



POLONUS

POLISH PHILATELIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER #14 Winter 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Polonus Members,

Life, death, and philately. My good friend, John Hotchner, recently wrote an article reflecting on the loss of his wife of 53 years, four years ago. His thoughts prompted me to reflect on my life now. Please bear with me.

It has been a year and a half since my dear wife of 53 years, Jean, passed away. For six years, she had been declining physically. During this time, I was her caretaker, and while this was never a 24/7 task, it was the primary focus of my daily routine. During these six years, one physical problem compounded another. Yet, even as Jean's physical health deteriorated, she continued to enjoy her life, balancing remarkable courage and tranquil acceptance. The staff at both the hospital and the hospice remarked on how at peace she was. Finally, on the beautiful, warm summer evening of July 30, 2024, her tired heart could no longer support her, and she quietly slipped into eternity.

Why do I tell you this? I have learned there are many, even in our philatelic community, who have had a similar experience and have had to cope with the loss of a spouse and the unavoidable grief that comes with this loss. When we take our wedding vows, we don't pay much attention to the "Till death do us part".

The loss of a spouse leaves a big, empty space within us. While understanding this, we also have to create a new reality in which this loss will always be part of it. Here is where my friend John's sage advice comes in. He says there are three "Fs" to get us through this: "Family, Friends, and Philately (lol!)."

I have two children who make sure Dad takes his medicine, eats properly, and does his exercises. My friends make sure I do not feel left out because I am alone and not part of a couple. I admit, there are times that I just want to be left alone, but I am reminded that Jean was such a strong supporter of my philatelic endeavors. Yes, I kind of resented when Ron, Andrew, and Mark hounded me to get something for the Newsletter or Bulletin, or when my commitment to the BOSTON2026 Advisory Committee called for yet another Zoom meeting. But these were the prompts I needed, and continue to need, to give me a renewed meaning and purpose for my new reality.

Yes, I can honestly tell you, this holiday season was difficult. But I am determined to get back into judging, exhibiting, and philatelic research and writing. What would I do if I did not have philately in my life? Not a week goes by that I don't get a call or email from someone here or from another part of the world with a friendly philatelic note or question.

At 85, I look forward to being part of this adventure until I reach 100. Then I can retire. Jean's support of the philatelic part of my life is a lasting gift she has given me.

-- Jim

Dr. James Mazepa, RDP
COB Polonus Polish Philatelic Society

A Valentine Card to Poland?

Well, not really a Valentine card, the sentiment is the same. The card was sent from New York, February 19, 1913, to Sosnowiec, Russian Poland. The sender sends best wishes from New York and asks if they have seen Father lately. The card was postmarked as received February 19, 1913. The same day it was sent! How could this be? In the West, we use the Gregorian calendar, and in Russia, they use the Julian calendar, which is 7 days behind the Gregorian calendar. An interesting historical artifact.



New Issue highlight – New Issue highlight – PZF Celebrates its 75th Anniversary

In September 2025, the Polish Post honored the 75th anniversary of our sister society in Poland, Polskiego Związku Filatelistów (Polish Philatelic Association) with a commemorative stamp issue and FDC. Polonus and PZF have a long and collaborative relationship with many members who are members of both societies.



The stamp celebrates the achievements of the oldest philatelic organization in Poland and expresses the collector's passion, tradition and contribution of PZF to the development of culture and philatelic education.

The stamp presents the badge of the Honorary Member of the Polish Philatelic Association – a gold, surrounded by a laurel wreath, with a characteristic symbol of the Union placed centrally. In the background, a magnifying glass symbolizing the inquisitiveness and precision of philatelists.

Also issued was a souvenir sheet in October 2025 marking the 23rd Congress of the PZF, held in Warlity Wielkie (Ostróda commune). The sheet features a picturesque landscape of the area – with a view of the lake along with a magnifying glass. On the souvenir sheet is the wax seal of the PZF along with their logo.



A fantastic Poland-India connection....

The year was 1942. The ship drifted in the Arabian Sea, like a floating coffin. There were 740 Polish children on board. Orphans. Survivors of Soviet labor camps, where their parents had died of the flu or starvation. They had escaped through Iran, but a more terrible punishment awaited them. No one would accept them.

The British Empire—the most powerful power of its time—refused entry to port after port along the Indian coast."It's not our responsibility. Sail away." Almost finished with food. No medicine. Time was running out.

Twelve-year-old Maria held her six-year-old brother's hand. She had promised her dying mother to protect him. But how do you protect someone when the whole world turns on them? And then news came to the small palace in Gujarat.

The ruler was Jam Sahib Digvijay Singhji, Maharaja of Navanagar. In the royal system, he was just a minor prince. The British controlled the ports, trade, and army. He had every reason to obey and remain silent. When his advisors told him that 740 children were stranded at sea after the British refused to take them to any port in India, he asked one question: "How many children are there?" "Seven hundred and forty, Your Majesty."

He paused and calmly said "The British may control my ports. But they do not control my conscience. These children are docked at Navanagarh."

The advisors warned him: "If you challenge the British—" "So I will stop." He sent a message to the ship: You are welcome here. When British officials protested, the Emperor remained firm. "If the strong refuse to save the children," he said. "I, the weak, will do what you cannot."

In August 1942, the ship struggled to enter Navanagara harbor under the blazing summer sun. The children walked like ghosts—exhausted, blank-eyed, many too weak to walk. They had learned to hope for good. Hope had turned dangerous. The Maharaja was waiting for them on the dock. Dressed simply in white, he knelt down to be at their eye level. Through interpreters, he spoke words they had not heard since their parents died. "You are no longer orphans. You are my children now. I am your Bapu—your father."



Maria felt her brother's handshake. After months of rejection, these words seemed surreal.

But he was serious. He didn't build a refugee camp. He built a home. In Balachadi, he created something amazing—a little Poland in India. Polish teachers who understand trauma. Polish food flavored with memory. Polish songs in an Indian garden. A Christmas tree under a tropical sky.

"Suffering tries to erase you," he said. "But your language, culture, and traditions are sacred. Let's keep them here." Children who were told they had no place in the world finally found a home.

They laughed again. They played again. They returned to school. Maria watched her brother chase a peacock in the palace garden, and her body remembered again what safety meant.

The Emperor used to visit them often. He remembered names. He celebrated birthdays. He watched high school plays. He comforted children crying for parents who would never return. He paid for doctors, teachers, clothing, and food—from his own wealth. For four years, while the world was torn by war, 740 children lived not as refugees, but as a family. When the war ended and it was time to leave, many wept. Balachadi became the only home they had ever truly known.

These children have grown and moved around the world—becoming doctors, teachers, engineers, parents, grandparents. And they have never forgotten. Warsaw's Good Emperor Square appeared in Poland. Schools bear his name. He was awarded Poland's highest honor. But the original monument wasn't made of stone. It cost 740 lives. Today, at 80 years old, they still gather. They tell their grandchildren about an Indian king who refused to turn compassion into political calculation.

In 1942, when kingdoms closed their doors, one man—without obligation and with every reason to remain silent—looked at the suffering and said: "They are my children now."

And so the world changed—silently, forever, and irrevocably.

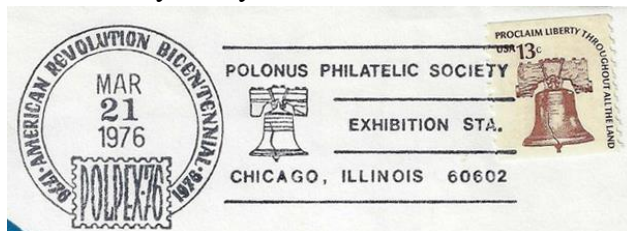
Rogues of Polish Philately

On December 5, 1918, the Lublin Post Offices overprinted three values of the Karlfond's Field Post issue into Polish stamps. These are known as the First Lublin Issue. The overprinted values corresponded to the current Austrian rates that were still in effect: 10 Heller for postal cards, 20 Heller letter rate, and 45 Heller for letter rate plus registration. These rates were in effect until December 16, 1918. Unlike the Second Lublin Issue, no fractionals (bisects or quadrisects) of the First Lublin Issue are known. An enterprising person bisected the three First Lublin Issues, applied a left over Lublin registry label, and dubious dispatch and arrival postmarks, thus creating values that should not exist.



POLPEX 1976 Honors the US Bicentennial

Polonus celebrated the American Revolution Bicentennial in 1976 with the largest exhibition in its then 36 year history. The show was held at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago, March 19-21 and attracted over 2000 visitors. The 300 frames of stamps, covers, historical documents, coins and medals represented one of the largest gatherings of Polish material seen in this country. In addition were other quality exhibits of U.S. and foreign material. Featured were such items as two letters sent by the great Polish patriot, General Thaddeus Kosciuszko while he served in the American Revolutionary Army stationed at West Point.



Winning with the Grand Award was our own Dr. James Mazepa for his exhibit Russian

Administration of Poland to 1870. Per all reports, POLPEX 1976 was a success with crowds exceeding expectations and many

members socializing at the annual beeba! As always Polonus issued commemorative souvenir sheet. In two separate colors, the sheet was designed by Leon Kawecki of California and featured the Polish Patriots Kosciuszko and Pulaski as well as George Washington. The US Postal Service was also hand at the show and applied a special cancel celebrating the show.

Polish Forces. Nairobi to Bombay 1944 Submitted by Steve Bonowski



Here we have a World War II cover that may be a bit uncommon as Polish government-in-exile covers go. This cover never got close to either the UK itself or to anywhere else in Europe. The cover was sent by the Polish Red Cross for East Africa to a Polish government contact in Bombay (now Mumbai), using K.U.T. stamps.

The cover went via registered airmail and also went through the censor process. The back has an additional Nairobi cancel and also two Bombay receiver cancellations.

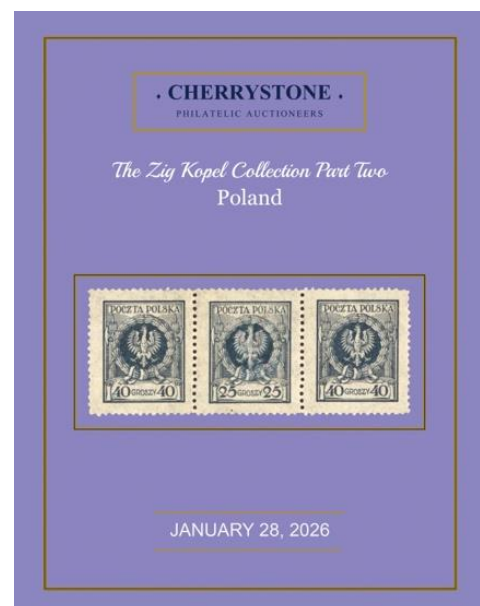
As a collector both of Poland and of British East Africa, a question posed by this cover is which collection will it go with? I will likely lean towards placing it in the East Africa collection due to the origin and to the use of colonial stamps. However, the cover will certainly merit a link in the Poland collection, perhaps also with a photocopy of it.

Cherrystone to offer the Zig Kopel Collection of Poland, Part 2

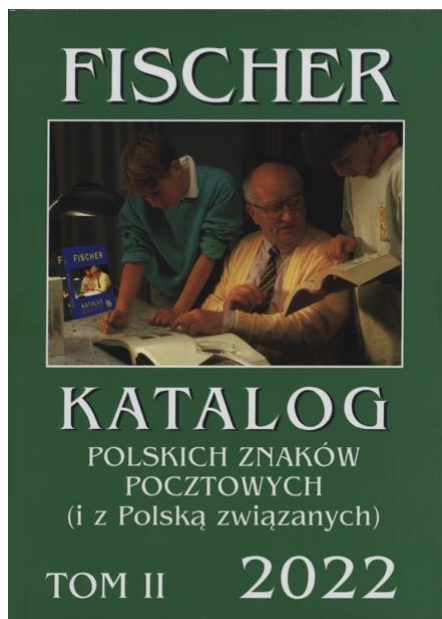
On January 28, 2026, Cherrystone will offer part 2 of Zygmunt (“Zig”) Kopel’s tremendous collection of Poland. Kopel was a noted Polish collector from the UK who passed away in 2024. Part 1 of the auction held in October was very successful with the majority of the rarities yielding prices above the initial estimates. From Cherrystone ...

”The sale contains rarities of pre-WWII Polish philately, highlighted by used and unused se-tenants of 25gr Color Error, continuing with Proofs, Essays and varieties, including early post-Liberation period, with further selections of Flight and Zeppelin covers, as well as Locals, Zaolzie and more.”

Visit www.cherrystone.com for more information on this spectacular auction of rarely seen Polish material which includes over 400 lots. Online absentee bidding is open and many lots have bids above the estimates!



For Sale – 2022 Fischer Volume 2



With thanks to our past-president Hank Bieniecki, we are offering a limited quantity of the 2022 Fischer Catalog, Volume 2. This 756-page full-color catalog was expanded by over 150 pages. Added are descriptions and values for emissions previously unlisted or just notated also illustrations, descriptions, and values for previously unlisted or notated key early postal history.

The original price was \$90 and we are offering these for \$50 (including postage and handling within the US) with all proceeds supporting Polonus! If you are interested please send an email to info@polonus.org to secure a copy. Remittance can be sent via paypal to info@polonus.org. or may also send a check payable to Polonus, c/o Andrew Urushima, 1510 Los Altos Dr. Burlingame, CA 94010.

This is a great opportunity to get a copy of this catalog at a discounted price while supporting Polonus!

Polonus News.....



BOSTON 2026 fast approaching!

Boston 2026 World Expo will take place on May 23-30, 2026, at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. This show is only the twelfth international philatelic exhibition to be held in the United States. There will be an FIP competitive exhibition of approximately 3,500 frames, plus other special/court of honor exhibits, as well as a large FIP literature competition and of course a large dealer bourse.

Polonus will be having our annual meeting in conjunction with the show (time TBD) so please plan on attending. If you are planning on exhibiting, the deadline to submit applications were extended to October 31, 2025. Visit their website at Boston2026.org for more information on this exciting show that only happens in the US every 10 years!

If you are planning on going, please make your travel reservations soon. Reservations can be made with discounted prices by making reservations through the Boston 2026 web site link to onPeak, the show's contracted housing management firm. These will be found on the Boston2026.org hotel page.

Polonus members excel in Sarasota....

Our members in the Sarasota area (and there a lot of them in Florida) excelled at the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition. Ron Klimley's exhibit "The Polish Hyperinflation of 1923-24" earned a large gold medal while James Mazepa's one frame exhibit, "Poland: Lublin Postal Administration Provisional Postal Cards December 1918 – 1919" also earned a large gold. Ron also won a Large Gold for his article "The 1966 Polish Millennium Stamp". Each of these

exhibits also won special prizes which will list in our next Bulletin. Our past-president, Dr. Edwin Andrews was the Chief Judge of jury.

Free membership to a fellow collector!

Polonus is offering a FREE 6-month promotional membership for new members referred by a member! With the membership, individuals will receive 2 Bulletins (digital or print), access to members only content on the website, receive our newsletters as well as all other Polonus member benefits. If you would like to refer a member, please send an email to info@polonus.org with their name, address and email address and we will take it from there. Thank you to Juliana Fink for nominating a new member.

Polonus Bulletin

If you are a print member, please let us know at info@polonus.org if you did not receive this issue. It was sent out in mid-September so it should have been in your mailbox by the end of October at the latest. A few members have noted that there were USPS delays or their issue was not received.

For Sale

Please visit the Polonus store on eBay to see our latest offerings. The store has recently received several donations which have replenished our inventory of POLPEX items. We now have a solid inventory for just about every year, except 1949. Most years are priced at \$5.00 for both the pamphlets and souvenir sheets! Remember Polonus members receive 10% off! Use coupon code POLONUSMEMBER.

Future Newsletters

As always, if you have something to contribute to the newsletter or the *Bulletin*, feel free to email me at jmazepa@comcast.net or Andrew Urushima at aurushima@yahoo.com. In the meantime, enjoy this Newsletter!

2026 Renewals

If you haven't renewed your 2026 membership, please click <https://polonus.org/paypal-portal/> to renew. We appreciate your support!