



# IPA Newsletter

## 2023 IPA® Hall of Fame Inductees



*Congratulations*



# It's Always Sunny in Florida...

Witamy członków!

## FL Musician Spotlight:

In this issue I would like to feature Mr. Stan Simms. Stan is originally from Newark, NJ. He started playing the accordion when he was 6 years old. Throughout his teenage years, Stan got professional lessons from his music teacher, Sanford Hertz. In the early 50's, Stan switched from playing accordion to playing drums in a rock & roll band, since polka gigs were hard to come by. In the 60's, he decided to start his own polka band in New Jersey called, "The Polka Tops". They were the first polka band to play at the Bayway Polish Home! Stan retired and moved to Palm Harbor, Florida. A short time after getting settled in, he started another polka band... the "Nu Soundz Band." They began playing in 2008 and their first job was at the Polish American Society of St. Petersburg. Stan was the leader of the band for 15 years before retiring in the spring of 2023, due to some health challenges. He and his band will be greatly missed at our clubs and by his loyal fans.

I would personally like to send Stan a very special "Thank You" for keeping polka music alive in the state, and I wish him the very best of luck in the future.

## Please continue to support our clubs & bands:

**Polish American Pulaski Club of Daytona Beach** is having Polka dances at (NEW LOCATION) **SNPJ Lodge #603 421 North Samsula Drive, New Smyrna Beach:** July 23<sup>rd</sup> Polka Classics, 27<sup>th</sup> Melotones, Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> Polka Classics, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> Northern Sounds, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> Brewski Bros, Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> Joe "O" Oberaitis, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> Brewski Bros, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> Joe "O" Oberaitis, and Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> Polka Classics. For more information, call the club at (386)-258-7059 or email: [pulaskidaytonaclub@yahoo.com](mailto:pulaskidaytonaclub@yahoo.com). Join their Facebook page or visit their website: [www.polishamericanpulaskiclubdaytona.org](http://www.polishamericanpulaskiclubdaytona.org).

**General K. Pulaski Citizens Club in Belleview** will be closed for the summer months. They will re-open on Sunday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> for their annual Oktoberfest dinner dance featuring Northern Sounds. Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving dinner dance with Northern Sounds and Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, Annual Christmas Kolendy featuring Northern Sounds. Please contact Brad for more info.

**SNPJ Lodge #603 in Samsula** will be hosting the **Polish American Pulaski Club of Daytona Beach** Sunday dinner/dances for the remainder of this year. For additional info. give Cindy a call at (386)-689-9454. Join their Facebook page, [snpilodge603@gmail.com](mailto:snpilodge603@gmail.com) or visit their website: [www.samsulasnpilodge603.com](http://www.samsulasnpilodge603.com)



By Brad Turk  
Florida Director

**Polish American Social Club of Vero Beach** is having other events during the summer months. For information, please join their Facebook page, visit their website [www.pacvbusa.org](http://www.pacvbusa.org), or call the club at (772)-778-0039.

**Polish American Society of St. Petersburg** is having "Thirsty Thursdays" every Thursday evening from 5:30-9:00 PM. Polish dinners will be served from 6:00-8:30 PM with a full bar featuring special drink prices. Sunday Polka dances will begin on Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> with Northern Sounds, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> FL. Generations, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> Polka All Stars. Please visit their website: [www.polishsociety.org](http://www.polishsociety.org) and join their Facebook page, call the club (772)-894-9908.

## OKTOBERFEST Season:

**Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Northern Sounds at OTOW Circle Square Commons, Ocala. **FREE Event** 5-9pm

**Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Brewery St. Pete **Free Event** 3-7pm

**Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ German American Friendship Society Pinellas Co. 12-4pm

**Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Brewery Tampa. **Free Event** 6-10pm

**Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Brewery Tampa. **Free Event** 2-6pm

**Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Brewery, Port Orange. **Free Event** 5-9pm each day

**Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>** – Frank Moravcik Band @ The Villages 6-9pm

**Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Brewery Gainesville **Free Event** 4:30-8pm



**Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Brewery Leesburg 6-9pm

**Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>** Midstate Allstars Oom-pah Band @ Upper Tampa Bay Downs Fri. 5-10pm

**Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>** Midstate Allstars Oom-pah Band @ Upper Tampa Bay Downs Sat. 11-4pm

**Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>** Oktoberfest Express featuring IPA Hall of Famer Joe “O” Oberaitis @ [Upper Tampa Bay Downs Sat. 5-10pm, Sun. 12-5pm](#)

**Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Villages 6-9pm

**Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ Cherrywood C/C 6-9pm

**Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>** – Northern Sounds @ The Plantation 10-2pm

**Please support Florida’s Polka IJ’s.** Featured on the Polka Jammer Network, 2009 IPA Hall of Famer Joe Oberaitis with Polkas 101 (Sat.), and Slovenian Polka Blast (Thur.) IPA member Ray Skorka, can be heard on Crankin’ Polkas (Fri.). The IPA members of The Southern FL Polka Assoc. are LIVE on Polish New Castle Radio with High on Polkas (Sat).

If you would like any additional information about our clubs, polka dances or special events, email me at [bradturk@cox.net](mailto:bradturk@cox.net) or call the **Polka Hot Line:** (352) 875-3961.



**Stan Simms**

## Making Memories at the Milwaukee Polish Fest

By Lindsey Mateja

Milwaukee Polish Fest 2023 was a vibrant celebration of Polish heritage and culture, bringing together polka enthusiasts from near and far. The festival featured a remarkable lineup of bands including I.P.A. Tribute Band, The Boys, Polka Country Musicians, Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push, The Maroszek Brothers, Keith Stras & Polka Confetti, Polka Family, Polka Generations, and D Street Band. The bands sounded fantastic.

Polish culture was celebrated at every turn with Polish food, clothing, jewelry, merchandise, and drinks available across the grounds. Polish Fest offers one of the most authentic displays of Polish culture, including Polish Dancers from all different regions, traditional Polish Music, and Disco Polo.

Attendees unified over the reliably temperamental weather of the Milwaukee Lakefront (warm sunshine on Friday and chilly winds on Sunday) all while enjoying Polish Fest staples of Tyskie Beer & Sobieski Vodka Lemonades. Many great memories were made between friends and family who attended, especially for those who hadn't seen one other for several years.





How many answers to the clues can you get?  
Here is a hint, all of the answers are song titles  
that have won IPA's Favorite Song Award through-  
out the years.

(answers on page 15)

## CLUE

## ANSWER

1	Where we first met Fiddlin' Freddie	
2	Eddie B took issue with this person after he lost his Peaches	
3	Marion Lush was the first recipient of an IPA Favorite Song Award for this song	
4	They traveled the country for this song	
5	New Phaze explained why musicians and fans do what they do	
6	The New Brass had this hit before they Rolled Out the Barrell	
7	PCM hopes they don't lose their transmission on this	
8	FreezeDried wanted her to welcome them home	
9	Ryan Ogrodny sang this duet with his Polka Hero	
10	The Maestro's Men demanded this	
11	The Brass Connection didn't have the need in 1985	
12	This marathon of a tune garnered The Sounds with their first award in 1982	
13	The name of this DIVA generated a win for Eddie B in 1975	
14	"What's it really about?" was the discussion after The Boys released this award-winning song in 2016	
15	The Official Polka of the Bay State	





## 55<sup>th</sup> Annual International Polka Association Festival & Convention



Make your plans now to attend the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual  
IPA Festival and Convention

**September 1 – September 3, 2023**  
**Labor Day Weekend**  
**DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh-Cranberry**  
<https://www.ipapolkas.com/go/2023ipafestival/>

If you prefer to call to make your reservation, you can do so by calling the hotel directly at 724-776-6900. Press 1 to be connected to the Front Desk at the hotel and mention the group name: IPA Attendee Block

### **3 Fun-filled days of Polka Entertainment**

**Lenny Gomulka and Chicago Push, The Beat, John Gora and Gorale, Polka Country Musicians, Klancnik & Friends, Polka Family, IPA Tribute Band, Old School, New Brass Express, Garrett Tatano Band, Tony Blazonczyk's New Phaze, Phocus, Dennis Polisky and the Maestro's Men, and The Kosmix Band**

(Band line up subject to change without notice)

**Welcome Party, Hall of Fame and Music Awards Banquet, Pool Parties, Polka Mass, Election of Officers and Directors, plus much more!**

### **Bonus Event:**

**Thursday August 31, 2023 – Pre-Festival IPA Welcome Party at the Cranberry Elks Lodge #2449 with music by 2022 IPA Hall of Fame Inductee Alex Meixner and his band**  
**All proceeds to benefit the Elks Lodge**

Follow us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ipapolkas](http://www.facebook.com/ipapolkas)

Visit our website: [www.ipapolkas.com](http://www.ipapolkas.com)

For more information email: [info@ipapolkas.com](mailto:info@ipapolkas.com)

Be sure to listen to the IPA Radio Show:  
Polka Jammer Network  
Sunday's from 11 am to Noon (CT)





Thomas Wanderlich, AZ  
Felicia DeKarski, AZ  
Jerome Machey, PA  
Kellie Everett, MO  
Ed Klancnik, TN  
Richard Machey, PA  
Elizabeth Sadus, IL  
Kenneth Lenish, FL  
Edward Skwiat, IN

## New Lifetime Members

John Freidhoff, PA  
Bren Wrona Norris, PA  
Peter Wendinger, MN  
Amber Alberts, IA



## The Boys Makes an Announcement

By Mike Matousek

Here's the latest news about The Boys. We're in the midst of a great year playing polka music and enjoying the company of our friends and fans. Since I'm exploring the next chapter of my life, I've decided to bow out of the group in early 2024. As a cofounder of The Boys (from Baltimore) back in 1980, the band felt it would be best to put "The Boys" brand on the shelf at that time. More info about the group's re-branding will be shared soon.

The Boys look forward to our remaining performances at Polka Fireworks in Seven Springs, Summer Music Fest in Frankenmuth, the Uniontown Polish Club, Zabawa in Erie, Polkamotion by the Ocean in Rehoboth Beach, the Maryland Folk Festival, the Hruku's Hellraisers Halloween Weekend in Cohoes, the Polish Cultural Foundation Hall in Clark, the Homestead Event Center in Dillonvale, the Polish Falcons Club in Mt. Pleasant, and the big 11-Day Polka Brews Cruise next February, which will be our last "hurrah." Please visit [www.theboysband.com](http://www.theboysband.com) to view more performance details on our tour page. Lots of fun to be had over the next eight months, so we're hoping to share some special moments with you.





## Ocean Beach Park Polka Days 2023 – More Polka Memories Made

By Richie Dombrowski

The “Eighth Annual Ocean Beach Park Polka Days” has concluded, and another fun polka weekend is in the books. A great crowd was again in attendance as some of the finest Polka Bands were again on hand to provide great musical entertainment.

The festivities fun kicked off Wednesday AM as the “Ocean Beach Park Polka Days Golf Open” began with another fun group of golfers. Weather was perfect as the group teed off another year. For all the folks staying at homes along the beach, the Wednesday “OBPPD Annual House Crawl” was once again in motion and a big hit as folks went house-to-house visiting their neighbors for Hors d’oeuvres and a “Na Zdrowie” or two!

Music began Wednesday evening as the host band, the Polka Country Musicians, again kicked things off on the boardwalk along with a live broadcast presented by the Polka Jammer Network. The fun continued Thursday, Friday and Saturday with bands performing in the pavilion right on the beach from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM and then following from 6:00 PM until 12:30 AM in the beautiful ballroom. All bands brought their “A+” game with live Jammer broadcasts again and the music flowed for hours. Bands appearing at OBPPD were: The “USPA 2022 Band of The Year”, the “Polka Country Musicians”, along with: Polka Family, The Boys, The Beat, The Dynabass, Ed Forman, Maestro’s Men, Lenny Gomulka and Chicago Push, Matt’s All Stars and making their first New England debut, Live Wire of Wisconsin.

We’d like to extend as warm “Thank You” to all the folks who attended from so many states; the great

bands who played their hearts out; the Ocean Beach staff; and, finally, the Ocean Beach Park Polka Days staff who worked diligently before, during and after the festival to keep this a premier polka event!

Next years dates are: June 19 – 22, 2024!! Make your plans now to attend this premier event and we’ll see you all again next year “at the Beach!!!”





## Combination Celebration! Polish Constitution Day, Cinco De Mayo, & Jammerthon 2023

By Kathy Blazonczyk

On Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup>, Tish Blazonczyk of Bel-Aire Enterprises hosted the Combination Celebration. Polka fans packed the Royalty West Banquet Hall in Willow Springs, IL to enjoy the energy and fine sounds of the Polka Family Band. What a crowd it was! We were happy to see fans & friends not only from Chicago, but from MI, IN, OH, WI and MA. The staff at the Royalty West provided delicious dishes, both Polish & Hispanic for purchase, and decorated the hall for a most festive atmosphere.

Polka Jammer IJ's were on hand to coordinate a two hour live broadcast for Jammerthon 2023.

Thank you Val Zielinski, Rick Rzeszutko, Keith Stras, Rick Kubic & Keith Pietranczyk.

Roberta & Randy Polovick were diligently processing pledges.

Thank you to all who attended to make this such an enthusiastic & fun event, and Congratulations to the Polka Jammer on another very successful Jammerthon!



# 2023 IPA Polka Hall of Fame®

## Inductee

*Dee-Dee Ogrodny*

*Living Category*



Dee-Dee Jasiewicz Ogrodny has had polkas in her heart since she was born, and she has been a fixture at polka events since she was 18 months old, first with her Mom, Josephine Jasiewicz, and with her Dad and brother, Henry and Henny Jasiewicz (both Inductees of the IPA Polka Music Hall of Fame). Dee-Dee started to sing with the Bell Hops' "Hopettes" and then solo with the Bell Hops when she was 9 years old, standing on a chair to reach the microphone. Dee-Dee's love for polkas continued to grow and little did she know, Staś Ogrodny, who would eventually become her husband, first saw her singing at his family's Fiedor's Grove when he was 11. Ray Jay Jarusinski (another IPA Polka Music Hall of Fame Inductee) eventually joined the Bell Hops, and Dee-Dee and Ray shared vocals. When the Bell Hops disbanded in 1970, Henry, Henny, and Dee-Dee joined the Polish All Stars.

In 1972, Henny & the Versa J's formed with Henny, Dee-Dee, Dad Henry, and members of the Gibala family. Dee-Dee had taken piano lessons for 7 years when the band originated, and she began contributing piano and bass along with her vocals. Then at age 13, Henny's son, Butchie, joined the band on drums. For the Jasiewicz and Ogrodny families, polkas were always the bond that kept them together. In the meantime, Staś, who played trumpet and sang, started performing with Ray Jay, his brother, and cousins who formed Ray Jay and the Carousels. Eventually Dee-Dee and Staś began dating, and each played in their own family bands every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Polka music has always been in Dee-Dee's heart, and her love for the polka people was and still is unparalleled! Dee-Dee and Staś were married in 1979; and when the Carousels disbanded for a time, Staś began playing with the Versa J's. The band continued to play together at venues throughout the country, and in May of 1985, Dee-Dee and Staś were blessed with their son,

Ryan Joseph. Ryan was born with the love of polkas, thanks to Dee-Dee and Staś, and his Grandfather (Pappi) Henry started to teach him violin as soon as he was able to hold the bow. Dee-Dee also began to take Ryan to Suzuki violin lessons when he was 3 1/2, taking notes during each lesson that she would use to practice with Ryan everyday. Ryan played along with his Grandfather until Henry passed away in 1989. Dee-Dee then continued to work with Ryan on his fiddle, vocal, and other instrumental lessons, cultivating his musical knowledge each and every day. She also taught Ryan and many other family and friends to dance the polka, and gave Ryan a never-ending love of polka music that he cherishes deeply. Dee-Dee's support, guidance, and love are the reasons why Ryan's dreams have come true.

Henny and the Versa J's with Ryan continued to perform locally, nationally, on cruises, and internationally including a tour of Poland. Many wonderful friends and family played with the band during those years. One of those dear friends, IPA Polka Music Hall of Fame Inductee Randy Koslosky, joined the Versa J's in 1997 and teamed up with Dee-Dee, Ryan, and the band to produce many heartfelt recordings, including one along with the choir of their Parish of St. Mary Czestochowa in McKeesport, PA. Dee-Dee coordinated and produced all of the band's recordings, bus trips, cruises, mailings, and promotion throughout the years. She was and still is always there for everyone with her larger than life heart.

Dee-Dee's involvement in polka music is inseparable from family. This includes performing in bands with her father, brother, nephew, husband, and son. For many female musicians, having a family has replaced performing, but for Dee-Dee the two have gone hand in hand. As a devoted stay-at-home



mom, she continued to perform and still be the devoted mom she wanted to be. So, her career in polka music was integrated with family life through playing in the band that included her family. And for those band members who were not related, she was a big part of making those members feel like family. That family sense extended beyond the band and band members to the friends and fans of the band and to polka fans on a national level. With Dee-Dee we have someone who has performed at the highest level in the world of polka music. In addition, beyond her talent, she represents the loving, welcoming, familial aspect of the polka world. Her humility, charity, kindness, friendship, care, compassion, selflessness, and inclusiveness are a force for good in the field of polka music. Everyone is welcome and brought in and feels the personal connection. In this way, Dee-Dee is an icon of what is best in our "polka family".

### ***Awards/Honors***

On a list that begins with Eddie Blazonczyk and Lenny Gomulka, Dee-Dee Ogradny is the third most awarded vocalist in the history of polka music. During the years, Dee-Dee was honored to receive the Favorite Female Vocalist Award 11 times from the International Polka Association, 13 times from the United States Polka Association, and the UPA Award for Piano Player of the Year. As part of the Versa J's, Dee-Dee coordinated and was featured on the band's recordings, which received IPA awards for Favorite Album for Come On Over, Favorite Song for "If I Could Be Like You" (written by Dee-Dee) featuring Eddie Blazonczyk and Ryan, and Favorite Song for "Do You Remember When the Fiddle Played". Additional awards for the Versa J's from the USPA included Favorite Album and Song. In addition, awards from 24/7 Polka Heaven included Best Album, Song, and Entertainers. The Versa J's received a Grammy award nomination in 2004 for Come On Over. The Grammy nomination allowed for many TV interviews, allowing Dee-Dee to continue to share her love for polka music with new audiences across the country. Dee-Dee is the featured vocalist on over 50 songs on 15 Albums & CDs with the family, the first song being "Polish Boyfriend" with others including signature tunes such as "Picking Cherries", "Let's Get Going", "Christ Is Born", "Touch of a Master's Hand", "I Give You Music", and "Restless". She also contributed her vocals on TBC's Our Polka Hero CD and a vocal duet with the Del Sinchak Band on their Live at Kuzmans record. As a studio musician on piano, Dee-Dee performed most notably on the New Brass' landmark Roll Out the Barrel recording as well as on "Birds 'N

Bees Polka" for The Krew Brothers. She shared her love for polka music weekly playing every polka venue, including benefits and conventions on stage for 42 years until her husband Staś passed away suddenly. Dee-Dee along with Ryan made the difficult decision to venture to Nashville in 2007. Their love for God, family, friends, and music continue to give them strength along the way. In 2022, Lenny Gomulka asked Dee-Dee to join him on his latest recording, To the Moon and Back. Dee-Dee was honored to be a featured vocalist on 3 songs, including the title track of the album.

### ***Nashville's Polka Ambassador***

Dee-Dee keeps in touch with the polka world and truly appreciates the love and support throughout the years. She continues to love and honor her Polish roots. As the senior manager of guest relations at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum for fifteen years, Dee-Dee consistently shared her love for polkas with Nashville artists, business executives, co-workers, and visitors, exposing new people to the polka world that she deeply cherishes. In 2022, Dee-Dee co-founded Four Strings Tours with Ryan and her daughter-in-law, Danika. One of the primary focuses of Four Strings Tours is to expand polka music's reach. By welcoming 150 polka fans to Nashville as a large group in October of 2022, Dee-Dee helped organize the first push-style polka event in Nashville history, featuring Lenny Gomulka and Chicago Push. She also organized and performed on the inaugural Four Strings Tours Recording Series song, Another Polka Rockin' Weekend (Nashville Version). Written by and featuring Lenny Gomulka, the song was recorded at Historic RCA Studio B with Country Music Hall of Fame member, Charlie McCoy. Dee-Dee nurtures the connections made with polka friends and family throughout the United States, and continues to treasure those connections. Family, faith, polka music, and Dee-Dee's Polish heritage have made her the humble and genuine role model that she is today. She is now thrilled to be Nunnie to her precious granddaughters, Cecilia Jordan (CeCe) and Lucina Josephine (Lucy), sharing the love of polka music with them. As a vocalist, musician, and person, Dee-Dee Ogradny represents all of the exceptional qualities that make the polka world extraordinary.





Please join the International Polka Association in celebrating the  
**53rd Annual IPA Hall of Fame & Music Awards Banquet!**



**Saturday, September 3rd**  
**10:45 AM Arrival & Seating**  
**11:00 AM Luncheon**

Location: DoubleTree Hotel in Pittsburgh-Cranberry, PA  
Tickets are **\$45 per person** by advance reservation only.

**Reservations must be made by August 19th, 2023.**

***Banquet Ticket/Reservation Purchasing Options:***

**Option 1: IPA Website Store**

Purchase your IPA Hall of Fame & Music Awards  
Banquet Tickets  
via **Paypal on the IPA store.**

**<https://www.ipapolkas.com/store/>**

**Option 2: Zelle**

Purchase your IPA Hall of Fame® & Music Awards  
Banquet Tickets via Zelle.

Zelle your Banquet Ticket money to  
**[banquet@ipapolkas.com](mailto:banquet@ipapolkas.com)**

**Option 3: Mail a Check**

Purchase your IPA Hall of Fame & Music Award  
Banquet tickets via Mail:

Download the IPA Banquet Reservation Form here:  
**<https://www.ipapolkas.com/go/banquetform/>**

Send your completed form and check to:

**International Polka Association  
Polka Music Hall of Fame and  
Music Awards Banquet  
PO Box 1484  
Plainfield, IL 60544**

You will receive a follow-up email to confirm your reservation and table information.

**Questions? Please contact: [banquet@ipapolkas.com](mailto:banquet@ipapolkas.com)**



**Join us for the 3rd Annual Golf Outing with Friends  
Honoring Richie and Jerry Tokarz  
Friday, September 1, 2023—IPA Weekend  
Strawberry Ridge Golf Course  
135 McNulty Lane  
Harmony, PA 16037**



**Tee Times will start at 8am  
Scramble Format  
Cost—\$ 50  
18 Holes/Cart  
Venmo—@Jeffrey-Yash  
Contact Jeff Yash by Saturday, August 20, 2023  
518-281-1587**



## The Passing of Steve Meisner, 2019 IPA Hall of Fame Inductee

Steven Alan Meisner, 62, of Whitewater, WI passed away surrounded by his loving family on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at Meriter Hospital in Madison, WI following a brief illness. Steve was born on April 17, 1961, in Beloit, WI to LaVerne and Judith (Kutz) Meisner. He married Barbara Lindl on May 19, 1985, at First English Lutheran Church in Whitewater.

Steve was a multi-talented musician, entertainer, composer, and arranger who traveled the country and world with his band. He first picked up a squeezebox at age five. After mastering the accordion, he took on the trumpet, tuba, bass guitar, button box, and occasionally drums and banjo. During his over 50-year career he performed with the nation's top accordionists, polka icons and musicians, sometimes averaging over 250 performances annually. He has either produced, performed on or created nearly 50 projects, including LPs, CDs, singles, jingles, commercials, movies, and videos - including appearing as a guest on other artist's recordings. He appeared in two movies, countless times on radio and on national, regional and local television. His tireless effort resulted in numerous awards from nearly every polka and ethnic organization including the International Polka Association (IPA), National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame, Wisconsin Polka Hall of Fame, Wisconsin Area Music Industry (WAMI), Iron World Polka Hall of Fame, Maryland Accordion Club, and many others.

If he wasn't entertaining audiences with his music, he was spending time with his wife, 3 children & 6 grandchildren, working on his many classic cars, enjoying life on Whitewater Lake, by the pool or on his boat, bird and squirrel watching from his favorite couch in his sunroom, or having a Korbel at his tiki bar with family and friends. His immense love for his family and friends was unmatched. He was always willing to help anyone out in time of need, give sound advice, answer any question or just listen and talk. Everyone knew that Steve was a true friend and would always be there for them. He was a surrogate father and brother to so many as well as a true one-of-a-kind friend to all. As such his care for all had lovingly been dubbed "MeisnerCare" by those close to him.

He is survived by his wife Barb Meisner, Whitewater; children Whitney Meisner, Whitewater, Lindsey Meisner (Nik Martin) Whitewater, Austin Meisner (Madison Holverson) Whitewater; siblings Daniel Meisner, Vashon, WA and Michelle (John) Bush,

Milton. He is also survived by his grandchildren Evan, Jacob & Rosalia Copeland (Whitney Meisner) along with Sam, Eli & Jack Martin (Lindsey Meisner & Nik Martin). He was preceded in death by his parents.

You can now mark your calendars and start making plans to attend Steve's Memorial Celebration. The date will be Saturday, August 19, 2023, at the Schwabenhof in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. This epic celebration and party is scheduled to begin at 1:00 PM in the afternoon and run into the evening. The Schwabenhof pavilion will hold a very large crowd along with ample free parking. Area hotels are being explored for room blocks and to provide out-of-town guests with lodging options. Music, entertainment, food and of course beverage planning are all underway. As you might imagine, an event of this magnitude will take a lot of planning. As soon as additional details become available, we will continue to provide additional information at [www.stevemeisner.com](http://www.stevemeisner.com), on Steve's Facebook page and to Steve's newsletter subscribers. Until then, you can start making travel plans and other arrangements for Saturday, August 19, 2023, at the Schwabenhof in Menomonee Falls.









thank you!

In Memoriam



Ronald and Eileen Zywieci, IL  
Bryan Koslosky, MI  
Daniel Nawrot, MI

Dave Raccis  
Eugene Sadus  
Bruno Mikos

## 2023 Kinloch Fire Hall

### "Pittsburgh's Polka Hot Spot" Polka Schedule

Saturday June 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Join us for some great fun <b>The KOSMIX Band</b>	8:00pm - 9:00pm \$12.00 per person
Sunday Oct 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2023	Join us to hear this great Slovenian Band <b>The Zolkas</b>	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$12.00 per person
Sunday Nov 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Join the newest Buffalo band featuring members from the Krew Brothers and Knewz <b>Seven</b>	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$18.00 per person
Sunday Nov 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	The incomparable award winning <b>Polka Family Band</b>	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$18.00 per person

*Schedule is subject to change*

**Kinloch Fire Hall**  
915 New York Ave  
New Kensington, PA 15068

Food and drinks will be available for purchase. No BYOB!

For table reservations or more information contact:  
Chris Bogdon - 412-260-9725 or [chris@westernpapolkas.com](mailto:chris@westernpapolkas.com)

For a list of all polka happenings in Western PA, and sign up for our  
mailing list, go to: <https://www.westernpapolkas.com>

On behalf of the  
Executive Board and the  
Directors, we wish you  
all safe travels to  
Pennsylvania for the  
55th Annual  
International Polka  
Association Festival and  
Convention.



IPA® Festival & Convention  
September 1 - 3, 2023



Visit our website for hotel updates  
[www.IPAPOLKAS.com](http://www.IPAPOLKAS.com)

See you there!

11. Got No Reason  
12. Up in the Attic  
13. My Mary Lou  
14. Mary Jane  
15. Say Hello to Someone in Massachusetts

6. Let the Sunshine In  
7. The Roads We Travel  
8. Angelina  
9. If I Could Be Like You  
10. Don't Stop the Music

1. Fiddle Faddle  
2. Who the Hell is Johnny  
3. Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain  
4. We Are Family  
5. For the Love of the Music

Answers to page 4

# 2023 IPA Polka Hall of Fame®

## Inductee

*Peter J. Danielczuk*

*Living Category*



2023 marks Peter J. Danielczuk's 53rd anniversary of being involved in polka music. Very rarely is there a DJ/IJ who becomes involved in all aspects of polka music the way he has. He started his polka career in 1970 at WADS 690AM in Ansonia, CT as the engineer for the Victor and Sophie Zembruski "Polish Eagle Polka Show" while he was still attending the University of Connecticut. When Sophie had to have an operation, he took over the show on his own for a few months. After his work with the Zembruski's, Peter worked full time on radio for a few years always playing at least one or two polkas every morning on his radio show. He later teamed up with Dick Yash for a few years on a show entitled "Polka Carousel." The two would become one of the best Polka radio duos in the country. He and Dick would do live remote broadcasts from the New England Polka Fest every year which was held at Warsaw Park in Ansonia, CT.

Peter started his "Polka Celebration" radio show in the late 1970's first on WADS 690AM in Ansonia, and then was on WWCO 1340AM in Waterbury, CT, as well as WDJZ 1530AM in Bridgeport, CT., and WNTY from Southington, CT. In 1992, his Polka Celebration show moved to WICC 600 AM for ten years, was heard throughout the Northeast, and was given the title of "Connecticut's Prince of Polkas" by the New Haven Register, CT Post, Waterbury Republican, Hartford Courant, and New York Times newspapers. In 2003, his radio show returned to WDJZ where he remained until 2009. In 2007, he started an FM show at WNHU 88.7FM from the University of New Haven in West Haven, CT. That show aired until the end of 2022 when the college administration eliminated all community programming. The Polka Celebration show is heard on [www.247PolkaHeaven.com](http://www.247PolkaHeaven.com) as well.

Peter was one of the original members of the Polka

Jammer Network back in 2003 and helped Polkaman Jack Baciewski start up "Polka Legacy", an oldies network which operated from January 2010 until August 2011.

Radio isn't the only thing Peter has been involved in. In 1992, he started his Polka Celebration TV Show on his local cable network which has consistently been rated the #1 watched TV show on that network. For years, Peter went to many dances throughout the country and filmed many hours of Polka fun for his TV audience.

Peter's other accomplishments include a regularly written article entitled "Polka Celebration" for the monthly newspaper of the Polish Falcons of America "Sokol Polski," songs he's written entitled "Hooray For The New York Yankees" and "MaryAnn The Polka Angel," CD liner note writer for well-known bands, hosting Polka Celebration cruises, promoting polka dances, Master of Ceremonies for festivals and awards programs in polka music as well as television. Peter was an executive officer of the International Polka Association for 17 years. Today, he serves as a Trustee of the IPA Hall-Of-Fame. In 2007, he was awarded the Joe Jozwiak Award from the International Polka Association, as well as being inducted into the National Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame located in Ohio. Shortly afterward, Jim Kucharski proclaimed him the "Dean of Connecticut's Polka Broadcasters".

In 2011, Peter was awarded the "Frankie" Yankovic Award by the PAC. The Frankie Award is a national service award, given to those individuals whose efforts have been instrumental in sustaining the polka genre. In 2013, Peter received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the United States Polka Association (USPA). In April of 2023, Peter was notified that he would be inducted in the International Polka Association Hall-Of-Fame.



Peter did a one hour show on the Polka Jammer Network from January 2003 until May 2007. After a few years absence, he returned to the Jammer in September of 2013. On February 5th, 2014, he expanded to a 2-hour LIVE show currently airing on Wednesday afternoons from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm ET.

His Polka Celebration show is also heard every 4th Sunday of the month (pre-recorded) from 3-4pm ET on WERG 90.5 FM in Erie, PA.

Peter has recorded with the Rich Bobinski Orchestra and Dennis Polisky & the Maestro's Men. He occasionally performs with them as a guest vocalist.

One of Peter's proudest achievements was to establish the "Ballroom Polka" by his mentor: the late Ray Henry, as the official state polka in CT. After seven years of persistence, Peter through his individual effort and tireless lobbying succeeded into getting the Connecticut State Legislature to name the Ballroom Polka by Polka Hall of Famer and former President

of the USPA: Ray Henry as the official State Polka in 2013. Governor Malloy signed the bill.

Another proud moment of his life was in the late 1990's when Peter had the opportunity to travel to Rome to meet and shake the hand of His Holiness (and future Saint): Pope John Paul the Great.

Peter has made Polka a major part of his life and continues to promote and entertain his listeners. Peter walks and talks Polka music!

PETER J's POLKA CELEBRATION plays the newest polka music, as well as classic polka oldies of the past. The show originates from "The Copper City of Ansonia, CT along the Naugatuck River."



Special Thank you to our Radio Show Sponsor  
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June 12, 2023  
Dear Christy and IPA Officers and Directors:  
Thank you so very much for the plaque and letter commemorating my 15 years of broadcasting on the Polka Jammer Network! What a surprise they were to receive and so very much appreciated! I believe it's safe to say, especially at this place in time, that our service to the music is done for the love of it. I don't know of any other genre that stirs the heart as does our polka music! I am grateful that I had the opportunity to, in small part, give back to the music what it has provided to me all my life. Thank you for all your service as well!

With much love & appreciation,  
Jon



**1<sup>st</sup>** – Frank Stanger;  
Maryann Cuglewski;  
Sandra chuster

**2<sup>nd</sup>** – Chuck Stastny; Patricia Daigle;  
Patricia Mazur; Tony Blazonczyk;  
Tanya Mackiewicz

**3<sup>rd</sup>** – Mike Stapinski; Maria Dipyatic;  
Cindy Olszewski; Jim Wysocki

**4<sup>th</sup>** – Susan Matysiewicz; Lynn Kaminski;  
Sherri Ann Martin

**5<sup>th</sup>** – Rose Marie Tynski; Dianne Zawisza;  
Max Kawa; Wally Czaska; Jeff Radtke;  
Spencer Carlson; Randy Polovick;  
Barry Pfannenstiel

**6<sup>th</sup>** – MaryAnn Jukubielski; Marcia Muscato;  
Linda Daddona

**7<sup>th</sup>** – Edward Guca; Camille Hjelm; Pete Jend;  
Chris Prochot; Walter Mendel

**8<sup>th</sup>** – Alex Saltanovitz, Jr.

**9<sup>th</sup>** – John Cieplik; Kelly Stec; Jeff Tomczak

**10<sup>th</sup>** – Helen Curtin; Jim Kucharski

**11<sup>th</sup>** – Dave Ulczycki; Keith Pietranczyk;  
Chris Zawisza; Lisa Adamich

**12<sup>th</sup>** – Leonard Wolski

**13<sup>th</sup>** – Carol Forman; Steve Zalewski;  
John Ziobrowski

**15<sup>th</sup>** – Edward Burczy; Ed Svoboda; Karen Guca

**17<sup>th</sup>** – Tim Wolter; Doris Benson; Cheryl Rognerud;  
Bernie Koslosky

**18<sup>th</sup>** – Carol Trzebiatowski; Chris Blocher;  
Valerie Nidoh

**19<sup>th</sup>** – Michael Matousek;  
Michael Retka; Debbie Kapuscinski

**20<sup>th</sup>** – Ken Machelski; Dawn Suchon-Rogers

**21<sup>st</sup>** – Carolyn Baras; Tammy Arnes;  
Wesley Matus;

**22<sup>nd</sup>** – Julianne Mossak; Jeanette Tonski

**23<sup>rd</sup>** – Stas Golembewski; Randy Vokral

**25<sup>th</sup>** – Steve Wejrowski; Robin Pegg

**26<sup>th</sup>** – Mary Ann Moon

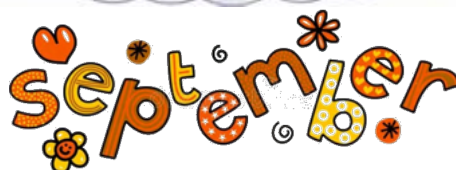
**28<sup>th</sup>** – Joyce Fornek; Judy Krason

**29<sup>th</sup>** – Keith Gennerman; Rick Chimniak

**30<sup>th</sup>** – Dianne Winiarz; Grazyna Danielczuk;  
Sandra Hrynio







1<sup>st</sup> – Rosanna Kutas; John Prytko, Jr.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Lorraine Ciesla; John Mikrut; Jim Weber; Rich Liput; Mike Evan

4<sup>th</sup> – Ken Pienta; Louis Fava, Jr.

5<sup>th</sup> – John Krawisz; Judith Ozanich

6<sup>th</sup> – Susan Jurevis; Jim Brado; Richard Zebrowski; Maynard Gipp

7<sup>th</sup> – Jeanne Henderson

8<sup>th</sup> – Daniel Nawrot; Brad Turk; Mary Witulski

9<sup>th</sup> – Jennifer Pijanowski; John Mikos

10<sup>th</sup> – Jeffrey Guyette; Johnny Waichulis; Jim Mackiewicz

11<sup>th</sup> – Sharon Creman; Mary Jean Sweeney; Evelyn Putz; Ted Kania; Lori Urbanczyk

12<sup>th</sup> – Rich “Sudzy” Cerajewski; Ronald Gregg, Janice Prushinski; Corrine Ganiec; Julianna Makuch

13<sup>th</sup> – David Bonczkiewicz; Eileen Daniloff; Jeff Heinzcosta

14<sup>th</sup> – Butchie Jasiewicz ; Jim Miller; Dolores Kozlauska; Velva Jankowski

15<sup>th</sup> – Rob Piatkowski; Deb DePont; Pat Jayo Gerrie Barsukiewicz; Joyce Bohuslav

16<sup>th</sup> – Lenny Gomulka; Krystyna Bylinowski; David Gajda

17<sup>th</sup> – John Borkowski; Geri Fornek

18<sup>th</sup> – Kenneth Larson; Danny Mateja; Corinne Turk; Robert Hoffman; Robert Richmond III; Stanley Mikrut

19<sup>th</sup> – Richie Kois

20<sup>th</sup> – Judy Rosinski; Eugene Brenek; Carlene Moloney; Felicia DeKarski

21<sup>st</sup> – Steve Drzewicki; Marilyn Miaso

22<sup>nd</sup> – John Paczkowski, Jr., Shirley Sains; Peter Hrycyk

23<sup>rd</sup> – Ted Kiewicz; Andrew Kuczmarski

24<sup>th</sup> – Donna Cotrupe; Edward Sienkowski; Donna Cotrupe

25<sup>th</sup> – Kevin Kwiatkowski; Joseph Ryndak

26<sup>th</sup> – Ed Haynack; Dan Czerniak; Doris Lokre; Bob “Blender Bob” Wolinski

27<sup>th</sup> – Mike Nowakowski; Diane Bulanda

28<sup>th</sup> – Lori Young

29<sup>th</sup> – Bev Kizior; Gary Hvdik; Willie Bohuslav; Veronica Costa

30<sup>th</sup> – Walter Dragon; Dennis Popiel





## Recipes from ... IPA Members

IPA President, Christy Krawisz, thought it would be a great idea to share some of our members favorite recipes with the membership. So, we will spotlight food and drink recipes submitted to us by our members. To share your favorite recipe, please email it to [info@ipapolkas.com](mailto:info@ipapolkas.com) and **include your name in your email**. Please send it in a word document or directly in the email. PDF's won't work, sorry. We look forward to sharing some great recipes with you! Enjoy.



### INGREDIENTS:

- 14.5 ounces chicken stock
- 10.5 ounces Cream of Chicken soup
- Knorr Cheddar Broccoli Rice & Pasta Blend (5.7 ounces)
- Knorr Chicken Flavor Broccoli Rice & Pasta Blend (5.5 ounces)
- 1 pound chopped broccoli, frozen and thawed
- 1-1/2 pound chicken tenders
- 1 TBS Old Bay® seasoning (or chicken seasoning, like salt & pepper)
- 3 cups Shredded Mexican Cheese

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 375F.
2. In the bottom of the casserole dish, add the chicken stock and cream of chicken soup mix.
3. Use a whisk to combine.
4. Add in both rice and pasta blends, again whisking until combined and all of the contents are wet.
5. Pour the chopped frozen broccoli on the top of the rice mixture, covering the entirety of it.
6. Lay the raw chicken tenders on top of the broccoli layer in the way that best fits all of the chicken.
7. Dust the top of the chicken with old bay seasoning (or your choice of general chicken seasoning).
8. Spread the shredded cheese over the top of the chicken, cover with tinfoil.
9. Bake for 45 minutes.
10. Garnish with fresh parsley (optional) and serve right from the casserole dish.

## Broccoli Cheese Casserole

Submitted by Christy Krawisz <sup>221</sup>



*maeznego*



# 2023 IPA Polka Hall of Fame®

## Inductee

*Gene Swick*

*Deceased Category*



On October 16, 2021, the polka world lost one of the most respected and loved polka promoters in the industry. Eugene (Gene) Swick passed away just two days after his 90th birthday after a long bout with multiple health issues. Born in the Polish neighborhood of Greenpoint in Brooklyn, NY, he went on to serve his country in the Air Force as a nuclear physicist. After 20 years of service, Gene retired as a lieutenant colonel and began another phase of his career as a senior staff scientist for the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). For the next 30 years, he would make frequent technical presentations to top Department of Defense officials at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. His family life included raising seven children, four girls and three boys, who gave him two grandchildren.

Throughout his life, Gene played a major role in sustaining and promoting polka music. He conducted polka dance exhibitions and promoted polka dances in a variety of venues in Southern California and Arizona for many years. By the sheer force of his will and personal finances, Gene managed to keep polka music alive in the southwestern portion of the country almost single-handedly. His influence was also felt nationally as he helped to financially support polka bands and festivals from coast to coast. More than one major festival would have ceased to

exist if it wasn't for his assistance. A humble man who preferred no recognition, he also helped to fund many polka recordings and endeavors behind the scenes. Among polka professionals in the know, Gene's generosity is legendary.

Gene was a longtime member of the IPA Executive Board and served for many years as a trustee representing the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and Hawaii. He actually bought the first computer ever used by the IPA and helped lead the modernization of the organization. A regular attendee at all major polka festivals, Gene was sought out by ladies of all ages to grace the dance floor and was the first to put a welcoming beverage in a polka fan's hand. Despite serious health issues during the last few years of his life, Gene continued to serve the IPA as a trustee emeritus until the day of his passing. A true gentleman, Gene Swick will always live in the hearts of the polka people he truly loved.

For his lifetime of dedication to polka music, his regional and national influence on the polka industry, his lengthy service to the IPA, and innumerable philanthropic endeavors, Eugene Swick deserves to be considered for induction into the Deceased Category of the IPA Hall of Fame.

## 2023 IPA Newsletter Schedule

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline for Submissions</u>
<b>October - November 2023</b>	<b>September 1, 2023</b>
<b>December 2022 - January 2024</b>	<b>November 1, 2023</b>

## South Florida Polka Association's Winter Getaway

By Maryrose Nesbitt

The South Florida Polka Association (also known as "SoFlaPA") held their Winter Polka Getaway "Fun In The Sun" event February 1-5, 2023 at the fabulous Ocean Sky Hotel & Resort in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Polka fans from Florida, as well as Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, the Carolinas and Canada convened in South Florida looking for good polka music and, yes, gorgeous sunny weather!

The fun kicked off on Thursday evening, February 1, with a Meet & Greet Party in the Hospitality Suite for those who arrived early to enjoy the beautiful beach weather, local attractions, water sports, fishing excursions, and the best in restaurants and tiki bars along the south Florida shoreline. It was a great gathering of old friends, as well as meeting & welcoming newcomers. There was quite a bit of socializing and laughs (of course) while catching up with everyone. Many thanks to the hosts of Thursday's event, Tommy Horodecki and Damian Kolodziej, for their outstanding hospitality.

The weather did not disappoint as more polka-loving people arrived on Thursday, February 2, to sunny weather and 80 degree temperatures, making it a superb day at the beach, which was just a short walk through the hotel pool area (complete with cabana bar). The Welcome Party began in the evening with the sounds of the Southernmost Polka Band (formerly known as the SoFlaPA Band). Their fine honky style sounds filled the ballroom of the hotel making for a very festive time. They did a great job setting the tone for the rest of the weekend.

Friday, February 3, brought more gorgeous South Florida weather during the day for pool and beach activities. Polka music on Friday evening was furnished by the Polka All-Stars and the Polka Country Musicians. The Polka All-Stars, a group of seasoned polka musicians, which included IPA Polka Hall of Famer, Mike Costa (trumpet & vocals), Mike Stapinski (trumpet, clarinet & vocals), Ron Marcisuk (concertina & vocals), Kevin Kurdziel (accordion & vocals), Brian Urbanczyk (bass) and Kenny Yash (drums) took the stage. For a group of musicians who have never played together before, the band impressed everyone with their great sound and many familiar polka songs. The Polka Country Musicians kept the night going with their solid award-winning sound that delighted the large crowd and

packed the dance floor.

Saturday, February 4, began in the morning with a special version of "morning yoga" with Damian Kolodziej on the beach. It was a one-of-a-kind experience! In the evening as the ballroom opened, stylish polka fans were greeted with polka music's first "red carpet show" hosted by Damian Kolodziej and Alina Horodecki as the solid honky sound of the Southernmost Polka Band filled the air for their second performance of the weekend. The Polka Country Musicians were on hand once again for their second day of top-notch polka music. Around the midpoint of the evening, the music paused for the SoFlaPA Awards presentation by Master of Ceremonies, Billy Horodecki. Congratulations to all the SoFlaPA Award winners: Mike Costa & The Beat (Band of the Year), Sebastian Pucowski - Mike Costa & The Beat (Male Vocalist of the Year), Laura Mateja - IPA Tribute Band/Southernmost Polka Band (Female Vocalist of the Year), Pool Party Polka - Polka Country Musicians (Song of the Year) and Jimmy Sturr (Lifetime Achievement Award). Another highlight of the evening was inviting all willing musicians in attendance to play a set as the SoFlaPA All-Star Jam Band. It was awesome to see so many polka musicians getting together to jam out on some polka standards. The Polka Country Musicians brought things to a close playing overtime as shouts of "One More Time!" filled the ballroom.

Sunday afternoon, February 5, brought the infamous pool party by the "polka party pool" at "Casa Horodecki" for a more intimate gathering of polka people who stayed in town for more sunny Florida weather. The Horodecki pool party venue served up an abundance of food and beverages. Thanks to hosts, Billy & Diane Horodecki, for their hospitality as well as musicians Mike Stapinski, Danny & Laura Mateja, Richie Kois, Wally Dombrowski, Brian Urbanczyk, Kenny Yash, Rick Iwanczuk and Jake Mikrut for their musical talents at the pool party, also doing a tribute to IPA Polka Hall of Famer Jersey Polka Richie by performing some of his most popular songs. Richie was in attendance at past SoFlaPA events where he played and sang his favorite songs. His presence is surely missed.

Many thanks go out to all the fun-loving people who attended the SoFlaPA "Fun In The Sun" event, Jimmy Weber for the use of his sound equipment,

Continued on next page



Christine Kapanowski and Gail Cerva for making and serving up such wonderful food once the music was finished each night. Last but not least, we'd like to extend a huge thank you to the IPA who were gracious enough to help sponsor this event! Congratulations to Team SoFlaPA for putting on such a great event and giving people up north the opportunity to escape the cold weather for a little while and enjoy some great polka music!

The South Florida Polka Association is in the beginning stages of making plans for another Winter Polka Getaway "Fun In The Sun" event in the Fort Lauderdale area at the beginning of February. The event will take place days prior to the 2024 Panama Canal Polka Brews Cruise, which embarks from Miami on the NCL Gem on February 5, 2024. More details will be available in the upcoming months. Please stay tuned!





# IPA Hall of Fame® Member, Bruno Mikos, Passes

By Christy Krawisz



It's with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Bruno Mikos, who was inducted into the IPA Hall of Fame in 1986. Our deepest sympathies go out to the entire Mikos family.

Bruno's singing career began early. He learned to sing the "Two Bucks Polka" at the age of five as he heard the song played on the

Oskierko Polka Show over WJOB Radio in Hammond, Indiana.

During his grammar schools days, he tried to play the accordion. He did not care for this instrument and his interest switched to the trumpet. He attended the Roseland Conservatory of Music and got instruction from a private teacher, Al Schonecker. During the high school days, he played the trumpet and herald trumpet with the Jazz, Concert, Dance and Marching Bands.

In 1962, he joined a local band, the Polka Jacks. In 1963, he became a member of the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208. He then joined the Ted Bonk Band and did remote radio broadcasts over WOPA & WJOB. It was then he joined the Li'l Wally Band and played across the country in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Vermont, West Virginia, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Minnesota and Virginia. Some great events were

at the Toronto Canadian Expo backing Bobby Vinton, and the Palmer House in Chicago for the Music Operators of America, with Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney, Boots Randolph, etc...

In 1966 he was inducted into the Army and shipped to Germany. He played there for the Polish Concern for Displaced People. On furlough back home, he

married Sue Kovalick, both returning to Germany for the duration of his hitch. Upon discharge, returning to Chicago, he played with Li'l Wally, Tom Altenburg, Casey Homel, Richard Gomulka, Li'l Richard and others.

Settling in Ohio, Bruno formed his own band, the Harmony Stars in 1974. His first album gave him national recognition. A fan club was established in his honor in Ohio. For 3 ½ years he did the "Weekend Polka Party" over WHHH Radio, Warren, Ohio. He then worked on WKTL in Struthers, Ohio.

He appeared on the "Polka Variety Show", Channel 5 in Cleveland. His popularity has even traveled to Alaska where his records have been played.

As owner of Bem Star Records, a publishing and record company, he has started out bands such as Holy Toledo Polka Stars, the Dynasonics, the Troubadours, Judy & Her Suchey Brothers. He wrote songs like "Back To Chicago," "Hey Pretty Girl," "Lost Love," "Honky Tonky Polka," "Can't Get Married," and others. He received recognition as "No. 1

Band" in Battle of the Bands mail requests sponsored by Al Mann on WTAQ in 1976; No. 1 Band in the Battle of the Bands sponsored by Larry Walk in Idora Park, Youngstown, Ohio in 1976; the USPA's favorite album "People Pleasing Polkas" in 1979; Outstanding Polka Achievement Award, USPA 1982. He received certificates from Jerry Lewis for services for MSD and played for many benefits in the Cleveland Area.





## What a night at the ball park!

Boston Red Sox/E.F.O.

Polish Heritage Night at Fenway Park – Boston, Massachusetts

By Carol Forman

Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup> was such an awesome night at Fenway Park for the first Polish Heritage night. Polka music, dancing and polish food consumed Jersey Street in Boston, Massachusetts. The Eddie Forman Orchestra (E.F.O), from our very own state of Massachusetts. entertained a crowd of over 300 people supporting this wonderful event right in front of the Red Sox ball park entrance on Jersey Street. The polka music resonated throughout the area and the people filled the street dancing the polka.

The band members are: Eddie Forman-band leader, accordion. Congratulations Eddie on 55 years as the band leader of the E.F.O. - Bob Frydryk, Trumpet - Frank Kolodzieski, Clarinet and Saxophone – Greg Blackburn, Bass - John Cieplik, Drums. A big shout out to John for organizing a bus to the Polish Heritage Celebration.

The souvenir Polish heritage/Red Sox shirts that came with the game ticket were outstanding and let

us all display our pride for our polish heritage, loud and proud! The pregame was a sea of Red and White.

After the pregame event, the people enjoyed an exciting night watching the Red Sox vs. Colorado Rockies.

A night at Fenway is always special, but this one just kicked it up a notch!



# 2023 IPA Polka Hall of Fame®

## Inductee

*"Li'l" John Nalevanko*

*Pioneer Category*



Documenting the history of polkas in Western Pennsylvania would not be complete without discussing John Nalevanko. Affectionately known as Li'l John, he has been a driving force in promoting Polka music in the area.

As a musician, John first started playing drums in local bands when he was 12. He played in various bands like the Polka Stars, Avant Gard, Starlighters, and the Jr. Simms Band. However, his true breakout was when he started playing with the Music Tones in the early '70s. The Music Tones originally recorded one 45, including the Ashes of Love Polka. This country number was then recorded by other polka bands like Eddie Guca, Brass Works, Windy City Brass, and Jimmy Sturr.

The Music Tones were a staple at church festivals, dances, and weddings in Westmoreland County, right outside of Pittsburgh. You could catch them every weekend in the summer, which led them to a very nice following. The Music Tones continued to play until 2005 and recorded two more albums. One was "Dance Dance Dance" and then "Again" in 1996.

In 2005, Li'l John formed the ATM Band. ATM stood for All Types of Music, and they exemplified playing rock, country, cha cha's, and other types besides their polkas. The ATM Band continued to be a fixture at church festivals, private parties, and weddings. In 2007, they recorded a sampler CD called "Li'l John and the ATM Band Sampler." The ATM Band is still playing in Western PA. Besides these

albums, John was also fortunate to be invited to play a few numbers on the "Honky Heaven" Live CD that was recorded at Kuzman's in 2013.

Although John was an accomplished drummer and bandleader, his true calling was being a polka DJ. Starting in 1976 on WTRA, then 1983 on WCNS, 1985 on WQTW, 1991 on WCNS, and now on WXJX. John has been a polka DJ for 45 years in Western PA. He continues to be the only Polka Show in Western PA broadcast nationally on iHeart Radio. This exposure has led John to expand his following to a truly national level.

Li'l John was more than a DJ that played music. He wanted to get the polka fans to understand the people behind the music. As a result, he has interviewed many polka celebrities live on this show over the years. Polka Stars like Whitey Pawola from the Naturals, the Connecticut Twins, Eddie Blazonczyk, Marion Lush, Li'l Wally, Al Pala, Bobby Sendra, and Frank Wojnarowski were just some of the polka celebrities that appeared on his show. Li'l John has recently provided the recordings from these interviews to the IPA, which they included them in their IPA Interview Series that is available on YouTube.

John's prominence in the radio community led him to be inducted into the Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2011. John was inducted on the same ballot as Jack Bogut, a radio personality on Pittsburgh's own KDKA radio.

As a Polka DJ, Li'l John regularly had to find new sponsors for his show. Some of the sponsorships



that John started were with Del Grosso Foods, Snowfloss Sauerkraut, Amco Transmission, and Mrs. T's Pierogies. John never wanted to keep the sponsorships to himself and regularly pass along his contacts to other polka bands and festivals. John always believed that sharing success would be the only way to keep polkas alive.

These sponsorships led Li'l John to his third passion: polka promotions. John started running dances in 1978, and they continue to this day. John ran dances at the Latrobe American Legion and booked bands like Ray Budzilek, Jimmy Weber and the Sounds, and Bruno Mikos early on. His Thanksgiving weekend dances were very popular in Western PA. John then moved his dances to the Coal AC in Greensburg, PA, and now at Yukon Slovenian Hall. Over the years, Li'l John has brought the biggest polka bands in the nation to Western PA. Bands like Lenny Gomulka and the Chicago Push, John Gora, Maestro's Men, Li'l Wally, Ania, and the Dynatones, Stas Golonka, Maestro's Men, and Ray Budzilek were fixtures at Li'l John's Dances. Even Covid-19 did not stop, Li'l John. He picked up booking bands in 2021 and had some of the highest-attended dances in Western PA.

Li'l John has been a polka encyclopedia over the years. You can name any song, and Li'l John would automatically recall the band that recorded it and

the album. This knowledge led Li'l John to help polka bands with obscure songs for their new albums. You can talk to any polka band, and they will recall that Li'l John enabled them to provide ideas for songs that eventually became hits. This knowledge also allowed Li'l John to write liner notes for many polka bands. Bands like Stas Golonka, Canadian Fiddle Stix, Lenny Gomulka, Windy City Brass, Joe Oberaitis, and Li'l Richard all came to Li'l John when they released new albums. John has also documented the birthdays of every polka celebrity for a monthly column in the Polish American Journal.

As you can see, Li'l John Nalevanko was a powerhouse in promoting polkas in Western PA. Without Li'l John's contributions, Western PA would not be one of the top places in the country to play polkas. Western PA is in a great position because of the leadership that Li'l John has provided over the last 50 years.



## **INCUMBENTS SEEKING RE-ELECTION**

### **OFFICERS**

President - Christy Krawisz

2nd Vice President - Chris Bogdon

Financial Secretary - Lynn Kaminski

### **Illinois - 3 open positions**

Stephen Kaminski, Brian Kapka,  
and Christy Nowakowski

### **Non-Illinois - 3 open positions**

Emma Bogdon (appointed), Sue Szela, and Brad Turk



# 17th Annual IPA Hall of Fame® Dance

By Peter Danielczuk

For the second year in a row, the Annual IPA Hall of Fame Benefit Dance held March 4 & 5, 2023 at the Ludlow, MA Polish

American Citizens Club was a complete success. This was the 17<sup>th</sup> annual and the second one co-chaired by IPA member and Vice President, Dance Chairman of the Ludlow PACC, Ernie Daigle and IPA Hall of Fame Trustee Peter J. Danielczuk.

The two day event started with a great crowd on Saturday evening March 4<sup>th</sup> with entertainment by The Boys who entertained with their usual great music. On that evening Ernie and Peter worked the door by themselves. The kitchen crew which served great food included Patty Daigle, PACC President John Diotalevi and Shelia Somers. 50/50 raffle tickets were sold by Red & Carol Blyda as well as members of the Prytko Family.

Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> was the actual annual dance which honored the music of long time IPA officer and Hall of Famer Freddie "K" Kendzierski of Bonita Springs, FL, formerly of New Jersey. There was also a special tribute to The New Brass. For the first time in many years, the crowd was near capacity of the hall. The day started with music by Dennis Polisky & The Maestro's Men followed by EFO (Eddie Forman Orchestra). After EFO came Hall of Famer Mitch Biskup and The New Brass Re-union. The crowd went wild when they started to play some of their greatest hits from their great recordings. Todd Zaganiacz of the Polka Jammer Network served as the MC for this segment. Next up was Hall of Famer Lenny Gomulka who was backed up by the Maestro's Men. Next was our honoree Freddie K and his band playing ten of Freddie's hits from his many recordings. Peter J Danielczuk served as MC for this part of the program. Following this band's performance, Freddie was presented with a beautiful plaque recognizing Freddie's many years playing polkas as well as all the years involved in the promotion of polkas. The plaque was presented to him by Ernie Daigle and Peter Danielczuk. There was also a moment of silence for IPA Trustee and

Hall of Famer Fred Bulinski who recently passed away as well as for Freddie's son Freddie Jr. who passed away many years ago in a tragic auto accident. Freddie and his wife Linda still today give a yearly scholarship to a deserving High School senior interested in music.

Sunday workers include Ernie and Peter, as well as kitchen workers Patty Daigle, John Diotalevi and Nathan Fidalgo. The door was manned by Cynthia Ciejek, Helen Padagenis, Joe Adamczyk & Willie Ostrowski. Once again Red & Carol Blyda and members of the Prytko family did the 50/50 raffle. Also attending the weekend from Chicago were IPA officials Lynn and Steve Kaminski.

Again this weekend was a tremendous success and the money raised at this weekend will be donated to the IPA Hall of Fame fund. Plans are already being made for next year's Hall of Fame weekend. Mark these dates on your calendar, March 9 and March 10, 2024 at the PACC in Ludlow, MA.

A standing ovation for newly elected IPA Hall of Fame recipient

**The Honorable David "Nigel" Kurdziel**



Congrats, Nigel!

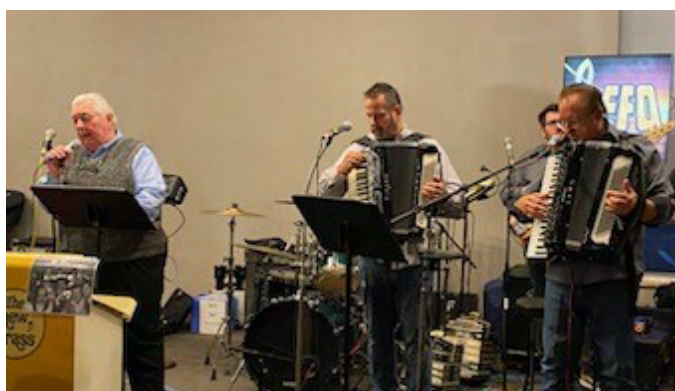
Your dedication and love of polka music made this tribute of a lifelong achievement possible — and so well-deserved!

These wishes come from Lynda and Linda:

"Lovin' on Lynda" — your beautiful bride, and "Love for Linda"/Linda From Minnesota — just one of your many fans!

Honoring and loving you from Heaven and Earth, Nigel.





Honoring New Jersey's own  
Freddie "K" Kendzierski







The International Polka Association Proudly Presents



## The Parade of Polka Bands Picnic! Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023



Hammond Mohawks Picnic Grove

4040 Calumet Ave., Hammond, IN



- Doors open at 12:30pm - Polka Music from 1pm until 6pm
- Admission: \$15 Payable at the Door

**\*Polka Bands Scheduled to appear\***



Tony Blazonczyk's New Phaze



IPA Tribute Band



Polka Mojo



Polka Generations



DynaVersaStickToneAires

Freshly-grilled Polish food favorites!  
Refreshing beverages!

Rain or Shine! Indoor Restrooms!

[www.lpapolkas.com](http://www.lpapolkas.com)





# 2023 IPA Polka Hall of Fame®

## Inductee

*David "Nigel" Kurdziel*

*Living Category*



David Kurdziel was born on May 2, 1963. His introduction to polka music was at the many church picnics he attended with his parents and the polka radio shows that were broadcast in his hometown of Buffalo, N.Y. At age 11, David started taking electric bass lessons and by age 13, he began playing with his first band, The Melody Men led by his brother drummer Mike Kurdziel. After graduating grade school, David attended high school at The Buffalo Academy for The Visual and Performing Arts where he was a music major playing upright bass in the school orchestra and studying music theory. Having recorded over 70 polka albums, CDs and singles, David also had the privilege of performing on stage, and also on TV and radio, with some of polka mu-

sic's most iconic bands including The Dynatones of Buffalo N.Y. and Eddie Blazonczyk's Versatones from Chicago. Having performed at some of polka music's biggest dances and festivals across the country, often accompanied by his wife Lynda, son Benjamin, and his daughter Marlee, David's career has spanned over 40 years.

For his many accomplishments in the Polka industry, David Kurdziel, has been deemed deserving by the electorate of the International Polka Association for induction into the POLKA MUSIC HALL OF FAME®.



### **June 7, 2023 – Eunice and Mike Doleysh, The Doleysh Brothers Orchestra**

- In recognition of your husband's and father's impact on polka music and to the polka bands in the Wisconsin Area, we thank you and present you with this Certificate of Appreciation.

**June 5, 2023 – Joni Zychowski Gregg, Joni's Jammin' Polkas** - In recognition of your untiring efforts in the promotion and advancement of Polka entertainment for over 15 years of Broadcasting. Thank you and Congratulations.

**May 7, 2023 – The Maroszek Brothers** - In recognition of your efforts for promoting and performing Polka Music for over 50 years. The International Polka Association hereby presents this Certificate of Appreciation. Thank you and Congratulations.

**February 2, 2023 – Barefoot Becky and the Ivanhoe Dutchmen** - In recognition of your efforts for promoting and performing Polka Music for 35 years, the International Polka Association hereby present this Certificate of Appreciation. Thank you and Congratulations.

# THE PULASKI CLUB

2023

WAY OUT WEST POLKA DANCE FEST.

“FALL FESTIVAL”

**MICHAEL COSTA & THE BEAT**

***November 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>***

***Saturday Night 5pm to 9pm***

***Sunday 2pm to 6pm***

*(doors open 1 hr. before event)*

*\$15.00 admission at the door, kids under 12 FREE*

*(table reservations of 8 or more contact Nickelcity Dave 602.741.8214)*

*Kick off the festivities Friday night, November 17<sup>th</sup>, “Meet & Greet”  
with the Variety Soundz of DJ “Nickelcity Dave” @ 6pm.*

***FREE Admission***

*This is a Non B.Y.O.B. affair the Pulaski Club has a full bar available,  
and the Polish Kitchen will be open.*

**Hotel reservations: Holiday Inn & Suites Phoenix Airport North**

**1515 N. 44<sup>th</sup>, St. Phoenix, Az 85008**

**(p) 602-358-0909 (online: reservation # Pulaskiclub )**

**[www.hiphoenixsuites.com](http://www.hiphoenixsuites.com)**

*The Pulaski Polish / American Club at 4331 E. McDowell Rd. Phoenix  
Arizona 85008, 602.275.9329*

***[www.facebook.com/pulaskiclubaz](http://www.facebook.com/pulaskiclubaz) [www.pulaskiclubaz.com](http://www.pulaskiclubaz.com)***



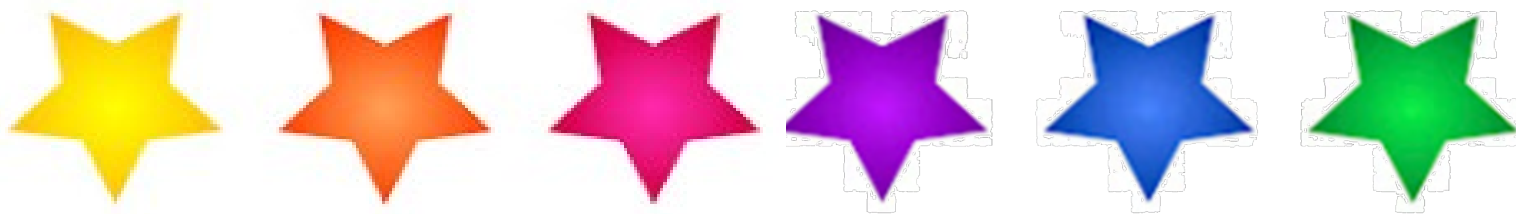
## Board of Directors Election Eligibility

Nominees shall not occupy any appointed or elected office of any other polka organization. No nomination shall be valid unless agreed to by the nominee. A willingness to seek and accept office must be done in person at the annual meeting. If unable to attend the annual meeting, candidates may also submit a signed and dated letter. If emailing your submission letter, please put **Board Position** in the subject line. **Please include what skills you have to offer to enhance the board, as well as why you would like to join the board.** Such letters can be submitted for consideration in any of the following ways:

1. brought to the meeting by another member
2. given to an officer or director in advance of the meeting
3. mailed to the International Polka Association, PO Box 1484, Plainfield, IL 60585
4. emailed to [info@ipapolkas.com](mailto:info@ipapolkas.com)
5. deadline for submissions is August 15th

### Requirements for Elections:

Voters must be a member of the IPA for no less than 30 days before the Annual Meeting. Each nominee must be able to actively utilize e-mail, Webex, and dial-in conference calling. All members seeking a position on the board should expect to receive assigned duties and responsibilities. These will include activities which support the ongoing operation of the organization, working at our annual convention and all other IPA events, as well as special projects as needed throughout the course of their



## Electable Positions in 2023

**President & Sergeant-At-Arms: 1-year term**

**All Others: 2-year term**

### **OFFICERS**

#### **President**

- Must be from Illinois
- Must have served at least 2 years on the Executive Board

#### **2nd Vice President**

- May be from any state
- Must have served at least 2 years on the Executive Board

#### **Financial Secretary**

- Must be from Illinois
- Must be a member in good standing for at least one year

### **DIRECTORS**

#### **Illinois** - 3 open positions

- Must be from Illinois state
- must be a member in good standing for at least one year

#### **Non-Illinois** - 3 open positions

- Can be from ANY state
- must be a member in good standing for at least one year

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### IPA Newsletter

The "IPA Newsletter" is the official publication of the INTERNATIONAL POLKA ASSOCIATION, INC.®. The "IPA Newsletter" welcomes submissions from readers and will publish them with consideration to space and time requirements. Pictures are welcome but used only when budget and space constraints allow. All items become the property of the IPA. If you would like a photograph returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

#### Editor:

Lynn Kaminski  
newsletter@ipapolkas.com

#### Contact us:

International Polka Association, Inc.®  
PO Box 1484  
Plainfield, IL 60544  
1-800-TO-POLKA  
(1-800-867-6552)  
Website: [www.ipapolkas.com](http://www.ipapolkas.com)

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#### Membership

Dues are \$15.00 per person for all members. You can also purchase a lifetime membership for only \$200.00 per person. If you would like to join the IPA, please send your check or money order to:

Lynn Kaminski, Financial Secretary  
International Polka Association  
PO Box 1484  
Plainfield, IL 60544  
Email: [membership@ipapolkas.com](mailto:membership@ipapolkas.com)

Renew your membership online!  
Visit: [www.ipapolkas.com/store](http://www.ipapolkas.com/store)

## 2023 IPA Officers and Directors

### Officers:

President: Christy Krawisz (IL)  
1st Vice President: Lori Lewandowski (IL)  
2nd Vice President: Chris Bogdon (PA)  
Treasurer: Dan Mateja (IL)  
Secretary: Cheryl Furmaniak (IL)  
Financial Secretary: Lynn Kaminski (IL)  
Media Advisor: Keith Pietranczyk (IL)  
Youth Advisor: Chris Ebel (MN)  
Sergeant at Arms: Randy Koslosky (PA)  
Chaplain: Fr. Dennis Bogusz (PA)

### Directors:

Emma Bogdon (PA)  
Stephen Kaminski (IL)  
Brian Kapka (IL)  
Johnny Krawisz (IL)  
Henry Lenard (DE)  
Lindsey Mateja (IL)  
Dennis Mikolajewski (IL)  
Christy Nowakowski (IL)  
Jill Styczynski (WI)  
Sue Szela (MA)  
Brad Turk (FL)  
Rich Zebrowski (PA)

### Would you like your newsletter emailed to you?

The IPA would like to go green! Help us save money on printing costs and postage.

If you would like your newsletter emailed to you, please send an email to:  
**newsletter@ipapolkas.com.**

Please put in the subject line:  
**PLEASE EMAIL MY NEWSLETTER.**



## IPA RADIO SHOW



Don't forget to listen to the IPA Radio Show on the Polka Jammer Network on Sundays, 11:00 a.m. - 12 noon Central Time and also available in the Polka Jammer archives. Be sure to tune in! Visit [www.polkajammernetwork.org](http://www.polkajammernetwork.org)

Each show features IPA officers and directors.

Please call 1-800-TO-POLKA if you are interesting in advertising on the IPA Radio Show.

## WE NEED SPONSORS!



Sunday, August 6 - Parade of Polka Bands  
Thursday, August 31st - IPA Kick-Off Party  
Friday-Sunday, Sept 1-3 - 55th Annual IPA Festival

## Advertise in the IPA Newsletter

### One Issue

Full Page .....	\$75.00 per issue
Half Page.....	\$55.00 per issue
Quarter Page .....	\$40.00 per issue
Eighth Page.....	\$25.00 per issue

### Three Issues

Full Page .....	\$67.00 per issue
Half Page.....	\$45.00 per issue
Quarter Page .....	\$36.00 per issue
Eighth Page.....	\$22.00 per issue

### Six Issues

Full Page .....	\$60.00 per issue
Half Page.....	\$40.00 per issue
Quarter Page .....	\$32.00 per issue
Eighth Page.....	\$20.00 per issue

**DEADLINE FOR October 2023 NEWSLETTER: September 1**

Email ad files to Lynn Kaminski using:

**newsletter@ipapolkas.com**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS!!

As reminders for membership renewals are mailed out, it would be greatly appreciated if these could be returned **as soon as possible**. Not only are these fees used to allocate printing and mailing expenses, but for various other causes. **So please return your renewals in a timely matter.**

International Polka Association, Inc.®  
PO Box 1484; Plainfield, IL 60544  
1-800-TO-POLKA (1-800-867-6552)  
Website: [www.ipapolkas.com](http://www.ipapolkas.com)

