

Polanki, Inc.

Polish Women's Cultural Club Newsletter

May [Maj] 2016

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Happy Mother's Day!!

Polanki Meeting May 13

The Polanki general meeting will be held on Friday, May 13, at Villa St. Francis in the dining room at 7:30 p.m. If anyone has not paid their dues, please bring it along with your membership form. It was due last month.

SPEAKER: Danuta Urbikas, Chicago realtor, shares memoirs of her sister's life in WWII Poland and Siberia.

HOSTESSES:

Louise Cieslak
Rachelle Ebenhoe
Margie Hess
Shirley Sternig
Anne Wal
Kathy Wiczorek

From the President's Pen

April was certainly a busy month for Polanki. We had several events: the Spring Bazaar, the Pierogi Dinner, and the Awards Tea. Thank you to everyone for making these events a success. We could not have done it without the countless volunteers. Thank you to the event chairpersons, the committee members, the people who worked before and at the events, the people who made delicious salads for the Pierogi Dinner and the scrumptious savory, sweet treats for the Awards Tea, and anyone else who made a contribution as I do not want to omit anyone. The website committee met again. We are certainly making progress and hope to unveil the new website in the next few months. Maksymilian Bondyra, whom I met on my trip to Poland last summer, was very generous and donated a copy of the children's book he wrote about Pope John Paul II to the Polanki Library. Check it out in the Library. Thanks for your ongoing support of Polanki. Rest up this month as Polish Fest is on the horizon! As always, feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

12th Annual Pierogi Dinner—April 10, 2016

"Just when we needed you...there you were." To all of the Polanki ladies, their families and friends who volunteered for the event....we say a BIG THANK YOU. It takes many hands to accomplish this event successfully and you can all give yourselves a pat on the back. Our guests (430 strong) enjoyed the dinner

and the delicious salads. The list of volunteers is long (40 this year), but we would like to commend the behind the scenes volunteers: Geraldine Reszel, who handled all of the reservations and the phone calls for weeks on end; Dana Michaels and Paul Melenchuk who cooked the entire day, John Saltz, a PHA member, who continually filled the ice bin, removed the trash, worked the dish machine all afternoon and helped early in the day with equipment set-up; to PHA staff members : Ericka, Jeff and Mike Norman who provided set-up assistance and recommendations for set-up by table numbers and use of the salad bar and gas burners for frying the pierogi; to Tom, our gracious bartender and to Dave, the guy who gets there in the early hours of the morning to clean, set-up, wash windows and vacuum. We thank a member who stepped up to volunteer for the first time, Jill Swenson-Parra; to Anne Wal and Diane Ufnowski who manned the Salad Bar for the entire shift; and yes! a big thank you to Laurie Ufnowski, Seating Hostess, who handled and assigned our guests to a specific table number to reduce the long lines of previous years. Thank you all for your spirit of cooperation!

Nancy Monfre and Judy Chattin, Co-Chairs

Frances Barwinski 1931-2016

At the age of nine Piotr Białobrzski left America with his parents, who returned to Poland to farm. Later in life he married Jadwiga and the two became parents of nine children—five died as infants during the war. The remaining children were Edwin, Frances, Alina, and Hanna.



They lived in the village of Białobrzeg-Dalszy, 8 kilometers from Ostrołęka. During the war the Germans took their house, so the family lived in a bunker in the forest. Because Piotr was American he had to hide in the forest and it was Alina's job to keep watch for the Germans who were searching for Jews and Americans. Each night Piotr came to the bunker for food. Piotr survived this way for two years.

In 1947 Piotr built a house on the same spot as the one the Germans took apart. However, two years later (March 3, 1949), the family left everything behind and came to America. When they arrived in New York, the family stayed with relatives in Brooklyn—Edwin was 19; Frances, 18; Alina, 17; and Hanna, 12.

After one week the family headed for Milwaukee. Hanna lived with Auntie Bessie; Alina with the Krawczyk family and took care of their two children, 8 and 4 years of age; Frances lived with a pharmacist's family and took the children, 7 and 8 years of age, to school.

Both Frances and Alina went to elementary school in Poland; Frances continued into high school. Alina finished high school after she entered the Felician Convent in Chicago. Frances went to night school to learn English and worked at St. Luke's Hospital in housekeeping. Their brother Edwin was drafted into the army during the Korean War and was sent to Germany.

Frances eventually worked at Johnson Cookies on National Avenue. In 1953 she married Roman Barwinski. They had five



Shirley Rydell, Alina Sedlak & Frances Barwinski

children—two boys and three girls. In 1958 Frances got her driver's license and would drive Hanna to Polanki meetings.

Alina was in the convent for seven years. When she left, Alina came back to Milwaukee and moved in with Frances. She got a job as a receptionist at Deaconess Hospital during third shift and went to school during the day. Alina married John Sedlak in 1959. They had four children—one boy and three girls. Alina belonged to Polanki years ago and rejoined in 2004.

Frances loved Polanki since she joined in September, 1976. She worked for just about every Polanki event and worked in every booth, and she baked for the food booth and the tea.

Barbara Zakrzewska Borowiecki 1924-2016



Sustaining member Barbara Zakrzewska Borowiecki, 91, of Springfield, passed away on Friday, March 18, at St. Joseph's Home. She was born on November 20, 1924, in Warsaw, Poland, to Stanisław Zakrzewski and Irene Rago Zakrzewska. Barbara was a survivor of the German and then the Communist occupation of Poland during and after World War II and was able to escape with her family to the United States in 1947. She had enormous passion for teaching and learning new things; and after she arrived in the United States, Barbara set out to learn English and enrolled in George Washington University. She later moved to Indiana and received both Bachelors and Masters degrees from Indiana University. After relocating to Madison, Wisconsin, she completed her Doctorate in Geography. Barbara took the position of professor in the Department of Geography at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1960 and became Chairman of the department in 1971. She retired in 1992.

Among Barbara's many life accomplishments was her instrumental role in the acquisition and transfer of the American Geographic Society Map Collection to the Golda Meir Library at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The Map Collection is one of the finest cartographic assemblages in the U.S. and one of the most distinguished in existence, with maps dating back to the 1400's. In 2009 Barbara received the Distinguished Samuel Finley Breese Morse Medal for "the encouragement of geographical research" for being instrumental in securing and preserving the AGS Map Collection.

Barbara married her Polish sweetheart, Mieczysław ("Mitch") Borowiecki by proxy in 1950 while she was living in the U.S. and he remained in Poland. With Mitch unable to leave Communist Poland, the marriage was annulled in 1959. Mitch was able to secure a travel visa to the U.S. in 1971 and traveled with his young son, Tomasz, to Milwaukee to remarry his Polish sweetheart in 1971.

Barbara enjoyed her family, nature, reading and teaching. She was a prolific writer in her specialty glacial geomorphology. She was an active member in the "Polanki" Polish Women's Club in Milwaukee and was instrumental in developing Polish, East European and Russian Studies at UWM.

Barbara joined Polanki in October, 1965. She was vice president in 1966 and president in 1967.

Polanki Achievement Awards

NELLIE BARAN MEMORIAL AWARD

Matthew Coughlin, UW Milwaukee,
Certificate, Professional Writing

VERA BUCZKOWSKI MEMORIAL AWARD

Natalie Sobierajski, UW Madison, B.A.,
Political Science, Social Welfare, Communication Arts

BARBARA GODLEWSKI MEMORIAL AWARD

Sarah Kochanski, UW Milwaukee, B.S.
Nursing

RITA AND ED MICHALAK MEMORIAL AWARD

Justyna Chojnowski, UW Madison, B.A.
Polish, Speech Pathology

GEORGE NIEMCZYCKI MEMORIAL AWARD

Justine Mech, UW Milwaukee, B.A.,
Biological Sciences/Pre-Med

CLARENCE AND ESTHER NOWICKI AWARD

Margaret Naczek, UW Madison, B.A.,
Journalism, Polish

JEAN SORENSON MEMORIAL AWARD

Angelika Szygula, Carthage College,
Master in Education

Our Deepest Sympathy to

the family of Active member Frances Barwinski who passed away on April 12;

to the family of Sustaining member Barbara Borowiecki who passed away on Friday, March 18; and

to Active member Ula Tempska whose mother, Zofia Napora, passed away in Wrocław, Poland, just two weeks shy of her 90th birthday. She came

to at least one Polanki meeting with Ula. She did not speak English, but Ula translated/summarized the proceedings for her; and she enjoyed participating in the evening. Zofia was 13 and living in Warsaw when WWII started. Her Father Mikolaj Wdowczyk and older brother Stefan were killed by the Nazis in a street execution in September 1939, and young Zosia had to help her Mother bury them. She never quite got over these traumatic experiences. She was later involved in the Warsaw Uprising as a courier. Her account of that is included in the oral history archive of the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising (can be looked up on-line). After Warsaw fell, she was captured and forced to labor for the Nazi army. After the war, in 1948, she married a dashing Karol Napora, with whom she moved to the formerly German territories in Western Poland. They raised three kids in Wrocław and although Zofia did not go to college or develop a career, she cherished that faith-leavened, quiet, simple Polish life with and for her family, which also included her mom Ewa.



4/10	Kathy Wieczorek
4/11	Sue Zblewski
4/18	Barbara Januchowski
4/27	Joe Shaw
4/28	Margie Hess

Coming Events

June 17-19	Polish Fest–35th anniversary
October 16	Soup Festival, Norway House
Jan. 29, '17	Christmas Party at PCW

Congratulations to Ewa Barczyk on her retirement from Golda Meir Library.

Poland's Most Beautiful Churches

by Agnieszka Warnke, February 2016
translated by Pauline Schlosser
Culture.pl



The Church of Peace in Swidnica, photo: Mieczysław Michałak

Monumental and full of charm, beautifully preserved and withered by time, full of history and legend. Here are 15 exceptional churches of Poland, dating from the Middle Ages through to contemporary times.

Gniezno cathedral

The Gniezno cathedral, the Mother of Polish Churches, stands on the Wzgórze Lecha (Hill of Lech). Evocative of French architecture, the shrine's present shape was raised in the 14th Century as the fourth structure on site. The first was built in the 9th century, the subsequent one—a century later. Built on the scheme of a cross by Duke Mieszko I, and serving as the tomb of his wife

Dobrawa, the cathedral was also later rebuilt by Bolesław the Brave. It was here that the burial ceremony of Poland's patron, St. Wojciech, took place. The silver coffin with his relics is still kept in the cathedral to date.



Gniezno cathedral, photo: Wojciech Stróżyk

Through renovations that followed a series of fires, the cathedral took on Baroque and classicist forms, to be later finally reconstructed in the Gothic spirit after World War II.

Its mighty towers stand high above the 85-meter walls and have Baroque tented roofs. The main nave and the side naves are surrounded by a wreath of 14 chapels, most of them Gothic. The porch by the southern tower houses one of Poland's most precious relics of Romanesque art—the bronze, late 12th century Gniezno Doors.

The cathedral also contains many other valuable works of art and beautiful architectural details (such as the tombstone of Zbigniew Oleśnicki carved by Wit Stwosz).

The first coronation ceremonies of Polish kings were held at the Gniezno cathedral.

At the millennial anniversary of the Gniezno gathering, representatives from countries bound to the mission of St. Wojciech planted symbolic trees in the Valley of Reconciliation.

The cloister church in Sulejów

Sulejów is the best preserved Cistercian fortified abbey in Poland. Legend links the founding of the cloister with a hunt by Prince Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy (the just). While chasing after a stag, the prince got separated from his companions and as he was trying to find his way back to them he heard a voice from the

sky ‘Raise a church in this place, and I will return you to your servants.’ The ruler promised to fulfil the will of God, and twelve lions led him back to his court.



The church of St. Thomas of Canterbury in Sulejów, photo: Gerard

The church of St. Thomas of Canterbury was raised with high quality sandstone from the Szydłowiec region in the first half of the 13th century. The three-nave transept basilica is built in a Romanesque and Gothic style. Its chapter house is covered over with a groin-rib vault, the four spans of which all lean on one column—one of the most daring constructions of its kind in Poland. Inside, there are five Baroque altars and a rococo main altar, raised in 1788 by Jan Millman. The wooden sculptures of lions surrounding are evocative of the church’s founding legend.

Pelplin cathedral



The cathedral of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary in Pelplin, photo: Przemek Swiderski

The small town of Pelplin in the Kociewie region hides one of the most monumental sites of Gothic architecture in Poland. The three-nave and one-span cathedral basilica of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary was raised at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, and its construction continued through to the 16th century.

Among the preserved elements of its original construction are the late-Gothic choirs (built between 1450-1462). The oak benches are decorated with figures (with a rare depiction of the Holy Spirit as a man) and ornate floral compositions.

There are also the magnificent Baroque organs, as well as diamond, rib and star-vault ceilings, and an exceptional number of altars. The 23 of them are made of wood, marble and stucco. The most precious altar is the main one, raised in a mannerist style, gilded, and richly decorated with the paintings of Hermann Han. The five storeys of the church are 25 meters tall, making it the tallest church of its kind in this part of Europe.

The local Diocese Museum keeps numerous unique incunabula, among them one of the twenty copies of the Gutenberg Bible that exist in the world (and the only copy on Polish territory). Pilgrims are also attracted by the so-called *pelplinki*, a regional speciality, creamy caramel cookies with honey.

Wawel cathedral

There could hardly be a more exemplary monument of Polish culture, history, and faith than Wawel cathedral. 37 coronation ceremonies took place here, beginning with the crowning of Władysław Łokietek in 1320. Almost all of Poland’s rulers have been buried at the cathedral.



Wawel cathedral, photo: Waldek Sosnowski

The crypts of the church also serve as burial sites for national heroes, among them Tadeusz Kościuszko and Józef Piłsudski, and a Bards' Crypt houses the tombs of Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki. There is also the grave of St. Stanisław, whose cult is linked with the idea of a united and independent Polish State.

We know little about what the first cathedral church was raised in Wawel looked like. It was probably built shortly after the founding of the Kraków bishopric in the year 1000. After yet another Romanesque cathedral was raised at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, the crypt of St. Leonard remained as well as the lower part of the Silver Bells' towers. The 14th century three-nave transept basilica we know today was rebuilt numerous times over the centuries.

Currently, there are 19 Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque chapels, with the prominent Zygmunt I the Old resonates from the cathedral during important state and church ceremonies. Tradition has it that the sound of the bell makes the clouds disperse and the sun appear. The decorative, cast-iron doors that lead into the cathedral date back to the epoch of the last Piast rulers.

St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków



St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków, photo: Andrzej Rubis

The second most important shrine in Poland's former capital is the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Its original building was raised before Kraków was officially endowed with city rights in 1257, and this explains its symmetrical placement with respect to the axis of the Main Square. The original Romanesque building was destroyed during the Tatar invasions, and its traces are now preserved 2.6 meters underground.

The clay brick three-nave Gothic basilica of today was built in the late 14th century. Over the subsequent 100 years chapels were added onto the side naves, and later the work concentrated on renovating the interiors. Franciszek Placidi dared a brutal intervention into the Gothic original in the 18th century, but later the form was partially brought back to the preceding Gothic style. Among those who took on the task of this re-Gothicising the cathedral was the artist Jan Matejko (who painted the starry polychromic vault ceiling) and his students—Stanisław Wyspiański and Józef Mehoffer, who created separate stain-glass designs. St. Mary's Altar, one of the most prominent and best preserved works of late Gothic sculpture in this part of Europe.

Two towers of unequal height are another distinct element that captures attention. The tent-roofed *hejnał* (hymn) tower measures 81 meters together with its spire, while the bell tower is 69 meters high. According to legend, two brothers worked on the construction of the towers. One of them stabbed the other for fear of the other's tower becoming taller than his own. Filled with remorse, he took his own life soon afterwards. The murder weapon still hangs in one of the Sukiennice gates.





Polanki members who attended PAC May 3 Constitution dinner at which Ewa Barczyk was honored.

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