



IPA Newsletter

2022 IPA® Hall of Fame Inductees



Congratulations



It's Always Sunny in Florida...

Witamy członków!

It's a sizzlin summer here in Florida which gives everyone a chance to support LIVE polka music by attending some Northern polka dances/festivals.

[Keep your feet dancing to the polka beat while our FL Clubs prepare for our upcoming Fall dances!](#)

Polish American Pulaski Club of Daytona Beach is having Polka dances at **The Elks Lodge, 285 Wilmette Avenue, Ormond Beach**. The Melotones will be playing on July 24th and Polka Classic on August 28th. The Fall Dances will be announced soon. For more information, call the club at (386)-258-7059. You can also contact the club on their Facebook page, email the club at pulaskidaytonaclub@yahoo.com, or check out their website at: www.polishamericanpulaskiclubdaytona.org.

German American Club of Marion County will be celebrating the club's **25th Silver Anniversary** on August 14th with a special dinner/dance featuring the Northern Sounds. September 18th will be their Oktoberfest event. November 7th is the Fall Festival with music by Eva Adams and December 19th is the annual Christmas Party, featuring the popular Tannenbaums Band. For tickets/information, please call Mary (352)-789-6499 or visit their website: www.gacmarioncounty.com.

General K. Pulaski Citizens Club in Belleview will be closed over the summer. They will re-open on October 9th to celebrate General Pulaski Memorial Day with Northern Sounds. On November 13th they will honor Veterans Day/Thanksgiving with Northern Sounds. The annual Christmas Kolendy party is December 11th featuring Northern Sounds along with some special guests! Please contact Brad for more information.

SNPJ Lodge #603 in Samsula will be having a Canal

Street Nights Oktoberfest event on Thursday October 20th, in downtown New Smyrna Beach featuring the Brewski Brothers. The event is **FREE**. For more information, give Cindy a call at: (386)-689-9454. Join their

Facebook page, email the club: snpjilodge603@gmail.com or visit their website: www.samsulasnpjilodge603.com



By Brad Turk

Polish American Social Club of Vero Beach is currently having "Friendly Friday" (one Friday a month), featuring happy hour drink prices and food along with FREE admission. For dates and information please join their Facebook page, visit their website www.pacvbusa.org, or call the club at (772)-778-0039. Stay tuned for Fall polka band dates to be announced soon.

Polish American Society of St. Petersburg is having "Thirsty Thursdays" every Thursday evening from 5:30-9pm. Polish dinners will be served from 6-8pm with a full bar featuring special drink prices! The club will be re-opening on November 6th with the Northern Sounds. November 20th will be Florida Generations. December 4th will feature the Polka All Stars and December 18th is their Christmas party with the Nu Soundz. Please visit their website: www.polishsociety.org or check out their Facebook page for more info.

As a reminder, Florida's favorite IJ's are: 2009 Hall of Famer Joe Oberaitis with Polkas 101 (Saturday), and Slovenian Polka Blast (Thursday), as well as, Crankin' Polkas (Fridays), with IPA member Ray Skorka.

If you would like any additional information about our clubs, polka dances or special events, email me at bradturk@cox.net or call: (352) 875-3961. Looking forward seeing all our friends at the polka festivals. **Do zobaczenia.**

Ocean Beach Park Polka Days Returns

Ocean Pizza, Polkas on the Beach, Virtual Roller Coaster Rides, and the Riel World! If these are unknown to you, you should plan to attend Ocean Beach Park Polka Days to experience one of the unique polka festivals in the nation.

Pillar Polkabration was the premier polka festival on the east coast and was run by IPA Hall of Famer Dick Pillar. At its peak of popularity, he had eleven days of polka entertainment in the ballroom and on the beach. After Dick Pillar retired, Richie and Wally Dombrowski decided to bring back a polka festival at Ocean Beach in 2014 and renamed it Ocean Beach Park Polka Days. After a two-year hiatus, polkas returned to the beach, and 2022 was a great year.

The festival kicks off with a welcome party on Tuesday, and this year, it was held at the famous Ocean Pizza with the live Polka Jammer Network broadcasting. Ocean Pizza is a restaurant a few miles from the beach and was always the location where people went to eat after the polka festival. Ocean Pizza is owned by the same people that owned it in the Polkabration days, and they were delighted to have polkas return. In fact, they would extend their hours just for the polka people to eat after the festival.

On Wednesday, Polka Country Musicians provided the entertainment on the board. This free concert is always a great way to kick off the festival. The weather started promising for the band, but you knew you were in New England when the fog started rolling in. Unfortunately, the band had to cut it short due to the fog, but the kick-off concert was always a great time. Of course, once that was over, the party returned to Ocean Pizza to continue the celebration.

On Thursday, polka music kicked off at 10:00 on the beach. Yes, you heard that right. Ocean Beach Park Polka Days has a pavilion on the beach and is only 25 yards from the water. Fans get their place on the beach as early as 8:00 am to reserve their spot. When Dynabass and the Beat started performing, the beach was packed with people drinking and having a great time. Once you recovered from listening to polkas on the beach for 5 hours, everyone started making their way to the ballroom, which opened at 6 pm and featured Eddie Forman, Boys, and John Gora and Gorale. Like all the other days, once

the dance ended at 12:30 pm, the party continued at Ocean Pizza for hours.

by Chris Bogdon
2nd Vice President

On Friday, music at the beach featured the Nutone's and Energy. Performing with Energy brought special memories for me since Pillar Polkabration was our first road trip in the early 90s. It was great to be back at Ocean Beach with Energy. In the evening, the ballroom had the great sounds of Matt's All-Star Jam Band, Polka Country Musicians, and Polka Family. It was also great to see Dick and Joanne Pillar stop out to see some of the entertainment on Friday night. I think Hank Guzevich summarized Friday so nicely when he commented about the number of young people at the dance. There were so many new people there this year, and it was great to see.

On Saturday, music at the beach started with John Gora and Gorale and Lenny Gomulka. One of the highlights of the beach is stopping at the Riel World, a tent hosted by the Riel's of Massachusetts. They always have so many options for liquid refreshments that it is a must-see at Ocean Beach. Finally, the evening entertainment featured the Maestro's Men, Boys, and Polka Country Musicians. Saturday night also features a virtual roller coaster ride that started a couple of years ago. They set up the chairs like a roller coaster, and everyone gets in their seats and pretends they are on a roller coaster while the bands are performing. Everyone has such a great time with this. There are some great videos of the roller coaster on Facebook.

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Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church

113 Years of Service to God and His People

Rector
Fr. Vasyi Sendeha

Parish Council
President
Mary Wisniewski

Sisterhood of St.
Anne President
Carol Rodmerski
Mary Wisniewski

Church School
Director
Pat Wolsko

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Caregiving Com.
President
Elias Gordan

50/50 Club
President
Michael Gbur

International Polka Association
4608 S. Archer Ave.
Chicago, IL 60632

May 7, 2022

Christ among us!

On behalf of Our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Palos Park, IL, I would like to thank you for your very generous donation of \$1,023.00 towards humanitarian relief fund for Ukraine. We use the money donated to cover the cost of shipping of humanitarian goods as well as to buy supplies such as food and heavy equipment in Poland for Ukrainian people.

We are grateful for your support. May God bless you and reward you hundredfold!

Your donation is tax deductible.

Sts. Peter and Paul Church is a non-profit religious organization.

Our EIN number is 36-2277374

If you need additional information don't hesitate to contact our office.

Thank you
Yours in Christ,

Rev. Vasyi Sendeha

Rev. Vasyi Sendeha
Pastor

8410 West 131st Street Palos Park, IL 60464-2122

Rectory Phone (708) 361-5165/ Rev.Vasyi@yahoo.com Website: www.sspeterandpauluoc.net



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This year, people came as far as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Florida for Ocean Beach Park Polka Days. One unique aspect of Ocean Beach Park Polka Days is the families bringing their kids. Kids love Ocean Beach because, besides the great music, you also have a beach. If you haven't experienced Ocean Beach Park Polka Days, you must plan to get here one year. Ocean Beach is in New London, CT, with proximity to major cities like Boston, New York, Hartford, or Providence. Its unique locations also allow many other things to do like sightseeing, wine tastings, and casinos. Kudos to Rich and Wally Dombrowski for hosting such a great festival. Next Years festival will run from June 21st thru June 24th. If you want more information, you can go to <https://www.oceanbeachparkpolkadays.com>.

2022 Kinloch Fire Hall "Pittsburgh's Polka Hot Spot" Polka Schedule

Sunday Feb 27 th , 2022	Join us for the Fun Energy	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$17.00 per person
Sunday Apr 10 th , 2022	IPA & USPA Award Winning Polka Country Musicians	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$17.00 per person
Sunday May 15 th , 2022	IPA & USPA Award Winning DynaBrass	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$17.00 per person
Saturday Sep 10 th , 2022	Join Chris Bogdon with PA Musicians Burgh Boys	8:00pm - 9:00pm \$12.00 per person
Sunday Oct 2 nd , 2022	IPA Hall of Famer Lenny Gomulka and the Chicago Push	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$17.00 per person
Sunday Nov 13 th , 2022	The hottest band in the nation The Beat	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$17.00 per person
Sunday Nov 20 th , 2022	Special Thansgiving Dance Jack Tady and JTB	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$12.00 per person
Sunday Dec 18 th , 2022	DTO Christmas Celebration Dick Tady and the DTO	2:00pm - 6:00pm \$12.00 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

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

IPA's POLKA MUSIC IS ESSENTIAL AVAILABLE NOW



Polka music is Essential is the latest IPA t-shirt designed by IPA member Hayley Krawisz. Scan the QR code to take you directly to the store to purchase yours now, or you can visit the store at IPAPolkas.com.

You can pay your IPA membership
using

zelle



2022 International Polka Association
Festival and Convention
2nd Annual Kick-Off Polka Party



Thursday, Sept 1, 2022

Western PA's Hottest Polka Band

Mon Valley Push



Music from 7:00pm to 11:00pm

Doors Open at 6:00pm

Tickets: \$15 per person

Cranberry Elks Lodge #2249
20720 Route 19
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

All proceeds benefit the Elks Lodge #2249

BSA Troop 405 will be selling food as a fundraiser

Drinks will be available for purchase! No BYOB!

For tickets, table reservations or more information contact:
Chris Bogdon - 412-260-9725 or chris@bogdonfamily.com

*For more information about the 54th Annual IPA Polka Festival and Convention
in Cranberry Twp., please see <https://www.ipapolkas.com>*

2022 IPA Polka Hall of Fame®

Inductee

Alex Meixner

Living Category



Alex Meixner is a nationally acclaimed musician, performer, bandleader, educator and a leading advocate of polka music. Formally trained in classical, jazz and ethnic music, Alex has cross-pollinated his versatile playing styles through pop music, funk, jazz and polka. He is an active ambassador for polka music, revitalizing interest coast to coast resulting in sold out shows, renewed cultural interest, and growing mainstream acceptance. For Alex, it's more than playing energetic shows; it is a mission to provide a much needed positive experience that pulls communities together to celebrate history, culture and genuinely good times.

Developing the Perfect Gentleman, Scholar, and Phenomenal Performer

Alex's passion for music was kindled at an early age by having the rare fortune of living in a household of professional musicians. He was cultivated intimately by his father, the 3rd generation of the family band whose leadership was passed down through generations hailing from Austria. Fully immersed in the business of music, Alex immediately gravitated toward mimicking their activities in the studio, stage and record shop. Finally, at age 3, he began formal study on the piano, and within a year he picked up the accordion resulting in his debut on stage by age 6, an experience that was to shape his life so much in future years.

And if playing those instruments weren't enough, his ability to learn many instruments led to gigging regularly on drums, bass, keyboards, piano accordion, button accordion and trumpet with Polish polka legend Joe Oberaitis and Canada's Polka King, Walter Ostanek, in addition to touring nationally with his father's band by age 11. His aptitude for playing jazz

and classical trumpet opened doors to formal study and opportunities including playing with the London Symphony Orchestra in High School and emerging as a highly sought after candidate for music school. He chose Ithaca College for its renowned reputation in developing music performers and educators.

While exceeding expectations in academic pursuits, he continued developing professional credentials in the polka music, recording albums for artists from the USA, Mexico, Austria, and Canada while maintaining a national touring schedule. At age 18, a track he performed on with his father was on Walter Ostanek's, 1994 Grammy award-winning album "Music and Friends." This performance not only added to his credibility but also started a renewed curiosity of the polka music market by younger musicians and veteran performers who had viewed this genre as a mere novelty whose popularity was past its prime.

Many Milestones on a Road Less Traveled

As a leader in the polka music cultural renaissance, Alex performs fluidly in styles hailing from Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, Spain, Poland, and America/Cleveland. His signature style pays homage to the authenticity instilled in his DNA while adding a modern twist that appeals to a broad cross-section of audiences. By creating and performing an expansive range of new and traditional music for solo, small, and large groups, Alex has expanded the vocabulary of ethnic music and continues to maintain a body of work that places him among the culture's finest performers.

Growing Mainstream Recognition

In 2016 Alex collaborated with the notable advertising agency, BBDO, to produce the

infamous Hormel Pepperoni commercials contributing to a successful sales campaign and contract renewals. At the end of 2016, he recorded with comedy phenomenon, Jack Black, for the major motion picture, "The Polka King," that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2017. Alex's reputation for professionalism and quality performance attracted additional commercial opportunities including performing on radio commercials for Ford Trucks and the soundtracks for numerous episodes of Moonshiners on the Discovery Network.

Live Performance

Alex leads the Alex Meixner Band which performs approximately 180 times a year across the country for venues ranging from intimate events and clubs to massive festivals. The Alex Meixner Band is a regular headliner at Wursthfest (New Braunfels, TX), German Fest (Milwaukee, WI), Musikfest (Bethlehem, PA), Plattduetsche Park (Franklin Square, NY), Creative Alliance (Baltimore, MD).

Recording

Alex has performed on over 50 albums, including 17 as a leader or soloist. His performance with his Father on Canadian Polka King, Walter Ostanek's, "Music and Friends" won a Grammy Award. His album Polka Freak Out, a collaboration with Bubba Hernandez, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2007. He has also recorded with a vast number of diverse artists as a soloist or sideman including avant-garde accordionist/ composer- Guy Klucevsek, Grammy winners- Brave Combo, TexMex Rock icons- The Krayolas and Irish entertainer- Seamus Kennedy.

Talent Management

In 2015, Alex formed [AM Management](#), a fully bonded and licensed talent agency that focuses on pairing the right entertainment for Ok-

toberfests and themed events, weddings, and corporate events. Alex personally handpicks the entertainment and assesses the opportunities to ensure the right fit.

Education

Alex is a formally trained educator with degrees from Ithaca College and the Pennsylvania State University. While on the road he is frequently booked for master classes, guest lecturing and as a clinician for schools, colleges, and private music schools.

Merchandising

The New Braunfels, Texas-based [Faust Brewery](#) has launched the Alex Meixner Polka Pilsner in honor of the positive and growing impact Alex's dedication to the polka music industry has garnered. It is a featured beer at the brewery's New Braunfels tap room and other locations throughout Texas. The Faust Hotel has even named a suite after Alex to attract guests during their travels to festivals and events in New Braunfels and neighboring San Antonio and Austin areas. Alex produces a new line Alex Meixner Band apparel that is available online and during events to enhance inclusive participation at events. He maintains an extensive album of polka and ethnic music by himself and various artists available online and at gigs.

As Alex builds this multifaceted career, he remains steadfast in sharing his belief that 'happiness is a choice.' In a time of political, social and economic turmoil, Alex sustains the opportunity for all lovers of music, cuisine, dance and community to gather and have fun and enjoy what matters most in life.

When Alex is not performing with all of these groups, he is devoted to bringing music to students through educational clinics.

Correction to prior newsletter....

The donation of \$1,023.00 to the St. Peter and Paul church was from the donation of our raffles at our March IPA Dances and not April's IPA/Let's Polka USA dance.



2022 IPA Polka Hall of Fame® Inductee

Donald Lee Cialkoszewski

Living Category



Donald Lee Cialkoszewski was born to John and Frances Cialkoszewski of Polish, Russian and German ancestry in Trilby, Ohio, a suburb of Toledo. Don's entire family was musically inclined, and at age seven, he asked his parents for a red accordion for his birthday. He began formal accordion instruction at the Faust White Music Company and at eight years of age, he gave his first paid performance at a Christmas party.

In the 1950's, Don was already a featured solo accordionist, appearing regularly on the "Kiddy Carnival Show" on WSPD Radio in Toledo. In 1957 at the age of 11, Don was the first place winner of WTOD's Talent Contest, hosted by Chet Zablocki, with his accordion rendition of "Clarinet Polka." Also in 1957, Don was asked to perform on Lawrence Welk's Top Tunes and New Talent Show.

Throughout high school, Don studied and performed on the French horn, clarinet, guitar, and glockenspiel for the Central Catholic High School Marching Band and with the University of Toledo Marching Band and Symphonic Ensemble. At the age of 15, he won State, National and International Classical Accordion contests. He was the first accordionist to perform with the Toledo Concert Band and the first accordionist to be accepted into the Toledo Symphony Orchestra.

In 1968, Don opened "Lee's Music" which he owned and operated until 1973. He personally taught two hundred students on the guitar, accordion, clarinet, trumpet and drums. Many of his students went on to develop their own Polka bands: Toledo Polkamotion's Mike Tilinski, and Crusade's Eddie Biegej and Randy Krajewski. Don's music store business and radio

show served as a launch pad for Polka talent, including his own, and by 1971 his original compositions were being recorded. "I'm a Polish Kid and Proud of It" was the featured tune on Don's first recording and soon Don's audiences were referring to him as the "The Polish Kid." The recording was a hit and he quickly capitalized on the new moniker. Many more original recordings were to follow. A Polish Kid Fan Club was founded in Michigan with nationwide membership.

In 1972, Johnny Sandrack was the first DJ to present Don's debut album over WMZK Radio in Detroit, Michigan. The listening audience responded enthusiastically and flooded the station with requests for "I'm a Polish Kid Polka." It launched The Polish Kid Fan Club whose members proudly wore green and gold vests and traveled hundreds of miles to hear the unforgettable musical talent of Don Cialkoszewski. Throughout the years, Don's music been recorded by many bands and he has performed with Michigan notables including Marv Herzog, Big Daddy Lackowski, Harold Mitas, Linda Lee Brown, Karen Stroiwas, and Johnny Sandrack.

Don's innovative technique and original tunes ignited a button box craze in the mid-seventies. Intrigued with the instrument, Don had learned to play the button accordion and filled the button box scene with new music. Don is proud to have received the 1989 Summer Music Fest Award in Frankenmuth, Michigan, and to have two button box recordings in the Smithsonian Institute.

Don has enhanced the image of Polka music with his professionalism as a musician and has broadened the Polka audience with his unique style and sound. He has appeared at every

major polka festival across the United States including Bel-Aire Polka Days in Chicago, Frankemuth Summer Music Fest, Ocean Beach Polkabration, and at polka events in Mesa, California and Denver, Colorado with Frankie Yankovic. Don has tirelessly promoted Polish, Czech, Bavarian and German style music throughout his musical career. He has fostered polka dancing by providing the music for MaryLou Kaye's Down River Polka Time cable television show with fifty one-hour shows per year over a 5-year period. Don's also performed the music on MaryLou Kaye's polka dancing instructional video which was distributed to every library in the country.

This classically trained artist has written or composed hundreds of tunes including I'm a Polish Kid Polka, You and Me Polka, Barn Dance, Hot Dog Polka, Kick It Out, and Bubbles, to name a few. Don plays music one can have fun with, from classical to pop, swing, and Polka tunes. The opening strains of his signature "Chicagoland Twirl" signals party goers that they are about to experience an unforgettable musical event.

The Polish Kid's many recordings are a testament to his musical talent and creativity. His versatility in playing many instruments is shown in his release called "Button Box Wiz Kid." This

instrumental of Don's original hit tunes and most requested favorites has 40 minutes of music with the inimitable Polish Kid touch as he plays all of the instruments and does all of the vocals in harmony.

The Polish Kid draws a crowd around the stage as he flashes his big smile and switches to his button box to play some of his original music such as the Button Box Rag, Oy Dy Dee Shuffle, Tyrolean Summer Waltz, or the lilting unforgettable Gypsy Polka. "The Polish Kid" is not just a passing fancy—rather an episode in the life of an artist who continues to create new horizons. Now in his 64th year as a composer and performer, and thanks to satellite radio and the internet, Don's music is enjoyed worldwide.

After losing his wife and band drummer Lorraine in 2019, Don is now semi-retired and lives in Mt. Washington, Kentucky, close to his son and grandchildren. Another son and two daughters live in Florida and Michigan.

Don Lee "The Polish Kid" Cialkoszewski's contribution to the polka industry is well documented and established. He has shared his incredible musical talent by composing and performing for thousands of Polka fans for many years and certainly deserves to be inducted into the International Polka Association Polka Hall of Fame.

Ph: 1-800-To-Polka
(800-687-6552)



www.ipapolkas.com

International Polka Association

Email: info@ipapolkas.com

<https://www.facebook.com/ipapolkas>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ipavideo>



2022 IPA Polka Hall of Fame® Inductee

Don Gralak

Deceased Category



Donald R. Gralak was born on August 19, 1952, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His father bought him his first concertina at the age of six, and he was taught by local Milwaukee virtuoso Stan Nowicki. By the age of nine, he had performed publicly on radio and made several television appearances on WTMJ's "Joe Shot and the Hot Shots." Soon after, he was playing solo for parties, bridal showers, and small functions. In 1963, at the age of eleven, when Stan Nowicki became ill and unable to continue teaching, Don took over instructing Stan's students and taught the concertina for the next 18 years.

In addition to teaching concertina lessons, Don started his own Slovenian-style polka band in the 1960s and performed throughout the Milwaukee area. He and his band recorded several albums in the 1970s and early 1980s: "Introducing Don Gralak," "Encore," "Saloon," and "The Happy Polkateers." Don and his band added a rock 'n' roll touch to the traditional Slovenian style of polka music and was widely acclaimed for their ability to perform pop and rock 'n' roll songs as well as polkas. They became quite popular over time and played at various events throughout southern Wisconsin such as the Wisconsin State Fair, Milwaukee Summerfest, Milwaukee Polish Fest, and West Allis Western Days. They performed in Cleveland, Ohio, and participated in tours of Europe and the Caribbean during several polka excursions.

Don's playing style was brilliant and unmatched in several aspects. For instance, he played mostly Slovenian-style polka music on the concertina, which was traditionally a Polish or German band instrument. He played by pulling or pushing the left side of the bellows like an accordion, whereas traditional concertina players pulled or pushed both sides. Don was so gifted that he could play in any of the 12 musical keys, and he kept experimenting with technique to develop a smoother concertina sound. Whenever Don played festivals, people would crowd the front of the stage in awe of his musicianship and unparalleled talent. Moreover, Don had the ability to attract a younger crowd, somewhat unusual for Slovenian-style polka bands of the time. When he was not performing at polka events, Don accepted solo jobs where he played exclusively pop and rock music on the concertina. He became known as a musician's musician and was nicknamed "America's Concertina King" and "America's Master of the Concertina."

One of Don's career goals was to promote the concertina and polka music whenever possible. In 1978, he opened "Gralak Music," a music store in Milwaukee which specialized in concertina sales, repairs, music, and instruction. In addition to composing over thirty original songs, Don arranged hundreds of popular tunes for concertina music. From 1986 to 2000, he co-hosted a weekly polka radio show titled "The Goodtime Hour." He was honored as the "Wisconsin Polka Artist of the Year" in 1989 and named to the Wisconsin Polka Hall of Fame in 2001.

When Don was not performing, he maintained an active interest in police and fire work. He was employed as an emergency medical technician and then joined the Milwaukee Police Department as a 911 operator. Later he was promoted to telecommunications specialist, overseeing the entire 911 system for the city. Don passed away suddenly of natural causes on January 24, 2004, at the age of 51. His funeral was well-attended and included a lengthy memorial procession with a full police and fire escort. He was greatly beloved for his music and civic contributions by the city he called home.

In 2004, Don Gralak was inducted into the National Cleveland Style Polka Hall of Fame, and in 2021, he was inducted posthumously into the World Concertina Congress Hall of Fame. Even after his death, his exceptional versatility as a concertina performer and distinctive musical style continue to be recognized by appreciative polka fans worldwide.



Dear IPA Board Members,

It is with sincere appreciation that I thank you for your great cultural support through your generous sponsorship donation to the 39th Annual Slovenefest that was held July 8-10, 2022, at our beautiful SNPJ Recreation Center in the Borough of SNPJ, Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Joseph Evanish
National President/CEO



Dear Christy,

We would like to thank you and your officers and board for your sponsorship for our Polka Fireworks Festival. It is very much appreciated and will be acknowledged at our Festival.

Sincerely,

Tish Blazonczyk
& Family



June 1, 2022

Ms. Christy Krawicz
International Polka Association
P.O. Box 1484
Plainfield, IL 60544

Dear Christy,

On behalf of the **Toledo Area Polka Society**, we want to Thank you again for supporting our seventh annual **Polish Summer Picnic** being held June 17, & 18, 2022, with the sponsorship gift. We are deeply grateful! Just present your complimentary tickets at the admission station and enjoy the picnic. If you are not able to use the tickets, feel free to pass them on to a friend or family member.

Enclosed are your complimentary admission tickets. They are good for either day of the event.

With Deep Gratitude,

Michael D. Marek
Sponsorship Chairman
408 Hayes Road
Toledo, Ohio 43615
419-345-5928
michaeldmarek@sbcglobal.net
Visit us at: www.TapsPolkas.com

2022 IPA Polka Hall of Fame®

Inductee

Anthony W. Zebrowski

Pioneer Category



Anthony W. Zebrowski was born June 12, 1925 in Bayonne, NJ. When he was 2 he and his family returned to their homeland, Bialystok Poland. He lived there for the next 20 years. On April 1, 1945 Anthony and Zofia (Zosia) were married. In 1947 Anthony boarded a ship bound for the USA. He left behind his first child Sophie and his wife Zosia, who unknown to them at the time, was pregnant with their second child Anthony. As he left, he vowed to send for them. He would never return to Poland. While sailing, he subsidized the cost of his passage by performing music during Catholic Masses. Thus began his career in music and entertainment.

In 1949 promises were kept and Anthony, Zofia and their family which had grown to two children were reunited. They settled in Bayonne, NJ. At that time Anthony was the only one who spoke a limited amount of English. In 1951 they relocated to Cleveland, OH. They eventually taught themselves how to speak English while maintaining their Polish heritage. This was partially accomplished by watching television shows such as I Love Lucy and The Honey-mooners. This could explain Anthony's comedic nature. During the next ten years Anthony worked in various and diverse fields. He opened grocery, dry cleaning and music stores. He worked as a machinist and also had a weekly Polish radio program with his young daughter Sophie. A self-taught musician, he was an accomplished accordionist, violinist and drummer. During this period, he was performing as a musician. He also formed and was the

leader of an otherwise all girl polka band called "The Polish Sweethearts Orchestra". He has written material and performed on several recordings. This includes a 78 recording of the original A.Z.Z. Polka. As it was for so many others, it was an exciting time in all their lives. Anthony was no exception as he continued to chase his dream.

While in his 30's, he realized his professional and personal calling was to be a representative of the Polish people and to spread the good cheer associated with Polish music. In 1963 with his Polish accent and broken English he began his full time job of broadcasting as a radio disc jockey on WZAK 93.1 FM in Cleveland, OH. He would later become known as A.W. Zebrowski, The Polka Baron. It was during this high point in his career that he produced, directed and announced "The Polish International Program". Within days of his debut program, he had solicited more than 100 sponsors. The Brookstate Inn, Third Federal Savings and Loan, Eddy Ostry's Lansing Tires, Newburgh Super Market, Basista Furniture and others remained faithful to both A.W. and the Polish community during the years that followed.

With the support and help of his wife Zofia, he built "The A.Z.Z. Studio". A pioneer in so many ways, he had begun broadcasting live from his home studio in 1969. One of his dreams was to give his audience as many hours of on-air Polish entertainment as possible. To this day no other single disc jockey has provided more weekly on-air Polish entertainment than he did. He was on the air 7 days a week, Sunday from 5:30am to 9am and 8:30pm to 10pm. Monday

through Friday 5:30am to 8:30am and 3:30pm to 5:30pm, and Saturday from 11:00am to 2:00pm and 8:00pm to 9:00pm. His on-air program had grown to 33 ½ hours a week. As demands on his time grew, his son Anthony joined the radio business and announced the weekday afternoon programs. By that time the other children Sophie, Elizabeth, Crystine, Maryann, Joseph, Richard and Barbara were all heavily involved in the recording of commercials, special occasion programs as well as doing public appearances. A.W. also began an on-air interaction with one of his radio station engineers Dennis. Dennis and Elizabeth eventually married. With cameo on-air appearance by Zofia, the Polish International Program had truly become a family production.

A.W. was a strong promoter and supporter of his Polish heritage and music. To promote his Polish heritage and the music he loved, he made countless public appearances. He did many live remote broadcasts from dances, retail stores, shopping malls, special events, the old Cleveland Browns Stadium and theme parks such as Sea World and Geauga Lake. He also participated in many parades as well as the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage in 1976. A.W. and members of his family could be seen traveling parade routes on foot, in horse drawn carriages, on horseback or in luxury automobiles. Costumes would range from traditional to extravagant. The majority of the parades also included Tom Mroczka and The Music Box playing their live polka music as they traveled the streets. He introduced his audiences to polka stars like Lil Wally, Marion Lush, Happy Louie, Frank Wojnarowski, Eddie Blazonczyk, Wanda and Stephanie, Ray Budzilek, Lenny Zadel, Joe Oberaitis, Wally Chips, Bruno Mikos and many other great and talented entertainers from Cleveland and across the country.

During the 1960's and 70's Polish people were often insulted, mocked and used as the punch line of jokes. There was also a stereotype associated with wearing white socks. None of that bothered A.W.. He was proud of being Polish and wanted everyone to listen to him and enjoy his music. In 1975 he appeared on the cover of the Cleveland Magazine wearing a tuxedo jacket and "those white socks" to show everyone "I am Polish and proud".

A.W. received hundreds of awards from virtually

every Polish organization in the Cleveland area. He was presented with the keys to cities, plaques, trophies, proclamations from the Governor, the Ohio Senate and House and the U.S. Senate. There were multiple declarations of A.W. Zebrowski Day and proclamations from Pope Paul VI and later Pope John Paul II, the only Polish Pope who proclaimed the work he was doing. In print, on radio, and as a guest of various television talk shows, he spread the word that polkas are good. He was opinionated, at times controversial and always expressing his beliefs. He loved what he did and he loved the audiences that smiled and cried while listening to him.

Many of us remember waking to his program. Others might remember driving or working around the house with the radio blaring. For some the special holiday programs brought back memories of traditions that have since disappeared. And to a few of us, the strongest memory is the simple sound of a rooster crowing.

On November 13, 1979 at approximately 8:00am, while A.W. was on the air broadcasting from The A.Z.Z. Studio, the airwaves went silent. Later that day it was announced that during his program A.W. had suffered a heart attack and died. He was 54 years old.



**New Members:**

Linda Daddona, FL
John Hurchala Jr., CT
Karen Lakota, OH
Debbie Foreshock, PA
Gerry Kaminski, MI
Monica Kaminski, MI
Jeff Maroszek, WI
Patricia Passaro, NJ

Lifetime Members:

Ray Budzilek, Jr., OH
Edward Lipka, DE
Mary Julia Drella, WI
Alex Meixner, TX
Ron Pivovar, PA
Julie Ann Kurdys, NV

Thank You

Bryan Koslosky
Florian Chmielewski

On behalf of the
Executive Board and the
Directors, we wish you all
safe travels to
Pennsylvania for the
54th Annual
International Polka
Association Festival and
Convention.

See you there!

WE NEED YOUR EMAIL

In an effort to curb postage costs associated with membership renewals and to also make the system more efficient, the IPA began sending out Membership Renewal Notices via email in January 2021. Typically, members received three renewal reminders via postal service, however, members with email addresses on file will begin receiving their first two reminders via email with a link that takes you directly to the IPA store. The third reminder, which is the final reminder, will be sent through the postal service. Please send your email information to membership@ipapolkas.com.

As always, thank you for your support of the IPA. We wouldn't be able to do any of this without our loyal members.

2022 IPA Polka Hall of Fame® Inductee

Stan Wolowic

Pioneer Category



Stan Wolowic was a renowned accordionist and band leader and teacher for over 65 years. He and his band produced numerous albums promoting Polkas and Polish and ethnic music over his decades-long career. I have included numerous items herein, including copies of the fronts and backs of covers of 5 of his most popular albums with Capitol Records and ABC Paramount. The backs of the albums tell the story of his musical prowess during those years. A google search will reveal that his music is still widely available for sale on iTunes and Amazon music and YouTube.

Stan Wolowic was born on the south side of Chicago in 1920 and passed away in 2001. He fell in love with the accordion and started playing at the age of nine. By the age of 11 he was playing at Polish weddings and community celebrations. By the age of 15 he was playing professionally at clubs around Chicago.

After finishing high school and enlisting in the Navy during WWII, where he performed for officers' functions, he played with a variety of radio and early tv shows, finally forming the band **Stan Wolowic and The Polka Chips** in the 1950s.

Stan Wolowic and The Polka Chips became the stars of the first nationally televised Polka/Polish music tv show in 1956, **It's Polka Time**, on ABC. As Capitol Records described the phenomenon on his album cover, the Greatest Band In Polka Land:

"Where is Polka Land? On a recent 13-week tour, the Chicago-based Polka Chips found that

Polka Land can be any place where people gather to dance, to sing, to have a good time. They found a bit of Polka land in Swisher, Iowa, a town of a little over 100 inhabitants, where they drew an audience of 600 people one night. They found Polka Land in Brooklyn, where the Mayor and his wife came down to listen to their happy sounds, and where the Voice of America taped a part of their show for re-broadcast over Radio Free Europe. They found that even sophisticated Manhattan is a part of Polka Land: the Polka Chips played to a capacity crowd at the Roseland Ballroom there. Throughout the country, from Massachusetts to Minnesota, from Ohio to Canada, wherever the Polka Chips went, suburbs of Polka Land began springing up. Just what makes this group "the greatest"? A lot of things, actually... Stan Wolowic, leader of the group, played his first professional engagement when he was only 15, and now he is one of the country's most accomplished accordionists. There is something about the 'drive' and feeling he puts into his playing that turns his listeners into fans and his fans into devoted followers."

Over the years, Stan Wolowic received countless awards and commendations, keys to cities, etc. Two of his favorites were from the **Folk Dance Federation of California** and another from the **Polish National Alliance**, proclaiming:

"Whereas, Stan Wolowic has taken the leadership in bringing polka music to the forefront in the nation and ...rendered an unforgettable service to lovers of Polka Music ... it is resolved that the Polish National Alliance and the All Nations Polka and Folk Dance Committee expresses in this way

congratulations to Stan Wolowic and his Polka Chips to popularize polka music in the United States of America."

Even though he was an extremely busy musician, Stan Wolowic still found time to work with

students, to teach them that playing a Polka was more than just notes on a page. A Polka had to come from your soul. Over and over he could be heard saying, "If you're not smiling you're not playing a Polka. Polkas make people SMILE."

Stan Wolowic continued to promote Polkas and Polish music until the day he retired in the early 1990s. I have included herein a picture from the book "Ohio. A Picture Book To Remember Her By" showing Stan Wolowic performing for the Oktoberfest in Columbus, Ohio around 1980, to partially verify the longevity of his career. He performed at the Oktoberfest every year until he moved to California in 1990.

After he retired, Stan Wolowic continued to perform for local seniors' organizations, fundraisers for local causes, church and community dances, etc. He loved people and he loved performing, and audiences loved him right back!

Even after his death, his legacy and love for Polish music continued. He had a wealth of his musical arrangements of Polish music. These and other documents were donated to the University of Southern California Polish Music Center after his death. <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/newsletter/2002/july-2002/>

"April 2001: Stanley Wolowic arrangements donated by his daughter Jill Wolowic Comras, Canyon Lake, CA Stanley Wolowic was an accordionist and band leader in 1950s and 1960s. One box contains his arrangements (parts), the Capitol record "Stan Wolowic and the Polka Chips play The Million Seller Polkas", and tape with his music as well as scores with popular music composed by: Frank Wojnarowski, Frank Przybylski, Walter Dana and by foreign composers published in the years 1927-1949."

Stan Wolowic loved his Polish heritage and spent his lifetime promoting the joy that Polish music and Polkas brought to the world. You can see it in every single one of his pictures. I hope you will consider his talent, his achievements, and his lifetime devotion to his craft enough to honor him by including him in the Polka Music Hall of Fame.

"Jersey Polka Richie" passes away at the age of 64

Richard "Jersey Polka Richie" Drongoski, known as Americas concertina king, Jersey Polka Richie has entertained fans everywhere though his love of Polka music and mastery of the concertina. Born Richard Drongoski in Clifton, NJ, his first public performance was at the age of ten with LI'L Wally, Richie collaborated with two of his Idols, Casey Siewierski and Eddie Blazonczyk, Sr. on his first two Recordings. During his Third recording session, LI'L Wally nick named him Jersey Polka Richie. Richie played regularly with Happy Louie and Marion Lush before performing on his own. He has also shared the stage with Bobby Vinton, Marie Osmond, and Liberace. Richie had the honor of performing at Liberace's Birthday Party in Las Vegas in 1985. A member of the world Concertina Congress Hall of Fame, Richie spent over 50 years as a Polka performer, promoter, and recording artist. His talent and musical style have left an enduring impression on the Polka industry. For his many accomplishments in the Polka Industry, Richard "Jersey Polka Richie" Drongoski, was been deemed deserving by the electorate of the International Polka Association for induction into Polka music Hall of Fame and inducted in September 2021.



The IPA enjoys the Milwaukee Polish Fest

By Jill Styczynski



Milwaukee Polish Fest returns bigger and better to the Lakefront after a 2 year cancellation of the event. The weather was pretty pleasant; if anyone has been there know this always a bonus. NO rain downpours, NO high temps and humidity, NO cold winds off the lake. A few sprinkles and a little wind didn't stop the fun from continuing all day. Hey, we can't have it all.

The bands were on their A Game to entertain the crowds. You can hear the sounds of national bands like Polka Country Musicians, John Gora, and SqueezeBox with Mollie B & Ted Lange along with many local bands like Steve Meisner and Polish Connection throughout the grounds. The many stages offer you a variety of music to enjoy from the Non-Stop Polka Stage to the Miller Stage to the Sobieski Cultural Stage and even something of the kids at the Children's Stage. You can walk from one end of the grounds to the other and enjoy it all of the entertainment.

Polish Fest offers some of the best in traditional polish foods like Pierogi, Golabki and of course the Polish plates that give you a little bit of everything. Never fear it also provides you all the traditional festival foods of hamburgers and fried cheese curds and if you look around you can find something new and different to try like prime rib wrapped in bacon bits. You can find some-

thing to enjoy even for the pickiest of eaters in your group.

The Cultural Stage brings you a time to relax to enjoy the Folk Dancers performing in all their colorful, ornate traditional costumes. Take a little walk to the Cultural Village and learn about the heritage of Poland and maybe something about your Polish ancestry. They offer cooking classes, and demonstrations of Polish crafts as Pisanki (decorated eggs), Wianki (floral head wreaths), straw weaving and much more. The Village gives you a chance to purchase an assortment of Polish items to add to your collection of Polish pottery.

Let the festivities continue with the Polish beer, Sobieski Vodka tasting, Lemonade Bar, and the Root Beer barrels. Don't forget about the view from high above the grounds on the Skyline ride. The Big Boonski Firework display added many ohhhh's and ahhhh's to delight the young and the young at heart. So much to see and do at Milwaukee Polish Fest, you won't be disappointed. You need to add this festival to your calendar.

Congratulations to the Janine Adamczyk and the Polish Fest Committee on a successful festival.

Some photos courtesy of Steven Karcz





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

AUGUST



1st – Frank Stanger;
Maryann Cuglewski;
Gary Stewart;
Traci Simanoski;
Sandra Schuster

2nd – Chuck Stastny; Patricia Daigle;
Patricia Mazur; Andy Wachon;
Sondra Guetschow; Tony Blazonczyk

3rd – Mike Stapinski; Maria Dipyatic;
Cindy Olszewski; Jim Wysocki; John Lacki

4th – Susan Matysiewicz; Lynn Kaminski;
Sherri Ann Martin

5th – Rose Marie Tynski; Dianne Zawisza;
Max Kawa; Wally Czaska; Randy Polovick;
Jeff Radtke; Spencer Carlson

6th – MaryAnn Jukubielski; Marcia Muscato;
Linda Daddona

7th – Edward Guca; Camille Hjelm;
Pete Jend; Chris Prochot; Walter Mendel

8th – Alex Saltanovitz, Jr.

9th – John Cieplik; Kelly Stec;
Jeff Tomczak; Lisa Meyer; Christina Gobel

10th – Helen Curtin; Jim Kucharski

11th – Dave Ulczycki; Keith Pietranczyk;
Chris Zawisza; Lisa Adamich

12th – Leonard Wolski; Tammy Kirsch

13th – Carol Forman; Steve Zalewski;
John Ziobrowski

15th – Edward Burczy; Ed Svoboda;
Karen Guca

16th – Elizabeth Tarchala

17th – Tim Wolter;
Doris Benson; Cheryl
Rognerud; Bernie Koslosky

18th – Carol Trzebiatowski; Chris Blocher

19th – Michael Matousek; Barbara Pauls;
Michael Retka; Debbie Kapuscinski

20th – Dawn Suchon-Rogers;
Ken Machelski;

21st – Carolyn Baras; Tammy Arnes;
Wesley Matus; Erin Hvizdak

22nd – Julianne Mossak

23rd – Stas Golembewski; Randy Vokral

25th – Rose Marie Sukacz;
Steve Wejrowski

26th – Mary Ann Moon

28th – Joyce Fornek; Judy Krason;
Pat Wagner

29th – Keith Gennerman; Rick Chimniak;
Ken Kilgas

30th – Dianne Winiarz; Grazyna Danielczuk;
Sandra Hrynio



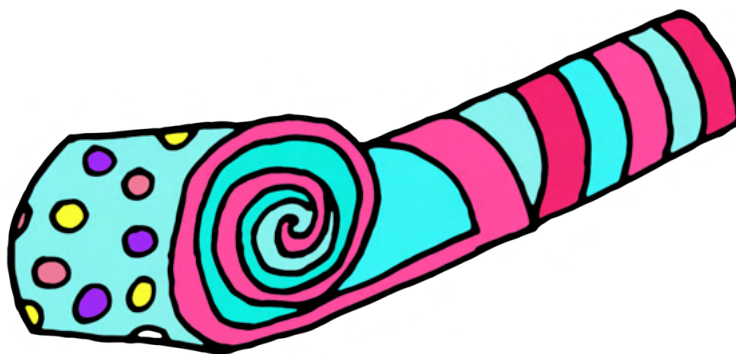


HAPPY BIRTHDAY

September



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1st – Rosanna Kutas; John Prytko, Jr. | 20th – Judy Rosinski; Eugene Brenek; Carlene Moloney |
| 2nd – Lorraine Ciesla; John Mikrut; Jim Weber; Rich Liput; Mike Evan | 21st – Steve Drzewicki; Marilyn Miaso |
| 4th – Ken Pienta; Louis Fava, Jr. | 22nd – John Paczkowski, Jr., Shirley Sains; Peter Hrycyk |
| 5th – John Krawisz; Judith Ozanich | 23rd – Ted Kiewicz; Andrew Kuczmarski |
| 6th – Susan Jurevis; Jim Brado; Richard Zebrowski; Maynard Gipp | 24th – Donna Cotrupe; Edward Sienkowski; Donna Cotrupe |
| 7th – Jeanne Henderson | 25th – Kevin Kwiatkowski; Joseph Ryndak |
| 8th – Daniel Nawrot; Brad Turk; Mary Witulski | 26th – Ed Haynack; Dan Czerniak; Doris Lokre; Bob “Blender Bob” Wolinski |
| 9th – Jennifer Pijanowski; John Mikos | 27th – Mike Nowakowski; Diane Bulanda; Jeffrey Behrens; Sharon Koslosky; |
| 10th – Jeffrey Guyette; Johnny Waichulis | 28th – Lori Young; Brian Earl |
| 11th – Sharon Creman; Mary Jean Sweeney; Evelyn Putz; Ted Kania; Lori Urbanczyk | 29th – Bev Kizior; Gary Hvdik; Willie Bohuslav; Veronica Costa; |
| 12th – Rich “Sudzy” Cerajewski; Ronald Gregg; Janice Prushinski; Corrine Ganiec | 30th – Walter Dragon; Dennis Popiel; Goldeen Uelmen |
| 13th – David Bonczkiewicz; Eileen Daniloff; Cary Haraburda; Ania Piwowarczyk; Jeff Heinz | |
| 14th – Butchie Jasiewicz ; Eugene Thoms; Jim Miller; Dolores Kozlauska; Velva Jankowski | |
| 15th – Rob Piatkowski; Deb DePont; Gerrie Barsukiewicz; Joyce Bohuslav; Pat Jayo | |
| 16th – Lenny Gomulka; Krystyna Bylinowski; David Gajda | |
| 17th – John Borkowski; Geri Fornek; John Borkowski | |
| 18th – Kenneth Larson; Danny Mateja; Corinne Turk; Robert Hoffman; Robert Richmond III; Stanley Mikrut | |
| 19th – Richie Kois | |



Hammond Mohawks Club Presents the 21st Annual Polkamanía

On Sunday, June 5th 2022, the Hammond Mohawks Club presented their 21st annual Polkamanía event at their picnic grove in Hammond, IN.

Over 300 smiling polka fans enjoyed the lively polka music of the Dynabass and Lenny Gomulka and Chicago Push. Everywhere you turned you would see groups of polka friends gathered together enjoying delicious Polish food, ice cold beverages, and of course, the melodic sounds of polka music.

What was interesting, was that when Lenny Gomulka was performing, he acknowledged not only the fans, friends, and family that were in attendance, but also included anecdotes and reminiscence of memories of times past.

As many may not know, that corridor along the state lines of Illinois and Indiana was a mecca of polka entertainment dating back to the 1950's and 60's. In fact, it was common to have 2 or 3 members of the same families performing together in polka bands. Memories of the Pietranczyk, Pala, Iwinski, Sienkowski, Tokarz brothers; along with concertina aficionados Casey and Davey Bruzdinski, Gerry Tarka, Marty Dzik, just to name a few all hailed from that state line region. It was intriguing listening to those wonderful polka memories of times past; so I thank you Lenny for including these within your performance.

What is sad, is that many of the entertainers named above are not currently performing or have passed. In addition there were a multitude of clubs and taverns in the area that featured polka music 2 to 3 times a week. Including the legendary Wednesdays, and Sundays, at Club 505!

Thank you for the directors and members of the Hammond Mohawks Club for continuing the polka traditions in this area. Your efforts are noted and appreciated.

Furthermore, the Hammond Mohawks and your International Polka Association has, once again, teamed up to present to our polka friends our annual Parade of Polka Band Picnic. This year's event will be held on Sunday, August 21st at the Hammond Mohawks picnic grove and will feature 5 Chicago area polka bands for continuous polka entertainment throughout the day. Please see the flyer featured in this newsletter, or as always, visit www.ipapolkas.com for more details.

It's been a wonderful polka summer season so far, so let's keep the polka momentum going, and we will see you soon on a dance floor near you!



Dennis Mikolajewski

Illinois Director



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
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 term of office.



Electable Positions in 2022

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

1st Vice President

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

Treasurer

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

Secretary

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

Sergeant-At-Arms

- Can be from any state
- 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

INCUMBENTS SEEKING RE-ELECTION



OFFICERS

President - Christy Krawisz
 1st Vice President - Lori Lewandowski
 Secretary - Cheryl Furmaniak
 Treasurer - Dan Mateja
 Sergeant-At-Arms - Randy Koslosky

Illinois - 3 open positions

Johnny Krawisz, Dennis Mikolajewski,
 Lindsey Mateja

Non-Illinois - 3 open positions

Jill Styczynski, Henry Lenard, open

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Preserving our Polka Legacy

The IPA is embarking on a journey to archive any IPA Hall of Fame induction speeches from the past. These moments are essential to preserving the music history that we love. If anyone has any IPA Hall of Fame induction videos on VCR tapes, we would like to borrow them and convert them to digital format. The IPA will then publicly post the videos on our website. All the VCR tapes will be returned after we completed the process. If you already have the videos in digital format, we would gladly take these as well. For more information, you can contact the IPA at archives@ipapolkas.com or you can mail the VCR tapes to the following address: **International Polka Association, Inc., PO Box 1484, Plainfield, IL 60544.**

Subscribe TODAY to IPA's YouTube Channel

The International Polka Association has a YouTube Channel. There, you can find Interviews with Hall of Fame® members such as **Wally Dombrowski**, **Carl Finch**, and **Stas Bulanda** just to name a few.

You can also find the entire 3-day IPA Virtual Festival that aired September 2020 and the Festival of Bands that was broadcasted in January, in case you missed it or just want to watch it again.

Brush up on your polka knowledge by playing along with the gameshows hosted by Keith Stras with a variety of polka celebrities as contestants.

Take a virtual walk through the IPA Hall of Fame or better understand how your membership dues and donations are utilized.

Search up performances of your favorite bands or watch those you may not be so familiar with.

Let us know if you may have any polka memories in your archives that could be included in by by contacting us at archives@ipapolkas.com. Please see above for more information.

To subscribe, just go to YouTube.com, search up IPA Videos, and hit subscribe.



The International Polka Association Proudly Presents



The Parade of Polka Bands Picnic! Sunday, August 21, 2022



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:



The Music Company with "IPA Hall of Famer" Rick Rzeszutko

The IPA Tribute Band



Tony Blazonczyk's New Phaze

The D Street Band



Tri-City Drive

A full array of beverages and freshly-grilled food favorites will be available for purchase.

Wszyscy idą na piknik polki! (Everyone's going to the polka picnic!)

Rain or Shine, Indoor Restrooms.

www.ipapolkas.com



Join us for the 2nd Annual Golf Outing with Friends

Honoring Richie and Jerry Tokarz

Friday, September 2, 2022—IPA Weekend

Strawberry Ridge Golf Course

135 McNulty Lane

Harmony, PA 16307



Scramble Format/18 holes

Tee Times Start at 8am

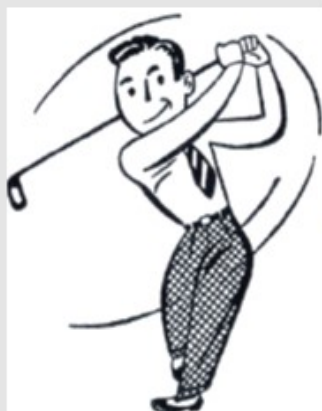
Cost - \$50/golfer

Venmo—@Jeffrey-Yash

Contact Jeff Yash by Saturday, August 20, 2022

518-281-1587

jeffreyyash@gmail.com



2022 Leon Kozicki Trustees Award Winner

Mike Stapinski



Without a doubt, Mike Stapinski is considered one of the top sidemen in the Polish polka genre and his number is at the top of many band leaders' cell phone speed dials.

Mike's talents include proficiency on trumpet, clarinet, sax, bass guitar, lead guitar, drums, piano, concertina and vocals. Mike's musical career began at the young age of 12 when he joined local Western Pennsylvania band, The Jolly Hopps. This was a brand new start-up variety band. At 15, he was polishing his skills with Polka Hall of Famer Joe Fiedor and his Polish All Stars traveling the country.

Upon moving to Chicago in 1980, he lent his abilities to Polka Hall of Famer Marion Lush and the White Eagles. This band did 2 recordings with Marion and played 130+ jobs a year across the country. Mike continued to play with Marion until his passing in 1993. Mike then joined Gerry Tarka and the Midwest Sounds in 1986 for nearly one year. In 1987, Mike began his ongoing 30+ year career with Chicago's Music Company, and in 2013, his association with the IPA Tribute Band. He was also a member of the exceptional Full Circle band, which also included Polka Hall of Famers Lenny Gomulka, Jimmy Weber, Al Piatkowski, Mike Matousek, and legendary drummer Roger Malinowski. That unique group hosted and performed on 7 very successful polka cruises and appeared at a number of high-profile events. Because of his versatility, Mike also regularly performs with Lenny Gomulka and Chicago Push, The Boys, Dennis Motyka's Good Times, and others.

He has also written many songs and recorded with several top bands throughout his polka career. He received the Marion Lush Songwriter's Award from the United Polka Association in Chicago. He has also written many songs in the pop music genre and tried to make it as a pop music songwriter in the late 1980's. Despite his busy schedule, Mike also carves out time on many Sundays to perform in a Polka

Mass band. Mike has been a first call player for years.

Here are other bands/groups he has performed on

stage with: The Versatones, Trel Tones, Ray Jay and the Carousels, Wanda & Stephanie, Freddy K, Windy City Brass, Little Richard and his Polka Allstars, Little Wally, Chi-Town Express, Jerry Zahara and the Happy Stars, World's Honkiest Polka Band, Freeze Dried, Bratwurst Brothers, The Schnitzels, Tony Blazonczyk's New Phaze, Stas Golonka and the Chicago Masters, Stas Bulanda and his Average Polka Band, Dynatones, Polka Country Musicians, Chicago Polish Carolers, Eddie Blazonczyk Christmas shows and the Mollie B Christmas Show.

Mike has 2 Grammy nominations with The Versatones and also received several best band awards with Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push and The Boys from the IPA and USPA. Mike contributes to the preservation of polka music by having 3 YouTube channels with over a million views on his live videos (polkas101, polkasunited and gonefullcircle). Mike also started an internet forum dedicated to polka music, Polkas United. He has never taken a break from his almost 50-year musical journey!



An Anecdote About Alex

With the upcoming induction of Alex Meixner into the IPA Hall of Fame, I wanted to take moment to share some thoughts on an experience I had filling in with his band in 2012 at the Berea Oktoberfest in Cleveland.

There is so much that could be said about Alex in terms of what he has done in his career. I'll leave that for others to write about. But, I just wanted to share some aspects of my experience filling in with his band because I think that show some facets of what makes Alex special – and because I think there are lessons to be learned.

An Alex Meixner performance is a wild ride. That is a given. It is like the wild mouse roller coaster ride at an amusement park, where you are speeding along and take many surprising turns. Better strap in. The diversity of Alex's repertoire is amazing. His knowledge of polka music in its many forms and ethnicities is remarkable. The "surprise factor" of an Alex Meixner performance may be part of the fun. He's unpredictable and, I think people liked that.

I'd like to focus on the ability to play an event made up of the general public and rile them up and get them dancing a polka. This event was a big event that had several venues with live music. The hall where we played had about 1,000 people. Alex worked them masterfully. One method to the madness (or to generating madness in the crowd) seemed to be getting people out on the floor with some tunes that they knew. Songs like Livin' on a Prayer, or Crazy Train, or Enter Sandman would get them out and singing along. Then, without skipping a beat, the band would switch to play a polka. So, the crowd on the floor would just keep grooving along. They were dancing the "polka" without

even knowing it. Did it matter that they weren't dancing well. No way. They were having a good time to polka music. He had transformed a crowd of general polka (not die-hard polka fans) into people dancing to a polka. That's a noteworthy accomplishment. So often people are afraid to dance a polka "wrong". This approach removed that question from consideration. Just move to the music. And the people did. Alex's medleys are a wonder to behold. I can recall how at the end of some of these, the crowd just roared....

His approach wasn't merely to cover a non-polka as a polka. Everyone does that. Somehow this was different – maybe because it was all so connected. But, it really worked. People were engaged and into it. And – just like that – people were having a good time dancing a polka.

I feel like my description fails to capture the moment. To attempt to do that was probably folly. If I was successful at all, that's cool. If not, I guess you just have to go and experience an Alex Meixner performance for yourself because he is surely one of the most incredible ambassadors of polka music going.

*** footnote: Here is one little side anecdote about this event. At one point Alex commands the attention of the crowd and announces "If you drink you will die. If you don't drink, you will die. So, why die thirsty?" I made mental note of that. At some point later, I wrote the song "Why Die Thirsty". I sent a demo of that to Alex. It so happened that Alex was going into the studio to do some recording on that very day. He ended up recording that song that day. That was a fast.

2022 IPA Newsletter Schedule

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

Slovenefest 2022

When you initially hear SNPJ, you first think of the various Slovenian Clubs around the country. But you may not know that SNPJ is also a town in Western PA, not far from Youngstown, OH. The city is one of the smallest towns in PA, with only 20 residents in 2020. However, the town expands to thousands when the annual Slovenefest comes to town. After two years of canceling Slovenefest, July 8-10, 2022, marked the return of Slovenefest.

The best way of describing Slovenefest is the Woodstock of polka music. Fans come from around in campers, tents, and the local cabins to celebrate Slovenian culture with food, dance, and celebrations. This year featured over 20 polka bands continuously over four different locations. The Outside Stage featured some of the top current Slovenian Bands like Jack Tady Orchestra, Eddie Rodick, Klancnik and Friends, and Garrat Tatano. The Heritage Pavilion featured more traditional Slovenian Bands like IPA Hall of Famer Fred Ziwich and the Joe Grkman Orchestra. The Gostilna featured some of the best local button box bands, and then finally, there is a day-long button box Jam Tent featuring jamming all day long.

Slovenefest is held on the grounds of the SNPJ Recreation Center that serves at a great loca-

tion for weddings, parties or other events. SNPJ members are able to leverage the SNPJ Recreation Center that includes a great swimming pool on the premise. Also of SNPJ members own houses and camping locations within SNPJ and use it year round.



By Chris Bogdon

2nd Vice President

Slovenefest is more than just a music festival; but is a celebration of Slovenian culture with things like the Miss SNPJ Pagent and the SNPJ Heritage Center. It was a fun time and a place I will start attending regularly. The IPA was a Silver Level sponsor this year, and it was very good to see many polka fans who attended my dances at the SloveneFest. It was also good to run into the National Cleveland-Style Polka Music Hall of Fame president, and we discussed more ideas on how the two organizations can work together.

For more information about the SNPJ or joining the SNPJ, you can find all the info at: <https://snpj.org>. The 2023 Slovenefest will be July 7-9, 2023, and you can find information and schedules at <https://www.slovenefest.com>.



IPA Hall of Famer Fred Ziwich and his International Sound Machine



Swimming Pool at the SNPJ Recreation Center



Western PA Button Box Band

2022 Joe Jozwiak Award Winner

Ernie Daigle



The IPA Executive Board is proud to announce the selection of Ernie Daigle for the annual Joe Jozwiak Award. Originally called the Special Achievement Award, this honor is a tribute to the late IPA Director Joe Jozwiak who advocated for a way to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions toward the promotion of polka music.

Mr. Daigle, who continues to dedicate a large part of his life to polka promotion, is considered by many to be one of the unsung heroes in this effort. It all started back in 1971 when he first heard Happy Louie perform at a polka dance and fell in love with the music. The following year, Ernie began booking polka bands for a local club and his church and continues such work to this day. At a polka dance in 1977 he had the good fortune to meet Patty, who became his wife two years later. They were blessed with two children, John in 1980, and Diana in 1982, and nurtured their love for polka music. John went on to become a drummer, bandleader, and recording engineer. Happy Louie, Polka Country Musicians, and Mark IV are just some of the bands that John recorded in the studio at the

Daigle home. In 2000, Ernie teamed up with IPA Polka Hall of Famer Billy Belina to host the Polka Bandstand radio show on WMUA that reached listeners in parts of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont and was streamed worldwide on the Internet. Later he began hosting his own program on Polka Legacy, which he subsequently moved to the 24/7 Polkaheaven network where it continues to broadcast. Ernie was elected to the Board of Directors of the Ludlow PACC in 2005 and became vice-president of the club in 2016. In 2018, he assumed the Chairmanship of the Dance Committee role. Ernie's many other polka promotional efforts include working as a volunteer in support the Ocean Beach Park Polka Days festival, serving as the "Ticket Master" to sell tickets for this fest as well as Jimmy Sturr's Pierogi Fest, the Ha-Lo Enterprises Parkinson's Benefit Dances and other events, and delivering polka DVDs to local cable stations for the enjoyment of fans who can't attend dances. The Daigles are especially noted for their hospitality and have opened their home to host polka parties with live music and fabulous food for many years. Ernie is a proud member of the Ludlow PACC, South Deerfield Polish Club, the International Polka Association, the United States Polka Association and currently serves as the co-chair of the Annual IPA Benefit Dance at the Ludlow PACC with Peter Danielczuk. Congratulations to Ernie Daigle for his many polka endeavors and his Joe Jozwiak Award!



53rd Annual IPA Polka Music Hall of Fame and Music Awards Banquet

Saturday, September 4th
10:45 AM Arrival & Seating
11:00 AM Luncheon

Tickets can be purchased:

1. Online via Paypal at www.ipapolkas.com/store
2. Online via Zelle to banquet@ipapolkas.com
3. By check payable to International Polka Association

For check payment, please fill out below reservation form and mail to:

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

Please contact Banquet Chairperson Lindsey Mateja at banquet@ipapolkas.com with any questions. Ticket confirmation and seating arrangements will be handled via email. Tables hold 8-10 people. Please ensure to include an email address on reservation form.

2022 Polka Music Hall of Fame and Music Awards Banquet

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Number of Tickets _____

Email _____

Admission

Friday: \$20, Saturday: \$25,
Sunday: \$25

3-Day Pass: \$60

Available for purchase at the door
on Friday, September 2nd only

Children under 16 will be admitted FREE
when accompanied by their parents.

Hotel Reservations

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
Pittsburgh – Cranberry

SOLD OUT!!!

The DoubleTree by Hilton has been sold out! The
IPA has secured a block of rooms at a discounted
rate at:

Comfort Inn Cranberry Twp.

924 Sheraton Dr,
Mars, PA 16046
(724) 772-2700

Rooms are available for \$119 plus tax, per night.
You must mention "IPA POLKA" to receive the
reduced rate.

<https://www.ipapolkas.com/go/overflow-reservation>

Reservations must be made by
August 19, 2021. Rooms subject to availability.

Additional Information

800-TO-POLKA
www.ipapolkas.com
www.facebook.com/ipapolkas
www.youtube.com/user/ipavideo

Thursday September 1st

Kick-Off Party

7:00 – 11:00 PM

Mon Valley Push

Cranberry Elks Lodge #2249
20720 Route 19
Cranberry Twp., PA 16006

For tickets, table reservations or more
info, contact Chris Bogdon (412) 260-9725
or chris@bogdonfamily.com

FRIDAY September 2nd

Welcome Party

1:00 – 4:00 PM

The Buffalo Concertina All Stars

6:00 PM – 12:45 AM

The Dynabass, The Jack Tady Band, Lenny

Gomulka & Chicago Push

Limited LIVE Radio Broadcast by:



(subject to change without notice)

SATURDAY September 3rd

Pool Party

11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Seven

4:30 PM – 1:00 AM

IPA Tribute Band, Klancnik and Friends, The Boys

Limited LIVE Radio Broadcast by:



(subject to change without notice)

SUNDAY September 4th

Polka Mass

10:00 AM

The KOSMIX

CONTACT THE IPA

800-TO-POLKA
www.ipapolkas.com
www.facebook.com/ipapolkas
Bands and times subject to change without notice.

SUNDAY September 4th

11:00 AM

Annual Election of Officers & Convention Meeting (IPA members only)

Pool Party

12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

The Nu Tones

4:00 PM – 1:00 AM

Michael Costa and The Beat, John Gora and Gorale, New Generation, Polka Country Musicians

Limited LIVE Radio Broadcast by:



(subject to change without notice)

IPA Hall of Fame and Music Award Winners

2021 Polish Style Polka Music Award Winners

Favorite Male Vocalist:

Lenny Gomulka

Favorite Female Vocalist:

Laura Mateja

Favorite Band:

Lenny Gomulka & the Chicago Push

Favorite Album:

***The Reason* by Mike Costa & The Beat**

Favorite Song:

***Let it Beat* by Mike Costa & The Beat**



2021 International Style Polka Music Award Winners

Favorite Male Vocalist:

Ted Lange

Favorite Female Vocalist:

Mollie Busta Lange

Favorite Band:

Alex Meixner Band

Favorite Album:

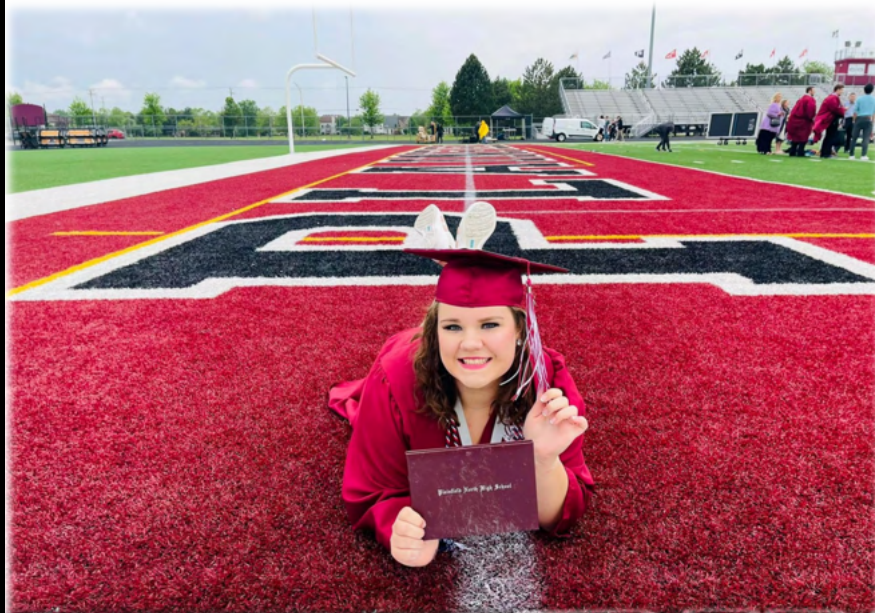
***Music with My Friends* by Alex Meixner**

Favorite Song:

***Crazy Accordion* by Nicola "Nicky D" DiSebastiano**



Congratulations Hayley Krawisz!!



Congratulations to Hayley Krawisz on her recent graduation from Plainfield North High School. Hayley is the youngest daughter of IPA® President and Illinois Director, Christy and John Krawisz.

Hayley will be attending Ball State University in the Fall. She will be majoring in Speech Pathology/Audiology and minoring in American Sign Language.

Good Luck Hayley!



Congratulations Hadley Kaminski!!

Congratulations to Hadley Kaminski on her recent promotion from John F. Kennedy Middle School. Hadley is the daughter of Financial Secretary and Illinois Director, Lynn and Stephen Kaminski.

Hadley will be attending Plainfield East High School in the Fall. She is looking forward to taking American Sign Language, Choir, and joining the drama department.

Good Luck Hadley!



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, 2022.

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.**

Link: <https://www.ipapolkas.com/go/banquettickets/>



Option 2: Zelle

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

**Zelle your Banquet Ticket money to ban-
quet@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/>

WAY OUT WEST ARIZONA POLKA DANCE FEST. 2022



WHEN:

Jan. 15th, & 16th, Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push

Feb. 19th, & 20th, Mike Costa & The Beat

Mar. 19th, & 20th, The Natural Talent (T.N.T.)

Nov. 12th, & 13th, Dennis Polisky & Maestro's Men

WHERE:

PULASKI CLUB 4331 E. MCDOWELL RD PHOENIX, AZ. 85008

TIME:

FRIDAY NIGHT 6PM. FREE ADMISSION (MEET & GREET)

SATURDAY NIGHT 5 TO 9PM \$15.00

SUNDAY AFTERNOON 2 TO 6PM \$15.00

(KIDS UNDER 12 FREE)

*No B.Y.O.B. affair the Pulaski Club has a full bar menu available
and the Polish Kitchen will be open*

**Hotel Reservations: Holiday Inn & Suites Phoenix Airport North
1515 N. 44th St. Phoenix, Az. 85008 (p) 602-358-0908
www.hiphoenixsuites.com**

**THE PULASKI CLUB 4331 E. MCDOWELL RD. PHOENIX, AZ. 85008
602-275-9329 WWW.PULASKICLUBAZ.ORG
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PULASKICLUBAZ**



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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

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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

Renew your membership online!
Visit: www.ipapolkas.com/store

2022 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)

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Brian Kapka (IL)
Johnny Krawisz (IL)
Lindsey Mateja (IL)
Dennis Mikołajewski (IL)
Christy Nowakowski (IL)
Anne Stec (MI)
Jill Styczynski (WI)
Sue Szela (MA)
Mark Trzepasz (NY)
Brad Turk (FL)

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
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

Each show features IPA officers and directors.

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

WE NEED SPONSORS!



Advertise in the IPA Newsletter

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Quarter Page.....	\$36.00 per issue
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Six Issues

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Quarter Page.....	\$32.00 per issue
Eighth Page	\$20.00 per issue

DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER NEWSLETTER: SEPT. 1

Email ad files to Lynn Kaminski using:

newsletter@ipapolkas.com

Sunday,	IPA's Parade of Polka Bands
Thursday, Sept 1st	IPA's Pre-festival Warm-Up Party - PAGE 5
Friday - Sunday, Sept. 2nd-4th	IPA's 53rd Annual Festival and Convention - PAGE 29

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
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Website: www.ipapolkas.com

