



# Gen Dobry!

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\*\*\* WELCOME! \*\*\*

to the latest issue of *Gen Dobry!*, the e-zine of PolishRoots®. If you missed previous issues, you can find them here:

<<http://polishroots.org/GenDobry/tabid/60/Default.aspx>>

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\*\*\* “HEY, BUDDY, WANNA BUY A COAT OF ARMS, CHEAP?” \*\*\*

by Fred Hoffman <[wfh@langline.com](mailto:wfh@langline.com)>

A pleasant change in recent years is that I hear far less about heraldry and coats of arms than I used to. With the explosive growth in records available to researchers, more and more people are coming to a stark realization: that relatively few wealthy nobles decided to give up what they had in Poland and emigrate to America. Why the hell would they? For the most part, we are descendants of those who left because they had nothing to hope for at home.

I hadn't really thought much about how things have changed in this regard till I read a recent entry in Dick Eastman's genealogy blog:

<<https://blog.eogn.com/2016/06/14/pssst-want-to-buy-your-familys-coat-of-arms/>>

It was a pleasure to read as Eastman illustrated the false assumptions underlying those who try to scam people with fake coats of arms. He pointed out that there were rules to heraldry, and those very rules make the whole premise of the coat-of-arms bucket shops untenable.

Before I go further, I should explain that Eastman's article deals with western European heraldry, from which Polish heraldry differed in many respects. I don't have room to go into all that here; I'll just say some knowledgeable people prefer to translate Polish *herb* not as “coat of arms” but as “clan sign,” precisely because of these differences. There were Polish arms used by one family and one family only, the so-called *herb własny*. Others were used by large clans of dozens of unrelated families (Dąbrowa, Jastrzębiec, Nałęcz, and so on). The reason I liked Eastman's article is because he stressed there were rules to these heraldic systems, even if the rules varied. Coat of arms or *herb*, whatever you called it, only small percentages of the population had one.

The thing is, I remember—back when I first started getting interested in Polish genealogy, in the mid 1980s—it seemed like half the people asking for information were sure their ancestors were nobles or even kings. I remember one day, a good friend of mine, whose name does not need to be mentioned, faxed me a copy of an old record for one of his ancestors. He phoned and said, “That second word in line four, does that mean he was noble?” I really hated to tell him the truth: “No, it means he was illegitimate.” I liked and respected this man a lot, and hated to dash his hopes. He had always said he didn't care whether his ancestors were noble; but he sure sounded hopeful that he'd found noble ancestry. Telling people the truth can hurt....

As more and more records can be searched easily, most people are recognizing the truth: their ancestors were almost certainly peasants. They didn't live in big cities or in castles; they lived in villages. If they did live near a castle, they probably shoveled you-know-what in the stables.

Now, I will grant, there is a common-sense reason to hope some of your ancestors were noble. Records on nobles tend to go back further and be more complete. Nobles were the ones who owned property, so keeping records on them was essential. They were the ones who bought and sold estates, and sued each other; old court records are full of their legal battles.

True, we are discovering that records dealing with peasants are more common than historians used to think, half a century ago. I remember translating chapters from the first highly regarded book on Polish genealogy, *Genealogia* by Włodzimierz Dworzaczek, a respected historian. He wrote, “As for peasants ... only rarely can their genealogy be traced back further than the beginning of the 19th century on the basis of registry records.” He based that opinion on the extensive research he had done; and the records he had found dealt primarily with nobles.

(In fairness to Dworzaczek, I should quote additional remarks from the endnotes of this chapter of his book. “These remarks are based primarily on materials for Great Poland. In other areas there may be significant departures from these rules. Who knows whether stable and long-used forms of peasant surnames may not abound in those areas where peasant ownership of the land was widespread? One could be led to that conclusion by the example of Wałcz county, where there were a number of peasants who paid rent on land and where established forms of their surnames can be traced from the 16th century. This matter demands further research.”)

Since then, more and more parish registers and other sources have become accessible for research. We now know there is a lot more in the records about peasants than the experts thought back then. And yet, I believe any experienced researcher will agree: it’s a real boon when we find a given family has noble connections. It really improves the chances that surviving records will give you something solid to work with.

It seems as if I used to tell people all the time, “Don’t get your hopes up. Chances are, you’re not descended from nobility.” I get the impression that today, more and more researchers understand and accept that up front. I’m glad—I hate disappointing people.

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**\*\*\* LETTERS TO THE EDITOR \*\*\***

Subject: Participants needed for Immigration Study

*Editor*—Paul S. Valasek forwarded this note, which he received on 1 June and which he thought might be worth sharing in *Gen Dobry!* Please understand, we are just passing along information. We know nothing about this study other than what is said here. If you’re interested, you can contact the people named.

To whom it may concern:

I’m writing you as a research assistant for Pepperdine University’s Culture and Trauma Research Lab. Currently, we are seeking participants who are descendants of European immigrants who emigrated post World War II for an important psychological study on generations. Participation involves the completion of an online survey which will take about 15-20 minutes. Participants may be eligible if: they are 18 years of age or older and if their parent or grandparent emigrated from Germany, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia (formerly known as Czechoslovakia),

Austria, Hungary or Romania between 1945 -1952. This study will create a more robust understanding of the long-term impact of specific immigration factors. Participation in the study is voluntary and confidential. Participants will receive a \$10.00 Amazon or Starbucks gift card for the completion of the survey.

We would be very grateful for your assistance during the recruitment process. If you would be able to send out a news blast about our study, post information on your social media pages, or distribute our flyers, please let us know. Also, if this is something you would be interested in, we can send you the recruitment materials via mail or fax.

If you have any questions or would like more information on the study, please feel free to contact our principal investigator, Melissa Duguay, at (818) 971-9877. You can also reach her at <[Melissa.Duguay@pepperdine.edu](mailto:Melissa.Duguay@pepperdine.edu)> or contact me at <[mjsinger@pepperdine.edu](mailto:mjsinger@pepperdine.edu)>. Additionally, this study is being conducted under the auspices of Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis.

Thank you for your time and have a wonderful day!

Mia Singer

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**\*\*\* LATEST ISSUE OF *TATRZAŃSKI ORZEŁ*, *THE TATRA EAGLE* \*\*\***

We received notice that the latest issue of *Tatrzański Orzeł*, *The Tatra Eagle*, has been published. This issue is largely devoted to the music of the *górale*, the fascinating mountain folk of southern Poland. There is also a review in English of the 2014 book *Co słycać na Podhalu: Tradycja we współczesności*, by Maria Małanicz-Prybylska.

The publication is bilingual, and a yearly subscription costs \$20. For more information, write:

Tatra Eagle Press  
31 Madison Ave.  
Hasbrouck Heights NJ 07604

or e-mail the co-editors, Janina Gromada Kedroń or Tadeusz Gromada, at <[jkedron@gmail.com](mailto:jkedron@gmail.com)>  
or <[tgromada@mindspring.com](mailto:tgromada@mindspring.com)>.

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**\*\*\* AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT PERIODICALS \*\*\***

*Editor*—This is an ongoing feature, meant to inform you of articles published recently in newsletters and journals that may interest you.

***Avotaynu*, Spring 2016, Volume XXXII, No. 1. <<http://avotaynu.com/>>**

- Włocławek Area Books of Residents Online, Fay Bussgang
- Eight Unique Techniques for Genealogical Discoveries, Gilad
- Teaching Jewish Genealogy to Eleven- and Twelve-Year-Old Students, Robinn Magid
- Searching for Ashkenazic Surnames in Reference Books, Alexander Beider
- Scholarship and Education Are Focus of Lectures at Annual Conference in August, David Laskin
- Genetic Genealogy Tips, Marlis Glaser Humphrey
- Some Things That You Can Do on Archives.org Including the Wayback Machine, Edward David Luft
- How the Gogolinsky Family of Warsaw Became the Barney Family of St. Louis, Missouri, Martin Fischer
- A Guide to Indirect Evidence: How We Find It, How It Guides Our Research, and How It Helps Us Build a Case, Harold Henderson, CG
- Escape from the Shadows: The True Identity of the Man Who Discovered America, Joyce T. Freeman

***The Galitizaner*, March 2016, Volume 23, No. 1. <<http://geshergalicia.org/>>**

- Gesher Galicia Publishes Its 100th Cadastral Map [Rudnik on the San], Jay Osborn
- Map Corner: 1825 Cadastral Map of Obertyn, Jay Osborn
- Oil Boom and Bust, Galicia Style—Book Review: *The Jewish Oil Magnates of Galicia*, reviewed by Norman Ravvin
- Faces of Dynów, Nina Talbot
- Early Galician Population Surveys: Hidden Genealogical Gems, Andrew Zalewski
- Common Heritage and Responsibility: Commemorating Jewish History in Lviv, Volodymyr Beglov and Sofia Dyak
- DNA and Jewish Genealogy, Adam Brown

***The Galitizaner*, March 2016, Volume 23, No. 1. <<http://geshergalicia.org/>>**

- Partnership with POLIN Museum on Printed Cadastral Maps, Jay Osborn
- The Jewish Musicians of Lwów, Hanna Palmon
- Wolfgang Mozart's Son in Galicia, Daniel N. Leeson
- First in Galicia: Jewish Physicians. Part I: Barber-Surgeons and Doctor, Andrew Zalewski
- Reminiscences of a Galician Jew, Sergey R. Kravtsov
- Map Corner: Łańcut Cadastral Map 1849, Jay Osborn
- Lviv Transcription Project, Eric M. Bloch
- Life in Two Galician Towns in 1930s, Stephen Denker
- Update on Rohatyn Jewish Heritage, Marla Raucher Osborn

***East European Genealogist*, Spring 2016, Volume 24, No. 3. <<http://eegsociety.org/>>**

- House Numbers and House Names in the Austrian Empire Using Examples and Documents from Galicia, Brian J. Lenius

- Persistence, Helpful Fellow Genealogists, and Occasional Success, John Schwandt
- From the *Słownik geograficzny*: Narol and Narol Wieś, translated by William F. Hoffman

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**\*\*\* UPCOMING EVENTS \*\*\***

*Note: see also <<http://www.eogn.com/calendar>> for a large selection of upcoming events in the world of genealogy.*

**July 9, 2016**

**POLISH FESTIVAL SEATTLE 2016**

**Seattle Center • Armory & Mural Amphitheatre • 305 Harrison St. • Seattle, Washington**

*Zapraszamy!* Delicious Polish food, lively entertainment, marketplace, exhibits, workshops, kids' activities and more... Mark your calendar for July 9, 2016 and we'll see you there!

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**August 7 – 12, 2016**

**36TH IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY**

**Seattle Sheraton in Seattle, Washington**

The 36th annual IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held in Seattle, Washington, August 7–12, 2016. The focus for the 2016 conference is *The Wandering Jew*.

For more information, visit the website:

<<http://www.iajgs2016.org/>>

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**August 14, 2016**

**PGSA QUARTERLY MEETING**

**“POLISH IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA: WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW” —  
STEVE SZABADOS**

**Arlington Heights (NW) Memorial Library, 500 N. Dunton Ave., Arlington Hts., IL 60004  
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Steve Szabados** is a genealogy lecturer and author. He has traced his ancestors back to 1600s New England and 1730s in Poland, Germany, Bohemia and Slovenia. His goal is to share his passion for Family History and he has given numerous presentations to genealogical groups and libraries.

This event will be held as a Webinar. For more information as it becomes available, visit the PGSA Website <<http://pgsa.org/calendar/>>.

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**August 31 – September 3, 2016**

**THE FGS 2016 CONFERENCE  
TIME TRAVEL: CENTURIES OF MEMORIES  
A Conference for the Nation's Genealogists  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

FGS and local host the Illinois State Genealogical Society invite you to join genealogists and family historians from throughout the world for some innovative time traveling experiences in Springfield, IL! Learn from exceptional speakers, network with other researchers, stroll through a large exhibit hall filled to the brim with vendors, and take in the amazing sights and sounds of Illinois' capital city.

(The November 23, 2015 issue of *EOGN* included the announcement that hotel reservations are open for this event. For more information visit the FGS Website.)

<<http://www.fgsconference.org/>>

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**Saturday, September 24, 2016**

**PGSA GENEALOGICAL WORKSHOP – A PRIMER  
Taft High School, 6530 West Bryn Mawr Ave, Chicago, Illinois 60631  
10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

PGSA is presenting a unique opportunity for everyone—Polish or not, young or older, experienced or brand new—to study the fundamentals of genealogical research. This one-day event will allow those interested to gain insight into why genealogy has become one of the primary hobbies for many. It will also enable those who have been bitten by the “bug” to share what they know with others. This is a win/win event for everyone.

On the second page of the attachment please note that the Conference Chair, Margie LaCerra, is seeking Round Table Discussion Leaders. If you feel you have some expertise on a particular aspect of Genealogy don't hesitate to contact her and learn more on how you can participate.

More information will be provided in upcoming issues of *Rodziny*, in the *Genealogy Notebook*, and on PGSA's website:

<<http://pgsa.org/calendar/>>

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**October 9–19, 2016**

## POLISH ORIGINS TOUR OF GALICIA

PolishOrigins.com has been conducting tours to the former region of Galicia for four years, and the response has been extraordinary. This year, their September tour is already booked up, but they will conduct another tour in October. You can see the itinerary and learn more here:

<[http://polishorigins.com/document/galicia\\_tour](http://polishorigins.com/document/galicia_tour)>

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November 4–5, 2016

### **3RD ANNUAL NASHI PREDKY FALL CONFERENCE *RESEARCH ESSENTIALS: COMBINING THE BASICS WITH 21ST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY***

**Ukrainian Cultural Center**

**135 Davidson Ave. • Somerset, NJ 08873**

Online Registration: <<http://ukrhec.org/nashi-predky-conference>>

The **3rd Annual Nashi Predky Fall Conference - Research Essentials: Combining the Basics with 21st century Technology** - will be held at the Ukrainian Cultural Center, located at 135 Davidson Avenue in Somerset, NJ. The event features nationally known experts in Eastern European genealogy, and will span two days, including a Cyrillic handwriting workshop, opportunity for document translations, and nine lectures.

On Friday evening, November 4th, participants can register from a choice of three options: a Cyrillic handwriting workshop led by **Prof. Jonathan Shea, AG**; a presentation on DNA entitled “Which atDNA test is right for you?” by **Shellee Morehead, CG**; or an appointment for assistance with document translation(s). Space is limited for the Workshop (20 seats) and the Translation Desk (16 appointments).

The main day of the conference will be on Saturday, November 5th. Registration opens at 8am and a light continental breakfast will be available. The morning sessions start off with the presentation “I Found my Village! Now What?” by **Julie Szczepankiewicz** where she will suggest resources and strategies to help researchers find their ancestral village. “Now I Found It! What Does It Say?”, a linguistic overview by **Prof. Jonathan Shea, AG**, examines various phonetic and grammatical features of the languages encountered in Eastern European research and attendees will work through the translations of sample documents.

After a buffet luncheon featuring ethnic food, the afternoon sessions offer a dual-track option to participants.

**New to the conference in 2016!**

The Nashi Predky Family History Group is proud to offer a dual-track afternoon of presentations. For those wanting to strengthen their research skills, the Basics Track offers “**US Alien Registration Files**” by **Shellee Morehead, CG**; “**How to Locate Those Elusive Military Records for Ancestors Who Served in the Austro-Hungarian Army**” by **Carl Kotlarchik**; and “**Finding Uncle Frank: Confirming the Identity of a U.S. Soldier Buried Under the Wrong Name**” by **Julie Szczepankiewicz**.

The Technology Track features three presentations for those researchers wanting to add tools to their Genealogy Toolbox: “**Using Polish Language Websites for Genealogical Research in Galicia (Halychyna)**” by **Prof. Jonathan Shea, AG**; “**Genetic Genealogy (DNA) Tools**” by **Shellee Morehead, CG**; and “**UAGenealogy: Discovering Online Genealogy Resources**” by **Michelle Chubenko**.

Take advantage of Early Bird pricing and save \$10. Discount ends September 30th!

Please feel free to forward to anyone who might be interested.

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\* About the Family History Group at the Ukrainian Historical & Education Center \*

Family History Group programming is coordinated by Mike Buryk, Michelle Tucker Chubenko, and Justin Houser, with the help of the Center’s archivist Michael Andrec and museum director Natalia Honcharenko. The goal is to help promote genealogical research and create an interest in ancestry and heritage in the former areas of the Province of Galicia, Ruthenia, Sub-Carpathian Rus and Russian Empire guberniyas which became Ukraine SSR, including descendants of ethnic groups Boykos, German-Bohemian (Bohmisch), Hutsuls, Lemkos, Moravian, (Rusyn), and those of Jewish ancestry. The FHG holds two annual events which offer opportunities for researchers to get advice on preserving family records and learn about tracing their ancestry in both Ukrainian and Polish archives.

[From a note posted by Michelle Chubenko to various mailing lists.]

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**November 20, 2016**

**PGSA QUARTERLY MEETING**  
**“HOLY COW! WHERE ARE MY POLISH CHICAGO CATHOLICS NOW?” —**  
**TERESA STEINKAMP MCMILLIN, CG**  
**Algonquin Public Library (NW), 2600 Harnish Dr., Algonquin, IL 60102**  
**2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Teresa Steinkamp McMillin** is a Certified Genealogist who specializes in German-American and Midwest research, as well as reading German script. She has been interested in genealogy since she was a child and currently has many pleased clients. She presents quality genealogical lectures for local societies and national conferences.

This event will be held as a Webinar. For more information as it becomes available, visit the PGSA Website <<http://pgsa.org/calendar/>>.

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**July 28–29, 2017**

**2017 INTERNATIONAL GERMANIC GENEALOGY CONFERENCE  
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

This is expected to be a unique conference, organized through an international partnership of societies across the United States and Europe. Given how many people of Polish descent came from areas ruled by Germany from 1815 to 1918, this event may be worth your attention even if your ethnic identity is not primarily German.

For more developments, keep an eye on the website: <<http://www.ggsmn.org/>>.

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**\*\*\* MORE USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES \*\*\***

<[http://www.genoroots.com/eng/article\\_vro.php](http://www.genoroots.com/eng/article_vro.php)>

This link connects to an article by professional Polish researcher Aleksandra Kacprzak on Vital Records Offices (Urzędy Stanu Cywilnego, or USCs) in Poland. It first appeared in the Winter 2006 issue of *Pathways & Passages*, the journal of the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast. Obviously, in ten years, a lot can change; but this is still worth reading because of the insights it gives you on dealing with these offices—what you can and cannot find there, and how to go about obtaining it. Included are scans of short- and long-form extracts from records issued by these offices, so you have a better idea what you get for your money.

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<<http://www.shopfamilytree.com/trace-your-german-roots-online>>

Several periodicals, such as *Nu? What's New?*, have mentioned the recent publication *Trace Your German Roots Online*, by James M. Beidler. It is available as a paperback or an e-book; I ordered the e-book. I have not had a chance to give it a really close look yet. As I paged through it, however, I was impressed. I'm working on the German volume of the *In Their Words* series of translation guides, so German research has been on my mind constantly. Mr. Beidler's approach seems sound to me, and his knowledge of the sources admirable. I reserve judgment for later; but so far, I like it. My only fear: a book of this sort will go out-of-date quickly.

<<http://www.meyersgaz.org/>>

Valerie Warunek mentioned this site in a post to Facebook. It is an online, searchable version of the *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrslexikon*, a gazetteer of great value for people with roots in Germany or the German partition. The gazetteer has been online for some time, but this site is much easier to use. It is still developing; but even at this stage, it's well worth exploring. Between this and <<http://kartenmeister.com/>>, you can find a lot of info.

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<<https://www.facebook.com/SlavicEtymologies>>

Language lovers who are on Facebook might enjoy checking out this page, devoted to Slavic etymologies. Reading text in Russian and other Slavic languages may not be your idea of fun, but I find it interesting. And their cover image of ancient gods is interesting: Dazhbog, Perun, Svantovit, etc. Gimme that old-time religion...

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<<https://goo.gl/Vgp2sR>>

On the GaliciaPoland-Ukraine mailing list, Laurence Krupnak posted a long URL to a Google Books entry on Lemko language instruction in current Poland. I took the liberty of shortening it with Goo.gl, and I hope the above link will work. The book is *Revitalizing Minority Languages: New Speakers of Breton, Yiddish and Lemko*, by Michael Hornsby, published last year. Again, if you're not a language lover, it may not do much for you. But any book that can discuss revitalizing Breton, Yiddish, and Lemko is worth a look, in my opinion.

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<<http://metrocosm.com/animated-immigration-map/>>

Valerie Warunek posted this link to PGS-Michigan's Facebook page, but said she learned of it from Cyndi's List. It's an interactive map that illustrates immigration to the U.S. since 1820. Fascinating!

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<<http://www.many-roads.com/#>>

On the Polish Genius mailing list, John Nieurzyla posted this link to a family history site with valuable sources on Prussia—which, naturally, would include more than a few Poles.

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<<http://maps.geshergalicia.org/galicia/galicia-bukovina-statistical-1878/>>

On the GaliciaPoland-Ukraine mailing list, Laurence Krupnak posted a note about the addition of this map to Gesher Galicia. It's an 1878 map of Galicia and Bukovina, and it offers statistical details as well as administrative and communication geography. Zoom into whichever area you're interested in, and use the key at the bottom to explain what the symbols mean.

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<<http://thenews.pl/>>

There was a discussion on the Polish Genius mailing list about a good source of news

from Poland, since the American press does a fairly pathetic job of covering anything in Europe other than terrorist attacks. Several folks made good recommendations, but Raymond Sosnowski gave a particularly good one: “the English Language service of Polskie Radio ... (which also has four channels in Polish).” The above URL should take you there.

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<[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=uczmy+sie+polskiego](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=uczmy+sie+polskiego)>

Also on that mailing list, Benjamin Kman mentioned that back when we started trying to learn Polish, he had found a series of video cassettes at the local library, *Uczmy Się Polskiego*, particularly useful. Now the videos have been digitized and made available on YouTube. You can click on the above URL and it will give you the choice of various lessons. They were filmed back in the early 1990s, which may give recent visitors to Poland an insight on how things have changed. But the basics of the language have not changed; so you might want to give it a try. Also, Jo Ann Fitzgerald said *Uczmy Się Polskiego* gave no English words to learn from, and the dialogue moved too fast. She found a free Polish group on iTunes that worked better for her. I would think one of these choices might prove helpful for most folks. The iTunes URL is: <<https://itunes.apple.com/au/podcast/learn-polish-polishpod101.com/id381009140?mt=2>>.

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<<http://www.paf-ct.org/www/our-programs/polish-language-classes/>>

On the same subject, Dorena Wasik pointed out that the Polish American Foundation offers “Polish Language for adults in New Britain, Connecticut. They also offer a limited number of spots via Skype-real time so you can participate in the class live. If you are interested, you can contact me at <[dorena726@yahoo.com](mailto:dorena726@yahoo.com)>. We offer four levels of Polish. Classes begin again in September.” The URL above will give you a little info.

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