

Pierogi-making production style at Polish Cultural Center

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Jolanta Sloboda welcomed the sun Monday morning with a tub of sauerkraut and a smile. "I got up at 5 a.m. to be here at (6:40 a.m.)," she said, "I was pressing the sauerkraut."

Sloboda, a Washington Township resident, starts her week the same way every Monday. She opens the kitchen at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy and starts making pierogi.

"It's in the blood," she said.

Many fillings

Her friend, Irene Giszczynski of Warren, arrived a few minutes later, ready to roll up her sleeves and begin mixing batches of potato, cheese and sauerkraut stuffings. Sometimes her husband pitches in for a few

hours.

"This morning, he squeezed the cheese," she explained. "I take everything from cooler. Some things have to be grinded. It takes me to 10 o'clock. And then I cook. All day. All day over a hot stove I cook."

The women and about 15 other members of the American Polish Cultural Center assemble and cook 350-600 dozen pierogi — a filled, boiled Polish dumpling — before the day ends.

That's a nine-hour day for Sloboda and Giszczynski and about seven or eight for the others who stroll into the center's kitchen between 8 and 9 a.m. every Monday.

The center sells pierogi in its restaurant and as a carry-out item. A dozen cost \$5, (\$5.50 for cheese and sauerkraut).

Proceeds from pierogi sales built and equipped the center's

industrial-sized kitchen.

"When we started and didn't have a kitchen. We worked there," said Sloboda, pointing toward a storage room. "And we had an old stove that was smoking and not enough pots and pans."

Equipment from home

"We came here with our equipment from home. The pots, pans, rollers, everything came from home. That's how we started."

Sloboda makes dough every Monday. She spends about half the day combining eggs, water, flour and other ingredients into huge mixing bowls.

She works alone, but within earshot of other volunteers who chat in Polish as they scoop neat balls of filling onto trays. Assembly-line style, they cut and fill dough, sending their finished pierogi to Giszczynski for boiling.

Many of the women, like Veronica Sokolowski of Warren and Sophie Sarka of Sterling Heights, enjoy the camaraderie, a key ingredient in this weekly sessions.

"My husband passed away and I couldn't stay by myself at home. I love to be with people," Sarka explained.

Sokolowski started volunteering with the pierogi crew two years ago after her retirement.

"Once a week I come here and see the other ladies and talk. We have fun here," she said.

Henrietta Kaczynski of Warren wouldn't think of returning to the old days when volunteers worked in the center's makeshift kitchen or cooked pierogi in each other's homes.

"We had parties and stuff like that. But this is better and easier," she said.

Industrial-size mixers, dough

stretchers and other high-tech equipment take some of the drudgery out of the process.

But some things never change. "My arms burn every week," Giszczynski said, her arms red from the heat as she scoops the bobbing dumplings from their steamy bath.

Giszczynski feels a sense of duty to the center as she tends the four pots of boiling water.

Volunteers needed

"I am retired and making something for nothing, you just have to do it sometimes," she said. "When they started here they didn't have any money. It's easier now but we still need money. That's why we volunteer. The pierogi we do for nothing. The young people, they all want money for what they do."

Sloboda wonders about the future of pierogi in an era when "most young women don't cook."

"What's scary for us is the fact that when we're gone, the young women don't want to come. The ones that are 30 and 40 years old. You can't bring them here. They don't want it. Too much work. They come and buy them and go home. It's gonna disappear," Sloboda warned.

She, like many of the other volunteers, cooks everything "from scratch" at home.

"Hamburger Helper," she laughed, shaking her head. "I never did that. Never in my life."

The American Polish Cultural Center is located at Maple and Dequindre. The center sells bags of frozen pierogi from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Carry-out and dine-in orders are available at the center's restaurant from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday and from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday and Friday. Call (248) 689-3636.

Snow shovelers cautioned

The American Heart Association suggests that the decision to shovel snow should not be made lightly. Shoveling snow might be one of the most strenuous activities some people ever attempt. Lifting a shovel piled with snow tremendously increases the heart's workload.

The combination of sudden physical exertion and cold weather could have serious consequences. It's natural for the blood vessels to temporarily narrow in cold weather. It can be even more dangerous if vessels are already narrowed due to fatty deposits. Too much strain on the heart during these conditions could cause a heart attack.

Dr. Barry Franklin, director of cardiac rehabilitation at William Beaumont Hospital, has some information that might make you think before you pick up that shovel.

Several years ago, researchers found that the heart rate and blood pressure responses to shoveling heavy wet snow often approached and exceeded the same responses during maximum exercise testing. And within two minutes, most subjects had already exceeded their upper heart rate limit for aerobic exercise training. It is no wonder that each year many middle

aged and older individuals experience cardiovascular complications during snow shoveling.

According to the American Heart Association, anyone who chooses to shovel should take precautions. They include:

■ Warm up before you begin to shovel.

■ Pace your work and take frequent periods of rest.

■ Lift small, rather than large, loads of snow.

■ Refrain from consuming large meals before and after shoveling.

■ Do not consume alcohol, caffeine, or use tobacco before or after shoveling.

■ Avoid inhaling cold air by wearing a breathing mask or muffler.

■ Protect exposed areas of the body from frostbite, another snow shoveling risk.

In people who are normally inactive with known or hidden heart disease, snow shoveling can trigger heart attacks and even sudden cardiac death. People who are most at risk are men and women over 40 with a history of heart disease or symptoms that suggest a cardiac problem. They include angina, palpitation and dizziness.

Also at risk are those people with one or more of the major

■ Within two minutes, most had already exceeded their upper heart rate limit.

Dr. Barry Franklin
—Beaumont cardiologist

coronary risk factors (cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol or a sedentary lifestyle). For these people, the best solution is not to shovel at all.

The American Heart Association emphasized that knowing the signs of a heart attack and getting to the hospital immediately can save your life. If you have any of these signs, get help fast: uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest lasting for more than a few minutes; pain spreading to the shoulders, arms or neck; chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.

For more information, call the nearest American Heart Association or call 1-800-AHA-USA or visit the AHA's Web site at www.americanheart.org

Epilepsy Foundation sponsors winter bowling

The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan in conjunction with Citizen's Insurance is encouraging individuals with epilepsy between the ages of 18 and 35 and their families, friends and co-workers to bowl those winter blues away and join the foundation's winter bowling league.

"This eight week bowling league provides an opportunity for individuals with epilepsy and others to socialize and exchange information in an informal and entertaining setting," said Arlene Gorelick, president of the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan.

The league will run for eight weeks beginning Feb. 13 on every other Sunday from 6 to 8 p.m. at Colonial Lanes in Ann Arbor. Participants can

enjoy bowling, pizza and soft drinks during each session, shoe rental and an end of the season barbecue for \$64 per person. Those who sign up a team of three or more will pay \$54 per person.

Deadline for registration is Jan. 31. Call the foundation office at 1-800-377-6225 to register.

Established in 1948, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan is the state's only non profit organization focusing solely on epilepsy. The foundation provides seizure management, employment guidance, advocacy, epilepsy awareness, information and referral, and individual and family support services to persons with epilepsy, their families and the general public.

JCC kids' swim teams still taking members

There is still time to enroll your child in the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit's competitive and development swim teams. Both teams are open for kids ages 6 to 17.

The JCC's Marlins hold developmental practice on Sundays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and Mondays through Thursdays from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The competitive team practices on Sundays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and Mondays through Thursdays from 6 to 8 p.m. Both teams practice at the D. Dan and Betty Kahn building.

The swim team requires any child 8 and under to be able to complete a length of the pool swimming at least three of the four competitive strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breast-

stroke or butterfly. Any child age 9 or older must successfully complete two lengths of the pool swimming any three of the four above mentioned strokes.

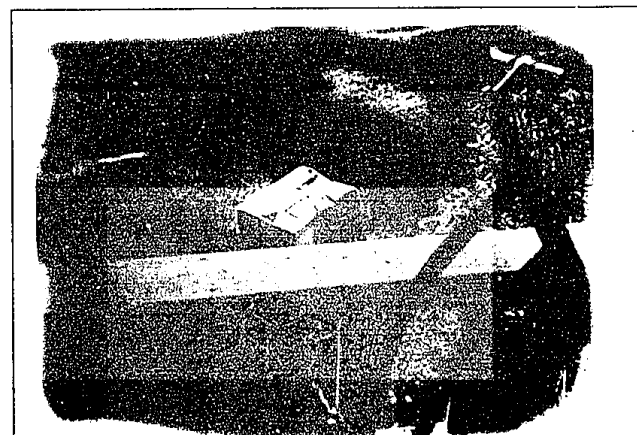
Cost for a 15-week session for the developmental team is \$145 for JCC members and \$180 for nonmembers. Cost for competitive team is \$155 for members and \$190 for non-members. Call Debbie Kraft at 624-5611.

Get Detroit Boat Show preview and help Lighthouse, too

Get a sneak preview of the Detroit Boat Show while supporting a good cause. GM Powertrain, in conjunction with the Michigan Boating Industries Association, presents the Detroit Boat Show Charity Launch benefiting Lighthouse of Oakland County Inc. at 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11, at Cobo

Exhibition Center in downtown Detroit.

Tickets are \$125 and include a pre-show look at more than 300 boat exhibits, fun entertainment, strolling buffet, prizes and more. Lighthouse moves families from poverty to independence and self-sufficiency.



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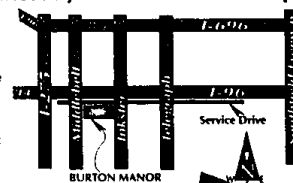
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