

Report of Honorary Consul for San Francisco for 2010



Dear Friends of the Sister Cities,

We would like to update you on the activities and plans of the Sister City Association and invite you to join as a member at the link to our new website at the bottom of this message. Please help us by joining today!

Administration of the non-profit organization, fundraising, outreach and community relations

Like many in the community, we are trying to do a lot with limited time and money. Unlike other cities, San Francisco provides no funding or city structure to the Sister City work. We started from scratch one year ago with nothing, so we believe we have made good progress.

The organization is now a non-profit California corporation. We have established bylaws and corporate documents, and applications have been filed to obtain state and federal tax exempt status. We filed both of these applications in early March. The state of California has approved our application. The IRS is in the final stages of reviewing our application, and we expect approval in the early part of 2011.

We are very proud to announce that we have a wonderful new web site at www.SFKrakow.org.

With the help of John Henry Fullen and Ed Baker, we have created a sister city website for communication with the committee members and the community at large. It will also serve as a tool for membership activities and for fundraising. The web site will inform members of future events, circulate photos from recent events and allow committees to post their own web pages and notices of their activities.

Using this new web site, we are now inviting the community to become members of our non-profit organization formally. This will be a nonvoting membership that entitles one to various benefits, including advance notice and special invitations to organization activities, among others. This is the first of upcoming efforts to invite people in the community to join. We are hoping to have your help to get the word out.

Recent Events and Plans for 2011

Here is a quick summary of some of the recent events we have helped organize and some plans for 2011:

Reception for Minister Balcerowicz

In October, we organized a reception for Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, one of the most historic figures in recent Polish history. Chairperson of the Commercial Committee Caroline Brownstone hosted the event, and Caria Tomczykowska, Shana Penn and Christopher helped organize it. Participants were able to meet and converse with Minister Balcerowicz in a very intimate setting, and it's fair to say a wonderful evening was had by all.

Poland-Silicon Valley Technology Symposium

Between December 4-7, we helped organize a Silicon Valley-Poland Technology Symposium at Stanford, put together by our Advanced Technology Committee along with US-Polish Trade Council and the Polish American Engineers Club. We had many VIPs in attendance including:

- Mr. Kazimierz Bujakowski, deputy mayor of Kraków and representatives of the Kraków Strategy and Development Department
- Mr. Olgierd Dziekonski, Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the President of Poland
- Mr. Dariusz Bogdan, Deputy Minister of Economy, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland
- Mrs. Joanna Kozińska-Frybes, Consul General of the Republic of Poland
- Sławomir Kopec, President of the Kraków Technology Park: regional officials from Poland, Presidents and representatives of Polish Technical Universities, representatives of technology parks and incubators in Poland, leaders of Polish and US businesses
- San Francisco Mayor's Commercial and Trade Representative Mark Chandler

Visit of the Delegation of Kraków Vice Mayor in December

Deputy Mayor Bujakowski, President Kopec, and their staff officials were guests of the Mayor at his annual Christmas Party at the City Hall. It was a magnificent event, with music, food, entertainment and a very impressive list of consular and public officials from San Francisco attending. Among others, our guests were able to meet and speak to former Secretary of State George Shultz, who was such a strong advocate for Poland during the Reagan Administration. (Secretary Shultz is on our Sister City Advisory Committee.)

Mayor Gavin Newsom and his chief of staff, Polish American Steve Kawa, also held a separate reception for the Vice Mayor and his staff on December 3rd in San Francisco City Hall in their honor. Mayor Newsom was there, and he gave our guests a private tour of his offices. At that time, they met with most of the Committee Chairs for the Sister Cities Association. The groups was also guided on a private tour of the City by Caria Tomczykowska, as well as one organized for symposium participants on a separate day.

First Anniversary of the Signing of the Sister City Agreement in Kraków

This summer we celebrated the First Anniversary of the Signing of the Sister City Agreement in Kraków. This was in conjunction with the 20th anniversary celebration of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, the largest festival of its kind in the world, spanning eight days and nights of music, art, theater, dance, lectures, workshops and seminars. Participants from the Sister City organization included Tad Taube, Koret CEO Jeffrey Farber, Caria Tomczykowska, Mary Kay Stuvland, and Bill Adasiewicz, among others. There were many other dignitaries from San Francisco including a representative of the Mayor Newsom's office.

Among the events organized during this celebration was a reception with U.S. Secretary of State Clinton, at Kraków's new Oskar Schindler Museum.

There was also a gala banquet organized with the City of Kraków, attended by the Mayor of Kraków, the Vice Mayor, the Consul General of the United States Consulate in Kraków, and many other dignitaries.

Chopin Concert

Caria Tomczykowska, Chair of our Sister City Tourism Committee and President of the Polish Arts and Culture Foundation, organized a Piano Concert and Reception, celebrating the 200th Birthday of Fryderyk Chopin on December 12, 2010 at the residence of the Consul General of France in San Francisco. The event was a joint project with of the French and Polish communities, to honor the music of the composer who belonged to both.

Film Premieres

In October, we sponsored a premiere showing of a film about the 19th century Polish-American actress Helena Modjeska. Born in Kraków, Poland, Modjeska debuted as an actress in San Francisco in 1877 at the California Theater on Bush Street – so it was a perfect film for our Sister City project. The event (which included a wine and cheese reception and roundtable discussion with the filmmakers) was organized by the hard work of Cultural Committee member Maureen Mroczek Morris, who did a superb job putting it all together.

With the help of the Taube Foundation and Maureen, we also sponsored and debuted the amazing film by Mary Skinner about Irena Sendler at the Jewish Community Center, and then later at the Polish Club. The Taube Foundation has made it possible for this remarkable film to be broadcast nationwide on Public Broadcasting Stations (PBS).

Art and Culture Committee Activities

Our Arts and Culture Committee Chairs, David Katznelson and Wiesław Pogorzelski, have been working on a number of projects:

- The American Conservatory Theatre (ACT, assisted by the Polish Cultural Institute in NY, will do a teacher exchange of their teachers and the Kraków Drama Academy in June 2011. ACT staff are now in Kraków attending the International Theater Festival, with the help of the PCI. ACT will return in the spring, at the invitation of the PCI, to attend the Warsaw International Theater Festival and also visit Kraków to continue to build their relationship with the Kraków Drama Academy.
- There will be a cross-pollination of culture in 2011 honoring Czesław Miłosz's life and poetry. Robert Hass, former American Poet Laureate and close friend and translator of Miłosz, is the key person. A venue and date will be announced soon.
- December 4, 2010-March 27, 2011 the Legion of Honor in SF will host an exhibit of the fine art works of Artur Szyk, Jewish-Polish artist and illustrator, who immigrated to the US during WWII.
- The Kitchen Sisters who have won a Peabody award on NPR radio want to make a series of short programs to introduce the cities of San Francisco and Kraków.
- Warren Hellman, who organizes the annual Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival at Golden Gate Park and has a bluegrass band, will be participating at next summer's Kraków Jewish Culture Festival and will be part of our PR and cultural exchange.

Traditional Arts

Under the leadership of Mary Kay Stuvland, we held the annual Christmas Choral Concert December 9 at the Berkeley Hillside Club, this year entitled "Christmas in Kraków: Slavic Choral Concert".

The event had a Kraków theme with a traditional Christmas procession. It featured new carol compositions composed in honor of Kraków. There was a focus on the Slavic tradition, and over 75 Central and East European musicians were brought together to participate in the event. In addition to traditional Christmas songs, three Chanukah songs from Central/Eastern Europe were performed.

The Traditional Arts Committee is also planning a project to take 24 dancers to perform in Kraków next summer, for a month, to represent San Francisco. More on that later.

Membership

As mentioned above, we are now inviting you and others in the community to become members of our organization formally. Membership will allow you various benefits, including advance notice and invitations to organization activities, special discounts on organization events, the opportunity to meet VIPs from Poland, and receipt of our organization newsletter.

The membership fees are modest. By joining our organization formally, this will provide important financial support to our organization, and help our efforts to make more San Franciscans and Americans aware of the beauty and culture of Kraków and Poland, and also share our City with our special friends abroad.

Below is a link to the website where you can join as a Member. Please join or make a donation today!

Link to Membership Page

If you prefer, you can use the same page to make donations or simply send a check to the address below.

We all hope you all will join and support this special relationship between two cities we love, Kraków and San Francisco.

All the best,

Tad Taube and Christopher Kerosky

Co-Chairs of the SF-Kraków Sister Cities Association

And Co-Honorary Consuls, Republic of Poland

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