

Polanki, Inc.

Polish Women's Cultural Club Newsletter

November [Listopad] 2015

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Happy Thanksgiving!

Polanki Meeting Nov. 6

The Polanki general meeting this month is earlier. It is on Friday, **November 6**, at 7:30 p.m. in the dining room at Villa St. Francis. Come get your wrist bands for Holiday Folk Fair.

There will be a **Polish Rummage Sale**. All proceeds go to Laski School for the Blind and Developmentally disabled in Poland. Please bring Polish items that you no longer have room or use for. Another member may see them as treasure.

PROGRAM: Finding your Polish Roots

HOSTESSES:

Lynn Adams
Lorraine Grzechowiak
Jennifer Konecny
Susan Konecny
Ewa Melenchuk
Helen Miller
Elaine Posard

The President's Pen

Snowflakes in the air! This means that our personal lives and our Polanki lives take on another level of busyness. Thinking of snowflakes, I remember, as a kindergarten student at Manitoba School, looking at snowflakes with a magnifying glass on the steps. (The steps were much higher then. Hmm.) Each snowflake was so unique, just like the women in Polanki. We are blessed with personalities that are unique and each one necessary to complete all that we accomplish so successfully. We have members who are detail people, global thinkers, creative, realistic, leaders, followers, talkers, listeners, writers, builders,

doers, researchers, supporters, cheerleaders, fundraisers, cooks, bakers, seamstresses, sellers, organizers, planners and especially good friends. Sometimes members step back to allow others to show their unique attributes, and sometimes members combine more than one attribute depending on what the task needs.

The main thing we need is appreciation of all these talents. Personally, I am in awe of the members who have attributes that I don't have. And grateful to all who share their gifts no matter what they are. You are

needed, appreciated and talented in your unique way. Thank you for your help especially during the busy season that approaches.

Rita Michalak 1926-2015

Life member Rita Michalak, age 88, passed away peacefully October 2 surrounded by loving family and friends in the comfort of her home. Preceded in death by her husband and siblings Regina Bohusch and Carl Glazewski. Edward and Regina were sustaining members of Polanki. She will be dearly missed by daughters Barb, Mary, Cindy, and Jean; grandsons Doug, Eric, Nathan, Stephen and Robbie.



Rita graduated from Mercy High School in 1945 and worked for nine years as a bank teller at National Savings and Loan, where she met her husband of 52 years. Her greatest passion in life was her family. Rita was a devoted wife and mother, and she raised her four daughters to be strong women like herself. As a grandmother, she loved, taught and emotionally supported her five grandsons until her death.

Rita participated in many organizations, focusing on the Polish culture and community. Rita was an active member of Polanki since March, 1973. During that time she has been president three times, treasurer for many years, and Holiday Folk Fair Sales Booth co-chair with Edith Malson for 25 years. Together with Janet Branden Rita purchased and priced merchandise from Poland, planned and built many a Folk Fair cultural exhibit for Polanki and commissioned a Concerto for Bassoon by Panufnik which was performed at the Performing Arts Center Vogel Hall. Rita was on the Committee that brought Miłosz to Marquette and was a major force in collecting funds in Milwaukee County for the Pope John Paul House. She was the first to do wianki at Polish Fest. Does anyone remember our Chopin Piano Contest and Awards? Rita was quite involved in those also.

In the 80s Rita invited “newbees” to sort and mark merchandise so they would learn about the folk art and how Polanki made profits. She also invited them to her home for group baking for Folk Fair. At one of those sessions Valerie Lukaszewicz and Geraldine Reszel were invited and they were in charge of making the Polish cheese cakes and ended up making 10 of them. Rita had to use her neighbors oven as well as her two to get them all baked. Periodically, one can see Rita on MPTV doing Polish Cooking. It usually runs before Folk Fair.

Rita helped fulfill the dream of the Polish Community Center in Wisconsin. Other organizations included the International Institute, Kosciuszko Foundation, Polish Fest, Polish National Alliance, and the Polish-American Philatelic Club. She received many honors and awards from Polish-American organizations for selflessly giving of her time, resources and talents.

Our Deepest Sympathy to

the family and friends of Life member Rita Michalak who passed away Oct. 2; and

Active member Kathy Wieczorek whose brother-in-law passed away in October.

Thanks!!

Active member Edith Malson, Sunshine chairman, thanks the members for their generosity to the sunshine fund. Missed the October meeting? Edith will still take donations in November.



11/07 Monika Sobierajski
11/08 Susan Konecny
11/15 Bette Dulka
Anne Wal
11/18 Dorothy Fennig
11/21 Danielle Barriere
Helen Miller
11/22 Lucy Reasoner
11/26 Ruth Klewin
11/29 Camille Shaw
11/30 Lorraine Grzechowiak

Coming Events

Nov. 20-22 Holiday Folk Fair
Nov. 29 Tree decorating at PCW
Dec. 6 Holiday Bazaar/Brunch, PCW
Dec. 20 Polanki Christmas Party
April 10, '16 Pierogi Dinner, Polish Center
April 24, '16 Awards Tea, Polish Center



Community Corner

Polish Center events coming up:

Tuesday, Nov. 10, Beata Zatorska, author of two best selling cookbook/memoirs about her Polish childhood, will be signing books—*Rose Petal Jam* and *Sugared Orange*. Books will be on sale for \$25.

Frozen pierogi sale as part of Holiday Bazaar/Brunch. Deadline for ordering is Nov. 27.

Did You See . . .

Active member Anne Wal in the “fresh” section of the Sunday, October 18 issue of the Journal Sentinel? She was featured in the article “Doing the Right Dumplings” by Anne Schamberg. She has been working on her technique for 15 years. From start to finish Anne can now make three dozen in an hour. And that includes making the dough. More recipes for the next edition of the Polanki cookbook, Anne?

Application forms for the 2016 POLANKI College Achievement Awards are available on the POLANKI website, www.polanki.org. The application form contains details regarding awards eligibility. The deadline for submitting an application is **January 18, 2016**. For further information, please contact Joanne Barndt, Awards Committee Chair, at joanne.barndt@gmail.com or at (414) 962-5634. **We ask all POLANKI members, friends, and supporters to spread the word about our College Achievement Awards and to encourage eligible students to apply.**

A Foreigner's Guide to Polish Folk Art

by Agata Dudek for Culture.pl



Photo: Marian Zubrzycki

To some, Poland is a country of grey apartment blocks, endless winter and even... polar bears. Well, it might be for those who have never heard about Poland and its rich culture. But if you saw Eurovision 2014 or if you've already visited Poland and managed to stop by a souvenir shop, you probably know that there's a lot of color and beauty to our traditional crafts!

Poland is (fortunately) not only about attractive women wearing surprisingly short folk skirts. The good news is that you can buy many things decorated with traditional Polish ornamentation, from post cards and mugs to folk skirts, as traditional decorative arts are currently experiencing a revival.

Now, you may wonder what exactly they look like.

We assume that by now you've googled Polish culture and you saw dancers, kielbasa and freaky folk dolls. You might have also wondered what those colored eggs are all about—and hey—you're in the right place to find out. Choose the idea that appeals to you the most and discover your inner Pole!

Definitely the eggs!

The tradition of egg painting goes back to ancient Mesopotamia, from where it spread to the region of the Mediterranean sea. The oldest painted eggs are of Sumerian origin and are about 5000 years old. The oldest Polish *pisanki* (traditional name for painted eggs, singular: *pisanka*) date back to the end of the 10th century.

In Slavic beliefs, eggs were associated with the cult of the sun god, and they symbolized new life and birth. Each spring, when life awakened from its winter slumber, Poles presented each other with eggs. At Easter the eggs were given to family members and, about a week later, to dear friends as well.



Photo: Andrzej Sidor; Polish painted egg

In the past only women were allowed to decorate the eggs—if a man walked into the room where eggs were being adorned, women had to remove the spell that the intruder might have cast on the eggs.



Malowanki; photo: Marian Zubrzycki

There are different ways to decorate eggs: *kraszanki* (also called *malowanki*) are a type of *pisanki* colored with natural dyes obtained from onion peel, walnut shells, beet juice and various flower petals, cooked until they give up their colors. An egg is then cooked in the resulting dye. Nowadays, artificial food dyes are also used. People would often scratch the egg to reveal the color of the shell and thus make a pattern on a *pisanka*. These are called *drapanki*.

Sometimes people would “draw” on the eggs with melted wax or cover the eggs with a layer of molten wax in which a pattern is scratched before the eggs are dyed. Needles, awls, straws and twigs all came in handy to inscribe and striate on the egg shells.

In some regions people make *oklejanki* by sticking yarn, elderberry petals, bulrush, scraps of colorful paper or patches of cloth to the egg shells. Similar form of *oklejanki* called *nalepianki*, where cut-outs of colored paper are used, are more popular in the former Kraków voivodeship and the region of the town of Łowicz.

Some eggs are turned into *wydmuszki* (singular: *wydmuszka*). To prepare a *wydmuszka*, one needs to pierce two holes in an egg and then blow out the egg white and yolk.

A particularly eye-catching type of Easter eggs are *ażurki*—open-work *pisanki*. This is when *wydmuszki* become handy—the egg shells are drilled with tiny drills, polishing machines, dental drills or CNC milling machines. A *wydmuszka* with drilled patterns is then painted, most often with acrylic paint.

And these eggs are only a part of the Polish Easter extravaganza!

I want to surround myself with palm trees



Ażurki; photo: Mateusz Skwarczek



Photo: Marek Malizewski

Niedziela Palmowa/Palm Sunday is a Catholic celebration commemorating the triumphant arrival of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. In Poland, Niedziela Palmowa has been celebrated since the Middle Ages. The feast takes place a week before Easter and thereby commences the Holy Week.

Although nowadays palms can be bought in many shops around Easter time, in the past people would make them on their own. Traditionally palms were made of willow branches, which symbolize the Resurrection and the immortality of the soul. In the region of Wielkopolska, willow branches were cut on Ash Wednesday

and then stored in water to keep them green until Palm Sunday.

In Wielkopolska as well as in the other parts of the country, cut branches were often decorated with boxwood, yew, periwinkle, blueberry, staghorn, dried flowers and grass, often dyed, sometimes with colorful ribbons or crepe paper decorations. The tradition of making palms for Palm Sunday is still particularly popular in the regions of Kurpie and Małopolska. Depending on the region, the technique of palm making and its appearance differs.

Palma Kurpiowska (from the Kurpie region) constitutes a cut trunk of a spruce or fir tree, entwined with staghorn, heather and blueberry. It's further decorated with paper flowers and ribbons, but the top is supposed to remain green.

However, it is *palma wileńska* (a type of an Eastern palm which originated in Vilnius) that seems to be the most popular in recent years. It's relatively short, plaited with dried flowers, mosses and grasses.



Palma kurpiowska, photo: Sławomir Olzacki



Palma wileńska, photo: Valdemar Doveiko

The Easter palms would be taken to a church, where they would be consecrated. Besides having its sacral meaning, the blessed palms were to protect from harm and sickness, to bring joy to one's home and to provide abundant crops. Some believed that the height mattered—the taller the palm, the longer and the happier the life of its owner would be. The prettier the palm—the more beautiful the progeny.

Traditionally, the palms are burnt on Holy Saturday and the resulting ash is kept until the following year, to be used during the Ash Wednesday ceremony.

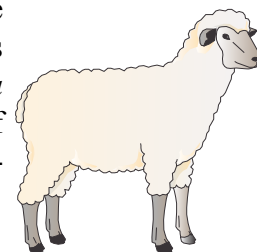
Palm Sunday is still celebrated across the country; communities of many Polish towns and regions organize Easter palm competitions. The tallest palms reach over 30 meters tall

Oscypek, ciupaga and Podhale—I have no idea what I just read and I want to find out



Production of sheep's cheese in Małopolska region, Zakopane, photo: Jola Lipka

... So what does *oscypek* and *ciupaga* have to do with Polish craft? What are they, even? Oscypek is a traditional smoked cheese made of goats milk. Not only is it tasty, it's utterly adorable too! Each oscypek is decorated by being molded in a special form that imprints various designs onto them. Some say that oscypki look like little sculptures. The so-called "oscypek's younger sister" *redykolka* even comes in shapes of "folk" animals, like roosters or sheep.



A *ciupaga* (also called *rombanica*), unlike goat cheese, is something that you probably haven't come across much—it's a Polish version of a shepherd's axe and is probably the most recognizable item of a Góral's outfit. You can use it for support, for climbing, chopping wood, as a weapon against wild animals, and... for dancing. Ciupaga are almost always decorated in some way. The wooden elements—often both the head and the handle (traditionally the head is made of iron, brass or wood—the ones sold as souvenirs are often gold or silver)—are carved and then painted, while the metal elements are usually engraved.



Ciupaga, photo: Wojciech Krynski



A highlanders pipe, photo: Lukasz Solski

Górale also make their own smoking utensils—*fajki* (pipes), *przekolace* (a tool used to clean a pipe) and *miechórki* (used for tobacco storage). Przekolac are often decorated with an ornament engraved on one of its sides, while miechórki are usually adorned with braided straps. Tobacco pipes made by Polish highlanders are very distinct from any other types—they're heavily carved, with tin chains and a tiny tin cockerel on their lids.

Wood carving is the highlanders' defining characteristic. It's not only about sculptures and cipagi; furniture, house elevations, walls—you name it—are all perfect material for wood carving. The incisions make up distinct patterns and recognizable ornaments, which you can also spot on Górale's clothes—belts and trousers in particular. *Parzenica* is a heart-shaped pattern adorning the highlanders' traditional trousers, but not simply to decorate them, but also to strengthen the fabric in areas prone to fraying. Nowadays, parzenica is also imprinted on different types of souvenirs; its embroidered on pillows, hoodies and t-shirts, printed on notebooks, engraved on cufflinks, there are even parzenica-shaped earrings and pendants. It has also become a popular motif for the tattoos of modern Tatry lovers.



Parzenice, Zakopane, photo: Adam Brzoza

(To be continued)

Soup Festival 2015

by Diane Holytz, Chairperson

This year's soup festival was enjoyed by 316 people who were anxious to enjoy a variety of soups. We had a great variety of Polish bakery supplied by our Polanki members, Polish pottery, folk art, and a raffle for Laski's benefit. Thank you so much to the soup makers: MaryEllen DeVito and Heddy Moskaluk-Bigos; Bernie Jendrzeczak and Sue Konecny-Tomato Soup with rice; Anne Wal-Savory Pumpkin Soup; Camille Shaw and Laurie Ufnowski-Potato Soup; Judy Chattin-Vegetable Beef Barley Soup; Anna Rogalski-Czarnina; Ela Wasielewski and Mike Norman-Mushroom Soup. Your culinary skill makes the soup festival a success. Thank you to all the members who volunteered to help on this special day.



Photos by Thomas Radoszewski and Barbara Rutkowski

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