

Polanki, Inc.

Polish Women's Cultural Club Newsletter

February [Luty] 2017

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Happy Valentine's Day!!!

Polanki Meeting February 10

The annual meeting will be held on Friday, February 10, at Villa St. Francis at 7:30 p.m. in the dining room. It is our election meeting and annual reports will be given. This means no guests and no speaker.

HOSTESSES:

Char Dzimiel
Teresa Jankowski
Barbara Januchowski
Susan Mikoś
Helen Miller

From the Presidents Desk

Thanks to all who made the Christmas Party a success! Thanks to everyone who attended the event, our members who helped plan and organize it as well as everyone who donated raffle items, bought raffle tickets, and made donations to Laski. I know our donations will be greatly appreciated. It was wonderful to be able to share a meal and socialize with everyone. At the last membership meeting, Polanki voted to donate \$50,000 over the next three years to the Basilica's capital campaign. The Basilica is ecstatic about the donation. In appreciation of the donation, Polanki will receive a window in the stairwell with its name on it. How exciting for future generations to know how devoted Polanki is to Polish culture in Milwaukee! Looking ahead, the Awards Tea is on April 23 and the Pierogi Dinner is on April 30. The next meeting is on February 10. It's our annual business meeting, where we will hold elections for next year's Board. Just a reminder that no guests are allowed at the meeting. It's been an honor to serve as Polanki's President for the past year.

2017 The Year of Kościuszko

200th anniversary of the death of Tadeusz Kościuszko, political leader (1746-1817)

Together with our sister institutions, Kościuszko Heritage, Inc. in Australia, and the Kościuszko Mound Committee in Krakow, the Kościuszko Foundation supported the effort to honor our Polish and American national hero.



UNESCO reports that: Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746-1817) lived at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In recognition of his activity for the sake of peace, independence and democracy—the equality of people regardless of their skin color or religion—he is considered a national hero in Poland and in the United States. He emphasized the role of both practical and citizen education, so that men and women who regained freedom should be aware of their rights, but also their duties with respect to the freedom and welfare of others.

In Poland, he fought for the freedom and equality of all citizens: peasants, who had to work as slave-like serfs, Jews who were a religious minority, women, who had fewer rights than men, and other people who were not treated equally. He emphasized the importance and role of women in the society Kościuszko, which at that time was a very cutting-edge approach. He was a precursor of the development of national awareness in its modern sense, encompassing all social strata and groups. In his fight for freedom and independence, he favoured [sic] peaceful solutions.

In acknowledgement of his activity for the sake of independence, peace and equality for all, Kościuszko is a national hero in Poland and the United States, and an honorary citizen of the French Republic. It is worth emphasizing that all views and ideas which he advocated remain relevant and important today.”

As part of the activities taking place to commemorate the memory of General Thaddeus Kościuszko on the bicentenary of his death, the Kościuszko Foundation in cooperation with the Polish American Teachers Association (PATA) and the Polish Supplemental School Association are organizing an interactive website (GlobalTad@thekf.org). The “purest son of Liberty” as Thomas Jefferson described him, with a last name that was unpronounceable by General George Washington who nevertheless greatly respected him, has a large number of monuments, poems, geographic locations (mountains, hills, towns, counties, parks, and so on), and institutions (schools, clubs, associations), named after him all over the world.

—Reprinted from the Kosciuszko Foundation Newsletter, Spring 2016, p. 5.

Member Tidbits

Kathy Wroblewski had an MRI of her brain and a CT scan of her body. Both are clear of cancer. Kathy had a long tumor in her esophagus about 2 and a half years ago and eventually the cancer showed up in her brain. Kathy has been posting her feelings on caringbridge.org. If you would like to read her postings, sign in, and then put in Kathy Wroblewski’s name and “voila” you will get her postings.

Barbara Rutkowski has finished her radiation treatments and has gotten encouraging news from her physician.

Anne Wal was going down her basement steps wearing fuzzy socks on her feet, slipped, and bounced down the stairs on her derriere one step at a time and broke her tailbone. It was good to see her at the Holiday party.

Anna Rogalski had shoulder surgery and cannot drive. So if you live near her, offer her a ride to meetings.

Lucille Trebatoski went to see her doctor, told him her symptoms, and he sent her directly to St. Luke’s. She had a couple of stents put in.

New member Susan Cieslak is going to chair the Pierogi Dinner. She has a lot of new and interest-

ing ideas for the event. She also has friends in the restaurant business who she has asked for help.

Life member Elizabeth Wagner's husband Stan has had surgery at St. Luke's January 31.

Norway House Torsk supper dates for 2016:
Feb. 25, Mar. 25, & Apr. 22



- 2/01 Iwona Nowak
- 2/11 Geraldine Reszel
- 2/13 Ewa Barczyk-Pease
Sharon Kearns
- 2/14 Jadwiga Korasz
- 2/17 Charlotte Dzimielna

- 2/20 Diane Holytz
Eleanore Jendrzejczak
Jerry Moskaluk
Jill Swenson-Parra
- 2/23 Rachel Hooten
- 2/26 Anna Rogalski
- 2/28 Jean Sorenson

Weather Alert

In case of inclement weather, Geraldine will email everyone. Those without email will receive a personal phone call.

Coming Events

- April 23 Awards Tea, PCW
- April 30 Pierogi Dinner, PCW
- Oct. 15 Polish Soup Festival Norway House

Our Deepest Sympathy to

Active member Judy Chattin whose brother Gregory Klosowski passed away January 31; and to the family and friends of Tom Ehlenbach who passed away January 6 at age 83. Tom was the husband of former deceased member Laurie Ehlenbach. Tom did a lot of manual labor for Polanki; and active member Diane Ullstrup whose father-in-law and active member Jessica Ullstrup's grandfather passed away January 16.

Wisła River 550 Anniversary

Year 2017 marks the 550 anniversary of the first flis (transporting goods on rafts and floating barges) on the Wisła after Poland signed the Second Peace of Toruń (1466) with the Teutonic Knights and regained access to the upper part of the river and its mouth. Known also as the Queen of Polish rivers, Wisła is a symbol of Polish identity and cultural heritage. For centuries, it was the main trading artery (for grains, timber and salt) and key factor in the economic boom that made Poland a major political and economic power in Europe during the "Polish Golden Age" (15th-17th cen.).

—from the PHCWI-Madison's website

The Kościuszko Foundation - *The American Center of Polish Culture*

Founded in 1925, the Kościuszko Foundation promotes closer ties between Poland and the United States through educational, scientific and cultural exchanges. It awards up to \$1 million annually in fellowships and grants to graduate students, scholars, scientists, professionals and artists, and promotes Polish culture in America. The Foundation has awarded scholarships and provided a forum to Poles who have changed history.



In the 18th century, Tadeusz Kościuszko said, “By nature, we are all equals—virtue, riches and knowledge constitute the only difference.” Education is the key to success, and Kościuszko dedicated his life to the liberation and education of the underprivileged. In the 20th century, another virtuous Pole followed his example and established the Kościuszko Foundation.

Szczepan Mierzwa was born to a peasant family in Rakszawa, a Polish village occupied by Austria-Hungary, in 1892. When he was 12, he learned about Kościuszko, a champion of peasants’ rights who also “stuck his neck out when there was fighting in a big country called Ameryka.”

At age 17, speaking no English, Mierzwa traveled in steerage on a German steamship to Ellis Island, where he became Stephen Mizwa. He headed to Massachusetts, working odd jobs and washing dishes while studying at night. He earned a scholarship to Amherst College, later completed a master’s degree at Harvard, and eventually became an associate professor of economics at Drake University.

Mizwa met Dr. Henry Noble MacCracken, the president of Vassar College, and their discussions about setting up a cultural exchange program led to the creation of a scholarship fund that brought nine Polish students to study at top American universities and sent an American professor to Krakow. The fund’s success inspired Mizwa to dedicate himself to creating an endowed foundation and to convince Dr. MacCracken to serve as its first president.



Stephen Mizwa in the 1950s

In 1925, The Kościuszko Foundation, Inc., was incorporated in New York to raise funds to grant aid to deserving Polish students to study in America, and to American students who want to study in Poland; to encourage and aid the exchange of professors, scholars and lecturers between Poland and the United States; and to cultivate closer intellectual and cultural ties between the two countries.

Initially, most of the money raised came from Americans, and Polonia was skeptical of Mizwa’s efforts. But in 1927 Mizwa persuaded Maria Sklodowska Curie, the Polish Nobel Prize-winning chemist and physicist, to let him name a scholarship after her. With Madame Curie’s support, the Foundation won notice and credibility.

During World War II, the exchange of scholars between Poland and the United States was cut off. Mizwa sent relief aid to Poland via back channels. With Poland under occupation, the Foundation promoted Polish culture and Polish issues in the United States.

After the war, Mizwa searched for a permanent home for the Foundation. He scored a great coup by acquiring the Van Alen mansion, built in 1917, for a fraction of its asking price, thanks to his persistence and the generosity of the seller, Margaret Patterson, who even donated to the Foundation in subsequent years to help pay off the mortgage.

This gave Polonia a headquarters in the most affluent and desirable neighborhood in New York. Mizwa had finally won Polonia's trust.

The Kościuszko Foundation Chopin Piano Competition was established in 1949, in honor of the hundredth anniversary of the death of Frederic Chopin. Over the years, renowned musicians such as Van Cliburn, Ian Hobson and Murray Perahia have won the competition. Today the annual Chopin Competition continues to encourage gifted young pianists to further their studies and to perform the works of Polish composers.

Mizwa also raised money to purchase and acquire donations of paintings by Polish masters such as Matejko, Chelmonski, Malczewski, Kossak, Brandt, Styka and others. They fill the gallery on the second floor of the Kościuszko Foundation, which is open to the public.

In 1955, Mizwa became the Foundation's second president when Dr. MacCracken stepped down. Cultural exchange was limited in the depths of the Cold War, yet Mizwa kept it alive through projects such as the "Books of Poland" campaign to restore university libraries.

In 1959, the Kościuszko Foundation published its indispensable English-Polish dictionary, and in 1961 added a Polish-English volume. Over the past four decades, it has set the standard in both sides of the Atlantic and has been reprinted 13 times, most recently with CD-ROM and DVD versions.

In 1967, the Board of Trustees approved the notion of local KF chapters across America to help the Foundation coordinate its efforts to promote Polish culture. In 1970, after 45 years as the driving force behind the Foundation, Mizwa retired as president, quoting the Apostle Paul: "I have finished my course. I have kept my faith." He died the following year.

During the 1970s, the Foundation sent more than 2,500 American students to Krakow and Lublin to study Polish language, history and culture. These Americans became ambassadors of freedom and democracy. The exchange of scholars from Poland to the United States also picked up.

The collapse of Communism provided new opportunities for the Foundation, which established a Warsaw office and negotiated office space with the University of Warsaw. It created American and Polish Advisory Committees of professors and scholars to improve the selection process for scholarships and grants.

The Foundation also published a glossy catalog of its art collection, "The Polish Masters from the Kościuszko Foundation Collection," which is now in libraries and on coffee tables around the world.

In 2003, the Foundation initiated a successful fund-raising campaign to establish a chair of Polish studies at Columbia University.

In 2008, Alex Storzynski, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of the award-winning biography of Kościuszko, *The Peasant Prince*, was elected president of the Foundation. He wrote a petition asking newspapers to stop using the historically erroneous phrase “Polish concentration camps.” The American media had long ignored pleas from Poland’s diplomatic corps and Polonia to avoid the phrase when discussing Auschwitz and other German camps in Nazi-occupied Poland.

The petition collected hundreds of thousands of signatures, forcing journalists to take notice. Newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* have changed their style books as a result. The Foundation will continue to collect signatures until all media outlets stop using this phrase.

As the challenges facing Poland have changed with the times, the Foundation’s work has evolved to meet those challenges. Mizwa started the Foundation after Poland’s rebirth, but his mission took on new meaning during the years of Nazism, Communism and the Cold War. Today Poland is once again free and part of NATO and the European Union. Many Kościuszko Foundation alumni have taken part in that transformation.

Just a few of the scholars who have received fellowships or grants from the Foundation include historian Prof. Norman Davies; Prof. Leszek Balcerowicz, Polish economist, former chairman of the National Bank of Poland, former deputy minister of Poland, who implemented economic shock therapy in Poland in the 1990s; Andrew Nagorski, award-winning journalist for *Newsweek*, vice president and director of public policy at the East-West Institute; and Anda Rottenburg, art historian, critic, and president of the Foundation of Polish Art Institute since 1998.

Young Poles and Polish Americans are uniquely poised to change the world, not just through humanities and the arts, but through the sciences, technology and business as well. With scholarships they can become the leaders of tomorrow. For the 21st century, the Kościuszko Foundation will continue this mission.

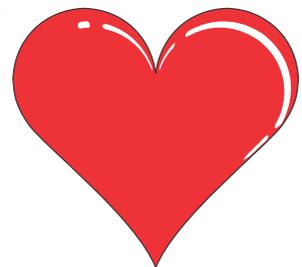
–Reprinted from the Report on the Kościuszko Foundation, Economic Conference 2013, pp. 30-32.

What Happened to St. Valentine’s Day?

February 14 used to be St. Valentine’s Day on the Church calendar, until it became the Memorial of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Secular calendars (and card shops) still call it Valentine’s Day. So what gives?

At least three different Saint Valentines, all martyrs, have appeared in ancient Church records. Saint Valentine relics exist in the catacombs and churches, meaning that the number of saints by that name could exceed three. Where records are lacking, legend persists.

Befitting of a day celebrating love, there’s the legend of couples secretly coming to a priest named Valentine for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony because the Roman emperor “Claudius the Cruel” had outlawed marriage. Single men, the emperor reasoned, would make more willing soldiers. As the story goes, while imprisoned and awaiting execution, Valentine was befriended by the emperor’s blind daughter. She regained her eyesight, and he wrote her a farewell note signed, “From your Valentine.”



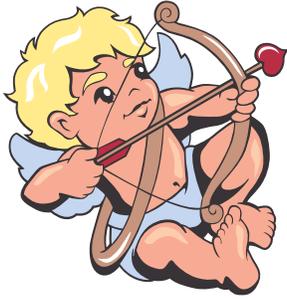


Table flowers were door prizes. Thanks Pat!



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