, and an additional thirty to forty people joined the golfers for dinner that night. The outing was supported by many donors to the raffle and silent auction, and we appreciated all the donations to support this event. Please mark your calendars for the 2010 event scheduled for August 2nd.

Golf Outing Sponsors:

Silver Sponsor

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Judge Fran Wasielewski – Judge Timothy Witkowiak

Thank You to Our Raffle/Auction Item Donors:

ACE Elliott Hardware, Inc.	Lamplight Farms
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Bucko Family Trust	Next Act Theatre
California Sun Tan & Day Spa	Pampered Chef - Emma McMinigal
Charles Allis Art Museum	Partylite - Amy Shields
Comedy Sportz	Polish Center of Wisconsin
Donna Mrugala at Sunny Meadows Farm	Polish Fest
Edward Jones Investments -	Sobieski Vodka
ReAnn Holmes, AAMS	Michele St. Marie-Boelkow
Frankly Music	Sunset Playhouse
Judith Free	Colleen Triebenbach
Green Fields Golf Center	Tuckaway Country Club
Hair Decisions and Oasis Spa	Gregory Wisniewski
In Tandem Theatre	Terry Witkowski
C.H. Janiszewski	Jenny Zillgitt
Michael Krass	

POLISH CENTER OF WISCONSIN

Polish
Vodka
Tasting



Friday, Nov. 6, 2009 • 7-10 p.m.

Sample a variety of Polish Vodkas
Dine on a Buffet of
Polish and American Foods
Cash Martini Menu available

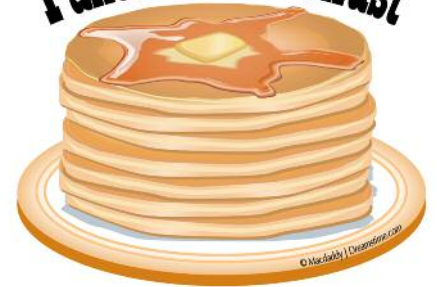
Admission:

\$18 in advance/\$20 at the door

\$10 designated drivers

Patrons must be 21 or over

Pancake Breakfast



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2009
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

\$7.00 adults • \$3.00 children 5-12;
children under 5 are free

Breakfast includes:

All the pancakes you can eat with optional fruit topping, a serving of bacon or sausage, eggs, coffee, milk, and juice.

Call for more details or to make a reservation: 414-529-2140

ORDER YOUR PIEROGI FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Help support Polish Fest's
Childrens' Activity Area

Pierogi are \$4.00 for a dozen.
Assorted varieties are available.
PRE-ORDER BY FRIDAY, NOV. 20
Pickup on Sunday, Dec. 6, 10 am-2 pm
or Wednesday, Dec. 9, 5-8 pm.

Download your order form at
www.polishcenterofwisconsin.org
or call Heidi at 414-529-2140
for more information.

Polish Holiday Crafts Workshops

Instructors:
RYSZARDA KLIM & JOLANTA DRAKE
(folk artists)

Monday, Nov. 16, 2009
6:30-8:00 p.m.



Learn to
make
Wycinanki
Christmas
Cards

Monday, Nov. 23, 2009
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Learn to make Straw
Polish Christmas Ornaments



CLASS FEE INCLUDES ALL MATERIALS:

Adults: \$10 for PHA members
\$12 for non-members

Save \$2 if you sign up for both workshops!
(\$18 for PHA members; \$22 for non-members)

Children ages 10-12: \$6; no children
under age 10. Children under 12 must be
accompanied by a registered adult.

Preregistration is required.

SPACE IS LIMITED. ENROLL EARLY.

For more information, call 414-529-2140.

Polish Center of Wisconsin

Champagne Brunch & HOLIDAY BAZAAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2009

Shop from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm

Champagne brunch served from 10:00 am until 1:30 pm

ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET INCLUDES:

- Made-to-order Omelets
- Carved Ham • Polish Sausage
- Smoked Salmon • Pierogi
- Breakfast Potatoes
- Creamed Cucumber w/ Dill (Mizeria)
- Assorted Rolls & Bread
- Fresh Fruit, Pączki & Assorted Pastries
- Coffee, Tea, Milk, Assorted Juices
- Glass of Champagne
- And much more!

PHA Members: \$15.50

Non-members: \$17.50

Children 6-12: \$7.50

Children 5 and under eat free

Reservations are recommended
for groups of 6 or more.

HOLIDAY BAZAAR

- Polish Blown Glass
Ornaments
- Bolesławiec Pottery
- Amber Jewelry
- Books & Gift Items
- Imported Polish Food
- And much more!

FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC!

POLISH CENTER OF WISCONSIN

6941 S. 68th Street
Franklin, WI 53132

Located between Rawson Avenue & Loomis Road

www.polishcenterofwisconsin.org
414-529-2140

Deck the Halls

ON SUNDAY, NOV. 29, WE WILL BE DECORATING THE POLISH CENTER FOR CHRISTMAS.

Join us as we decorate trees, hang swags of pine boughs, and get the Center ready for the holiday season. We start decorating at about 11 a.m. and serve cookies and hot cocoa to thank the volunteers.

Call us at 414-529-2140 if you plan to attend.



SAVE THE
DATE:

Sunday,
December 20,
2009

Wigilia:

A Polish Christmas Celebration

The Polish Center of Wisconsin will host a family-style Christmas Eve (Wigilia) dinner. After dinner, there will be a sing-along of traditional Polish and English carols. Watch our website and your mailbox for more details.

SMOKE FREE BINGO

Every Wednesday Night

POLISH CENTER OF WISCONSIN
6941 S. 68th Street • Franklin

Doors open at 4 p.m. • Early Bird Bingo
for \$1,200 at 6 p.m.

Regular Session Bingo for \$1,200
at 7:30 p.m.

— All Soft Cards —

SPONSORED BY
POLISH HERITAGE ALLIANCE, INC.
Proceeds benefit the Polish Center of Wisconsin.
Call 414-529-2140 for more information

Monthly Card Games at the Polish Center

1ST & 3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
STARTS AT NOON

Free and Open to the Public
Optional \$8 Lunch on 1st Thursday

Card clubs and bridge groups are welcome!
Individuals may join a table upon arrival.
Play sheepshead, poker and more.

For more information,
call 414-529-2140

2009 POLISH FEST SPONSORS

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Sobieski Vodka

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Polanki, the Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee
Steinway Piano Gallery of Milwaukee

Mass Sponsors:

Sue Chawszczewski
Terry Witkowski

Q&A

One of the most frequently asked questions about Polish Fest is "Why don't you have any Polish beer?" Here's an answer to that question:

All of the ethnic festivals are required to purchase their beer from MillerCoors. MillerCoors does distribute the Polish import Tyskie, but it is in glass bottles. Summerfest will not allow festivals to serve beer in glass bottles; it must be either on tap or in plastic bottles.

This issue is discussed at length with MillerCoors each year, and as soon as it is available either on tap or in plastic bottles, we'll be sure to have it at Polish Fest.



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If your organization has an event you would like included in the Polish Bulletin Board, please mail, fax or email us at the Polish Center of Wisconsin.

Polanki 10th Annual Polish Soup Festival
Sunday, October 11, 2009
12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Norway House
7507 W. Oklahoma Avenue
Seating is limited and by reservation only
Adults \$11
(includes 4 soups of your choice)
Children (10 & under) \$5.50
(includes 2 soups of your choice)
For more information, call 414-541-2433 or visit www.polanki.org

Polish American Congress Annual Dinner
Sunday, November 8, 2009
Cocktails 3:30-4:30 p.m.
Dinner at 5 p.m.
For details, contact Clare Ann Gauvette at 414-425-8528

Milwaukee Society of the Polish National Alliance Annual Pulaski Day Banquet
Sunday, October 18, 2009
Cocktails 5 p.m./Dinner at 6 p.m.
For more information, contact Janine Adamczyk at 414-550-3098

Here are some upcoming events being hosted by Polish organizations this fall:

POLISH BULLETIN BOARD

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED