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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Polish Tall Ship Planning 2008-9 Voyage to North America

Nearly 150 Polish Americans and sail training enthusiasts attended a dinner at the Port of Los Angeles, California, on November 4 to learn about a proposed voyage to North America by the Polish tall ship *Dar Młodoziezy*, the sail training vessel of the Gdynia Maritime University. The voyage is to take place from early summer of 2008 through summer 2009, and would be in conjunction with tall ships regattas sponsored by the American Sail Training Association and Sail Training International.

Guests of honor at the dinner included keynote speaker Dr. Józef Lisowski, Rector of the Gdynia Maritime University, and Captain Henryk Śniegocki, Deputy Rector for Maritime Affairs and Master of the *Dar Młodoziezy*, the university's 360-foot full-rigged ship, built in Poland in 1982.

Hal Barstow, International Relations Volunteer at the Los Angeles Maritime Institute, served as master of ceremonies and introduced the "Dar Dollars—Bridges Across the Atlantic" campaign to raise funds to help cover the extraordinary costs of the tall ship's voyage from her home port of Gdynia, Poland. The campaign also seeks to enlist the Polish American community, both as organizers of fund raising events leading up to the voyage, and to support Polonia cultural events and offer home stays for the visiting crew and students. The *Dar Młodoziezy* plans to call at Pacific Coast ports ranging from British Columbia to Southern California during the summer of 2008, and at Atlantic Coast ports ranging from Florida to Nova Scotia during the summer of 2009.

Consul General of the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles, The Honorable Krystyna Tokarska-Biernacik, presented Mr. Barstow with a check representing the first contribution to the "Dar Dollars-Bridges Across the Atlantic" fund-raising campaign. Mr. Barstow then quoted from a letter assuring the attendees of the support of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Richard Widerynski, president of the Polish American Congress, Southern California Division, and Mr. Richard Kobzi, director, Region K, Polish National Alliance, announced the support of their respective organizations at both the local and national levels. Captain James S. Gladson, president of the Los Angeles Maritime Institute, one of the campaign supporters, delivered remarks on the importance of community support to make the voyage a reality.

The program concluded with an impressive audio-visual presentation on Polish tall ships by noted Polish American author and photographer Thad Koza.

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