

Polanki, Inc.

Polish Women's Cultural Club Newsletter

December [Grudzień] 2015

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Camille Shaw 414-475-5124
1st Vice President	Marjorie Piechowski 414-963-9055
2nd Vice President	Patricia Koronkowski 414-281-7231
Treasurer	Jean Wroblewski 414-405-7753
Recording Secretary	Denna Flemming 414-282-1872
Corresponding Sec.	Wanda Kosmalski 414-418-2203
Historian	Joanne Barndt 414-962-5634
Publicity	Nadine Flemming 414-282-1872
Membership	Louise Cieslak 414-422-0652
Newsletter Editor	Geraldine Reszel 414-541-2433
Sunshine Chair	Edith Malson 414-744-9412
Auditing Committee	Heddy Moskaluk Susan Konecny Judy Chattin
Webmaster	Lidia Sobierajski 414-481-6557
Polanki Library	414-858-9357

Happy Holidays!!!

Instead of a meeting this month there will be a Christmas party at the Polonez Restaurant on Sunday, December 20, starting at noon.

The Christmas Party chairs Betty Dulka, Bernie Jendrzeczak, and Helen Miller remind us to make our reservations. As the number attending is down this year, members may bring more than one guest. RSVP as soon as possible. December 14 is the deadline.

Please note that the Christmas Party is the major fundraiser for Poland's Laski School, which serves blind and deaf children in a residential setting. Education, therapy, and enrichment activities and services work to make students as independent as possible. Laski has been supported through the generosity of Polanki members for years. The school is close to Polanki members' hearts. And the school is always very grateful.

Financial support for the school is mainly collected through Polanki's Christmas Party raffle. ***Bring a nice raffle prize and/or bring a check or cash to support this worthwhile cause.***

Join us at the Polanki event that asks no work of our members!

The President's Pen

"Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men." We hear this often at this time of year. Sometimes it is easier to say than to do. Not unlike so many things. In Polanki we have many different groups. Geographic, age, Polish-speaking and non-Polish speaking, Polish-born and American-born, long time members and recent members. There are probably many more if we kept going.

Sometimes the newer members notice that the long-term members have made close friendships with other members and as a result may not feel welcomed into these close-knit groups. It is true that there are close friendships in the club. People are

anxious to chat with friends that they may not see in other venues. However, new members who are in the meeting stage are on their way to making close friendships. It is important, however, to welcome and perhaps even mentor new members.

Rita Michalak, who passed away this year, was an expert at including, encouraging and mentoring new club members. Let's use Rita as an example of inclusion and friendship so that entering members feel

comfortable at our meetings and when volunteering. It is time for members who know the ropes to greet and support new members with an open heart. Rita's invitation to ask me to drive her to Kohler got me hooked.

Possibilities for seasoned members: 1. Invite a new member to sit with you at a meeting. 2. Go out of your way to learn members' names. 3. Volunteer with someone that is new to you. Who knows, you may make a new friend. 4. Try a different table at a meeting. 5. Car pool where appropriate. 6. Let's take on Rita as a role model.

Possibilities for new members: 1. Introduce yourself to more seasoned members. 2. Volunteer, it's a great way to get to know people and vice versa. 3. Share your talents and interests. 3. Be patient. Your comfort level will improve with time. 4. Realize that anything worthwhile takes time. 5. Know that Polanki needs you and all of your skills. 6. Give us a chance.

Looking forward to a busy and interesting 2016 as we include all of our members as the treasures they are.

Christmas Decorating at the Polish Center

Polanki tree decorated with handmade ornaments



Front row: Susan Mikoś, Edith Malson, Pat Koronkowski, Bernie Jendzejczak. Back: Denna Flemming, Nadine Flemming, Wanda Kosmalski, Laurie Ufnowski, Judy Chattin, Barbara Januchowski.
Missing: Joyce Broderick and Sue Zblewski Photo: Marie Idzikowski

Polanki's "new" szopka purchased in 2014



Photo by Susan Mikoś

MILWAUKEE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT FEATURES MUSIC BY HENRYK GÓRECKI

By Michael Barndt

On Friday, November 13, more than 25 Polanki members came to St. Josaphat Basilica to hear the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Chorus perform works by Polish composer Henryk Górecki. The sold-out concert featured Górecki's Totus Tuus and his Symphony No. 3, "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs."

Henryk Górecki was little known outside of Poland, living most of his life in the southwestern Silesian region. As a contemporary composer, he began by writing "radical modernist" works. His personal style matured into a form of serial composition well suited to his religious vocal compositions.

In 1976, Górecki wrote his third symphony incorporating texts that capture the grief of parent and child. The first movement incorporates a 15th century lament by Mary, mother of Jesus. The second movement features a daughter's note to her mother written on the wall of a Gestapo prison. And the song in the third movement expresses a mother's grief for a son lost in a regional Silesian war in the early 20th century.

Dubbed "sacred minimalism," Górecki's choral compositions are simple in basic structure. Repeated words and themes are subject to changes in timing and dynamics. These meditative works reflect Medieval modes as much as contemporary. A slowly developing theme in the orchestra was capped by the first song, stunningly delivered by soprano Kathryn Henry, a UW-Milwaukee senior and finalist in last year's Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. The acoustics and magnificent environment of the Basilica provided a perfect setting. The emotional impact of Górecki's 3rd symphony captured the imagination of a young generation fifteen years after its publication when a new recording went "viral" and sold over a million copies. Excerpts from the work have also appeared in several films.

The Milwaukee Symphony Chorus performed a dramatic choral work, Totus Tuus, written by Górecki in 1987. Górecki dedicated it to Pope John Paul II and incorporated the Pope's motto reflecting his commitment to Mary – "I am yours, always."

Polanki is proud to have been a long-time supporter of the MSO and a contributor to this program. Dr. Michael Mikós, UWM Professor of Slavic Languages, assisted Kathryn Henry with pronunciation of the Polish songs.

Associate conductor, Francesco Lecce-Chong, selected a bold and well-received program for his final concert with the MSO. He has accepted a new position with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Holiday Folk Fair 2015



Cultural booth: Camille Shaw and Kathy Wroblewski



Char Dzimielna, one of Sales chair people



Roma Numrych



Elaine Posard and Teresa Frankowski



Photos taken by Joanne Barndt

Happy Birthday! Sto Lat!

- 12/03 Janet C. Protasiewicz
- 12/05 Carol Bialek
- Elaine Posard
- 12/07 Shirley Sternig
- 12/13 Romaine Bata
- 12/14 Denna Flemming
- 12/17 Devon Flemming
- 12/15 Jane Dunn
- Jean Wroblewski
- 12/26 Halina Sosnowski

Folk Fair 2015

Folk Fair 2015 finished with a strong Polanki-presence and therefore a strong Polish cultural presence. Polanki's sales booth, cultural booth and demonstrations were part of the Folk Fair experience for the fair-goers. Thank you to every single volunteer who made this possible. Thank you to the organizers; Char Dzimiel, Ewa Melenchuk, Maryellen DeVito, and Jean Wroblewski in the sales booth.

Anne Wal organized the crew for the cultural booth including Margie Hess, Marjorie Piechowski, Susan Mikoś, Camille Shaw, Deb Tyszka, and Kathy Wieczorek. Thank you to the entire committee who creatively used the theme "Celebrate the Culture of Light" via the story of St. John's Eve.

And thank you to the demonstrators, Kathy Wieczorek and Sue Konecny who tirelessly work on creating their crafts.

The results of Polanki's work is very visible through the many volunteers in the sales and cultural booths: beautiful imports for sale, a beautiful visual and verbal story in the cultural booth, handmade wianki and Polish caps. Much of the work is not visible: product ordered by Diane Holytz, Bernie Jendrzeczek, and Jean Wroblewski, caps made by Kathy Wieczorek, and wianki made by Susan Konecny. Marjorie Piechowski creating bookmarks, Kathy Wieczorek sharing her wreath collection and handmade wianki, Margie Hess climbing a ladder to create the cultural booth, Susan Mikoś writing text and Deb Tyszka creating the cultural booth poster with her graphic and artistic skills.

Behind the scenes or front and center, everyone is a star. Bravo, Polanki!

Our Deepest Sympathy to

Sustaining member Christine Ostrowski whose daughter Lana passed away on November 11;

Active member Elaine Posard whose brother Robert Straszewski passed away on October 28.

Sustaining member Alina Sedlak whose husband John passed away.

Active member Sue Konecny whose mother-in-law passed away.

Get Well Wishes to

the husband of sustaining member Jane Dunn. Jerry had triple bypass surgery.

Active member Elaine Posard who broke her foot;

and the husband of Active member Adrienne Zuber. He is very ill.

Coming Events

Dec. 20 Polanki Christmas Party

Jan. 23, '16 Poland Under Glass @ Domes

April 10, '16 Pierogi Dinner, Polish Center

April 24, '16 Awards Tea, Polish Center

Community Corner

Torsk suppers at Norway House: \$13 adults; 4-7 p.m.

12/12/15

1/23/16

2/27/16

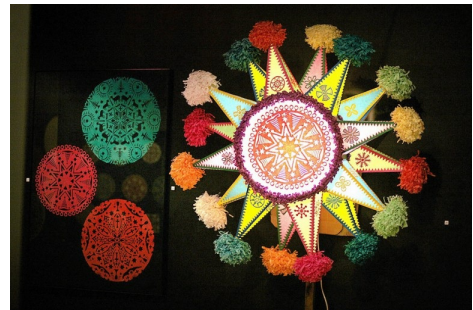
3/19/16

4/23/16

Polish Folk Art Continued

I want to rock with paper and scissors

If you ask a random Pole about the origins of paper cutting, they would say either Łowicz, Kurpie or Poland, in general. The truth is that first cut-outs were made in ancient China, around 200 BC. In Poland *wycinanki* (Polish for “cut-outs”) weren’t popular until the mid-19th century and, most likely, were incorporated into national tradition from Jewish culture.



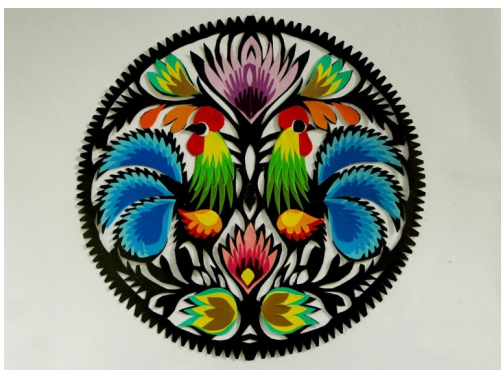
Traditional cut-outs from the Polish region of Kołbiel, photo: Lubomir Kosinski

The first record about the origin

of wycinanki mentions the area of Warsaw’s surroundings, yet the first collections organized in between 1901 and 1905 are dominated by wycinanki from the towns of Łowicz, Kurpie, and Kołbiel regions. This discrepancy is caused by the initial lack of regional differentiation which was established later. What links all of them together is the technique of making and ... purpose.

to use those to produce a highly detailed piece of art. What’s even more fascinating is that no stencil nor pencil sketch was used.

Wycinanki can take on various shapes: stars, circles, trees, rosettes, *leluje* (highlanders name for lilies), dolls, *kogutki* (“cockerels”)—basically, the name comes from whatever a wycinanka is depicting. Nature and beliefs were the major sources of inspiration. In the past people often chose to cut flowering trees, as they symbolized a bond between heaven and earth, cockerels, which symbolized fertility, and woman silhouettes, which symbolized mother earth.



But the shape isn’t all—the vast majority of Polish wycinanki are very colorful. To create a fancy wycinanka people use various colored papers—this is also the main reason why this type of decoration wasn’t widely spread before the 19th century—colored paper wasn’t yet widely available. The colors that dominate in Polish wycinanki are shades of red, green, yellow, blue and gold.

Completed wycinanki were hung in windows, on walls and from ceiling joists. Nowadays they are often found as decorations in heritage parks, museums, and cultural centers, but wycinanki have become so well-known around the world that many souvenirs and

objects are decorated with a wycinanka motif.

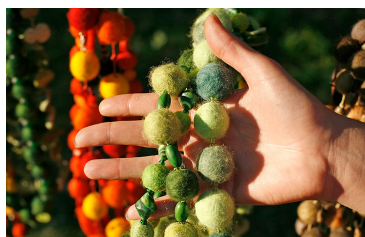
Łowicz region developed three types of wycinanki: *kodry*, *tasiemki* and *gwiozdy*. Typically, gwiozdy are symmetrical and shaped like animals, flowers, or any other geometric figure. The first two types are a bit more complex. Kodry are made up of numerous smaller wycinanki glued to a rectangular piece of white paper. Tasiemki are also many-hued, but they comprise of two identical paper bands with small wycinanki glued to them. The two bands are also glued to each other by top corners, and the bottom of the bands, completed with row of notches, slightly part from each other. The area where the two bands meet are covered with a smaller wycinanka, usually in the shape of a flower or a star.

Wycinanki from the Lubelskie region are particularly different from other Polish wycinanki, since they are always monotone, flat and cut from a single piece of paper. As opposed to other regions, the shape of Lubelskie wycinanki is always abstract—they don't depict animals or flowers, but combinations of squares, circles, whorls, lozenges and triangles. Wycinanki of a single color are also common in the region of Kołbiel, but in this area a squat woman holding cockerels above her head is the predominant shape.

The masters of wycinanki from the Kurpie region also portray equestrians and hunters, however, don't avoid the popular stars, trees and cockerels.

What perhaps isn't surprising is that wycinanki made in the time of communism depict tillage, harvest and ... heaving potatoes.

I feel like felt



Beads made out of felt wool,
photo: Wojtek Pacewicz

The origins of what is the oldest fabric known to man are shrouded in legend. Yet all trails seem to lead towards Turkey. It was there that, from 6500 BC to date, carpets were made from felt, as well as hats and the *sikke* head-caps of the dervishes. In Poland, as in the rest of Europe, felt became popular in the Middle Ages, and was used to make blankets, shoes, hats and other garments.

But what is exciting is the fact that felt is experiencing a comeback! It's probably not common to wear felt shoes any more, but items like bags, gloves and phone cases, with folk art ornaments embroidered on them, felt necklaces, earrings, hair accessories and toys can be found in the majority of souvenir shops.



Goshico felt with a traditional motif, photo: Piotr Bławicki

Felt art is relatively simple and cheap—anyone can try it, and, a lot of you will love it. In recent years the Polish-speaking part of the internet has been flooded with blogs written by felt hobbyists. But Poland has some famous felt designers as well. One of Polish brands specializing in felt handbags design—**Goshico**—won an audience award at a Brussels exhibition of Polish industrial design.

I want to get my hands dirty with clay, just like Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze in Ghost

Ceramics is a craft widespread across Poland, however there is a particular leading manufacturer in this field: Ceramika Bolesławiec. It's probably Poland's best known producer of hand-formed and hand-decorated tableware, which uses a world-unique stamp decoration technique. Once you see them, you'll



Ceramika Bolesławicz, photo: Mieczysław Michalak

be able to recognize Bolesławiec products any time, any where.

Bolesławiec's portfolio includes numerous tableware sets but also singular elements, such as plates, cups, platters, bowls, butter dishes, vases, salt and pepper shakers and many others. One can also find solely decorative elements, such as ceramic figurines and Christmas baubles.

Bolesławiec products are made of natural clay, which is widely spread in the grounds of Bolesławiec city and its surroundings. Archaeological examination of ceramic products found in the area indicates that the pottery tradition dates back to the Middle Ages.

Products by Bolesławiec are manually decorated with the use of colored under glazes, stamps, and brushes. Multicolored floral elements and various geometrical shapes dominate. Each piece of tableware is also labeled with one of the two Bolesławiec registered trademarks.

After being painted, the products are submerged in enamel, thus making them durable and resistant to abrasion. The last stage of the tableware making process is baking in a temperature exceeding 1200 degrees Celsius for over 15 hours.

The establishment of a ceramics trade school in the area in 1897 was an important stimulus to the development of ceramics' production and design. Notable artists and technological specialists contributed to the formation of innovative production techniques, spread avant-garde pottery shapes and decorations, and educated numerous generations of potters.

UWM Announces Summer Study in Poland

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee announces its 2016 annual Summer Study program in Poland at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin.

The five-week Polish language course (July 4-August 6) includes 100 hours of instruction at beginning, intermediate or advanced levels, plus lectures of Polish culture and sightseeing. Cost estimate: \$2,975 including tuition, room, and board, and 5 UWM credits, plus round air trip transportation Chicago-Warsaw-Chicago. The program is open to students and the general public.

Also being offered are two, three, four, five, six, seven, and eight-week courses as well as two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight-week intensive courses of Polish language in July and August.

For more information and application materials contact Professor Michael J. Mikoś
 Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literature, UWM
 Milwaukee, WI 53201
 (414) 229-4151 or 4949, fax (414) 229-2741
 E-mail: mikos@uwm.edu