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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dyngus Day Transformed Into America's Polish Match Making Festival
Flirtatious Exchange of Pussy Willows and Water Brings Couples Together

BUFFALO, NEW YORK, April 2, 2009 - For more almost 50 years, the Monday after Easter has been known as Dyngus Day in Buffalo, New York. It's a post-Lent day of dancing, beer, Polish sausage and an odd courting ritual that brings revelers in search of true love. The flirtatious exchange of pussy willow tapping and the squirting of water to attract members of the opposite gender has evolved into a Sadie Hawkins-style courtship rite with surprising results.

"Dyngus Day in Buffalo has transformed itself into America's Polish Matchmaking Festival," explains Dyngus Day Buffalo Co-Founder Marty Biniasz. "Many people in their 20s and 30s who are looking for a mate with similar cultural, religious and ethnic values see Dyngus Day as the perfect place to find companionship."

The tapping of pussy willows is an ancient courtship ritual that began in medieval Poland, based on pre-Christian Slavic traditions. The sprinkling of water is said to be a reminder of the baptism in 966 of Mieszko I, the first Christian King of Poland. Over the centuries, boys and young men would sprinkle girls and single woman with water and tap them with puss willows as a sign of affection. On Easter Tuesday, the women would return the favorite. At modern Dyngus Day parties it is common practice that both men and women trade water and pussy willows taps equally.

"We see young, single Polish-Americans from as far away as Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Southern Ontario making the pilgrimage to Buffalo, not only to enjoy the celebration, but to partake in a bit of innocent flirting and perhaps, to find true love," says Dyngus Day Buffalo Co-Founder Eddy Dobosiewicz. "We're not sure if it's the longer days, the budding branches or the smell of kielbasa that leaves everyone feeling a bit frisky, but there's definitely something in the air."

Does this odd tradition really work? Just ask the many Buffalonians who believe that Dyngus Day was the magic behind coming together. Joyelle Bartlett attended her first Dyngus Day celebration in 2004. Little did she know that she would meet her future husband Chris through a use of a little Dyngus water.

"I recall noticing a good-looking guy entering the celebration at the Mickiewicz Library," remembers Bartlett. "For most of the evening, Chris and his friends found it amusing to squirt us with water."

(Dyngus Day Love Continued)

By the end of the night, I was feeling brave and rather uninhibited and made my way over to make conversation. We ended up talking a bit, and then Chris asked me to dance. He proposed the following September- only five months after dating, and we were married in 2005.”

Rob Zielinski and Linda Monet met on Dyngus Day 1996 at the St. Stanislaus Parish Social Center in Buffalo’s Historic Polonia District. Eleven years later, Rob & Linda got married on Dyngus Day in a ceremony that included red and white flowers along with pussy willow filled bouquets.

“Dyngus Day is an incredibly friendly celebration,” explained Monet. “After meeting Rob near the social center’s bar, we danced, talked, laughed and well....a few years later, we’re getting married. Dyngus Day will forever hold a special place in our hearts and relationship.”

Jill Winiatowski met her husband on Dyngus Day 1992 at the old Chopin's Signing Society Clubrooms on Buffalo’s Kosciuszko Street.

“I went to the party with my Dad who, after a few beers, encouraged my future husband Rich to dance with his single daughter,” tells Winiatowski. I thought the meeting was by chance until I came home and told my mom about this great guy I met. My mom smiled as she explained that she had asked my grandmother for a little help. My gram had passed away 2 weeks earlier from cancer. Attending Dyngus Day was a deliberate decision to move on from our months of mourning and celebrate life. As I was leaving for Chopin's, Mom prayed to Gram to grab God's ear and to ask for assistance to help me find a good man. We were married in July 1994. Oh yeah, my Mom and Dad also met at Chopin's on Dyngus Day almost 30 years earlier.”

A Polish-American tradition, Dyngus Day celebrates the end of the restrictive observance of Lent and the joy of Easter. Over the decades, Buffalo, New York has become the Dyngus Day Capital of the World, attracting thousands of people from across the northeastern United States. Although celebrated in Buffalo’s Polonia neighborhood since the arrival of the first Poles in the 1870s, the city’s first modern Dyngus Day celebration in 1961 by the Chopin’s Singing Society, a tradition that continues today. Dyngus Day 2009 will take place on Monday, April 13th.