

Sister City Łomianki sends visitors to Heights

by Carol Jensen

The Mayor, two Police Chiefs and a Police Sergeant from Łomianki, Poland arrived August 2 after 26 hours of travel to visit their Sister City, Columbia Heights. They were given a short tour of Columbia Heights that evening. After a night's rest they toured the Columbia Heights Police station and were welcomed by police at a lunch given at the police station by Northeast Bank.

Columbia Heights Police Chief Scott Nadeau introduced them as Tom, Tom, Tom and Tom. Their first names happen to all be Tomasz. Łomianki Mayor Tomasz Dabrowski, Warsaw Police Chief Tomasz Szachowski, Łomianki Police Chief Tomasz Niedzwiecki, and Łomianki Police Sergeant Tomasz Pyra. After lunch Sergeant Pyra gave a presentation about Łomianki and their police work, and answered questions.

On Wednesday afternoon a Columbia Heights Sister City public welcome was held at the new Columbia Heights Library on Central Avenue. After a tour, Nadeau and Mayor Gary Peterson again welcomed them. Sister City Co-Chair Dolores Strand gave them each a US-Poland flag pin. Artist Corbett Vanoni was drawing caricatures of anyone who wanted. Some of the Łomianki group had theirs drawn.

Edward Carlson, who was Mayor at the time the Sister City relationship was formed 25 years ago, greeted them.

On Thursday they toured the Anoka County Sheriff Department and Hennepin Tech College Police Academy, and ended with a riverboat cruise on the St. Croix River in Stillwater.

Friday they visited the State Bureau of Apprehension, the Law Enforcement Memorial and the St. Paul Cathedral.

They also went shopping at Target. Sergeant Pyra said his wife had given him a long list of things to buy here and so far he had about half of them.

Friday evening Columbia Heights Sister City had a dinner at Jax Cafe on University Avenue honoring the Łomianki visitors. The evening started with a social hour followed by the mayor welcome. The blessing was said by Sister City members, in Polish by Ania Antus, and English by Edward Sikorski. Everyone held up their wine glasses for a welcome Toast of “Na zdrowi — to your health.

After dinner they were presented with gifts from the police and sister city. Everyone sang “St lat!” (good luck, good cheer!)

The four Columbia Heights Police officers who visited Łomianki a year ago were there. They enjoyed seeing their Łomianki friends again.

Saturday they visited Mall of America and Fort Snelling and on Sunday they attended a mass Polish at Holy Cross Church in Northeast Minneapolis with a reception following where they enjoyed speaking Polish with the church people. That afternoon Mayor Dabrowski with some of the Sister City people visited the Polish library in St. Anthony Main.

They expected their trip home to be about 13 hours, however, it took a bit longer. The Delta computer glitch delayed them at least five hours at the Minneapolis/St Paul airport. They made all their other connections and had a good trip home.

Łomianki is a first ring suburb of Warsaw. Last August, four Columbia Heights police, Chief Scott Nadeau, Sergeant Justin Pletcher, Sergeant Erik Johnson and Officer Jason Piehn visited Łomianki. They found that the two police departments function in a very similar manner, the main difference being technology.

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