

neighbors go

SATURDAY, November 3, 2007



Above: Magdalena Kochan of Rockwall joins a Latin-American friend at the International Festival.

At left: Malgorzata (Margaret) and Magdalena Kochan, representing Poland, pose in their costumes from the Krakow area.

Top right: Magdalena Kochan waves Poland's nation banner during the Parade of Nations.



Right: Maya Monroe, president of the Polish-American Foundation of Texas, and Andrzej Kaminski, man the Polish cultural booth.

Local residents celebrate Polish heritage at International Festival

BY MALGORZATA (MARGARET) KOCHAN

A parade of nations kicked off this year's International Festival, transforming Haggard Park in Plano into a rainbow of colors Oct. 20. The colors represented the many flags and nations of the international community living in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Honor guards in folk costume carried flags featuring their original homeland. Flag bearers for Poland were mother and daughter, Malgorzata and Magdalena Kochan of Rockwall. Wearing a folk costume from the Krakow area, Magda walked with pride as the wind softly moved the red and white national banner.

This event had special meaning because October is traditionally Polish heritage month in the United States.

"It is an important opportunity for the Polish-Americans living in Texas," said Ewa Stewart of Rowlett. "We have a chance to fea-

ture our culture and to promote an international dialog and understanding."

Volunteers from the Polish-American Foundation of Texas, polamfound.com, were busy keeping up with the demands of the day. Maya Monroe, PAFT president, kept a constant rapport with the visitors in the Polish cultural booth, showing Polish memorabilia and artifacts, while Marta Doblowska-Canadas kept up with the high demand for the Polish sausage, kielbasa.

The dance ensemble Orieta, which derives its name from the Polish national symbol, the White Eagle, sponsored by the PAFT, received enthusiastic support from Poetry Community Christian School. The students drawn from Rockwall, Rowlett and Terrell and coached by Malgorzata (Margaret) Kochan, performed two dances on stage. The first was a lively polka, an ethnic symbol of Polish immigrants in North America; and the second, a Polonaise, a

dance of the Polish aristocracy. The Polonaise, championed by the Polish composer Chopin, was viewed by the Romantic movement as the dance most expressive of the Polish national spirit. The Polonaise is usually performed in costumes of the Polish nobility of the 17th century. However, the dancers performed it in the elegant attire of the Empire period.

The proceeds raised during the International Festival will be used by the PAFT, a not-for-profit, tax-exempt group, to sponsor cultural programs promoting Polish culture in Texas. On the immediate horizon is promoting and producing a concert by internationally recognized classical accordion players Giziowski and Salej at the Eisemann Center, eisemanncenter.com, Nov. 3. Call the ticket office at 972-744-4657.

Malgorzata (Margaret) Kochan is PAFT public relations and special events director.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY MALGORZATA (MARGARET) KOCHAN
Polonaise dancers from Poetry Community Christian school, Joshua Baritseev, Anna Brown, Sara Duggan, Alexandra Fonteman, Justin Fuzell, Ryan Gallagher, Chiyenne Johnson, Jayne Jones, Josh Newman, Emily Nickel, Elinor Rowan, Chad Rush, Brennan Sapp, London Smith, Coleob Talamona, Michelle Williams, Jordan Wood, Megan Wood, Stephen Woodall and their dance teacher Malgorzata "Margaret" Kochan.

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