

Polanki, Inc.

Polish Women's Cultural Club Newsletter

November [Listopad] 2016

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Happy Thanksgiving!!

Polanki Meeting November 11

The November general meeting of Polanki, Inc., will be held on Friday, November 11, at 7:30 p.m. at Villa St. Francis in the dining room. Final instructions, wrist bands, etc., will be given out for Holiday Folk Fair.

SPEAKER: Active member Dana Michaels is going to demonstrate the new Polanki website.

HOSTESSES:

Lynn Adams
Lorraine Grzechowiak
Jennifer Konecny
Susan Konecny
Elaine Posard
Lucy Reasoner
Anne Wal

From the President's Desk

The days are getting colder and darker, which means Fall is definitely upon us, and the Holidays will be here before we know it. Thanks to everyone who made the Soup Festival a success! Everyone's contribution made a huge difference. Our next event, the Holiday Folk Fair, is quickly approaching. The theme is Celebrating the Culture of Water, and it sounds like Polanki's amber display is going to be amazing. The sales booth is also a big hit with the attendees. Thanks in advance to everyone who is working so hard prior to the event and to everyone who is going to volunteer at the event. We couldn't do it without you. Given that we no longer have Poland Under Glass, I will be appearing in costume as Queen Jurata at the Holiday Folk Fair in a few weeks. It's always a lot of fun to dress up in the costume. After spending some time in Gdansk and Sopot this summer, I have a greater appreciation of the Baltic Sea and Polish amber. Even though the Christmas Party is in January, we will not have a

membership meeting in December. We will have a membership meeting in January consistent with the typical meeting schedule. I wish everyone a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving!

—Denna Flemming

Sustaining Member Kim Swedowski Receives Award

Kim and Ed Swedowski awarded Heritage of Portage County Award. Heritage of Portage County, Inc., president Betty Parnham and chair Leon Ostrowski said:



In recognition and appreciation of your contribution to the preservation and sharing of Polish Heritage crafts. Kim learned her craft from her mother, Mary Raczek, and shares her Polish culture at area Polish events and with the children at schools. Kim demonstrates her Polish culture through artistic talent in ethnic Polish straw crafting, Polish paper art and painting decorative Polish eggs. At Kim's side is Ed who supports her as they share this unique gift around Wisconsin. Both your contributions to the areas Polish Heritage is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

The World Reacts to Andrzej Wajda's Death

by Wojciech Oleksiak
Culture.pl, October 14, 2016

Andrzej Wajda, the Oscar and Palmed'Or winning director, a true icon of Polish contemporary cinema, has died at 90.

Wajda was born in Suwałki, Poland, the son of Anicia (nee Białowąs), a school teacher, and Jakub Wajda, an army officer. His early years were synonymous with Poland's tragic 20th-century history. His father was executed during the massacre of Polish army officers at Katyń perpetrated by the Soviet Union in 1940. Orphaned, Wajda decided to join the underground resistance movement and went to war against Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. When World War II ended, he was only 19 and forced to start his adult life in a country ruled by a quasi-totalitarian and Soviet-imposed communist regime, which didn't fall until he was 63.



Andrzej Wajda on the set of "Man of Iron", 1981, Gdańsk shipyard.
Photo by Maciej Billewicz



From this background, it may seem unsurprising that the majority of Andrzej Wajda's films relate to the history of Poland. At the same time, they skillfully managed to touch upon universal topics, such as the difficulty of moral choices under a non-democratic regime, or the burden of post-war trauma and chaos. This is why, from the over 40 feature films he directed throughout his 60-year career, his most memorable works are his WWII trilogy—**A Generation** (1954), **Canal** (1956), and **Ashes and Diamonds** (1958)—and two politically-engaged films he only made thanks to a short, temporary thaw in censorship at the turn of 1970s: **Man of Marble** (1976) and **Man of Iron** (1981).

For his works, Andrzej Wajda received praise and recognition all over the world. Movies such as **The Promised Land** (1975), **The Maids of Wilko** (1979), **Man of Iron** (1981), and **Katyń** (2007) earned him Oscar nominations for best foreign language films. Eventually he was awarded the Academy Honorary Award in 2000 to wide acclaim from the Hollywood film makers' society.

He received the 1981 Palme d'Or for **Man of Iron**, a movie which made him not only an iconic director, but also the de facto artistic leader of the democratic opposition—the film's popularity turned out to be a subtly clever and most effective contributing factor in the eventual toppling of communism in Poland. Wajda said of receiving the Palme:

The day of the Palme was a very important day in my life, of course. But I was aware that this prize wasn't just for me. It was also a prize for the Solidarity union.

In 2016, Wajda had just finished his latest movie **afterimage**, another that touches on important socio-political issues. This biopic about painter Władysław Strzemiński, an artist who defied the communist regime's censorship and fought for freedom of artistic expression, is Andrzej Wajda's warning to politicians that any kind of censorship or dictating what is art and what is not, can do nothing but harm. The movie was chosen as Poland's official entry for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Language Film category.

Grief and outpourings

Wajda's death inspired an outpour of emotional reactions, recollections and words of appreciation worldwide.

Daniel Olbrychski, often regarded as Wajda's favorite actor, reminded that it was the director's impeccable relationship with actors that were the keys to his successes:

Wajda was the type of director who at the same time falls in love with every actor he works with but is also still capable to very steadily guide him or her on the set. No one could ever better combine this love with the incisiveness of the most demanding critic.

Another renowned Polish actor, Wojciech Pszoniak, put it even more simply:

Andrzej Wajda does not make films. He makes cinema. And it's not the same thing.

Alan Starski, the Oscar-winning set designer and Wajda's long-time friend, said:

None of his works ever aimed at being any kind of summary, recapitulation, an end of his career. Each of them was fresh, new. A new one would be no less original. If he were still alive, he would still make wonderful films!

Rossiyskaya Gazeta, a major Russian newspaper, put Wajda's name alongside some of the greatest directors of all time: Federico Fellini, Andriej Tarkowski, Akira Kurosawa, Luis Bunuel and Ingmar Bergman. Moreover, they wrote:

[...] the 20th century was the great century of cinema. We will miss it one day (...) as in present day cinematography, there's no place for artists of that caliber.

Wajda's death didn't pass unnoticed in France either. **Le Monde** wrote on its front page:

Throughout his life he was an artist sensitive to socio-political issues, a eulogist of Poland's difficult history, which he always strived to put in a universal dimension.

The German newspaper **Die Welt** published an obituary saying that:

He was Polish cinema and Polish history, the most important Polish director after World War II, a true chronicler of his country, a moral institution, a social critic with a movie camera.

Swedish reporter Hynek Palls of **Dagens Nyheter** wrote:

Wajda excelled at picturing the struggles of a man living in a totalitarian regime.

Finally, the Italian paper **La Repubblica** ended its article on his life and works with a simple epitaph:

We lost a great European.

Holiday Folk Fair Theme and a Request

The theme of the HFF this year is "the culture of water." Polanki has chosen the Baltic Sea to coincide with the HFF theme. Amber is a good fit for this theme because it washes up on Poland's coastline of the Baltic Sea. For the interactive portion of the cultural exhibit there will be a glass vial of water containing 1 part salt to 10 parts water which will be used to demonstrate that real amber floats and fake (plastic) amber sinks.

Any members who may have a broken strand of amber beads (approx. size of bead 3/4" in size and polished) may we use them in the Holiday Folk Fair cultural exhibit. It would be helpful to have the beads brought to this month's Polanki meeting. All amber will be returned to its owner after Folk Fair. Amber must be loose and polished, not attached to a piece of jewelry and not set in silver. Committee currently has a supply of fake plastic amber in traditional colors, some are round, oval, smooth, faceted, etc.



11/29 Camille Shaw
11/30 Lorraine Grzechowiak

Coming Events

Nov. 18-20 Holiday Folk Fair
Dec. 4 Holiday Bazaar, PCW
Jan. 29, '17 Christmas Party at PCW

Community Corner

Norway House Torsk supper dates for 2016:

11/07 Monika Sobierajski
11/08 Susan Konecny
11/15 Bette Dulka
Anne Wal
11/18 Dorothy Fennig
11/21 Helen Miller
11/22 Lucy Reasoner
11/26 Ruth Klewin

Nov. 12 and Dec. 10

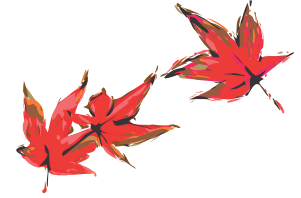
Wigilia, December 11, 2016, 5 p.m. at the Polish Center. Adults \$40, Children \$25.

Our Deepest Sympathy to

to the family and friends of life member Barbara Niemczycki who was in hospice in Florida. She was suffering from pancreatic cancer and passed away on All Souls Day.

Missing . . .

Camille Shaw is looking for two white plastic soup buckets that got lost at the Soup Festival. If you have them, please call or return them to Camille Shaw.



Chopin's Heart Secretly Exhumed

by Vanessa Gera
Associated Press

As Frederic Chopin gasped for air on his deathbed in Paris in 1849, he whispered a request that became the stuff of musical legend: Remove my heart after I die and entomb it in Poland. He wanted the symbol of his soul to rest in the native land he pined for from self-imposed exile in France.



A plaque on a pillar in Holy Cross Church marks the spot where the heart of 19th-century composer Frederic Chopin is enshrined in Warsaw, Poland.

Ever since, the composer's body has rested in peace at the famed Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris—while his heart has endured a wild journey of intrigue and adulation.

First it was sealed in a jar of liquor believed to be cognac. Then it was smuggled into Warsaw past Russian border guards. Once in his hometown, Chopin's heart passed through the hands of several relatives before being enshrined within a pillar in Holy Cross Church. During World War II, it briefly fell into the clutches of the Nazis. The organ has been exhumed several times, most recently in a secret operation to check whether the tissue remains well preserved.

Chopin's heart inspires a deep fascination in Poland normally reserved for the relics of saints. For Poles, Chopin's nostalgic compositions capture the national spirit—and the heart's fate is seen as intertwined with Poland's greatest agonies and triumphs over nearly two centuries of foreign occupation, warfare and liberation.

“This is a very emotional object for Poles,” said Michal Witt, a geneticist involved in the inspection. Chopin is “extremely special for the Polish soul.”

Chopin experts have wanted to carry out genetic testing to establish whether the sickly genius died at 39 of tuberculosis, as is generally believed, or of some other illness. But they remain frustrated. The Polish church and government, the custodians of the heart, have for years refused requests for any invasive tests, partly because of the opposition of the distant living relatives of the composer.

This year (2014), however, they finally consented to a superficial inspection after a forensic scientist raised alarm that after so many years the alcohol could have evaporated, leaving the heart to dry up and darken.

Close to midnight on April 14, after the last worshipers had left the Holy Cross Church, 13 people sworn to secrecy gathered in the dark sanctuary.

They included the archbishop of Warsaw, the culture minister, two scientists and other officials. With a feeling of mystery hanging in the air, they worked in total concentration, mostly whispering, as they removed the heart from its resting place and carried out the inspection—taking more than 1,000 photos and adding hot wax to the jar's seal to prevent evaporation. Warsaw's archbishop recited prayers over the heart and it was returned to its rightful place. By morning, visitors to the church saw no trace of the exhumation.

“The spirit of this night was very sublime,” said Tadeusz Dobosz, the forensic scientist on the team.

Polish officials kept all details of the inspection secret for five months before going public about it in September, giving no reason for the delay. They are also not releasing photographs of the heart, mindful of ethical considerations surrounding the display of human remains, said Artur Szklener, director of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Warsaw, a state body that helps preserve the composer's legacy.

“We don't want this to be a media sensation, with photos of the heart in the newspapers,” Szklener said. However, to prove that the heart is in good shape, he showed The Associated Press photographs of the organ, an enlarged white lump submerged in an amber-colored fluid in a crystal jar.

Some Chopin experts are critical of what they consider a lack of transparency.

Steven Lagerberg—the American author of “Chopin’s Heart: The Quest to Identify the Mysterious Illness of the World’s Most Beloved Composer”—believes international experts should have also been involved in the inspection. He said he wishes that the exhumation had involved genetic tests on a small sample of tissue to determine the cause of Chopin’s death.

Though Lagerberg and others believe that Chopin probably died of tuberculosis—the official cause of death—the matter isn’t fully settled. Some scientists suspect cystic fibrosis, a disease still unknown in Chopin’s time, or even some other illnesses.

“The mystery of this man’s illness lingers on—how he could survive for so long with such a chronic illness and how he could write pieces of such extraordinary beauty,” Lagerberg said. “It’s an intellectual puzzle, it’s a medical mystery and it’s an issue of great scientific curiosity.”

Chopin was born near Warsaw in 1810 to a Polish mother and French émigré father. He lived in Warsaw until 1830, when he made his way to Paris—where he chose a life of exile because of the brutal repressions imposed by Imperial Russia after a failed uprising.

Fulfilling Chopin’s wish, which was also inspired by the composer’s fear of being buried alive, his sister Ludwika smuggled the heart to Warsaw, probably beneath her skirts. After being kept in the family home for several years it was eventually buried in the Baroque Holy Cross Church, in central Warsaw.

It remained there until World War II, when the Nazi occupiers removed it for safekeeping during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Even as they slaughtered Poles block-by-block, killing 200,000 people in retribution for the revolt, they took pains to preserve the relic of a composer that the Germans have sometimes claimed as their own, because of the influence great German composers had on him.

—Reprinted from the Sunday, November 23, 2014, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.



Would you want to cut this cake?

Volunteers Needed for Cultural Exhibit at Holiday Folk Fair

Volunteers are still needed. Please consider signing up for one or more of these times:

2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, November 18

6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday, November 18

6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, November 19

5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday, November 20

Polanki's cultural exhibit, "The Treasures of Poland's Water," will feature the Baltic Sea and amber, the only gem that is plucked from water. The interactive part of the cultural exhibit (perfected by Kathy Wieczorek and Bernie Jendrzyczak, with contributions of amber from Margie Hess and Anna Rogalski) will demonstrate that real amber floats in salt water, while fake amber falls with a thud to the bottom of salt water. The cultural exhibit will also feature Margie Hess's hand-painted collage of the Baltic Sea, the Jurate, the Queen of the Baltic Sea (possibly in person on Saturday and Sunday, courtesy of Denna Fleming!), a Kashubian costume and what we hope will be a beautiful display of amber! Finally, the take-away for attendees will be bookmarks featuring amber and the Jurate which Marjorie Piechowski and Tamara Johnston will supply.

To complete the exhibit, we are seeking amber jewelry and other unique items created with amber. For security, all amber items will be in a display case, removed each night and placed back in the display case each morning. If you have an amber item to display, please bring to the November 11 meeting or contact one of the committee members.

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