THREE MONTHS REPORT

Dear Friends,

To begin with, by means of explanation and excuse, I am really sorry because if you wanted to find out what’s going on in PAC, and opened our web site (www.pacnorcal.org) to find only very scarce information, a few posts-not-so-much up today, and even empty spaces despite promising headings, that’s too bad. For that I have to apologize; it is inexcusable that it took so long to do something about it, but this will change now. We are working on finding a new formula for communication with the outside world, that means – you, and we count on your help, suggestions and response in this matter.

Below, there is a report about what happened and has been done so far.

In March, at the annual meeting of the Polish American Congress, Northern California Division, a new Executive Council was elected.

The Executive Council consists now of:

Andrzej Prokopczuk, President; Caria Tomczykowska, 1st V-President; Leopold Wierzbicki, 2nd V-President; Zofia Zakrzewski, Treasurer; Krystyna Wrona, Secretary; National Directors: Edmund Lewandowski, Marie Lewandowski.

Hence, on behalf of the new Council, I wish to extend my warmest greetings to everybody.

Our first task was to take part in the Berkeley International House Spring Festival as one of the official sponsors of “Poland as Country-of-Focus”. And Poland was in the focus, indeed. We, with 11 other organizations and groups, did our best to spread information about Polish history, culture and its present day. Most effective were Lowiczanie, of course, and they hardly needed to say a word.

On May 3rd, at San Francisco City Hall, we took part in a Polish Flag raising ceremony, hosted by the Mayor’s Office of Protocol, and attended by several government and city officials, and Polish American community leaders, as well as quests from Poland.

A great event for all of us was the celebration of 221 anniversary of the Polish Constitution of May 3rd held on May 5th, as usually at the Music Concourse in the Golden Gate Park. It was co-hosted by the Polish American Congress, with Mr. Edward Martinek as a presenter, and Lowiczanie Polish Folk Ensemble, led by Mary Kay Stuvland and Peter Kordis . The ceremony was dignified by a presentation of Poland’s high awards, with which the President of Poland have honored distinguished activists in our Polonia community. A singular splendor was added by the fact that the awards were presented by Consul General of the Republic of Poland, the Honorable Joanna Kozinska-Frybes, who will soon end her mission in the United States.

It was a great opportunity to enjoy magnificent classic Polish music executed expertly by the Golden Gate Park Band directed by Conductor Michael Wirgler, Polish folk music and songs presented with youthful passion and energy by Lowiczanie , and to admire, in particular, their gorgeous costumes, ravishing choreography, spectacular dancing, as well as our lovely charming kids from schools in Walnut Creek and Union City; altogether a wonderful display of a Polish Spirit. It was followed by a very friendly get-together for all at the nearby café. I only hope that most of you were there with us when the sun shone all day. And, if by any chance not – remember, next year there will be May 3rd, too, and make sure that we all will meet there again.

Now, I want to share with you **what is ahead of us, and this is really of the greatest importance**. It concerns everybody – members, non-members (perhaps future members), close friends of yours along with the casual ones, and maybe even strangers, whom you hardly know but you meet in your neighborhoods and work places. This is a problem of **including Poland in the Visa Waiver Program**. It has been going on for about ten years by now, and it really is the time to resolve it, finally.

**There is a very good chance it will be voted for** as being a part of S.744 (“Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act”). Now, voted favorably by the three Senate Committees, it is on its way to the Senate floor. This poses a very serious task for all of us: we have **to pressure our both California senators, Diana Feinstein and Barbara Boxer**, to support the piece of legislation in question all the way through the legislative quagmire. As you know, so far both of them were not very much supportive, to the contrary, rather. But if you believe in democracy, and democracy is at its best in this country, however sometimes imperfect, then you know very well that what counts in democracy is – a number of votes for or against. Yes, money is all important, but in this case, as much important as it talks through votes. We don’t have money, so we have to secure votes in another way - votes of our senators by presenting them with a significant number of our potential votes which are important to them as step stones on their way to the Chamber of Senate. **And numbers do matter**. **We must flood their offices with telephone calls and letters**, so they would know that very significant numbers of voters are in favor, and there is no way out.

**Please, do your best, do not hesitate, and do not procrastinate** – yes, we all know the power of these two last words. So act immediately. Below you will find the addresses and a sample of a short letter which states what is needed, as prepared by Prof. Anthony Bajdek, V-President of the National Executive Council of the Polish American Congress. We can trust him – by now a retired historian from the University of Boston. He spent a decade leading this campaign, and if not successfully, it was not his fault, some other forces were prevailing. But now is our time, and much, if not all, **will depend on our activity, vigor and performance.**

**PLEASE, DO YOUR BEST! *W jednosci sila, czyli w liczbach****!*

Call or write as soon as possible, to:

**Senator Diane Feinstein**, 331 Hart Senate Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; ph. 202-224-3841

**Senator Barbara Boxer**, 112 Hart Senate Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; ph. 202-224-3553

This might be a useful sample (or use a ready form enclosed - see under “News”):

***“As one of my two United States Senators, it is important that you vote favorably for passage of S.744 that will enable Poland, a loyal friend and ally of the United States, to be admitted to our nation’s Visa Waiver Program. Your Polish American voting constituents will welcome and remember your support. Thank you.”***

Contact both of your senators and identify yourself by name and address. MOST IMPORTANT! Calling at their Washington, DC phone numbers is more compelling and effective because your calls will be recorded on a daily basis in their Capitol Hill offices directly, no local office being involved. The staff on Capitol Hill should be impressed with a flood of phone calls/letters on a frequent daily basis.

**I do strongly believe that once again we are joining our forces, following this call for action.**

**And only thanks to your action we will have a chance to prevail!**

And, last but not least. Your support, being a member, makes us an organization, makes it possible to pursue our aims, which, I believe, you recognize as your own. It makes PAC a leader in promoting the interests of Polonia on a national scale. Without you we are diminished in many ways.

Based on the date of your last renewal, your membership should be considered “lapsed”. But we don’t think of you as a former member or a past supporter. It’s just that we have to watch our revenue and fundraise very carefully to meet our goals. We can’t come short when it’s time to pay for various projects, support our Polonia school children in their activities or youth in education , support other Polish organizations in need, and, of course, we need money for daily operations like mailing, office supplies, internet and web site costs.

Yes, we need your money, but it’s your participation what matters. Taking action now is what’s important. Your response now will reinstate your membership and secure our ability to function to your and our satisfaction. The annual dues now are $50; sorry, but this is in the hands of the National Office, and their finances are in a very poor shape.

Of course, if you have already paid, please disregard any mentioning of the dues.

Thank you, and our best greetings to you!

*Andrzej Prokopczuk, President*

Please, revisit our web site [www.pacnorcal.org](http://www.pacnorcal.org) soon.