



PANS Eaglet

The official newsletter of the Polish-American Numismatic Society

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Editor: Mark Benvenuto, benvenma@udmercy.edu, 248-219-5430

P.O.Box 80515
Rochester, MI 48308-0515



The 20th Anniversary of The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity Polish Commemoratives.

By Steven Bieda

Poland has issued a number of commemorative coins honoring “The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity” or in Polish, *Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy*, the largest private nonprofit charity in Poland which is focused on raising funds for pediatric and geriatric care. The charity supports health care in Poland. It organizes the largest open-air music festival in Europe, *Pol’and’Rock* Festival.

The charity was founded in 1993 by Lidia Niedzwiedzka-Owsiaik, Bohdan Maruszewski, Piotr Burczyński and Jerzy Owsiaik, the latter who also came up with the name. Initially founded to protect the lives and health of children, it subsequently expanded its mission to address other health issues, including one-time fundraisers for other concerns, including aid for the victims of flood in southern Poland in 2010, and for the victims of the tsunami in Sri Lanka in 2004. It expanded its range beyond pediatric concerns in 2013 by also raising funds in

support of geriatric and long-term care in Poland.

There have been several years in which commemorative coins were struck in honor of the popular charity. One of my favorites is a circulating issue from 2012, which celebrates its 20th anniversary. It is a 2 złotych denomination coin issued in brass and struck by Mennica Polska, the Polish Mint. It weighs 8.150 grams and has a diameter of 27 mm. Catalog number KM#Y.809. The coin was issued on May 1, 2012 in honor of the 20th anniversary and depicts an electric guitar with a plume of hearts emanating from the top of the guitar. The obverse has the Polish Eagle, along with the nation’s name and date. The mintage was 1,000,000.

Mennica Polska also struck a proof, .925 fine silver issue with the denomination of 10 złotych, with a planchet in the shape of a heart. This special collector issue has a mintage of 60,000. The reverse has a similar design to the smaller denomination, with the electric guitar with the hearts emanating from the base of the instrument. The obverse of this attractive and unusually shaped coin features the crowned white Polish Eagle, along with a stylized view of piano keys.

Both denominations have a smooth edge and were issued in medal alignment. As the mintages of both coins would attest, these beautiful coins are relatively easy to find online, as well as with some searching at coin shows.

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Remembering the Gales of November



By Steve Bieda

On November 10, 2025, I had the honor of attending a remembrance ceremony of the sinking of the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald held on the fiftieth anniversary of its sudden sinking on Lake Superior. The tragedy took 29 lives on November 10, 1975 and there were no survivors. During the ceremony, which was hosted by the Detroit Historical Society at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle, a wreath was reverently cast into the Detroit River while Amazing Grace was played by several Bagpipers. After the wreath laying several speakers spoke – on video and in person - of the ship and the tragedy, the discussion of the controversy over what caused the sinking, and how the tragedy, not unique on the Great Lakes, became a topic of mystic lore. The popularity of the Gordon Lightfoot ballad, The Edmund Fitzgerald, was very much a part of the discussion. Not only did the song rise to be a top hit, but much lesser known to the public was how that song brought comfort to the grieving families. Lightfoot's generosity in donating proceeds from the song were also discussed. The song was played at the end of the program.

In somewhat less complimentary terms, however, one speaker noted the “industry” of commemorative items – hats, shirts, prints of the sinking, that he felt were in bad taste, wondering why someone would

have a print of the ship’s sinking hanging on their wall, while asking whether they would hang a picture of a school bus accident the same way. It was an interesting question. Certainly the public has a fascination with the ship and its crew, immortalized beautifully by Canadian balladeer, the late Gordon Lightfoot (1938-2023).

The speaker’s comment about tacky and inappropriate souvenirs reminded me of a coin that Canada issued in 2015 – a Twenty Dollar denomination, One Ounce silver coin, part of a three-part series of “Great Shipwrecks” in Canadian waters of the Great Lakes. The obverse depicted the familiar portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, while the reverse, partially colorized, depicted the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald. The colorized portion of the coin depicts the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald within an outline of the part of Lake Superior in which it sank.

I love Canadian coins for their beauty and craftsmanship. But I remember that this coin issue struck me as insensitive and exploitative, and the colorized depiction of the doomed Great Lakes freighter with waves washing over its deck struck me as offensive – like really Canada, you issued a coin like that?

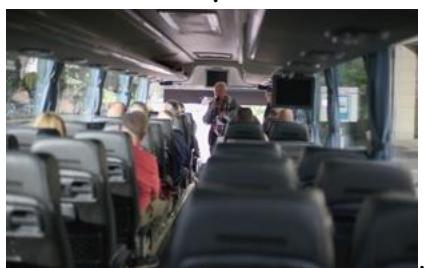
Matters of good taste aside, the colorized proof coin was struck in .999 fine silver, weighs 31.39 grams, and measures 38 mm. Like all Canadian coins, it is struck in medal alignment. It was a plain edge with the ship’s name in lettering. It had a mintage limit of 7,000 and was the last coin of a three-coin series commemorating maritime disasters in Canadian waters.

From a cursory search of Canadian coin dealers and eBay sales, the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald coin currently trades in the \$120-140 range.

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Spectacular 2025 PANS Society Numismatic and Historical Tour

By Lester J. Rosik



Sixteen coin enthusiasts, along with two former ANA presidents representing several states across the United States, were deeply grateful for the PANS Society 2025 numismatic and historical tour of Poland and the Czech Republic. One of the great highlights of the trip was a private visit to the Polish Mint SA, Mennica Polska, in Warsaw.

The Polish Mint SA is a modern and privately owned company publicly traded in Poland. It produces coinage for Poland and other nations and also manufactures investment coins, bullion pieces, gold and silver bars, medals, seals, and insignia. The mint has upheld a long tradition of exceptional craftsmanship since its founding in 1766 in Warsaw under the authority of King Stanisław August Poniatowski. For more than two hundred and sixty years, the combination of skilled artisans and advanced minting technology has made the Polish Mint SA one of the leading mints in the world. Our group was extremely fortunate to visit the mint through contacts PANS maintains with the Polish Numismatic Society, PTN. Photography inside the mint was strictly prohibited.

After the tour of the Warsaw Mint, our group was invited to the PTN headquarters in Warsaw for coin presentations. Mr. Dariusz F. Jasek delivered a talk on Polish gold coins, followed by presentations from PANS members Mr. Brett Irick and Mr. Robert Campbell on United States gold coinage. I served as the interpreter during the event. Former ANA president Mr. Thomas Uram presented presidential awards to PTN members for their participation in the international coin education sessions held online with participants from the United States, Canada, Poland, Switzerland, and Austria.

We visited the museum wing dedicated to Polish coins and medals at the Royal Castle Museum in the historic center of Warsaw. Another exceptional numismatic highlight was the Emeryk Hutten Czapski Museum in Krakow, home to an outstanding collection of Polish coins, medals, and historical artifacts.

In addition to the numismatic treasures, we explored many significant historical sites, including castles, cathedrals,

old market squares, and the famous Wieliczka Salt Mine. Some members of the tour also chose to visit the Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial and Museum.

Other remarkable destinations included the silver mine in Tarnowskie Gory and the Guido coal mine in Zabrze. The historic city of Wroclaw in Silesia offered magnificent traditional and modern architecture, as well as its famous collection of bronze dwarf statues. We also enjoyed dinner at the city's oldest restaurant, which dates back to the fourteenth century.

Prague in the Czech Republic was another spectacular stop, offering extraordinary historical sites and a memorable dinner cruise on the Vltava River. On the return to Poland, the group visited the Germania Mint in Jelenia Gora, a private manufacturer of modern collectible numismatics. We received a special guided tour of their minting facility and an explanation of their production process.

As we made our way back to Warsaw, we stopped at the renowned Boleslawiec Museum, known for its Polish ceramics. A unique and delightful surprise awaited us near the end of the journey: an overnight stay at the medieval castle of Kliczkow in southern Poland. Everyone greatly enjoyed the rare experience of spending the night in a castle and sharing breakfast there the following morning.

The ten-day numismatic and historical journey passed quickly, and soon it was time to return home to the United States.



EE **PANS History; Remembering Author** **Arthur Majewski**

By Steven Bieda

The Polish American Numismatic Society recently held its 400th meeting. In looking back at the history of PANS, we have always been fortunate to have a diverse, dedicated and talented membership. One such individual was Arthur Majewski, a Michigan numismatist and longtime PANS member who specialized in Polish coins and decorations. This article takes a look back at our former member, whose contributions to the hobby included authoring an English language book on Polish coins and decorations, as well as serving on the U.S. Assay Commission.

Mr. Majewski, was a long-time resident of the City of Grosse Pointe, Michigan at the time of his death on August 6, 2008. He was an attorney by occupation who practiced in southeast Michigan. In addition to his Juris Doctor, Majewski had a Masters in Education. Both degrees being awarded by Wayne State University. Active in numismatics, Arthur Majewski had the honor of serving on the 1975 Assay Commission after having been appointed by President Gerald R. Ford. The United States Assay Commission was an agency of the federal government that operated from 1792 up until 1980 when it was officially abolished. President Carter made no public appointments to the commission in 1977, and the 1976 Assay Commission was the last time commissioners were appointed from the public. As an appointee to the 1975 commission, Majewski was one of the last public appointments. The Assay Commission's function was to meet annually in Philadelphia to supervise the annual testing of gold and silver coinage (and in later years base medal coinage) to ensure that they met official specifications. Some members of the Assay Commission

were designated by statute, but most of the members were freshly appointed each year, and members included prominent Americans. This was a coveted appointment, as commissioners received a special, very limited, commemorative medal struck by the U.S. Mint.

Mr. Majewski had previously been appointed by former Michigan Governor William Milliken to several state commissions, and through his connections with Republican leaders and rich numismatic experience, was able to snag a coveted appointment to the 1975 Assay Commission.

Majewski was passionately interested in Polish numismatics and history, and he was generous in sharing that knowledge. In 1973 his collection was loaned to the National Bank of Detroit Money Museum for a special display that year. The NBD Money Museum, once one of the largest museums dedicated to coins and notes in the Midwest, operated from 1960 to 1992.

Majewski's interest and research into Polish coins and decorations eventually led to his authorship of *Moneta Polska*, a book on Polish coins and their history that was published in 1987. The book had one printing of the first edition and is no longer in print. It was offered in hardcover with a dust-jacket and was published by MARYT Publishing Co. out of Detroit Michigan. The illustrated book is 216 pages. It may be the only Polish coin book written entirely in English, and it discusses the development of the basis of coinage in Poland, mints, mint marks and provides accurate translations of all inscriptions into English, along with a discussion of personages, places and events.

The book is relatively hard to find today. It occasionally shows up on eBay. Recently, one was offered for \$49.95 with \$5.99 postage from an online book store out of Charlottesville, Virginia. Another showed

up on the on-line auction site “One Bid” where it sold for 39 Euros (roughly \$43) on April 13, 2024.

Fathers of Polish Independence 2025

Exhibit

PANS member Dariusz Klepko recently displayed his exhibit “Fathers of Polish Independence 2025 Exhibit” at Sterling Heights, the Polish Scouts Banquet on November 9th. The full article is at: <https://polishweekly.com/fathers-of-polish-independence-2025-exhibit>

Further photos of his exhibit are included here. If you have the chance, please visit the link, for an excellent article and set of photos.



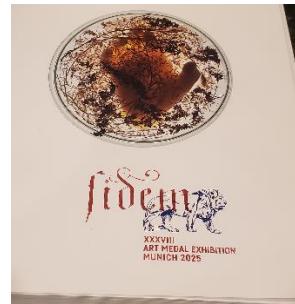


Some Notes From the FIDEM XXXVIII Conference

By Mark Benvenuto

Every two years there is a conference of artists and other enthusiasts of the medal as an art form, called FIDEM. The acronym is French, and translates to the English: International Federation of the Art Medal. The most recent conference was the 38th, and was held in Munich, Germany from 15-18 October this year. Artists from the world over had their medals displayed, and one nation which sent a significant number was Poland.

Shown here are several of the medals from Polish artists as displayed in the FIDEM catalogue, as well as the cover of the catalogue. Clearly, there is no shortage of artistic talent in term of medals within Poland.



As with the entries of the artists of most countries into the FIDEM catalogue, these medals are routinely art medals, and not circulating or commemorative coins, although some have national or political themes. It is often possible for an interested collector to connect with an artist and see if their medals are for sale. This can be a fascinating means by which a person can expand their collection.

If you would like a closer look at the catalogue, please send an e-mail to Mark Benvenuto, and he will make it a point to bring it to an upcoming PANS meeting. If

you think the next FIDEM conference might be one you would like to attend, well, plans are shaping up right now for 2027 in Prague, Czech Republic.

One Easy Way to Begin A Collection of Modern Polish Coins

By Mark Benvenuto



Believe it or not, some members of PANS are extremely advanced collectors, folks who have collected for decades, yet have focused their efforts on areas that do not include any of the coins of modern Poland. A quick, easy, inexpensive way to change that for the better is to look at the many modern, brass 2 Zł pieces that have been issued in Poland in the past few decades.

Much like the United States quarters that have been pounded out since 1999, with numerous different reverses, the Polish 2 ZŁ make up an impressive collection of different themes and designs. Shown here is one of the 2 ZŁ pieces issued in 1999 honoring Poland's involvement in NATO – a theme that bears special relevance today. But it is only one of many.

Collecting the 2Zł pieces is not difficult, as a dealer in foreign coins may have some of these at any of our PANS shows, as well as at any of the MSNS conventions (both of which will be coming up in the spring). Finding a mere handful of

different designs might just lead to a fascinating – and large – collection, if we give it enough time and energy.

A Fun PANS Holiday Dinner

This year everyone, we have photographic proof that the PANS holiday dinner was well attended. The tables were full, and folks seemed to have a great time. Thanks for the photo, Mike Rosik:



Also, when lined up, some members were gunning for center stage, and others tend to hide in the background (we still see you back there):



...and here our photographer even revealed himself:



...thanks, Steve Bieda!

Watch the Metals Prices!

Folks, the price of silver and gold have gone through the roof of late. For those of us who have been collecting for quite a while, and who like to tell, "Back in my day..." stories, well, the price of silver was indeed \$4 per ounce once, back in 1976. Likewise, the price of gold was once \$100 per troy ounce... in August of 1976.

Perhaps we should be careful what stories we tell, as they date us and tell just how long we've been collecting. If we wish to keep that illusion of youth, we may want to go easy on tales of our fabled past. ☺

► Spot prices as of 11 December, 2025

Gold: \$ 4,282.90/troy ounce

Silver: \$ 63.70/troy ounce

Copper: \$ 4.50/pound

Platinum: \$ 1,711.00/troy ounce

Palladium: \$ 1,515.90/troy ounce

\$US-Złoty exchange: 3.60

Have you been able to join us on the web? Try: www.pans-club.org. Or, on Facebook? If not, please go to Facebook, find PANS, and see what events are coming up for our society.

Once again, come to the meetings and win

Your PANS meets once a month, except for July and August, and is generous in raffling off one Polish coin per meeting. Why not attend a meeting, and see if you can add something to your growing collection?

Send in your finds.

Have you found any Polish coins of note, perhaps squirreled away in some dealer's stock of foreign coins? If you have found a hidden treasure, or one hiding in plain sight, e-mail Mark a photo and a brief write-up of how you came upon it. The PANS members will most likely be interested in hearing about it.

REMEMBER FOLKS, PLEASE PAY
YOUR DUES FOR THE
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FOR THE YEAR - \$30 IF YOU'D
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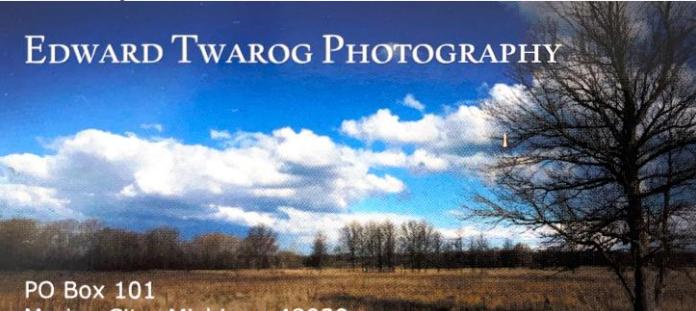
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Polish American Numismatic Society & Windsor Coin Club
Annual International

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Join Our Club

We meet on the first Saturday of the month at 12:00 PM at the American Polish Cultural Center located at 2975 East Maple Road (15 Mile Road) at Dequindre Road in Troy, Michigan. Visit the PANS Club website at www.pans-club.org for details. We currently have 10 meetings per year (August through May) with 2 months off during the summer. The Polish American Numismatic Society also plans a Christmas Oplatek Dinner during the Holiday Season. Meeting agendas include business matters and informative lectures from renowned guest speakers on topics including error and variety coins, significant coins in Polish history, Hamtramck scrip, coin photography. Open and lively member discussions about US and Polish numismatics are encouraged. Of course, the meeting would not be complete without coffee and delicious Polish pastries. The Polish American Numismatic Society hosts two very successful public coin show at the American Polish Cultural Center. Our primary show always takes place on the third Sunday of February. PANS also hosts a second show in August. Shows have been co-hosted with other clubs in the region. If you have any interest in numismatics, please attend a meeting and sign up as a member. PANS dues are only \$20.00 per year or \$30 per year if you would like the PANS Eaglet newsletter sent to your mail on a quarterly basis. PANS Club Membership is a great way to meet collectors with similar interests and knowledgeable dealers willing to share their experiences in a hobby that we all enjoy. To become a member-in-good-standing, plan to attend a minimum of 5 meetings per year and perform club-related duties at PANS Club sponsored Coin Shows.

Membership Application I hereby make application for membership in the Polish American Numismatic Society, subject to the rules and regulations set forth in the Constitution and By-laws.

SIGNATURE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

RECOMMENDED BY: _____

DATE ACCEPTED: _____

FIRST YEAR DUES PAID: _____

I COLLECT: _____

Attend a meeting or mail to: PANS, PO BOX 80515, ROCHESTER, MI 48308