

## March 2009 Austin Polish Society Newsletter

Dear APS Members and Friends,

Austin Polish Society has many events to review and update for all of our members. We appreciate the volunteer hours and great attendance at all of our events! Thank you!

First, a review of the highlights from February and early March events:

### Bigos Cook-Off – A Big Success!

The APS sponsored the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bigos Cook-Off on Saturday, March 7 and 11 cooks submitted entries. The 1st prize went to Marcin Nowicki, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize to Beata Gmurowski, and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize to Jurek Ozarowski! Congratulations to our 2009 winners! Each winner received a prize. First prize was donated by Sasha's Russian Gourmet Market; the second place prize was a CVS gift card donated by Beata Gmurowski, and third prize was a bottle of Texas wine donated by Austin Polish Society. Big thanks go to Houston based "Polonia" restaurant for donating kielbasa and to Pawel Podnieszinski for grilling it during the event.

Thanks to Gosia Jurczynska for organizing and conducting the Bigos Cook-Off. Gosia did a fantastic job! Thanks to all the donors and volunteers.

### Director Krzysztof Zanussi discusses "Morality, Physics and Filmmaking"

The Austin community enjoyed two presentations by famed director Krzysztof Zanussi. A one-time physics scholar who also studied philosophy at the Jagellonian University, Polish-born Krzysztof Zanussi began making amateur movies in the late '50s, after chancing to take a film course at the University of Warsaw. On February 20, 2009, the Austin Polish Society with the University of Texas Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies and the Radio, Television and Film Departments presented Dr. Zanussi's **Serce na dloni (A Warm Heart)** (2008, 96 minutes).

The film was introduced by Dr. Zanussi, who provided interesting details and background information on his film for the large group of about 200 guests at the UT Texas Union Theater. Dr. Zanussi discussed film direction and production, script writing, and provided rich anecdotes about his experiences and the people he has known. Dr. Zanussi presented a biographical documentary film, **Anxiety**, to introduce himself to the audience. Dr. Zanussi responded to numerous questions from the audience on topics ranging from his friendship with famed Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski (*Kieslowski and Zanussi shared similar values and probed many of the same questions, and as head of TOR, Zanussi produced several of Kieslowski's films*) to why Poland is not an Eastern European country (*Poland is in Central Europe and the modern use of the term 'Eastern Europe' is a remnant from the days of the Eastern Bloc, when Poland was one of many countries in Europe occupied by the USSR between 1945 and 1989. Poland has always been regarded by historians, geographers and others as a part of Central Europe.*) The evening was a great success and a rare opportunity to probe the mind of Dr. Zanussi--a talented writer-director, thoughtful philosopher, and a trained physicist with a good sense of humor and a passion for knowledge.

On Monday, February 23, Dr. Zanussi addressed a smaller group in the UT College of Communication Building where he spoke eloquently on his chosen topic: "Modern Film Language". Dr. Zanussi showed several film clips (**Life as a Fatal Sexually Transmitted Disease** and **Wherever You Are**) and described the many choices that a director makes when telling a story and how filming problems force a director to devise very creative solutions for making a film believable. Dr. Zanussi made time for student questions and comments. Thank you, Dr. Zanussi, for a memorable visit to Austin, Texas! (Please see photos of Dr. Zanussi's visit at: <http://www.austinpolschsociety.org/photos.php?>

**Thank you!**

**Austin Polish Society is grateful for the continuing support of the University of Texas Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies and the Department of Radio-Television and Film, co-sponsors of these wonderful events. Special thanks go to Dr. Thomas Garza, Dr. Sharon Strover, Dr. Gil Rappaport, and Professor Andrew Garrison.**

**Surprise Guest : Polish Director Mr. Jacek Bromski is working in Austin!**

Mr. Jacek Bromski is visiting Austin to collaborate on a musical score for his latest film, *U Pana Boga za miedzą*, due to be released this year. Mr. Bromski is collaborating with a local composer to create music for the third in a series of his very popular Polish comedies about village life in Poland. In 2008, Mr. Bromski was a guest director at the Austin Polish Film Festival and he presented the Austin, Texas premier of *U Pana Boga w ogrodku/God's Little Garden* (2007). Mr. Bromski's first film in this series was *U Pana Boga za piecem/As Snug as a Bug in a Rug* (1998). Welcome again to Texas, Mr. Bromski! For a glimpse of Mr. Bromski's latest film, please see: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYdX\\_-qSgWY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYdX_-qSgWY)

### **Monthly APS Film Night Changes!**

The APS Film Night is on a new day and time and at a new location for APS monthly movies. The films are still free but with a new day and time—**5 pm on the first Sunday of each month** at United States Arts Authority, **2906 Fruth, off 29<sup>th</sup> and Guadalupe**, next to **Spiderhouse Café**. Our new Film Committee, Marcin Nowicki, Joanna Gutt-Lehr and Mary Gawron, is excited to cooperate with Charles of *I luv video* and Warren of *Art Seen Alliance* who help with technical and promotional issues. Please see Charles reviews at [www.iluvvideo.com](http://www.iluvvideo.com). APS welcomes all film-goers to join us each month for a special film directed by a Polish filmmaker. The United States Arts Authority can easily accommodate up to 50 people, has a projector, screen and cabaret feel that is well-suited to our movie events. Arts Authority can also accommodate art exhibits and musical presentations and there is no charge for the use of their space. Guests are welcome to order food and drinks through Spiderhouse Cafe. Thank you to the US Arts Authority's management – the owner, Conrad Bejerano, and to Charles and Warren for their support!

### **Kieslowski Featured in the APS April 2009 Film Night**

In April, APS will present **No End/Bez konca** (1984, 1 hour and 47 minutes). **No End**, the first collaboration between writer-director Krzysztof Kieslowski and lawyer- turned-screenwriter Krzysztof Piesiewicz, takes place in a Poland that is under the cloud of martial law. More than any of the director's other internationally-screened features, this one requires some (however rudimentary) knowledge of the political situation in Poland during the early-to-mid eighties. Martial law was declared in late 1981, and, in the resulting climate of uncertainty and tension, the courts began to pass two-to-three year sentences on anyone caught painting graffiti, found in possession of an underground newspaper, breaking curfew, or participating in strikes or other resistance activities. One of Kieslowski's objectives in *No End* was to explore potential ramifications of this situation from a noncritical perspective. (Please see the complete review James Berardinelli at [http://www.reelviews.net/movies/n/no\\_end.html](http://www.reelviews.net/movies/n/no_end.html) )

**Interested in volunteering? Have a great idea or talents?**  
Contact: Gosia by e-mail: [gosia.jurczynska@oag.state.tx.us](mailto:gosia.jurczynska@oag.state.tx.us) or phone: 512-837-9749 (home) or 512-575-4098 (work). Thanks!

## CALENDAR EVENTS

### Sunday, March 29, 2009

**Time:** 9:30 am

**What:** Discussion and presentation of **Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project**. This project started with Protestant kids from rural Kansas, who discover a Polish Catholic woman, who saved Jewish children during WWII. Irena Sendler and students from Uniontown, Kansas have chosen to repair the world. In the fall of 1999, a rural Kansas teacher encouraged four students to work on a year long National History Day project which would among other things extend the boundaries of the classroom to families in the community, contribute to history learning, teach respect and tolerance, and meet our classroom motto, "***He who changes one person, changes the world entire***". Few had heard of Irena Sendlerowa in 1999, now after 270 presentations of *Life in a Jar*, a web site with huge usage and world-wide media attention, Irena is known to the world. How did this beautiful story develop? See <http://www.irenasendler.org/default.asp> for details.

**Where:** University Presbyterian Church, 2203 San Antonio St., Austin, TX 78705  
(512) 476-5321

**Cost:** FREE

### The first Thursday of each month the APS holds its Board Meeting

**Time:** 7 pm

**What:** The APS Board Meeting

**Where:** Priebe Security Services, 7940 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 210, Austin, Texas 78757.

**The April meeting is on Thursday, April 2.**

### Saturday, April 4, 2009

**Time:** 2-5 pm

**What:** Pisanki/Polish Easter Egg Painting for children and adults

**Where:** River Place Woodlands Park

**Cost:** \$5 adult/ \$1 child

We will have traditional pisanki egg painting demonstrations and practice stations for kids and adults as well as an egg hunt for the children. There will be a special surprise this year, the drowning of "Marzanna," a symbolic Polish custom of saying goodbye to winter and welcoming spring. Paczki, coffee and tea will be served.

### Sunday, April 5, 2009

**Time:** 5 pm

**What:** Monthly Polish Movie Night (*No End / Bez konca* by Krzysztof Kieslowski)

**Where:** United States Arts Authority at 2906 Fruth, off 29th and Guadalupe, next to Spiderhouse Café

**Cost:** FREE

### Sunday, April 19, 2009

**Time:** 5 pm

**What:** Polish Cooking Class - **Gołąbki** (stuffed cabbage rolls) and **Szarlotka** (Apple Strudel)

**Where:** 6102 Anemone Cove, Austin, TX 78759

**Chef:** Beata Liszka (limit to first 25 people - please call 512-837-9749 to purchase tickets)

**Cost:** \$25 per person

### Sunday, May 10, 2009

**Time:** 5 pm

**What:** An Evening with émigré Polish Poets

**Where:** United States Arts Authority at 2906 Fruth, off 29th and Guadalupe, next to Spiderhouse Café

**Contact:** Margaret Meub at [mmeub@mmm.com](mailto:mmeub@mmm.com) or 587-7097.

**Cost:** FREE

Polish immigrants can be found in most parts of the world. Many immigrated through the centuries forced by political oppression; many left looking for a better life. There is a great wealth of literary art and music created by émigré writers, poets and composers who were inspired by their much-loved homeland. Please join us for an evening with some of the most known poetry written by Mickiewicz, Slowacki, Tuwin, Hemar and others. Anyone who would like to participate and share their acting or musical talent is invited to contact Margaret Meub at [mmeub@mmm.com](mailto:mmeub@mmm.com) or 587-7097.

### 2009 Austin Polish Society Art Show

We are beginning to plan the 2009 Art Show for the end of summer. The show will feature works from Polish artists as well as art about Poland. If you would like to participate or have any questions and/or suggestions please contact Caroline Ulbrich at [caroline@ulbrichphotos.com](mailto:caroline@ulbrichphotos.com).

### 2009 Austin Polish Film Festival

The work is under way to plan the fourth Austin Polish Film Festival. Anybody interested in volunteering can contact the Festival Committee by sending email to [austinpolshsociety@yahoo.com](mailto:austinpolshsociety@yahoo.com).

## A Date in Polish History: February 6 – April 4, 1989

The **Polish Round Table Talks** took place in Warsaw, Poland from February 6 to April 4, 1989. The government initiated the discussion with the banned trade union Solidarność and other opposition groups in an attempt to defuse growing social unrest. Following the factory strikes of the early 1980s and the subsequent formation of the (then still underground) Solidarity movement under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa the political situation in Poland started relaxing somewhat. Despite an attempt by the government to crack down on the anti-Communist sentiments, the movement had gained too much momentum and it became impossible to hold off change anymore. In addition there was fear of a social explosion due to economic malaise and runaway inflation that had depressed Polish living standards and deepened public anger and frustration. By 1988 the authorities began serious talks with the opposition.

In September 1988 a secret meeting was held which included amongst others the opposition leader Lech Wałęsa and Minister of Internal Affairs Czesław Kiszczak. They agreed on holding the so-called *Round Table* talks in the near future to plan out the course of action to be undertaken in the country. The *Round Table* talks began on February 6th 1989. They included the *solidarity opposition faction* and the *coalition government faction*. The talks were held in the Council of Ministers Office. The meetings were co-chaired by Lech Wałęsa and Czesław Kiszczak.

The Polish Communists, led by General Jaruzelski, hoped to co-opt prominent opposition leaders into the ruling group without making major changes in the political power structure. In reality, the talks radically altered the shape of the Polish government and society. The events in Poland precipitated and gave momentum to the fall of the entire Communist bloc.

From: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish\\_Round\\_Table\\_Agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_Round_Table_Agreement)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Polish Catering

If you're planning a party wouldn't you like to surprise your guests with some Polish meals? It's only a phone call away. A wide assortment of Polish foods for every occasion, you choose-we prepare. Contact: Anna (512) 692 7684, cell 732-407-5485, Barbara (908) 377 6528, email: [polishcatering@yahoo.com](mailto:polishcatering@yahoo.com)

**Ideas? Suggestions? Praise?** Let us hear from you! Please contact Beata Gmurowska at [bmghomes@yahoo.com](mailto:bmghomes@yahoo.com) or go to <http://www.austinpolsishsociety.org/>