



# IPA Newsletter

March - May, 2018

Official Publication of the International Polka Association, Inc. ®

Hello Polka Fans,

Believe it or not it is SPRING! If we keep saying and thinking it, it will come true. I hope everyone made it through the tough winter months, and are in good health. It's time to get ready for another exciting polka festival season. So far this year, many of the winter polka events have been excellent. Very good crowds have been coming out and supporting the polka activities.

The IPA January weekend was quite successful in spite of some snow and cold temperatures. Over 250 polka supporters attended the Saturday Warm Up Dance with Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push providing excellent music. Sunday's IPA Festival of Polka Bands was attended by over 300 people and was another outstanding polka event. Thank you to all the bands who provided excellent music.

Thank you to Lori Urbanczyk and her staff for a great dance in Buffalo at the end of January. A great big thank you to the bands from Buffalo who provided the music and to all the Buffalo area fans who attended.

Thank you to Theresa Parker and the "Texas Polka News" for sponsoring another IPA Benefit dance in Texas. We appreciate all that you do for polka music and the IPA. I urge everyone to look into subscribing to the "Texas Polka News."

The IPA Benefit Dance in Ludlow at the PACC chaired by Sue Szela and Linda and Fred Kendzierski honoring the great music of The Tones was another great event. Thanks to The Boys, Dennis Polisky and Maestro's Men, the Eddie Forman Orchestra and Full Circle for the great music and entertainment. Thank you to all the great polka fans who attended and supported this 13<sup>th</sup> annual event.

Thank You to Debbie Dunaj and her posse of polka peeps for organizing the Wisconsin Warm Up Dance and Festival of Wisconsin Polka Bands. Over 500 people attended this wonderful event. The Rib River Ballroom was rockin with smokin polka music. We thank the great bands and polka fans who attended to make this event such a successful event.

Our Dance with Let's Polka USA and the IPA was well attended and provided an exciting afternoon of polka music for all who attended. Thanks to John Gora, who came out and put on quite a show. Thanks to all of the great polka fans who attended. We also did a live broadcast on the Polka Jammer for the Annual Jammerthon. Over \$50,000 was raised over the weekend to support polka music on the Jammer.

Let's keep the momentum going. I urge everyone to continue to support all of the polka promoters, polka bands, DJ's and IJ's, and the polka organizations. If we continue to work together, we can and will achieve great things. Let's continue to make 2018 a great polka year.

I would also like to congratulate the 2018 IPA Hall of Fame Class, and the 2017 Music Award Winners. We look forward to celebrating with you all at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival and Convention in Buffalo Labor Day Weekend.

In closing, I would like to thank the officers and directors of the IPA. This dedicated group of men and women work hard to keep our organization moving in a positive direction.

Rick Rzeszutko  
President

# 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:

Debbie Dunaj - dunajda07@yahoo.com

## Contact us:

International Polka Association, Inc.®  
PO Box 1484  
Plainfield, IL 60585  
1-800-TO-POLKA  
(1-800-867-6552)  
Website: [www.ipapolkas.com](http://www.ipapolkas.com)

The IPA logo, "INTERNATIONAL POLKA FESTIVAL" and "POLKA MUSIC HALL OF FAME" are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark office. All three trademarks of the International Polka Association and their use, without written permission, is strictly prohibited.

## 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:

John Krawisz, Financial Secretary  
International Polka Association  
PO Box 1484  
Plainfield, IL 60585  
Phone: 630-204-1793  
Email: [christy-ipa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:christy-ipa@sbcglobal.net)

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

# 2017-2018 IPA Officers and Directors

## Officers:

President: Rick Rzeszutko (IL)  
1st Vice President: Christy Krawisz (IL)  
2nd Vice President: Fred Kendzierski (NJ)  
Treasurer: Dan Mateja (IL)  
Financial Secretary: John Krawisz (IL)  
Secretary: Keith Pietranczyk (IL)  
Sergeant-At-Arms: Peter Danielczuk (CT)  
Media Advisor: Jerry Wantroba (IL)

## Directors:

Patrick Henry Cukierka (IL)  
Debbie Dunaj (WI)  
Ed Guca (Canada)  
Lori Lewandowski (IL)  
Laura Mateja (IL)  
Mike Matousek (MD)  
Dennis Mikolajewski (IL)  
Jake Mikrut (IL)  
Bonnie Ryniec (IL)  
Sue Szela (MA)  
Lori Urbanczyk (NY)  
John Zelasko (MI)

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 [christy-ipa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:christy-ipa@sbcglobal.net).

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



# IPA RADIO SHOW

Don't forget to listen to the IPA Radio Show on Sundays, 11:00 a.m.—12 noon Central Time on WPNA (1490 AM) in Chicago or via the internet at [www.radiowpna.com](http://www.radiowpna.com).

Each show features IPA officers and directors including Rick Rzeszutko, Laura Mateja, Christy Krawisz, John Krawisz, Bonnie Ryniec, Dennis Mikolajewski, Keith Pietranczyk, Jerry Wantroba, and Dan Mateja.

The IPA Radio Show is also broadcast on the Polka Jammer Network on Saturdays from 4-5 p.m. Central Time and also available in the Polka Jammer archives. Be sure to tune in! Visit [www.polkajammernetwork.org](http://www.polkajammernetwork.org)

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

<b><u>IPA Statement of Fund Balances as of 2-28-18</u></b>		
	<b>12/31/2017</b>	<b>2/28/2018</b>
<b><u>CDs</u></b>		
Bank Of America	\$45,534.65	\$45,534.65
Prospect (closed 9/22 and deposited to BOA)	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b><u>Checking</u></b>		
Bank of America - Credit Card Account	\$1,854.53	\$39,760.58
Bank of America - Festival Account	\$98,476.11	\$101,484.11
PNC - General Checking	\$20,653.09	\$20,942.01
PNC - Hall Of Fame Checking	\$1,762.15	\$3,233.65
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>\$168,280.53</u></b>	<b><u>\$210,955.00</u></b>
<b><u>Net Change</u></b>		<b>42,674.47</b>

As was reported at our annual meeting over Labor Day weekend, the IPA Board discovered certain irregularities in the organization's financial records and confirmed the person responsible. We are happy to announce that we have made a full recovery of the misappropriated funds from the person responsible and the IPA was made whole.

Further, we have taken steps to ensure that something like this doesn't occur again. We have purchased Directors and Officers Liability Insurance and Crime Insurance as extra protection and safeguards. If you have any questions about this matter, please direct them to Rick Rzeszutko.

*Dear Officers, Board, and Membership of the International Polka Association,*

*I am writing today to offer my sincere apologies for what I have done to the organization. I have tarnished not only my own reputation, but also yours. I realize what I did was very serious and hurt many people.*

*I humbly ask for your forgiveness. Even though I have made restitution to the International Polka Association, I know that the effects will linger. I have sought professional help to deal with my problems.*

*Again, I apologize for the hurt, pain, and uneasiness I have caused not only in organization itself, but in the polka field. I am truly sorry for all of this. I know that words will only go so far, but I hope that in time, I can prove myself again to all of you.*

*Sincerely,  
Linda Niewierowski*



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the International Polka Association. We have many exciting events planned for this year, and we hope you're able to join us in Buffalo for our 50th anniversary festival and convention!

### ***How the International Polka Association Began***

The concept of a national polka convention had been developed and pioneered originally in Chicago. From the popular yearly moonlight dances starting in 1960, which attracted thousands of polka lovers from all sections of the United States and Canada — the first polka convention emerged in 1963. This developed into the International Polka Convention which was presented each succeeding year in Chicago, Detroit and Buffalo, New York.

In January, 1968 a steering committee comprised of Johnny Hyzny, Leon Kozicki, Joe and Jean Salomon, Eddie Blazonczyk and Don Jodlowski met to discuss plans for the next convention. After a series of meetings they began preparations for the formation of the International Polka Association. The Association was officially chartered by the State of Illinois as a "not for profit" corporation and was registered with the County of Cook (Chicago) in August of 1968.

Since 1968 the International Polka Festival has been presented under the auspices of the International Polka Association. The delegates to the 1968 Convention approved the establishment of the Polka Music Hall of Fame and the presentation of annual Polka Music Awards.

As stated in its charter, the International Polka Association was organized as: "An educational and charitable organization for the preservation, promulgation and advancement of polka music and; to promote, maintain and advance public interest in polka entertainment; to advance the mutual interests and encourage greater cooperation among its members who are engaged in polka entertainment; and to encourage and pursue the study of polka music, dancing and traditional folklore."

The International Polka Association presents many special awards each year to encourage the promotion of polka music. Through the efforts of the IPA, the month of January has been proclaimed as National Polka Music Month and the annual festival has served as a show place for new, deserving polka talent. Many functions under the auspices of the IPA are presented in various states, a weekly radio program has been established and a bi-monthly news bulletin keeps the members informed of the business affairs of the Association, as well as polka related events and news from across the country.

The International Polka Association is also responsible for the continued operation and growth of the Polka Music Hall of Fame and Museum. It is through this branch that the Association has been able to continue its historical, educational and research goals on behalf of the polka music industry.

*History via [ipapolkas.com/about-the-ipa/](http://ipapolkas.com/about-the-ipa/)*

## IPA Expands Polka Music Awards

Every year, the International Polka Association conducts balloting for its annual Polka Music Awards that determines the *Favorite Polish Style Polka Album*, *Favorite Polish Style Polka Song*, *Favorite International Style Polka Album*, *Favorite International Style Polka Song*, *Favorite Male Vocalist*, *Favorite Female Vocalist*, and *Favorite Band*. The process is conducted under the auspices of the IPA Polka Hall of Fame/Music Awards Committee through the voting of the national academy of IPA Trustees and Electors who represent geographic portions of the USA and Canada and the various polka music styles that compose the polka industry in North America.

In keeping with its mission to preserve and promote polka music of all styles, the IPA has expanded the awards to include *Favorite International Style Polka Band*, *Favorite International Style Male Vocalist*, and *Favorite International Style Female Vocalist* beginning with the current awards cycle. The former *Favorite Band*, *Favorite Male Vocalist*, and *Favorite Female Vocalist* awards will be renamed *Favorite Polish Style Band*, *Favorite Polish Style Male Vocalist*, and *Favorite Polish Style Female Vocalist* to clearly define the polka styles of the award winners as with the other awards.

A Polka Hall of Fame/Music Awards Banquet is conducted every year to honor the deserving award recipients. This year's banquet will take place on Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup> at the Millennium Hotel in Buffalo, NY as part of the IPA's Annual Polka Festival and Convention this Labor Day Weekend. 2018 also happens to be the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IPA's official charter as an official "not-for-profit" corporation. Visit [ipapolkas.com](http://ipapolkas.com) for more information about the organization and its exciting polka functions and events.

## IPA Polka Music Hall of Fame Inductees and Polka Music Award Winners

Congratulations to the IPA Polka Music Hall of Fame inductees and Polka Music Award winners, voted on by the IPA Electors. The 49th annual IPA Polka Music Hall of Fame and Music Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, September 1, at the Millennium Hotel in Buffalo, New York.

### HALL OF FAME RESULTS

Living Category: MOLLIE BUSTA LANGE

Living Category: GARY BRUEGGEN

Deceased Category: LEON "BUD" HUNDENSKI

Pioneer Category: JOE MACIELAG

Leon Kozicki Trustees' Award: RICHARD BERNIER

### MUSIC AWARDS

Favorite International Style CD: "40th Anniversary Recording" - Fred Ziwich & His International Sound Machine

Favorite International Style Song: "Dunaju Dunaju" - John Jaworski

Favorite International Style Band: The Alex Meixner Band

Favorite International Style Female Vocalist: Mollie Busta Lange

Favorite International Style Male Vocalist: Steve Meisner

Favorite Polish Style CD: "Dance All Night" - The DynaBrass

Favorite Polish Style Song: "Dance All Night" - The DynaBrass

Favorite Polish Style Band: Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push

Favorite Polish Style Female Vocalist: Stacey Morris

Favorite Polish Style Male Vocalist: Lenny Gomulka





## The Passing of Ed & Jeanne Szela

Ed Szela was elected IPA Director from Massachusetts in August 1999. He was born in Thompsonville, Connecticut, the son of Polish immigrants. His parents were actively involved in the Polish community, volunteering their services at local polka dances where Eddie developed his love of polka music and learned to speak Polish fluently at an early age. Eddie married his wife, Jeanne, on October 23, 1965.

They met at a polka dance, and along with their two daughters, Sue & Sandy, they traveled throughout the country attending numerous polka festivals, Polish picnics, and polka cruises. Eddie & Jeanne reside in Longmeadow, Massachusetts where they host an annual Christmas Party at "Club Szela"- Where the Party Never Ends!

Ed had always been dedicated to keeping polka music alive, not only by supporting various clubs and polka bands by attending their dances, but also by being an active member of the IPA and other polka organizations. He had for many years, along with Freddy Kendzierski, run a benefit for the IPA Hall of Fame at the Ludlow PACC with several thousand dollars of proceeds donated to the Hall of Fame Fund.

He was a dedicated board member of the Ludlow PACC and held the position of Dance Committee Chairman donating his time and efforts to bringing many popular polka bands from near and far to entertain the polka fans. He also organized many bus trips to various polka weekends and Polka Festivals. Ed was honored by the Ludlow PACC with the Citizen of the Year Award for 2010, and by the IPA with the Joe Jozwiak Award for 2012.

Ed passed away on January 9, and Jeanne passed away on January 19. They both will be sorely missed; may the rest in peace together.

## 50th Anniversary Hall of Fame and Music Awards Banquet

Saturday, September 1, 2018

Millennium Hotel; Buffalo, NY  
Cocktail Hour begins at 10:00 AM  
Banquet begins at 11:00 AM

Tickets for this event are \$50 per person and can be purchased by contacting Rick Rzeszutko: [musico@comcast.net](mailto:musico@comcast.net)

Mail your check made payable to the International Polka Association (IPA) to:  
IPA Banquet c/o Rick Rzeszutko  
3809 S Damen Ave  
Chicago, IL 60609

Deadline for reservations are August 17, 2018.

Please make your reservations as soon as possible to guarantee your table.

## 2018 IPA Festival & Convention Band Lineup



Phocus  
The Boys  
The Knewz  
The Project  
The KOSMIX  
Special Delivery  
IPA Tribute Band  
Eddie Forman Orchestra  
Polka Country Musicians  
Ray Jay and the Carousels  
Jackie Libera & The Classix  
Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push

Full details coming in the next newsletter!

We hope you can join us Labor Day weekend for our 50th anniversary of the IPA Festival & Convention to be held at the Millennium Hotel in Buffalo, New York. The celebrations begin with a welcome party on Friday, August 31, as well as a pool party on Saturday and IPA Jam Session on Sunday afternoon. Look for all the details in the next edition of the IPA Newsletter.



## Chet Schafer Passes

Chet Schafer, a cultural beacon in Chicago's Polish-American community, passed away on April 11, 2018, at the age of 95. He was a family patriarch, polka radio disc jockey and music producer, and champion of Polish culture. He inspired those around him by sharing his love of Polish music and culture and faith in God.

Chet Schafer was born Chester Aloysius Szafranec in 1922 in Chicago to Karolina and Henryk Szafranec, who were recent Polish immigrants. He grew up in Wicker Park and had seven siblings: Hank, Joseph, Frank, Mike, Tony, Helen, and Wanda. Schafer served in an administrative capacity during World War II. After completing his service, he took journalism and broadcasting classes at Northwestern University on the GI Bill.

Chet married Dolores Mendygral in 1950. They lived in the West Humbolt Park neighborhood and raised a family of thirteen children. The family even occupied two adjacent houses on Walton Street for many years. All members of the family were active members of St. Francis of Assisi parish.



Chet spent many years working a day job as part-owner of Hollywood Press, a Wicker Park printing firm, with his brothers Tony and Frank. The family moved to the Mont Clare neighborhood in 1990. Chet Schafer's radio career spanned over 65 years. He got his start co-hosting a polka program with musician Lil' Wally Jagiello on Chicago station WCRW in 1950. In 1952, Chet started his own "Polka Hit Parade" program on LaGrange station WTAQ, using the popular TV program "Your Hit Parade" as a model. In 1954 he expanded to another radio program on WTAQ, on which he held the first polka band popularity contest in the Chicagoland area. He received over 22,000 pieces of mail for this contest, which was featured in Reader's Digest magazine.

Chet's polka music has also been broadcast from Oak Park station WPNA before he found his long-term home on the airwaves at WCEV 1450 AM in 1986. The Sunday afternoon "Chet Schafer Show" was broadcast on WCEV until November 2017. Chet was known as the "Dean of Chicagoland's Polka Broadcasters." He is believed to have one of the longest-running radio careers in the Chicago area and one of the longest-running polka radio shows in the country. Chet was also the first in Chicago to produce live polka stage shows. These were variety shows which featured live bands, vocalists, dancing groups, and comedy skits. Chet performed live broadcasts of his radio show at local polka dances and outdoor festivals. He also co-hosted the polka segment of the "Polonia Today" TV show in WCIU Channel 26 in the 1980s.

In addition to his radio activities, Chet owned the Chicago Polkas recording label since 1952. He produced 10" 78 rpm records, 45s, 8-tracks, cassettes, LPs, and CDs by artists such as the Pala Brothers, the 47th Street Concertina Club, Lil' Richard, the Hi-Notes, and Staś Bulanda. He released over 100 albums. One of Chicago Polkas' last recordings was an album of music composed by and for the Polish and American war hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko. Throughout his life, Chet was active in a number of community organizations, including the Polonus Philatelic Society, the International Polka Association (IPA), the Senior Polka Association (SPA), the Polish American Cultural Club, and the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America. He wrote articles for such publications as Polka Guide, Polka World, and I.P.A. News. Chet donated a 1794 handwritten document by Polish military and American Revolutionary War hero Tadeusz Kosciuszko to the Polish Museum of America. In 2004, Chet and Dolores received the Polish Spirit Award from the Polish Museum of America. That same year, Dolores passed away. Chet married Geraldine Ryndak in 2010 at the age of 88, showing that he never gave up on life, love, and happiness. Geraldine passed away in 2013. Chet remained active with his radio show and recording label until his health declined in 2017. He passed away due to kidney disease.

Chet also served as First Vice President of the International Polka Association. May he rest in peace

Source: <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/chicago-il/chester-schafer-7819345>.



## Joe Jozwiak Special Achievement Award

Many years ago, the late Joseph Jozwiak, a director of the IPA, made a suggestion that an award be bestowed upon an individual or group of individuals who have made a significant contribution or endeavor to enhance the promotion of polka music. After much discussion, the International Polka Association (IPA) voted to honor those worthy individuals with the establishment of the Special Achievement Award. To pay tribute to Joe Jozwiak, following his passing, this award was renamed the Joe Jozwiak Special Achievement Award. The award is given to recognize polka personalities who might not otherwise be acknowledged for their dauntless contributions. Nominees can include DJs, polka writers, promoters, ballroom operators, etc.; bands and musicians are excluded.



*IPA 1st Vice President Christy Krawisz, Norb Ciesla, Lorriane Ciesla, and IPA President Rick Rzeszutko.*

We would like to congratulate this year's recipient of the Joe Jozwiak Special Achievement Award, Norb Ciesla.

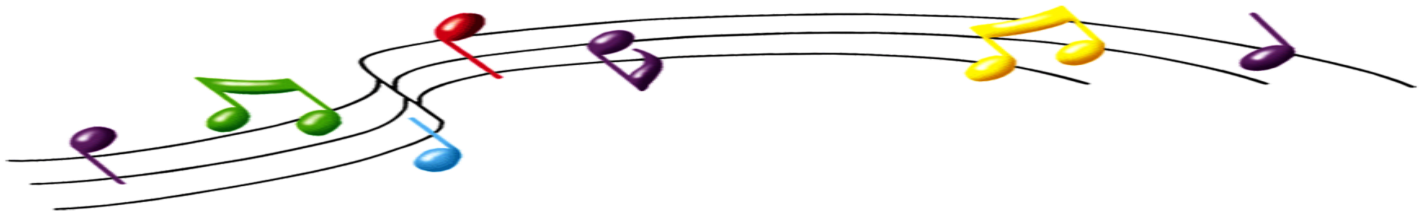
If you are at a polka dance and a guy with a video camera tells you he is a priest - you are probably talking to Norb Ciesla (aka Father Norb) from Orland Park, IL, President of the Let's Polka USA. Club. Norb is married to Lorraine, his wife for over 57 years.

Polka music is a passion for Norb. It is not unusual for a dance you are at today, to be on YouTube that night for your viewing and listening pleasure. Today Norb has posted over 10,300 videos and exceeded 5,000,000 hits by the end of January.

Words from Norb Ciesla:

"It has been a great honor to follow the footsteps of founder Mike and continue to share that great polka music with old and new friends across the world. The internet has given me a chance to share the fun we have with family and friends at our dances while enjoying music from excellent polka musicians that play for our club. I really try to capture the fun and joy that polka music brings to people's lives. It is very hard to be sad when a great polka is playing. You just want to get up and dance. Nothing makes me happier than seeing some of our senior members dancing with some of our younger members and carrying the polka joy forward into the next generation. You know you are at a polka dance because there are no iPhones - instead the kids are interacting, dancing and having fun. It is a great honor to receive the Joe Jozwiak award. I extend my thank you to the IPA, the great bands we get to listen to, the great friends and families I have met over the years throughout the United States. I also would like to thank "Polka Hall of Famer", Richie Gomulka and his wife for the privilege of being on the Polka Jammer Internet Show as a guest. Best wishes to everyone for 2018!"

Norb was presented the Joe Jozwiak Special Achievement Award at the IPA Chicago Festival of Polka Bands on Sunday, January 14. Congratulations to Norb, and thank you for your contributions to polka music.



## 2018 IPA Festival & Convention - We Need Your Help!

In preparation for our 50th anniversary, we are looking for photos from IPA events throughout the years. Please help us by submitting your photos of your experiences at IPA events. Any help you can give us would be greatly appreciated.

You can scan and email them to: [christy-ipa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:christy-ipa@sbcglobal.net) or mail a copy that will not be returned to: IPA 50th Anniversary Photos; PO Box 1484; Plainfield, IL 60585.

## IPA Warm-Up Dance & Festival of Chicago Polka Bands

The IPA Warm-up Dance and 49<sup>th</sup> Annual IPA Festival of Chicago Polka Bands was held on January 13 and 14, 2018.

The IPA Warm Up Dance was Saturday January 13, 2018 music was provided by Lenny Gomulka and the Chicago Push at Polonia Banquets. Attendees were able to visit the IPA Hall of Fame, dance and sing to the fine sounds of the Chicago Push, who of course, played overtime.

The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of Chicago Polka Bands was held the following day, at the Glendora House, which brought out hundreds of polka fans from throughout the US and even Canada. Music that afternoon was provided by, D Street Band, Windy City Brass, Tony Blazonczyk's New Phaze, IPA Tribute Band, The Music Company, FreezeDried and Tri-City Drive.

Both events were very well attended, and we want to thank all the bands for donating their time and talents. We also thank the staff at Polonia Banquets and the Glendora Banquets for their continued support of polka music. To all who attended these events, thank you so much.

— Christy Krawisz

Photo Credit: Les Kapuscinski





## Texas Dance Supports IPA

Texas Polka News sponsored the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual IPA Dance on Jan. 27 at the KC Hall in Schulenburg, Texas during National Polka Month. The Dujka Brothers, whose recording of Church Picnic Polka was chosen as 2016 International Song of the Year, provided the music. Danny Zapletal, IPA trustee for the Southwest US, served as emcee. He also joined Mark and John Dujka on stage with his trumpet. Special guest was Alfred Vrazel, IPA 2014 Hall of Famer, who also joined the band with his accordion for a few numbers.

Surprise guest was Chicago IPA Hall of Famer Ted Okrzesik, and his wife, Gennie O, who happened to be visiting family in Texas and came out to the dance. The floor was filled with dancers of all ages all night long. Guests enjoyed a stew dinner provided by the Knights of Columbus cooks, and had fun with the silent auction. The event raised about \$1,000 for the IPA, and nine Texans signed up as IPA members, helping the IPA reach its goal of 1,000 members for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"It was another great event where Texans showed their support of the IPA," Danny Z said, adding that everyone loved the "Thank You Texas!" banner the IPA sent.

"Till next January, polka on!"

—Theresa Parker, editor "Texas Polka News"



## IPA & Let's Polka USA Unity Dance

The International Polka Association and Let's Polka USA Club from Chicago held their 7th Annual Unity Dance on April 8, 2018, at the Glendora Banquet Hall.

Music was provided by the IPA Tribute Band with a guest performance by IPA Hall of Famer from Canada, none other than John Gora! Polka fans enjoyed an afternoon of great music, friendship, and even a visit from some "butterflies"! Thank you John Gora for spending the weekend with us and for another great performance. We also hosted a live broadcast for the 2018 Polka JammerThon, during which we raised approximately \$3,000 during our two-hour broadcast. Thanks to IPA Directors Keith Pietranczyk and Dennis Mikolajewski, who were our hosts for the show. We were able to help reach the PJN's weekend goal of raising \$43,000, and then exceeded it! Great job everyone.

Our organizations are honored to come together in unity to promote polka music, and we thank all who attended for your generous support. We hope you enjoyed the afternoon with all of us!

— Laura Mateja



## Ludlow IPA Hall of Fame Benefit Dance

March brought the annual IPA Hall of Fame Benefit back to Massachusetts for the 13th year at the Ludlow PACC. Numerous polka fans from many different states and several IPA Hall of Famers were entertained by The Boys on Saturday, March 10th to kickoff the weekend festivities. Sunday, March 11th brought a full day of entertainment to the packed PACC with Eddie Forman and EFO, Dennis Polisky & Maestro's Men, and Full Circle. The evening was highlighted by Full Circle performing a beautifully orchestrated musical tribute to The Tones.

Thank you to Freddy and Linda Kendzierski and Eddie and Jeanne Szela who organized this event 13 years ago and have made it the success it continues to be each year. Although greatly missed, Ed and Jeanne were with us in spirit.

Thank you to The Boys, EFO, Maestro's Men, and Full Circle for providing their musical talent, and also the IPA board members and officers, past and present, who attended and lent their support.

A special thank you to all who attended what has become an annual weekend-long event, especially those who travelled long distances to be a part of it, as well as those who worked so hard to make it the success it was. Over \$5,000 was raised to benefit the IPA Hall of Fame. Hope to see you again next year!

— Sue Szela





## IPA Warm Up Dance & Wisconsin Festival of Polka Bands

The IPA held its first IPA Warm-Up Dance and Wisconsin Festival of Polka Bands March 17-18, 2018. Lucky for us Wisconsinites, the weather couldn't have been more perfect; we got two feet of snow a few weeks later! Polka fans from as far as Connecticut, Ohio, Nebraska, and Minnesota traveled to hear the fine sounds of The Project on Saturday evening, with over 200 attending Saturday evening's festivities. Sunday drew a crowd of over 300, entertained by the music of The Maroszek Brothers, The Natural Talent (TNT), Polish Connection, and Polkatown Sound.

Thank you to all the bands for your time and talent, and thank you to my hard-working crew who helped make the weekend a success: Michelle Eron, Jill Czerniak, Lynn Thull, Braeden Eron, David Dunaj, and Doug Dunaj.

Over \$3,000 was raised! We look forward to bringing more dances to Wisconsin, and thank you all for your support.

—Debbie Dunaj

Photo Credit: Rick Rzeszutko





## Certificates of Appreciation



IPA Sergeant at Arms Peter Danielczuk presented Certificates of Appreciation to Dennis Polisky, Eddie Forman and Richie Bernier, for promoting and performing polka music for over 50 years. Also pictured is IPA President Rick Rzeszutko and IPA 2nd Vice President Fred Kendzierski.

Photo Credit: Karen Olszewski

IPA Director Lori Urbanczyk presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Ron Dombrowski, In recognition of 40 years of polka music broadcasting on the radio with Drive Time Polkas (WECK & WXRL) and on television with Polka Saturday Night and WBBZ Polka Buzz, and for your promotion of polka music in Western New York, On behalf of the Buffalo polka bands, polka musicians and polka fans, The International Polka Association hereby presents you this Certificate of Appreciation. Thank you, and congratulations!



IPA Director Dennis Mikolajewski, presenting Kenny Bartkowiak with the International Polka Association's Certificate of Appreciation for his 46 + years of performing polka music.

Also Pictured IPA President Rick Rzeszutko and IPA Director Laura Mateja.

IPA presented the Doszak Family and Illinois Polkafest a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of their efforts to promote and support polka music.

Thank you and congratulations on your 30th anniversary of hosting the Illinois Polkafest.

Pictured are Chris Doszak, Steve Meisner, Christy Krawisz, John Krawisz and Rick Rzeszutko.



## Welcome New Members!

Joanie Stryk Rethlake, TX  
 Richard Bernier, CT  
 Michele Wojtowicz, MA  
 Kathleen Labuda Zink, IL  
 JoJo Malinowski, IL  
 Mike Samars, IL  
 Francine Pawlicki, NY  
 Chris Zawisza, Canada  
 Don Wayerski, WI  
 Neil Kosman, IL  
 Diane Bulanda, IL  
 Kenneth Sowizrol, IL  
 Paul Chinchin, PA  
 Brian Tos, Canada  
 Tom Butash, Canada  
 Lottie Rogacki, NY  
 David DeFields, NY  
 Chris Makarewicz, NY  
 Melissa Dziadosz, NY  
 Greg Chwojdak, OH  
 Tyler Zawatski, IL  
 Cletus Roh, MD  
 Mike Kocieniewski, NY  
 Greg Griffin, Jr., TX  
 Joan Griffin, TX  
 Yvonne Zapletal, TX  
 James Like, SD  
 Doris Goche-Benson, TX  
 CW Benson, TX  
 Kelli Lee, TX  
 Kenny Torres, TX  
 Brad Cutright, TX  
 Richard Pijanowski, NY  
 Rob Czech, MA  
 Chris Doszak, WI  
 Frank Maroszek, WI  
 Tammy Kirsch, WI  
 Chet Kizewski, WI  
 Lynn Kizewski, WI  
 Allan Maroszek, WI  
 Becky Bukowski, IL  
 Jack Kramer, WI  
 Greg Dybas, IL  
 Patty Chmielewski, MN  
 Florian Chmielewski, MN  
 Joey Blackburn, NY  
 Ronald Kutas, NY

### LIFETIME MEMBERS:

Wally Czaska, Sr, NY  
 Dan Czerniak, MN

## Thank You

Thank you to the following individuals for their donations to the International Polka Association:

- Michael Bednarz, in memory of Ed Szela
- Violet Wasielewski, in memory of Matt Wasielewski

We sincerely thank you for your contributions and support of the International Polka Association.

## Newsletter Production

We apologize for the delay in completion and mailing of this newsletter in order to inform you of all our past and upcoming exciting events. Any questions or concerns regarding the newsletter, please contact me. We thank you for your understanding and continued support.

— Debbie Dunaj

## Did You Know?

Did you know the International Polka Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization as recognized by the IRS? All donations to the IPA are tax-deductible.

## Please Remember Us In Your Will Or Trust

To assure the future of the IPA and polka music, your assistance is needed. When you write or review your Will or Trust, please consider leaving a charitable request. Ask your attorney to include the International Polka Association.

Members are very important to the International Polka Association! If your membership is up for renewal, please send your renewal and dues as soon as possible. Membership dues are \$15.00 per year or \$200.00 for a lifetime membership. Renew online at [www.ipapolkas.com](http://www.ipapolkas.com).

We currently have 952 members. Help us reach our goal of 1,000; encourage a friend or two to join!



# IPA Birthdays



## March

- 1: Elaine Veverka; Kathy Prochot
- 2: Todd Zaganiacz; Jim "Wigs" Weglicki;  
Mike Marek
- 3: Tom Mrocza; Tim Verthein; Dennis Zielinski, Jr;  
Karen Danielczuk; Tony Rozek, Jr.; Tom Butash
- 4: Ken Yagelski
- 5: Dick Pillar; Stanley Martin Sr.
- 6: Joan Pyzik; Rick Rzeszutko ; Gintare Okrzesik
- 8: Wendy Wantroba; Les Kapuscinski
- 9: Joseph Mehorczyk; Eddie Siwiec;  
Joseph Pusz; Thomas McGuire; Steve Kantorski;  
Linda Malachin
- 10: Fred Ziwich
- 11: Fr. Dennis Bogusz; Walter Kazmierczak;  
Jon Peters; Chester Pala
- 12: Garry Kuchenbecker; Josefine Kozak;  
Angela Piasecki; Joseph Warco;  
Chase Stanczewski
- 13: Frank Waltos; Kelli Lee
- 14: Casey Kliszak
- 15: Father Tom Aleksa; Joan Zychowski Minehart
- 16: Wojtek Kukiela
- 17: Larry Walk; Patrick Henry Cukierka;  
Jeff Mleczo
- 18: Mary Lou Brock
- 19: Joseph Oginsky; Marcia Musial
- 20: Vincent Shemansky ; James Kaminski
- 21: Roman Marsolek; Chris Turecek
- 22: Theresa Slipek; Debbie Jackinoski;  
Ted Lange; John Zelasko; Debbie Bezler;  
Sue Krysa
- 23: Julie Ann Kurdys; Dianne Gora
- 24: Mark Kohan; Missy Lynn Krejci; Katie Krawisz
- 26: Tony Winiarz; Patricia Wojnowski; Steven Fenus
- 27: Mike Gryczko; Yvonne Zapletal
- 28: Mike Kochanek; Frank Kosman;  
Chester Dziadosz; Antoinette Rozek;  
Zachary Janson
- 29: Allan Maroszek
- 30: Jim Barvainis; Lucille Gay; Mitch Piotrowski;  
Richard Pijanowski
- 31: Judy Stringhill; Chuck Troiani; Lori Lewandowski

## April

- 2: Joseph Witek
- 3: Bob Derks
- 4: Timothy Haselow; Mary Lou Czerniak
- 5: Steven Smith; David Straup Slick
- 6: Bill Kozlauska; Alice Koziel; Richard Szuflita
- 7: Betty Downey; Barbara Ann Adams;  
John Zelasko
- 8: Tom Reznickervitz,
- 9: Michelle Genrich; Veronica Grocholski
- 11: Roger Malinowski; Paul Chichin
- 13: Louella Kundert ; Jerold Walkowiak;  
Mark Coleman
- 14: George Walker; Larry Trojak
- 16: Ed Vatauvuk; Brian Tos
- 17: Ronald Biskup; Mack Martin; Tyler Zawatski;  
Diane Nowakowski; Steve Meisner;  
Margaret Zotkiewicz-Dramczyk
- 18: Peter Wendinger;
- 19: Mitch Gorz
- 20: Cherie Trzepacz; Michael Blaskowski;  
Tim Rohal
- 21: Jane Siuda; Douglas Glon; Bob Jarnot
- 22: Leonard Cioch; Johnetta Vinka;  
Maria Szymanski; Debbie Rymanowski
- 23: Brian Szumigalski
- 24: Roberta Matuszko
- 25: Sally Rzeszutko; Brian Urbanczyk;  
Marie Brado; Robert Gawryla;  
Gina Monteleone
- 26: Gary Osga; Gloria Bonnin; Phyllis Videtich
- 27: Rev. Phillip Grib; Michael Schrader;  
Frieda Mocny; Linda Walczynski-Louie;  
Amanda Cowe
- 28: Eric Kurowski; Joseph Price; John Sakal;  
Michael Bednarz
- 29: Kim Cielecki





# IPA Birthdays



## May

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1: Dick Powell  | Michael Nowakowski   |
| 2: Judy Del Pozzo; Gary Rozak; Rita Sajkowicz; John Kwiatkowski, Jr; John Kostecki; Cindy McHugh          | 18: Larry Stec; Fran Russo; Jackie Libera; Kenneith Sowizrol                   |
| 3: Jennifer Pietranczyk   | 19: Clarence Karakla   |
| 4: Harold Otto; Sandi Zaganiacz; Debbie Walczynski-Greene   | 20: Ryan Ogrodny; Stan Baryla  |
| 6: Frank Gubala; Mashelle Pavey; Robert Mazur; Julie Misek  | 21: Marge Smith; Edwin Rajewski  |
| 7: Ray Pasinski; Richard Kozacko; Sharon Goldyn   | 22: Raymond Skorka; Linda Kendzierski;   |
| 8: Grace Mikrut ; Lorraine "Travers" Truskolaski  | 23: Judith Pollick; Ruth Lietz; Melanie Ellis                                  |
| 9: Janice Lochner; Matthew Kasprzyk; Becky Bukowski   | 24: Mary Saber; Ron Palkowski; Marty Biniasz                                   |
| 10: Lenny Zielinski; David Nowatzki; Mike Surratt; Jill Czerniak; Bini Husain; Danny "Potts" Poczciwinski | 25: Robyn Mrozinski; Arlene Talbot; Jim Letnick; Greg Griffin, Jr.             |
| 11: Eleanor Grudi   | 26: Tim Winiarz ; Thomas Lewandowski   |
| 12: Minnie Florio; Chester Sterczek   | 27: Rick Zarek; Jane Piotrowski;   |
| 13: Julie Figura; Connie Shemansky; Bob Raica   | 28: Carol Schminski  |
| 14: Stacey Morris; Carolyn Blajda; Eileen Uba; Jerry Wantroba, III  | 29: Andy Bojczuk; Carolyn Kasproicz; Marty Olshanski; Kim Hedrich; Peter Siuda |
| 15: Krystin Benkowski; Linda Olejnickak; Daniel McNamara; Bryan Koslosky; James Like                      | 30: Jerold Kriston; Ricky Krupski  |
| 16: Chris Bogdon; Eddie Korosa, Jr.; Bob Zukowski   | 31: Ashley Mateja; Bill Popek  |
| 17: Edmund Burdzy; Linda Chesky-Fernandes;  |  |



**THEY'RE BA-ACK!**

After a 30 YEAR hiatus...

**GENNIE O and THE WINDY CITY BRASS**

Present

**The "O" Family Album**

Featuring the **All-O Family Band!**  
15 Fun Tunes!

- Everybody
- Whiskey on the Rocks
- Shining Moon Waltz
- Who'd Ya Like to Love Ya
- Floyd and the 9 Horseman
- I Want a Girl
- Green Parrot
- Evening Bells Waltz
- Loved Three Times
- Pinke Pinke
- Back in Baby's Arms
- Morning Has Broken
- What Went Wrong?
- Life Goes On Waltz
- Be Kind to Your Parents!

**\$15<sup>00</sup> + S/H**

Get your CD today!  
Email us at:  
**WCBpolkas@gmail.com**

**ARCHER RECORDING COMPANY**

Please join the International Polka Association's  
**50th Anniversary Mass,  
 Dinner, and Dance Celebration**  
 Semi-Formal Event • ADVANCED RESERVATIONS ONLY

**Sunday, October 28, 2018**  
**Polonia Banquets • 4604 S. Archer Avenue • Chicago, IL**

**Doors open at 11:30 AM • 12:00 PM Mass celebrated by Father Bob Roll**  
**1:00 PM dinner served**

**Featuring a fabulous Family Style Polish dinner including chicken, polish sausage, beef,  
 Polonia's famous dumplings, and more!**

**Music and Dancing 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM by:**  
**The Boys**

**Reservation and payment deadline:**  
**October 16, 2018.**

**Adults - \$45/person**  
**Teens (13-20) - \$35/person**  
**Kids (4-12) - \$15/person**  
**Children 4 and under - FREE!**

**PRICE INCLUDES FOUR HOURS**  
**OF OPEN BAR FROM 2:00 - 6:00 PM!**



**Raffles, photo booth, giveaways, and lots of surprises! Call: 1-800-TO-POLKA (1-800-867-6552)**  
**Visit [ipapolkas.com](http://ipapolkas.com) and [facebook.com/ipapolkas](https://www.facebook.com/ipapolkas)**

Please fill out the form below:

Please mail check to: International Polka Association, PO Box 1484, Plainfield, IL 60585.

Make Check Payable to IPA

NO TICKETS WILL BE MAILED. EMAIL ADDRESS NEEDED FOR TICKET CONFIRMATION.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Adult tickets (\$45): \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Teen tickets (\$35): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Kids tickets (\$15): \_\_\_\_\_ Kids under 4 (FREE): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_





**Free  
Catalog  
CDs  
DVDs**

**PolkaConnection.com**

**Your connection to polka  
music from around the world.**

**Call Free (866) 901-6138**



# \$1000 FREDDY K JR MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



The Freddy K Jr. Music Scholarship Committee is now accepting requests for applications for the 2018 Scholarship award. Applicants must be high school seniors who have been accepted to an accredited college and play a musical instrument. Anyone who is interested in applying for this year's award can download an application on our website at [www.freddykjrmusicscholarship.com](http://www.freddykjrmusicscholarship.com) or contact the Scholarship Committee at the following address:

The Freddy K Jr. Scholarship Fund  
23850 Via Italia Circle, Apt #1104  
Bonita Springs, Florida 34134

Freddy K Jr. played trumpet in his father's band, **The Freddy K Band**, when he died in an automobile accident in July of 1997. Music, especially Polka Music, was Fred's life and passion. His personality, sense of humor and love of Polka Music affected all who knew him. The Music Scholarship Fund was set up to carry on where Fred left off by promoting polka music through the gift of a \$1,000 Scholarship to a deserving student every year. Each award will be given at one of the polka Festivals during the summer.

## WINNERS OF \$1000 SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2017 – Veronica Prytko, Millbury, Massachusetts
- Joseph Blackburn, Troy, New York
- 2016 – Olivia Piatkowski, Canastota, New York
- 2015 – Adam Winiarz, Norton, Massachusetts
- 2014 – Jenna Libera, Charlton, Massachusetts
- 2013 – Eva Snyder, South Hadley, Massachusetts
- 2012 – Justin Kohan, Orchard Park, New York
- 2011 – Stephen Piatkowski, Canastota, New York
- 2010 - Kassandra Dardzinski, Saugus, Massachusetts and  
Anita Marie Thomas, Balto, Maryland
- 2009 – David Raccis, Wilbreham, Massachusetts
- 2008 – Christopher Wanyo, Shillington, Pennsylvania
- 2007 – Kevin Martin, Hudson, New Hampshire
- 2006 – Lanella Raccis, Wilbreham, Massachusetts
- 2005 – Nick Koryluk, Hicksville, New York
- 2004 – Michael D. Riel, II, Chicopee, Massachusetts
- 2003 – Ryan Ogrodny, White Oak, Pennsylvania
- 2002 – Brian Romianik, Millville, New Jersey
- 2001 – Melissa Mocadlo, Stevens Point, Wisconsin
- 2000 – Andrew Krystopolski, Wilmington, Delaware
- 1999 – William Lomnychuk, Reading, Pennsylvania
- 1998 – John Daigle, Chicopee, Massachusetts



# Texas Polka News

POLKA ★ COUNTRY ★ WESTERN SWING ★ CAJUN

**Covering Texas Polka Scene  
Since 1987**



**polka<sup>beat</sup>.com**  
★★★★★

**Providing Dance Hall Weekend  
Schedules Since 2010**

Subscribe to Texas Polka News for only \$25/yr. for 12 monthly issues.

Send check to PO Box 800183 Houston, TX 77280.

Go to [PolkaBeat.com](http://PolkaBeat.com) to subscribe online by clicking on the Texas Polka News logo on the homepage.

While you're there, sign up for our FREE weekly e-newsletter at the top right of the homepage.

IPA Dates to Remember		Advertise in the IPA Newsletter	
Labor Day Weekend:	50th Annual IPA Festival & Convention; Millennium Hotel Buffalo, NY	<div>One Issue</div> <div>Full Page ..... \$75.00 per issue</div> <div>Half Page..... \$55.00 per issue</div> <div>Quarter Page ..... \$40.00 per Issue</div> <div>Eighth Page..... \$25.00 per issue</div>	
October 28:	50th Anniversary Mass, Dinner and Dance Celebration Polonia Banquets; Chicago, IL	<div>Three Issues</div> <div>Full Page ..... \$67.00 per issue</div> <div>Half Page..... \$45.00 per issue</div> <div>Quarter Page ..... \$36.00 per issue</div> <div>Eighth Page..... \$22.00 per issue</div>	
		<div>Six Issues</div> <div>Full Page ..... \$60.00 per issue</div> <div>Half Page..... \$40.00 per issue</div> <div>Quarter Page ..... \$32.00 per issue</div> <div>Eighth Page..... \$20.00 per issue</div> <div>Email ad files to Debbie Dunaj: dunajda07@yahoo.com.</div>	
<div>IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS!!</div> <div>As reminders for membership renewals are mailed out, it would be greatly appreciated if these could be returned <u>as soon as possible</u>. Not only are these fees used to allocate printing and mailing expenses, but for various other causes. <b>So please return your renewals in a timely matter.</b></div>			

International Polka Association, Inc.®  
PO Box 1484, Plainfield, IL 60585  
1-800-TO-POLKA (1-800-867-6552)  
Website: [www.ipapolkas.com](http://www.ipapolkas.com)

