

[From the Am-Pol Eagle]

JACKIE SCHMID DIES

Am-Pol Eagle's polka columnist, polka promoter, Polonian and political activist Jackie Schmid, 51, died at home on Monday.

Schmid, an executive assistant to Congressman Brian Higgins, had just helped organize the Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival and General Pulaski Parade in Cheektowaga last weekend.

Schmid was a Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in 2012. She was presented the Polish American of the Year award by the Buffalo Bisons in 2008. At that time Judge Michael Pietruszka said of Schmid, "She is definitely one of the unsung heroes of Polonia. She works on all of these projects behind the scenes and just does wonderful things for the community."

Despite feeling ill, Schmid attended the Pulaski Parade and Cheektowaga Polish Arts Festival on Sunday. Last year Schmid stated: "The Polish Festival is really important to keep the Polish heritage alive and pass down the traditions. The younger generations need to keep the traditions going."

Ron Urbanczyk of the band City Side had said of Schmid: "She promotes not only polka music but the Polish tradition." Schmid planned the Pvt. Leonard Post Pre-Dyngus Day and Dyngus Day celebrations.

Schmid was vice chairwoman of the Cheektowaga Democratic Committee, general manager of the Cheektowaga Symphony Orchestra, a director of the General Pulaski Assn., Inc., an organizer of Squeezefest (an accordion festival and old-fashioned polka party), and a member of the Polish American Arts Festival Committee. She was also active as a polka promoter and member of St. John Gualbert Parish in Cheektowaga.

Cheektowaga Supervisor Mary Holtz has referred to Schmid as an "event planner extraordinaire" for the Cheektowaga Crabapple Festival. Schmid was also an active volunteer with the Cheektowaga Patriotic Commission which organizes the Independence Day celebrations including the parade in the town.

Schmid was born in Buffalo and raised in Cheektowaga, where she was active in local Democratic politics. She was a 1979 graduate of Villa Maria Academy. She also cooked for her family's restaurant, which was located on Broadway and Shepard Street on Buffalo's East Side, before it was moved to Cheektowaga. The restaurant was closed in 1985.

Brian Rusk, president of the General Pulaski Assn., lauded Schmid's collaboration with other directors as she served as co-chair of the parade for 10 years. He called her, "A fine and dedicated woman."

Rusk added, "She was a foundation of our Pulaski Assn. and parade for the last 15 years. We will miss her at the General Pulaski Assn. and I personally dedicate the parade yesterday in her memory."

Pulaski parade co-chair Mira Szramel said Schmid was always dependable. "I knew I could count on her," Szramel said. She added that she knew she could always "Call Jackie" and the job would get done.

Schmid is survived by her mother, Sandi (Alexandra), father William Sr., and brother William.

A wake will be held at Barron Miller, 3025 William St., Cheektowaga on Friday from 2-8 p.m. A Mass of Christian burial will be offered 10 a.m. Saturday at St. John Gualbert Church in Cheektowaga.

RECOGNIZING STAFF SGT.  
JEFFREY KELLY**HON. DANIEL WEBSTER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to express my sincere appreciation for Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Kelly's service to his country.

After joining the U.S. Army Reserves in 2000 and transferring to the Regular Army in 2006, Sgt. Kelly served three tours in Iraq. In 2008, during his last tour, Sgt. Kelly was seriously injured when his convoy came under rocket-propelled grenade and mortar fire. Despite his injuries, Sgt. Kelly completed his assigned mission.

Sgt. Kelly is a native of Central Florida and graduated from Westside Vo Tech in Winter Garden. Sgt. Kelly now lives in Clermont with his wife, Michelle, and two young children, Jade and Lindsey.

On behalf of the people of Central Florida, I am pleased to express our gratitude and to praise Sgt. Kelly for his courage and dedication to his country. His commitment to his country and his selfless service is an inspiration to us all.

CONGRATULATING GRAMBLING  
STATE UNIVERSITY**HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to congratulate Grambling State University (GSU) on its 111th anniversary. This milestone is a testament that GSU is a true leader in education.

Opening on November 1, 1901, GSU was organized by a group of African American farmers who wanted to organize and operate a school for African Americans in north Louisiana. What began as an industrial school, Grambling State shifted its focus to rural teacher education in the late 1930s. GSU transformed in the early 1950s into an institution that offered students education in the areas of science, liberal arts, and business. The university now offers 68 degree programs to its students.

In recent years, Grambling has incorporated new academic programs and has added new facilities including a business and computer science building and school of nursing. Throughout the university's 111-year history, the value of each individual student has always been emphasized. GSU continues to be an institution "where everybody is somebody."

I commend Grambling State University on this significant milestone, and its dedication to positively influencing the lives of its students. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Grambling State University for this momentous occasion.

SEEKING FREEDOM FOR AMERICAN  
TRAPPED IN BOLIVIAN  
PRISON**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, which I chair, held a hearing to shine a spotlight on and to search for a resolution of the extreme injustice being perpetrated by Bolivian government officials against Jacob Ostreicher, an American trapped in the infamous Palmasola prison. Charged with crimes for which the Bolivian Government has produced no evidence, either of the crimes themselves or that Mr. Ostreicher committed either one, he is being denied the most fundamental due process and human rights both under Bolivian law and international human rights standards.

On June 9, Sheri Rickert, my Staff Director on the subcommittee, and I went to Bolivia to meet with Mr. Ostreicher and to attend a court hearing for his release on bail which had been repeatedly delayed since September of last year. The testimony presented at the Subcommittee's June 6 hearing about this case revealed the repeated due process violations being committed by Bolivian officials.

On June 11, I had the opportunity to witness some of them myself. Two attorneys from the Bolivian Ministry of Government, who I understand should not be intervening in the case, aggressively threatened to take legal action against the judge if he refused to recuse himself. Although the judge rightly rejected the ludicrous reasons on which the Ministry of Government attorneys based their threat, they accomplished their goal of having the hearing postponed and Mr. Ostreicher returned to prison.

To underline the absurdity of the Bolivian judicial system, Mr. Ostreicher's case was then referred to a court where the judge is detained in the same prison as Mr. Ostreicher. It took fully six weeks for the hearing to be rescheduled in another court that has a judge. I've been told that, unfortunately, the same scenario as occurred at the June 11 hearing took place again on July 23. The Ministry of Government attorneys injected themselves into the hearing and aggressively threatened the judge if she failed to recuse herself. The judge rejected out of hand the basis asserted for the threat, but again postponed the hearing and returned Mr. Ostreicher to jail.

While in Bolivia, I met with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Juan Carlos Alurralde, the Minister of Government Carlos Romero Bonifaz, and the Minister of Justice Cecilia Ayllón Quinteros to advocate for Mr. Ostreicher's release. Each one of them have made commitments with respect to this case but have not followed through.

And in the meantime, Mr. Ostreicher continues to face daily threats to his life in the violent, unsanitary, drug-infested Palmasola prison. He has been on a hunger-strike since April 15, and he was already extremely frail and weak when I saw him over a month ago. Both a private and a Bolivian government doctor have examined Mr. Ostreicher and recommended that he be referred to a medical clinic for evaluation. Given everything else that