



IPA Newsletter

A Note From Our President

As the president of the IPA, one of the biggest questions I get is about the process for getting a potential Hall of Fame Candidate onto the ballot. As a result, I wanted to outline the IPA's high-level process.

As you may know, the IPA offers folks the opportunity to nominate themselves or others via the official online nomination page on the IPA website at <https://www.ipapolkas.com/nomination-hof/>. The open season for submitting nominations begins the day after Labor Day and closes on December 31st every year. Since each nomination is reviewed by our thirteen national trustees, the form on the webpage must be completed by the submitter with an accompanying biography that describes the nominee's qualifications. This biography must address these three criteria:

Experience

Eligible nominees must have 25 years or more of dedicated professional experience in the polka industry. This should include service with bands, media shows, organizations, festivals, or similar entities.

Awards, Accomplishments, Achievements

Eligible nominees must have received recognition in the polka music industry regionally or nationally. Their significant accomplishments should include national awards, major media projects (recordings, TV, radio, Internet, motion pictures, videos, etc.), high-profile events, and any other successful polka-related endeavor

Contributions toward Preserving and Advancing the Polka Music Industry

In keeping with the mission of the IPA, eligible nominees must have contributed to the preservation and advancement of polka music without personal financial gain. This should include any polka organization membership or support, official service on polka music boards/committees, polka promotional efforts, cultural or charitable activities, or any other altruistic or volunteer work that resulted in the enhancement of polka music's image, the broadening of its audience, or its greater good.

Since the trustees may not have personal knowledge of a nominee, the biography must be written as if it were a job application resume. A sim-

ple one-page narrative documenting how the nominee's qualifications meet the three criteria is all that is needed. Remember, the trustees are looking for facts that support each of the three criteria, so it's best to keep the bio as succinct as possible. Also, two references with contact information must accompany the biography. If the majority of the trustees determine that the nominee adequately addressed these requirements, they will approve the nominee for placement on the ballot used by the National Academy of 195 Electors when they vote during the annual election period. If the majority opinion of the trustees determines that the biography of the nominee fails to adequately address one or more of the criteria, the submitter will receive a response explaining the deficiency. Such nominees may resubmit their nominations in the future as their accomplishments evolve and are properly documented in their biographies in keeping with the three requirements.

We want to stress that the IPA will no longer accept mail-in submissions. All nominations must go through the online portal. If you are unable to use email, we highly recommend that you find a friend or family member to assist.

As always, if you have any comments or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at info@ipapolkas.com. We will gladly help explain the process further.



It's Always Sunny in Florida...

Witamy czlonkow!

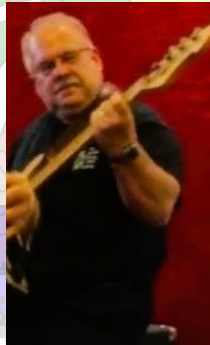
Hope to see you at one of our upcoming Florida Dyngus Day polka parties. The Polka All Stars will be on the beach at Crabby Bill's Bar & Grill and Gone Coastal will be performing at the Polish American Society of St. Petersburg. These are sure to be exciting events that you won't want to miss! Remember.....**EVERYONE' S Polish on Dyngus Day!**

FL Musician Spotlight: Jim Sefcik

Jim is originally from McDonald, Ohio, a Village in Northeast Ohio near Youngstown, Ohio. Jim's interest in polkas began with his introduction to Youngstown-area polka bands in the late 1960s by his mom and dad, Kay and Leonard Sefcik, who listened to and saw the Joe Fedorchak and Del Sinchak Polka Bands. It was his first time seeing an out-of-town band live, from Chicago, Eddie Blazonczyk's Versatones, at Idora Park in his first summer out of high school in 1971, that got him hooked on playing polkas and on his future musical career.

Jim started out on Piano at the age of seven, then moved on to upright string bass at the age of fourteen, in high school, performing in scholastic string orchestra performances. He also performed on Upright Bass in the Youngstown, Ohio area with local Tamburitza Bands, drawing on his exposure to Tamburitza music from his high school through his college years. Jim transitioned to Electric Bass later in college at Youngstown State University, where he had his first opportunities to play polkas locally in the Youngstown, Ohio area, at the beginning of the Mahoning Valley Button Box Band, led by his mom, Kay Sefcik. He had his first opportunity to stand in and perform with the Joe Fedorchak Orchestra in 1975, his last year of college.

After a ten-year hiatus from performing music in the late 1970s through early 1980's due to extensive career work related to overseas travel, Jim got back into playing polkas on Electric Bass with the Bob Mochilar Polka Band, Slovenian-style music (Clearwater, Florida) (1986-1991). He developed an affinity for Polish-style polka music in the Tampa Bay area on keyboards, on both Upright and Electric Bass with the Bee Sharps Polka Band (1992-2019), and also performed on Electric Bass with the Florida Honky Polka Band (2003-2024) as well as the Flori-



da Generations Polka Band (2010-2024).

Jim joined local Band Leader Ernie Stetz (Bee Sharps) and occasionally hosted a local Sunday Polka Radio show in the Tampa Bay area on WMNF 88.5 FM between 1995 and 1997. He could also be seen performing occasionally at Walt Disney Epcot's Norwegian Village and Downtown Disney on both Upright and Electric Bass (2000-2013). He performed on Electric Bass as a guest performer for winter touring Northern Polka Bands in Florida, including Walter Ostanek (Canada) and the Lenny Gomulka Chicago Push Band in the mid 1990's. Jim also performed with the Joe Fedorchak Band on its winter tours in 2002-2003, and with the Mahoning Valley Button Box Band (Youngstown, Ohio) on three Florida tours in the mid-1990s through 2006.

Jim has recorded multiple CDs, including the following Discography:

- **The Florida Honky Polka Band** – How's Your Dyngus? (2005)
- **The Florida Honky Polka Band** – Can't Play Polkas in a Dixie Bar (2005)
- **Mahoning Valley Button Box Club** (Youngstown, Ohio) – Volume IV (2005)
- **The Florida Honky Polka Band** – Back to Honky (2006)

Since the recent disbandment of the Florida Honky and Florida Generations Polka Bands in 2024, he has enjoyed music gigs on both Upright and Electric Bass, with former musicians from Walt Disney Epcot productions throughout Orlando and the East Coast of Florida.

He has been married to his wife Lisa for 36 years. They make their home in Dunedin, Florida. Jim has three grown children, Ian, Roberta, and William, with one grandson and one on the way. He is looking forward to retiring soon from his lifelong career as a Civil Engineer.

I would like to personally thank Jim for being a Lifetime IPA member since 1993 and congratulate him on his upcoming retirement, which will afford him even more time to play, support, and enjoy Polka music!



By Brad Turk

Please continue to support our Clubs & Bands:

Polish American Pulaski Club of Daytona Beach, is having their dinner dances at the **SNPJ Lodge #603 421 North Samsula Drive, New Smyrna Beach,** Feb. 8th Brewski Brothers, Feb. 22nd Frank Moravcik from Ohio, March 8th Jim Wicks, March 22nd Brewski Brothers. For dinner reservations call Irene/Club (386)-258-7059. For additional info. please visit their Facebook page.

General K. Pulaski Citizens Club of Belleview. (The club is in the process of being sold). The club will be having their dinner dances on Feb. 15th, March 15th, April 5th Easter Sunday, May 3rd with Northern Sounds Band. Please contact Brad for more info.

Polish American Society of St. Petersburg, is having their dinner dances on Feb. 1st Polka All Stars, Feb. 8th Frank Moravcik Band, Feb. 15th Gone Coastal, Feb. 22nd Polka All Stars, Feb. 27th Jimmy Sturr Band, March 1st Northern Sounds, March 8th Frank Moravcik from Ohio, March 15th Gone Coastal, March 22nd Northern Sounds, April 6th Dyngus Day with Gone Coastal from 5-8pm, April 12th Northern Sounds. Please visit their Facebook page, or website: www.polishsociety.org, Dinner reservations call Rita (727)-347-7944, club (727)-894-9908 for more info.

Polish American Social Club of Vero Beach. The club is getting ready for their Polka season on Feb. 8th 2026 with Eddie Forman Orch. (EFO) Dinner 1pm, Dancing 2-5pm. For all of their monthly events, please join their Facebook page, visit their website www.pacvbusa.org, or email: pascverobeach@gmail.com. Call the club at (772)-778-0039.

SNPJ Lodge #603 in Samsula. FLORIDA'S POLKAFEST 2026 CELEBRATING 100 years on Friday, Feb. 20th, kitchen opens at 4-8pm with Jam session host by Kristijan Razpotnik/Vince Rigler, admission only \$1.00 per person. On Saturday Feb 21st, featuring Frank Moravcik Band from Ohio, kitchen opens at 12N, Dancing 1-5pm, admission \$15.00 per person. Full Bar, Great Food, special prizes & more! For info. call the club (386)-428-3983. Join their Facebook page **SNPJ Lodge 603**-Official site for all their events, snpjldodge603@gmail.com. Visit their website: www.samsulasnpjldodge603.com.

2026 Polkas Events:

Feb. 26th: Jimmy Sturr Band @ Florida Strawberry Festival Plant City, 303 Berryfest Place Plant City. For info. /Tickets call: (813)-754-1996, (845)-651-4266

Feb. 27th: Jimmy Sturr Band @ Polish American Society of St. Pete 1343 Beach Drive South East St. St. Petersburg FL. Dance 5-9pm. Advance tickets \$23/Door \$28. Call: (845)-651-4266

Feb. 28th: Jimmy Sturr Band @ Polish Am. Social Club, 343 Prima Vista Blvd., Port St. Lucie, Dance 12N – 4pm. Tickets/info. call: (845)-651-4266

April 6th Dyngus Day: Gone Coastal @ Polish American Society of St. Pete 1343 Beach Drive South East St. St. Petersburg FL. Dance 5-8pm. *Get your advance Tickets!* Limited seating...Call the club (727)-894-9908

April 6th Dyngus Day: Polka All Stars @ The Original Crabby Bill's, 401 Gulf Blvd., Indian Rocks Beach. **Free event!** bring your water cannons to get wet! Beach party starts at 1pm. Call (727)-595-4825

Please support Florida's Polka IJ's. Featured on the Polka Jammer Network, 2009 IPA Hall of Famer Joe Oberaitis with Slovenian Polka Blast (Thur.), and Polkas 101 (Sat.). IPA member Ray Skorka, can be heard on Crankin' Polkas (Fri.). High on Polka's every (Sat.) on PolkaRadio.org featuring IPA members Tara, Diane, Jimmy and Billy.

If you would like any additional information about our clubs, polka dances or special events, email me at bradturk@cox.net or call the **Polka Hot Line:** (352) 875-3961. Please continue to support LIVE polka music and our clubs!



POLKA POWER: ONE OPPORTUNITY, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF LISTENERS

For the past 10 years or so, I have played music for runners at the Pittsburgh Marathon. This has been a phenomenal experience.

There are so many polka songs that talk about how the music makes you move and gets you going. This is tangible and obvious when playing for marathon runners. You see the music move someone to start running again or to keep going. You hear runners say they are thankful for the music and that it helps them do what they do. This confirms the power of music, but especially of polka music.

It is also an amazing opportunity to put polka music in a public place where tens of thousands of people will experience it – and feel the power of polka music. The Pittsburgh Marathon has tens of thousands of runners. There are many marathons around the country. So, I want to encourage other polka musicians to look into this possibility in a city near

them. In Pittsburgh, the marathon organizers have a band signup on the marathon website. They provide a generator, tents, and a little incentive for donating your time. There are various details to deal with, so please feel free to contact me if you would like to do this in a city near you. I have thoughts on how to approach this, how to pick a location to play, and which songs to play. By the way, the Theme from Rocky played as a polka is especially powerful....



By Randy Koslosky
IPA Sergeant at Arms

So, if you're a polka musician who would like to share that gift and play for thousands (even if each member of the "audience" may only hear a minute of your music), I encourage you to explore this possibility. It is super fun and rewarding, too.

Polkamotion by the Ocean Sept 17th-19th 2026

Blue Magic

Dynabrass

EFO

Polka Family

DVSTA

Maestro's Men

Polka Country Musicians

WRITER'S BLOCK, POLKA, AND A NEW PARTNER NAMED AI

I turned 60 this past January and have tried to keep up with technology. In an ever-changing world where new things, trends, gadgets, and gizmos seem to come and go every 5 minutes, it's difficult, if not impossible, to keep up with everything. AI technology, especially in its association with the creation of music, is no exception.

My son is 35 and lives in New York City. He and I have been writing and developing a new musical for Broadway called *Big Famous*, based on my time as Jan Lewan's music director. (Yes! Polkas one day on Broadway!) We have gone through a lot of songs in the last few years that either made it into the show or got scrapped for one storytelling reason or another. Recently, we chose to scrap one important song towards the end of the show and tried to write something more "complicated". It's a very pivotal song to the story. I made a few attempts at composing the song, each one ending up crumpled on the floor of my studio. After about 4 or 5 different failures, I handed it back to my son to see what he could come up with. He was also at the same level of writer's block that I was. The reason being it needed to be a huge turning point in the story and was super difficult to compose. So, we turned to AI.

There are AI applications out there where you can literally type in a "prompt" of what you want a song to sound like or be about. You can type in your own actual lyrics or just give it a high-level concept of your idea. You can pick from some preprogrammed genres and then, at the click of a button, have a fully produced song composed, recorded, and ready for you, all with astonishing speed and quality. This kind of thing is great if someone with no musical talent wants to write a song for their sweetheart on Valentine's Day. Fantastic!

After we prompted the program, we were astonished that AI produced a song idea for us on this very problematic tune. The big question became, "What do we do with this AI-composed song that we are now listening to? Can this be passed off as our own music? Did we write this?"

My son and I discussed it and came to the same conclusion: if AI is used as a "collaboration tool" and not a shortcut for a lack of musical training and cognitive thought, then we viewed it as an "extra writing partner" to help bounce ideas off. And that's what it did. It gave us some fresh ideas that helped us get out of our collective writer's blocks. So we sat back down at a real piano and finally got to a final song

we could achieve ourselves. We used it as a simple tool that provided us with some new inspiration, and that is all we needed.

So what could this mean for the future of polka music? Is it difficult to spot the difference between an AI-generated song or recording? Well, if we are focusing on our little polka world, no. The AI creators have not yet perfected the Chicago Polish-Style Polka genre because AI can't bellow shake! There are other genres, like Country and Cajun, that may come close, but AI is not yet great at generating authentic-sounding polkas. I don't see anyone putting out a 100% AI-generated album of Marion Lush hits anytime soon. But hey, give it 5 more minutes.

Stephen Kaminski has composed, arranged, produced, and played with bands such as Jan Lewan, Jimmy Sturr, Charm City Sound, FreezeDried, and his own solo album projects with his Dream Team.



By Stephen Kaminski
IPA Director

Limited Edition 1/4 Zips

Represent the IPA in Style

Premium  Limited  Exclusive

Exclusive Membership Rates

Limited Quantities

Premium Quality



ORDER YOURS TODAY

GET THEM BEFORE THEY'RE GONE

BEL-AIRE ENTERPRISES
presents

A COMBINATION CELEBRATION **POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY & CINCO DE MAYO**

Celebracja Dwóch Uroczystości Una fiesta de Dos Culturas

THE POLKA FAMILY BAND FROM PENNSYLVANIA



SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026
ROYALTY WEST BANQUETS

8675 South Archer Avenue
Willow Springs, IL 60480

Doors open at 1:30
Music and Dancing 2:00 – 6:00
Admission Price - \$20 per person
Children Under 12 admitted Free

Food & Drinks will be available for purchase.

For more information please call 708-594-5182
or email belaire7208@aol.com



2026 International Polka Association
Festival and Convention



6th Annual Kick-Off Polka Party

Thursday, September 3rd, 2026

Multi Award Winning Band

DynaBrass



Music from 7:00pm to 10:00pm

Doors Open at 6:00pm

Tickets: \$20 per person

Limited Number of Tickets Available for this Performance

Cranberry Elks Lodge #2249

20720 Route 19

Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

**All proceeds benefit the Veterans Commission
of the Elks Lodge #2249**

Food and Drinks will be available for purchase! No BYOB!

For tickets, table reservations, or more information contact:

Chris Bogdon - 412-260-9725 or chris@westernpapolkas.com

For more information about the 58th Annual IPA Polka Festival and Convention
in Cranberry Twp., please see <https://www.ipapolkas.com>

It's Here Again!

The 7th Annual...



Young
Songwriter's
Competition



Showcase Your Talent. Share Your Sound.

Eligibility

- No minimum age
- Open to all songwriters **up to age 39 as of July 1, 2026**
- Open to **amateur and professional composers**
- Any **polka genre**

Submission Guidelines

- Submit **one original song** of your own.
- You may also submit **one additional song** as a **co-writer**.
- Select your strongest work and let the polka world hear it!

Prizes

- **1st Place:** \$1,000
- **2nd Place:** \$100

Deadline

- **July 1, 2026**

Scan the QR Code or click [**HERE**](#) to go to the Submission Form or to view the Instructions, Eligibility, and Terms



WILDWOOD

PucoYashu is Bringing Back Those WILD WILD Wildwood Days!

Rain or Shine
May 28th—30th, 2026

Oceanic Hotel

4600 Ocean Ave Wildwood, NJ * 609-522-6500
Room Rates from \$129—\$179 * Group Code: POLKA

RAIN OR SHINE

May 28th

Daily Admission—\$5
Oceanic Bar 6pm—10pm
Welcome Party
DJ BRUCE Z



May 29th

Daily Admission—\$30
Oceanic Pool 1pm—5pm
Frankie Liszka &
Blue Magic

THREE DAY PASS—\$55

16 & under free all weekend

For More Information:
Michael Pucowski
michael.pucowski@gmail.com
908-209-9843
Jeff Yash
jeffreyyash@gmail.com
518-281-1587

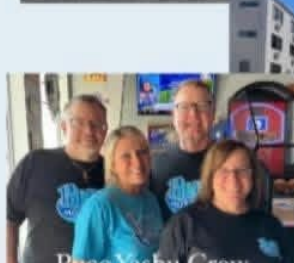


Oceanic Bar 8pm—12am
Eddie Forman Orchestra

May 30th

Daily Admission—\$30
Oceanic Pool 1pm—5pm
Eddie Forman Orchestra

Oceanic Bar 8pm—12am
Frankie Liszka &
Blue Magic



Patrick Henry Presents!



Wisconsin Dells Polka Fest! & Expo!



May 8-10, 2026

Party in Chula Vista's huge Conference Center!
A Great Weekend of Family FUN!



Frank Liszka & Blue Magic

from Ohio - Friday & Saturday

Polka Family Band

from Pennsylvania - Saturday & Sunday

Live it Up! A Tribute to Lil' Wally!

from Minnesota - Friday

The Mix

from Wisconsin - Friday

Barefoot Becky & the Ivanhoe Dutchmen

from Iowa - Saturday

Ryan Kautzer Band

from Wisconsin - Saturday

The Nu Tymes

from Wisconsin - Saturday

Kevin Altenburg & Friends

from Illinois - Sunday

The Saturday Morning Monster Jam!

Hosted by: Nathan Neuman

Polish/English Catholic Mass - Polka Dancing Lessons!

Weekend AMTRAK Trip Available!

Band line-up and other events subject to change without notice.

For general festival information: Call (773)889-6811

www.dellspolkafest.com

Hotel Package Available:

Only \$184 p/p Double Occupancy
Single Occupancy \$333 + tax & resort fee.

Includes:

2-Nights at Chula Vista Resort Buffet
Breakfast Saturday & Sunday in the
Market Fresh Buffet.

Breakfast Gratuity included.

Polka Fest Tickets NOT included.

*Each additional adult, \$16.50 /day + tax.

*Each additional child 3-15, \$12 /day + tax.

*Upgrades available for additional \$\$\$.

Room only prices starting at \$139/night.

Thursday or Sunday night only \$79!

Waterpark pass only \$10/person per day.

Call Chula Vista Resort direct at:

(608)254-8366 promo code:

L-03894 Polka Fest 2026

Discount code is not available online. Rate

Guaranteed until 04/15/26

Admission: Fri: \$25, Sat: \$30, Sun: \$20

Weekend Pass: \$65, Kids Under 18: Free!

with guardian. Plus Tax where applicable.

Huge Dance Floor By: Russ Napiwocki!

Chula Vista Resort, 2501 River Rd. Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

Kinloch Fire Hall

Western PA's Polka Hot Spot

2026 Polka Schedule

Sunday Apr. 12 th , 2026	Seven (NY) Join the award-winning band from Buffalo, NY as they return to Kinloch.	2:00 pm – 6:00 pm \$20.00 per person
Saturday May 16 th , 2026	Buffalo Concertina All Stars ♥ Chris' Special Birthday Party Dance ♥	5:00 pm – 9:00 pm \$20.00 per person
Saturday Aug. 1 st , 2026	DVSTA First ever appearance at Kinloch for this great young innovative band!	5:00 pm – 9:00 pm \$20.00 per person
Sunday Sep. 20 th , 2026	DynaBrass Join them as they make their return appearance!	2:00 pm – 6:00 pm \$20.00 per person
Saturday Oct. 10 th , 2026	New Generation (WI) Live broadcast for the Polka Jammer Network's Jammerthon!	5:00 pm – 9:00 pm \$20.00 per person
Sunday Nov. 29 th , 2026	Polka Family Join the Incomparable Polka Family as they head back to Western PA's Polka Hotspot!	2:00 pm – 6:00 pm \$20.00 per person

The 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@westernpolkas.com

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



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



April

1st – Helenrae Budzilek

2nd – Joseph Witek

3rd – Dustin Ager

4th – Timothy Haselow;
Mary Lou Czerniak

5th – David Straup-Slick; Ed-
ward Stachura

6th – Alice Koziel

7th – Basia Adams; John Zelasko Sr.

8th – Jerry Soliwoda, Jr

9th – Sara Zelasko; Veronica Grocholski

10th – Valerie Janson; Debra Rutkowski

11th – Paul Chichin

12th – Randy Theis

14th – Debbie Horoschock; Debbie Majka

15th – Daniel Prigge

16th – Tamara Waner

17th – Diane Nowakowski; Mack Martin;
Tyler Zawatski; Michael Riel;
Margaret Zotkiewicz-Dramczyk

18th – Peter Wendlinger; Jackie Libera

20th – Michael Blaskowski; Walter Ostanek

22nd – Johnetta Vinka; Phyllis Ripley

23rd – Brian Szumigalski

25th – Sally Rzeszutko; Brian Urbanczyk; Robert
Gawryla; Janice Dziagwa-Vincent

26th – Phyllis Videtich

27th – Jeff Powaski;
Debbie Rymanowski;
Linda Walczynski-Louie

28th – Joseph Price;
Michael Bednarz;
Eric Kurowski;
Jacob Bzura

29th – Kim Cielecki; Candice Rebovich;
Stanley Czerminski



HAPPY
Birthday
DAY



**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**



1st – Matthew Martin;
Kimberly Uelmen;
Roscoe Powell

2nd – Judy Del Pozzo;
Gary Rozak; John Kostecki

3rd – Cliff Hickock

5th - Martha Gretchen; R. Ed-
ward Staszak

6th – Mashelle Pavey; Robert Mazur

7th – Richard Kozacko; Hadley Kaminski;
Tom Zak

8th – Lorraine “Travers” Truskolaski

9th – Janice Lochner; Shane Whitney; Dan Bizon

10th – Jill Czerniak; Bini Husain; Lenny Zielinski

11th – Bill Horodecki

12th – Chester Sterczek

13th – Connie Shemansky; Shirley Sherpetis

14th – Stacey Morris; Carolyn Blajda

15th – Krystin Benkowski; Bryan Koslosky;
Darlene Arneson; Patricia Kaminsky;
Dorothy Styczynski

16th – Christopher Bogdon; Bob Zukowski;
Bob Wojtowicz; Al Meilutis

17th – Linda Chesky-Fernandes; John Smagowicz;
Tom Haslett; Mary Leja; Laura Manke;
John Wudtke

18th – Larry Stec; Fran Russo;

19th – Craig Skupny; Phillip Olszewski



20th - Ryan Ogrondy

21st – Edwin Rajewski;
Mitch Biskup

22nd – Raymond Skorka;
Linda Kendzierski;
Paul Chojnacki; Harold Otto

23rd – Ruth Lietz; Matthew Gregg

24th – Mary Saber; Ron Palkowski; John Rogers;
Rich Suckiel

25th – Robyn Mrozinski; Jim Letnick

26th – Timothy Winiarz; Thomas Lewandowski

27th – Rick Zarek, Jane Piotrowski

28th – Pauline Adelman; Gina Gomulka

29th – Martin Olshanski; Bonnie Sergel;
Andy Bojczuk

30th – Brian Svetlik

31st – Bill Popek; George Dums



THE PASSING OF IPA HALL OF FAMER JOHN “STANKY” STANKOVIC



With great sadness, we inform you of the passing of John “Stanky” Stankovic a 2019 Hall of Fame Inductee. We offer our deepest condolences and

sympathies to his family, and all his polka friends and fans.

John “Stanky” Stankovic, 89, of Hanover Section, Nanticoke, passed away early Thursday, December 25, 2025.

Born at home on Phillip Street, in the Hanover Section of Nanticoke on May 4, 1936, he was a son of the late Joseph and Anna Shambora Stankovich.

Stanky was a graduate of Nanticoke High School, class of 1954. He was a star athlete, excelling in baseball and basketball; playing for the Nanticoke League, Wilkes Barre Barons, and trying out for the Cleveland Indians.

He began a humble career as a ragman, as well as his beginning, what would become a lifelong career as a musician at the age of nine. Stanky became a nationally known and tremendously loved Polka mu-

sician for 80 years, playing all over the world, including: two world fairs, five continents, and the 50th anniversary of the Korean War at Osan Air Force Base in South Korea, and HBO Television. He recorded over 20 albums with his band, “Stanky, and the Coal Miners”. He enjoyed fishing and mushroom picking, and could be known as the best storyteller in the world. He had a love of food and travel, but most of all cherished the time spent with family and friends.

Stanky was a member of St. Faustina Kowalska Parish, Nanticoke, and formerly St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, prior to the consolidation of the parishes. He was a member of the International Polka Association and was inducted into its hall of fame in 2019. In 2025 John was also inducted into Luzerne County Arts and Entertainment hall of fame. He also belonged to the Nanticoke Lions Club, and a member of the Hanover Fire Company #4, Hanover Section, for over 70 years.

He is survived by his loving wife Dorothy “Dottie” Wegrzynowicz Stankovic, with whom he celebrated their 63rd anniversary on June 2; two daughters; Kimberly Bukowski, and son-in-law, and Deborah Horoschock, (late husband, Vinny Horoschock); grandchildren, Ashley Michaels and her husband, Jeffrey, Alex Bukowski, and Trevor Bukowski; a brother, Joe Stanky and his wife, Corrine; and all the many fans throughout the world.

Congratulations and Thank You **IPA Certificates of Appreciation**

Frank Moravcik Band - In recognition of almost 50 years of performing. Thank you and Congratulations. (December, 2025)

NY Polka Bob - In recognition of nearly 50 years of broadcasting and promoting Polka Music with the “Polka Beat – Ukrainian Melody Time”. Thank you and Congratulations. (January, 2026)

Linda Hochevar - In recognition of nearly 40 years of performing Polka Music. Thank you and Congratulations. (January, 2026)

SNPJ Lodge 603 - In recognition of celebrating 100 years of supporting and promoting Polka Music. Thank you and Congratulations. (January, 2026)

D. Thomas Busch - In recognition of your dedication to integrating and embracing polka music within the school curriculum, for encouraging the youth of Pulaski to continue their musical pursuits beyond high school, and for mentoring over 30 students who have gone on to perform in polka bands. Thank you and Congratulations. (January, 2026)

THE PASSING OF IPA HALL OF FAMER RICHIE GOMULKA



With great sadness, we inform you of the passing of Richie Gomulka, a 2010 Hall of Fame Inductee. We offer our deepest condolences and sympathies to his family, and all his polka friends and fans.

Richie was born on February 6, 1942, in Chicago, Illinois, to Ted and Mary (Owca) Gomulka, first-generation American-born parents.

The oldest of four children, Richie shared a lifelong bond with his 2 sisters and younger brother.

Richie leaves behind his beloved wife Suellen, his children the Late Gary (Valerie) Zielinski, Ronald (Julie) Mentzer, Michelle (Bob) Piven, Karen (Ken) Farmer, and Marysue ; Siblings Dianne (Steve) Paliga, the Late Angie Gomulka, Lenny (Estelle) Gomulka.

In 1976, Richie married the love of his life and sweetheart, Suellen. Together they built a beautiful life and marriage spanning over 49 years, filled with faith, laughter, and polka music. Richie and Suellen were blessed with five wonderful children and their family eventually grew to include many cherished grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews who brought him immense pride and joy.

Richie's professional life reflected his deep connection to people and his community. For many years, he drove a taxi cab, always with a warm smile and a story to share. But his true passion was Polka music. A talented drummer and singer, Richie began performing in polka bands at the young age of 13 and continued to share his love of polka music

throughout his life. His dedication and talent was recognized in 2010 when he was inducted into the International Polka Association Polka Hall of Fame. Richie was also a member of other various polka organizations. He was well known in Chicago as the Polka Icon for his Honky Dyno style of Polka Music.

Richie was also the beloved host of The Richie Gomulka Polka Show on WPNA, The Polka Jammer Lunchtime polka show and Easy Listening Waltz Show, delighting his listeners with his energy, and devotion to preserving the joy of polka music.

Outside of his musical life, Richie had a fondness for antique and classic cars. Above all, he was a man of strong Catholic faith, which guided him throughout his life and provided comfort and strength to those around him.

Richie will be remembered for his kindness, humor, dedication to his family, and the music that filled so many hearts with joy. His legacy lives on in every song, every smile, and every moment of love he shared.



2026 IPA Newsletter Schedule

Issue

Deadline for Submissions

June - July 2026

April 15, 2026

August - September 2026

June 15, 2026

October - November 2026

August 15, 2026

December 2025 - January 2027

October 15, 2026

POLKA FIREWORKS

SEVEN SPRINGS, PA • JULY 1-4, 2026

A POLKA PARTY AND A RESORT VACATION

WEDNESDAY JULY 1ST

Welcome Party
feat. A Honky Tribute to Ray Jay & The Carousels

THURSDAY JULY 2ND

Pool Party feat. DJ Tony Blazonczyk
Lenny Gornulka & Chicago Push (MA)
The New Generation (WI)
DynaBrass (OH)

FRIDAY JULY 3RD

Volleyball & Pickleball Tournaments
42nd Annual Litwin Concertina Jam
Seven (NY)
Crusade featuring Eddie Biegaj (OH)
Ryan Joseph & All Access (TN)
Frankie Liszka & Blue Magic (PA)

SATURDAY JULY 4TH

Pool Party feat. DynaBrass
"Live It Up!" (MN)
Lenny Gornulka & Chicago Push (MA)
Polka Family (PA)

ADMISSIONS PRICING

Wednesday		\$10
Thursday	Adults \$25, Teens (13-17)	\$10
Friday	Adults \$30, Teens	\$10
Saturday	Adults \$30, Teens	\$10

Children 12 and under FREE if accompanied by an adult



The #1 Polka Party 51 Years & Counting

SEVEN SPRINGS

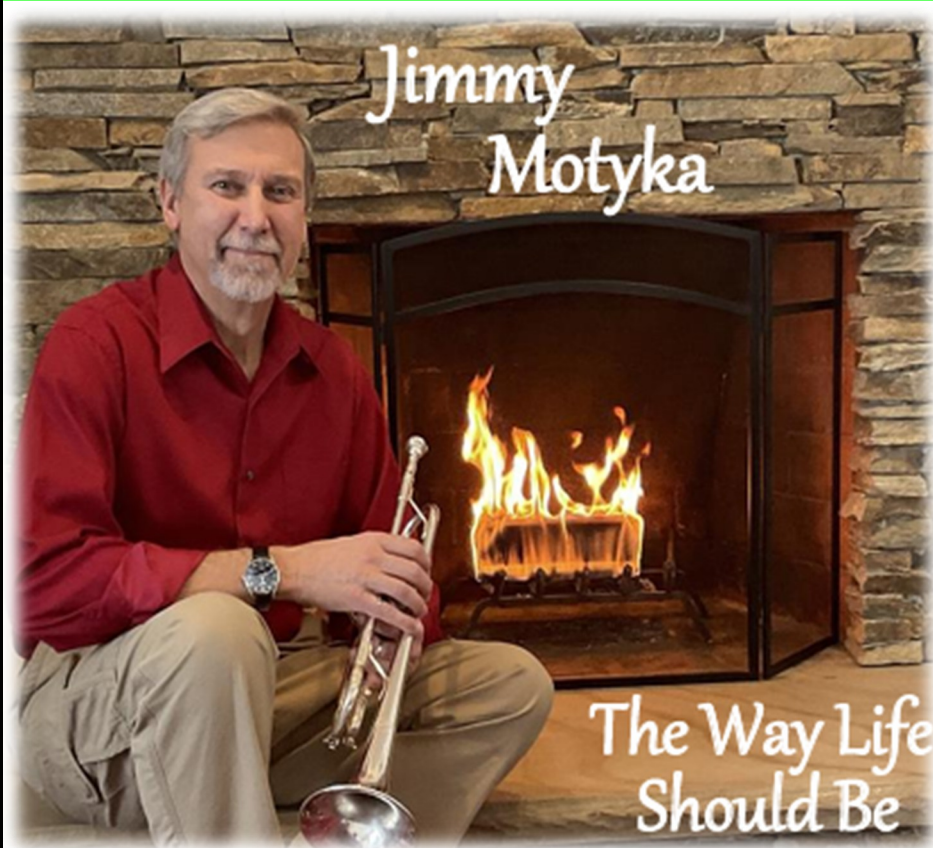
Seven Springs Mountain Resort
Champion, PA
855.947.0438
7springs.com

POLKAFIREWORKS.COM



FOR RESERVATIONS

Call (855) 947-0438 and ask for
"Polka Fireworks room rates"—
or use Group Code: **B7SPLK26**
rooms starting as low as \$155 for
Queen Lodge accommodations



I'm Jimmy Motyka and I've been playing polka music for over 40 years. I figured it was time to record a CD of my own! Over the course of those years, I've been a member of The Villagers Travelers, The Instrumentals, The Bay State IV, The Classix and I'm currently playing trumpet with Dennis Polisky and the Maestro's Men. I have had the pleasure of performing with many other great bands such as Happy Louie, The New Brass, Heavy Chicago, Chuck Pendrak, PCM, EFO, and The Chicago Push.

After I retired from teaching, I began writing songs in my free time. I came across a piece of paper with lyrics for a song entitled, "The Way Life Should Be" that I co-wrote in high school with my friend Paul. I remembered the melody and wrote out the music. My wife Sandy suggested the song would be a great title for the recording. So, "The Way Life Should Be" became the title cut.

Soon after that I came across another song that my wife's late husband, John Berestka, wrote for her. He was an exceptional accordion player and he wrote the song exclusively for accordion. My thought was to develop trumpet and clarinet parts for the song and dedicate it to Sandy from both John and me. That is how "My Sweethearts" came to be.

This recording has three original songs, and some that were adapted from other genres along with some old polka standards. It has been quite the journey! I hope that you will enjoy listening to these songs as much as I enjoyed recording them with some great fellow musicians and friends: Richie Bernier on accordion, Al Piatkowski on concertina and accordion, Matt Lewandowski on bass and drums, and Randy Koslowski on piano, Rusty Danmeyer on steel guitar on "Famous Last Words of a Fool", and Sandy Motyka as a guest vocalist on "Send a Message to My Heart".

The cost of the CD is \$20 and it will be available for purchase from me at any Maestro's Men engagement. You can also email me at jimmotyka33@yahoo.com for purchase and with any questions you may have.

Song List

1. The Way Life Should Be Polka
2. Broken Memory Polka
3. Oj Rety Polka Song List
4. You're the One Polka
5. Famous Last Words of a Fool Waltz
6. My Sweethearts Polka
7. Heart's Aren't Made to Break Polka
8. Weeping Willow Polka
9. Forever's as Far as I'll Go Polka
10. Walk on Faith Polka
11. I Wrote Your Name Oberek
12. Send a Message to My Heart Polka
13. Polka Jamboree
14. Make it Soon Polka
15. Hard Rock Bottom of Your Heart Polka
16. At My Daughter's Wedding Polka

\$1000 FREDDY K JR MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



The **Freddy K Jr. Music Scholarship Committee** is now accepting requests for applications for the 2026 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 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

2025 – Laila Chaoub, Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey

2024 - Nicole Mrozinski, Hugo, Minnesota

2023 – Holly Rose Kolodziej Scarfone, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

2022 – Sebastian Pucowski, Hackettstown, New Jersey

2021- Syrena Prytko, Millbury, Massachusetts

2020 – Lucas Yash, Webster, Massachusetts

2019 – Emma Bogdan, Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania

2018 – Zachary Piatkowski, Canastota, New York

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 - Kassandre 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 – Lanelle 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 Moadlo, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

2000 – Andrew Krystopolski, Wilmington, Delaware

1999 – William Lomnychuk, Reading, Pennsylvania

1998 – John Daigle, Chicopee, Massachusetts

THE PASSING OF IPA HALL OF FAMER THADDEUS OKRZESIK, SR. (TED O)



With great sadness, we inform you of the passing of Teddy Okrzesik, Sr., a 2010 Hall of Fame Inductee. We offer our deepest condolences and sympathies to his family, and all his polka friends and fans.

Born in Chicago on July 29, 1937, Ted was a devoted husband and father, and the proud and loving Dziadz of 17 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. He was a dear friend to many. Ted is survived by his beloved wife of 67 years, Genevieve (née Bocian), and his loving children: Teddy Jr. (Becky), Danny Sr., Teri (John) O'Brien, John (Jennifer), and Cathy (Steve) Zimel.

Ted grew up on the South Side of Chicago and attended St. Pancratius Grammar School and Holy Trinity High School. He proudly served his country in the United States Army.

His musical journey began in his youth, playing and singing alongside his brothers Joe and Bob in the Polkaliers Band to the delight of his parents Joseph and Emily (née Scieszka) and many fans – an experience that sparked his lifelong passion for Polka music.

Ted had a storied career in the Polka music field that spanned 75+ years as a musician and promoter, well known for his annual Longest Day of the Year Dances at historic Polonia Grove and Chicago is a Polka Town polka weekends at the world-famous Sabre Room. He held leadership roles with several Polka organizations and achieved the Polka Pioneer award from the International Polka Association in 2010. With wife Gennie, they owned and operated the legendary The Omen Polka Lounge in Brighton Park from 1972 through 1981. They also hosted several radio programs together. He was an accomplished vocalist, drummer, trumpet player and bassist. As the leader of the Windy City Brass and The Next Step Polka bands, he proudly performed with his wife and children at countless venues across the United States. He also recorded numerous record albums that continue to bring joy to many.

Ted had many hobbies over the years and found joy in tackling renovation and improvement projects around the house, learning the latest in music and recording technology, exploring the wonders of science and nature, and spending time with family and friends.

Ted often said, "Life is for the living," and he lived by those words with passion, curiosity, and kindness, and a generous spirit that touched everyone he met.



Changes to the Membership Renewal Process

The International Polka Association (IPA) has updated its membership renewal process to assist in controlling costs. For members who receive the newsletter via email, all communications, including renewal notices, will now be sent electronically. Members can expect reminders in the month preceding their membership expiration, during the month of expiration, and in the month following expiration. If members do not renew during these reminder periods, their membership will expire at the end of the month following the expiration month, and they will no longer be considered an active member of the IPA.

For members who receive their newsletter through traditional mail, you will still receive your reminders as usual through traditional mail delivery.

As always, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your membership in the IPA. Your support is invaluable and enables the organization to continue its mission of supporting and promoting polka music. We truly appreciate your commitment.



58th Annual International Polka Association Festival and Convention



September 3rd, 2026 – 7 -10 pm Kick Off Party

At the Cranberry Elks Lodge – DynaBrass

Sept 4th – 6th, 2026

Labor Day Weekend

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel – Pittsburgh Cranberry

724-776-6900

4 Fun-filled days of Polka Entertainment by:

John Góra and Górale, Dennis Polisky & Maestro's Men, Frankie Liszka and Blue Magic, Jody Maddie's Uptown Sound, IPA Tribute Band, Jimmy Weber Sounds Reunion, Eddie Forman Orchestra, Gerry Kaminski's Polka Network, Twin Cities Soundz, Polka Country Musicians, Polka Family

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



More details and information to follow.

Visit our website: www.ipapolkas.com

Be sure to listen to the IPA Radio Show:

Polka Jammer Network

Sunday, 11 am to 12 pm (CT)

Polka Radio

Saturday, 5 pm to 6 pm (CT)



Hotel Block Now Open for the 58th Annual IPA Festival and Convention

The International Polka Association (IPA) is excited to announce that the **hotel block for the 58th Annual International Polka Association Festival and Convention is now open!** Scan this QR code to book your room online.

If you prefer to make your reservation by phone, you can call the hotel directly at **724-776-6900** and press **1** to be connected to the **Front Desk**. Be sure to mention the **Group Name: IPA ATTENDEE BLOCK** when booking to receive the special group rate.

Last year, the hotel block sold out early, so be sure to book your room as soon as possible to guarantee you're staying where the PARTY is happening!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the IPA at info@ipapolkas.com.

We look forward to celebrating another incredible year of music, dancing, and polka tradition with you. Reserve your room early and get ready for an unforgettable festival!



Hotel Cancellation Policy Reminder 58th Annual IPA Festival and Convention

The **DoubleTree Hotel** has implemented a **30-day cancellation policy** for reservations made for the International Polka Association Festival and Convention.

If you need to cancel your reservation for the IPA Festival and Convention — though we certainly hope you won't — the cancellation must be made **on or before Monday, August 3, 2026**. If you cancel **after this date**, your **first night deposit will not be refunded**.

Please note that this is a **hotel policy**, and the **IPA has no control over it and must follow the hotel's guidelines**.

Both the **IPA and the hotel understand that special circumstances may arise**, and they will work with guests on an **individual basis in cases of emergencies, funerals, or other serious situations**.

Additionally, please remember that there is a **minimum two-night stay requirement** for reservations.

Thank you for your **cooperation and understanding** regarding these policies.



DOUBLE TREE
— by Hilton —

WAY OUT WEST ARIZONA POLKA DANCE FEST. 2026

WHEN:

Jan. 10th, & 11th, Tony Blazonczyk 's New Phaze

Mar. 21st, & 22nd, DynaBrass

Apr. 11th, & 12th, Frankie Liszka and Blue Magic

Nov. 14th, & 15th, Polka Country Musicians

TIME:

Friday Night 6pm. FREE admission (meet & greet)

Saturday night 5 to 9pm \$15.00

Sunday afternoon 2 to 6pm \$15.00

(kids under 16 FREE all weekend)



*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) 602-358-0909 (ask for reservation # Pulaskiclub) www.hiphoenixsuites.com

*The Pulaski Polish / American Club at 4331 E. McDowell Rd. Phoenix Arizona 85008, 602.275.9329
www.facebook.com/pulaskiclub "fun time"page www.pulaskiclubaz.com*

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:

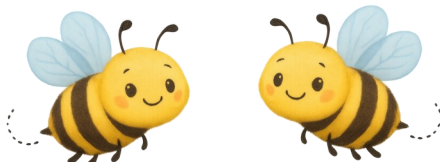
Dues are \$15.00 per person for all members. You can also purchase a lifetime membership for only \$200.00 per person. If you would like to join the IPA, please send your check or money order to:

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



Current IPA Officers and Directors

Officers:

President: Chris Bogdon (PA)
1st Vice President: Jill Styczynski (WI)
2nd Vice President: Henry Lenard (DE)
Treasurer: Matt Olszewski (PA)
Secretary: Cindy Olszewski (PA)
Financial Secretary: Lynn Kaminski (IL)
Sergeant at Arms: Randy Koslosky (PA)

Advisors:

Advisor: Christy Krawisz (IL)
Lori Hudy-Lewandowski (IL)
Media Advisor: Keith Pietranczyk (IL)
Chaplain: Fr. Dennis Bogusz (PA)

Directors:

Andy Bojczuk (NY)
Emma Bogdon (PA)
Stephen Kaminski (IL)
Brian Kapka (IL)
Dan Mateja (IL)
Lindsey Mateja (IL)
Christy Nowakowski (IL)
Sue Szela (MA)
Brad Turk (FL)
Brian Urbanczyk (NY)
Jeff Yash (NY)
John Zelasko (MI)

Current IPA Hall of Fame and Awards Committee

Gary Brueggen * Craig Ebel * Jackie Libera * Mike Matousek *
Jimmy Weber

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.

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

One Issue

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

Three Issues

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

Six Issues

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

DEADLINE FOR JUNE 2026 NEWSLETTER: April 15

Email ad files to Lynn Kaminski using:

newsletter@ipapolkas.com

Polkas bring people together—one joyful beat at a time.

Let’s keep the squeezebox singing and the dance floors spinning by supporting polka music wherever we hear it.

Share a song, attend a dance, and celebrate the tradition so future generations can feel the same lively rhythm.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS!!

Please note of the changes to our membership renewal process on **page 19** of this publication.

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

