



HISTORY OF THE LET'S POLKA U.S.A. CLUB

This website is dedicated to Mike Sonsiadek, whose passion for Polka music inspired him to co-found Let's Polka U.S.A. with Eddie Bartczak. Following the final UPA Christmas Party and Dance, former members gathered to reminisce and discuss ways to continue the tradition. Determined to preserve and promote Polka music, Mike proposed forming a new club, and Eddie readily agreed.

With the support of former UPA members, donations were secured, and in February 2004, Mike personally contributed \$500 to register the Let's Polka U.S.A. symbol. Mike and Eddie served as the club's first leaders, while Dorothy Bartczak managed the club's finances and records. By 2006, Berne Locke and Theresa Bolf assumed key leadership roles, helping to guide and strengthen the organization's future.

Under the leadership of President Norb Ciesla, a devoted Polka enthusiast, the club experienced significant growth. Norb's dedication extended beyond events and gatherings; he documented the Polka community extensively, uploading more than 16,000 videos to his YouTube channel, which remain publicly available at <https://www.youtube.com/@FatherNorb>.

His successor, Chet Kowalkowski, a respected Polka musician and former member of the Versatones, led the club through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chet made meaningful contributions to sustaining member engagement and fostering community spirit during a difficult period.

Mary Leja later assumed the presidency and continued advancing the club's progress. She provided strategic direction, supported committee leadership, and ensured that the club's mission remained central to its activities. She also oversaw responsible financial management, coordinated events and programming, and represented the club within the broader community to build partnerships and support continued growth.

Today's officers continue to build on this foundation:

Officer Name	Title
Ernie Stetz	President
Cynthia Gawryla	Vice President
Bonnie Boersma	Secretary
Ursula Stetz	Treasurer
Sara Zelasko	Media Advisor
Dave Gajda	Director