



# Polanki, Inc.

The Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee Newsletter

April (Kwiecień) 2020

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## **Polanki Meeting April 3, 2020 Cancelled**

Polanki's regular membership meeting to be held on Friday April 3 at Villa St. Francis has been cancelled because of the corona virus. When in-person gatherings are possible again, Polanki will resume membership meetings. In the meantime, stay safe and well at home and keep in touch with each other through telephone calls, e-mails, prayers and thoughts.

### ***From the President: Our Present State of Affairs***



***(Photo courtesy of Joanne Barndt)***

Flexibility, tenaciousness, discipline, creativity: all things that our ancestors displayed through difficult times. Now is the time to catch up on reading, knitting, crocheting, listening to music, emailing, calling friends, organizing taxes, learning a new language (explore duo lingo) and cleaning MY closet. We can do this!

It's a great time to get to know ourselves better, appreciate our uniqueness, and express our special talents. Stay healthy, the busy time will come again. Please remember that if you need help, just pick up the phone and ask for help.

***Camille Shaw***

2020 Polanki President



## April Birthdays

4/01 Carol Sobanski Powers  
4/10 Kathy Wieczorek  
4/11 Sue Zblewski  
4/18 Barbara Januchowski  
4/21 Elena Shebelski  
4/27 Joe Shaw

Life Members Edith Malson and Geraldine Reszel continue to undergo rehabilitation after hospital stays. Please remember them in your thoughts and with a card or a phone call.

We wish them both a quick and lasting recovery.

## Upcoming Events: Polanki

**Until further notice, no Polanki events are being held.**

This includes membership meetings, the College Achievement Awards Tea and most likely Polish Fest.



## Community Corner

**Polish Center of Wisconsin:**  
**April 12 Easter Brunch--Cancelled**

**Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church:**  
**April 5 Syrena Swiecone 2020—Cancelled**

## Our Deepest Sympathy to

The family of sustaining member Anne Heinrich, who passed away in March, 2020.

## Annual Membership Dues

Annual active or sustaining membership renewals are due. Please fill out the membership form with payment and mail to the Polanki mailbox (P.O. Box 341458, Milwaukee, WI 53234). It is important to renew as soon as possible so committee members can have an updated list of activities and events you wish to participate in. This information is entered into the Polanki membership database, used for the membership directory and easily accessible to all committee chairs to identify volunteers for Polanki events. The sooner dues are paid, the sooner the 2020 membership directory can be prepared. Thank you in advance for your prompt renewals.

## **2020 College Achievement Award Winners**

The following students were selected to receive college achievement awards for 2020. They will receive their award certificates and checks through the mail and will be invited to be recognized at the 2021 college achievement award tea. Throughout the year the newsletter will feature essays written by the awardees. The first essay to be published follows on page 6 of this issue.

### **ANGELA DUBIEL MISCHKE MEMORIAL AWARD**

Denna Flemming  
University of Wisconsin-Parkside  
Master of Business Administration

### **NELLIE BARAN MEMORIAL AWARD**

Anna Fons  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
M.S.P.A., Professional Accounting and Auditing

### **CLARENCE AND ESTHER NOWICKI AWARD**

Aleksandra Grulkowski  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
B.A., English Literature and Polish

### **MSGR. ALFONSE S. POPEK MEMORIAL AWARD**

Katherine Hayes  
University of Colorado-Denver  
Ph.D., Biology

### **RITA AND EDWARD MICHALAK MEMORIAL AWARD**

Marta Kowalik  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Bachelor of Business Administration

### **STANLEY F. AND HELEN BALZERZAK MEMORIAL AWARD**

Martin Kozon  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Ph.D., European History, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Poland and East Central Europe

### **RUTH KLEWIN MEMORIAL AWARD**

Aleksandra Kubas  
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh  
B.S., Nursing

### **GEORGE AND BARBARA NIEMCZYCKI MEMORIAL AWARD**

Joanna Rogowski  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
B.F.A., Piano Performance

**VERA BUCZKOWSKI MEMORIAL AWARD**

Izabela Stankiewicz  
Northwestern University  
B.S., Biomedical Engineering, Pre-Med

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE: VICTOR PODLASKI POL-AM AWARD**

Julia Tager  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Ph.D., Clinical Psychology

**ELEANORE JENDRZEJCZAK MEMORIAL AWARD**

Sam Wisneski  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
M.A., Media Studies

**ANN LALASZ MEMORIAL AWARD**

Rachel Zawicki  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
B.A., Communication, Journalism

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**Public Television Airing “Flavor of Poland” Series: Two Left!**

While you are staying at home and looking for interesting diversions, you can still catch the last two television shows on the “Flavor of Poland” series. This charming food and travel series is hosted by Polish-born, US-raised actress Aleksandra August, who interviews chefs and home cooks and explore the history, culture and culinary heritage of medieval cities such as Kraków and Warsaw, visits an Olsztyn snail farm, learns to bake Toruń gingerbread and tastes the hearty food of Polish highlanders in the mountain city of Zakopane. She then returns to her kitchen to share recreations of new and traditional Polish dishes.

The Polish-US production team has visited over 30 Polish cities and towns. “Flavor of Poland” is produced by the Independent Film Factory, a Polish-American company producing TV shows, series, documentaries and feature films. This series is produced by WTTW Chicago and distributed by American Public Television.

Channel 10.1 (WMVS): 3:30 p.m. Saturday; Channel 36.1 (WMVT): 10:00 a.m. Sunday. The remaining shows are the following:

March 28-29	"Lublin"
April 4-5	“Zakopane"

The above dates are only for the Milwaukee PBS channels; check with other Wisconsin PBS stations for their dates and times for this series.

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# General Polanki News and Information

## The Polanki Library Will Still Need You!

The Polanki Library is a valuable resource for the entire Polish community. Polanki originally contributed \$75,000 for the construction of a library in the Polish Center and has been managing it ever since. Today, the library offers a wealth of books in both Polish and English, including classic and contemporary fiction, films, and nonfiction topics relating to history, geography, art, music, folklore, cooking, genealogy, tourism and more.

Once public gatherings are allowed again, the Library will resume its hours on Tuesdays from 12-2 p.m., on Wednesday evenings from 6-8 p.m. and during other special events at the Polish Center.

We are fortunate to have a cadre of dedicated volunteers, but with several of them recently on Polanki's sick list, we are in need of new helpers. No experience is necessary; we'll show you what to do, whether it be book-processing, record-keeping, or interacting with the public. Some familiarity with Polish genealogy would be especially helpful, but is not a requirement.

For more information, please contact Susan Mikoś, Pat Koronkowski, Edith Malson, or any other library volunteer.

## Polish Genealogy Interest Group

The next meeting of the Polish Genealogy Interest Group *is planned* for Saturday, May 9, from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Tippecanoe Library, located at 3912 South Howell Avenue. For more information, contact Susan Mikoś, Cindy Lepkowski, or Terri Cieslak. ***This meeting will be dependent on future announcements about the corona virus and whether public gatherings are recommended or not.***

## A Note from the Editor

During the necessary restrictions on our daily lives because of the corona virus, the Polanki Newsletter and frequent updates have kept all of us aware of rapidly changing events, including scheduled Polanki gatherings. We appreciate your patience and cooperation during this unsettled time and look forward to meeting again in person later this year. At this time the future of Polish Fest is undecided, along with other summer fests.

Please note that we may need to change the membership meeting location in the future as a health precaution for our members and residents of Villa St. Francis.

In order to publish the newsletter on the first of each month, the deadline to submit articles, photos or other copy will be the **25<sup>th</sup> of each month**. However, you can submit ideas for future issues at any time. I also encourage your comments or suggestions for improvements. You can reach me by telephone at 414-963-9055 or by email at [marjorie.piechowski@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marjorie.piechowski@sbcglobal.net)

Marjorie Piechowski  
2020 Polanki Newsletter Editor

## For Your Reading Pleasure

This essay was submitted by Julia Tager, who received the UWM Victor Podlaski POL-AM Award.

Olga Tokarczuk, a Polish novelist and winner of the 2019 Nobel Prize for her 2018 book *Flights*, is a product of post-war Polish culture, and her literature is peppered with allusions to it. The book is comprised of a series of interconnected vignettes about travel, psychology, and culture, each of which subtly nods to Tokarczuk's culture in a way that remains accessible to both Polish and non-Polish readers alike.

In the vignette, "Your Head in the World," the narrator describes studying psychology in the backdrop of a "big, gloomy communist city," eventually concluding that "anyone looking for order ought to steer clear of psychology altogether" (Tokarczuk, 2017, 10). Tokarczuk herself studied psychology in Warsaw before becoming a writer (Grey, 2018). She is bothered that psychology attempts to capture truth which cannot be known, using statistical methodology to teach its students "to believe that with such a tool we would be able to perfectly describe all the workings of the world."

Juxtaposed beside Tokarczuk's frustration with all that psychology cannot know, the academic building in which the narrator studied "had been the headquarters of an SS unit during the war" (Tokarczuk, 2018, 10). In collocating her descriptions of a symbol of oppression and brutality with a foolish attempt at making meaning in the world, she tactfully evokes within the reader her own intense discomfort. How could we ever expect an area of study to profess truths in a world where senseless tragedies occur? It seems that the daily lives of many Poles post-World War II exist in direct opposition to psychology's insistence that problems can be explained away by theories and statistics.

As a budding psychologist, I study the characteristics of distress in parents of children being treated in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Just as Tokarczuk implies that psychology cannot explain the horrors of war, I experience the frustration that our academic endeavors, however psychologically sound, cannot possibly ameliorate the parental heartbreak of having an ill or dying child. Attempting to find truth, Tokarczuk studies defense mechanisms, then concludes that without them, "If we simply saw the world as it was, with nothing to protect us, honestly and courageously, it would break our hearts" (Tokarczuk, 2018, 12).

Of course, Tokarczuk is not writing abstractly when she describes a world which "would break our hearts." Living in modern Poland, she is uniquely positioned to feel such heartbreak. To this day, there is "no family in Poland that is unaffected" by World War II, which maintains a strong grasp on the memories of Poles today (Hobson & Cole, 2019). Poland lost nearly 6 million people in the war (Telewizja Polska S.A., 2018), survivors of which commonly experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder exacerbated by a sociocultural reluctance to acknowledge the difficulty of those who suffered (Lis-Turlejska, Szumiał, & Drapała, 2018). Even for those born after World War II in Poland, the effects of intergenerational trauma likely persist (Khazan, 2018). In light of her country's tragic past, Tokarczuk skillfully captures the heartbreak so familiar in Poland today.

For both Polish and non-Polish audiences alike, Tokarczuk's "Your Head in the World" is a meditation on what we cannot know. She ends the vignette with a return to the senselessness of psychological methodology, reminding us of the "terribly dangerous" assumption "that we are constant, and that our reactions can be predicted" (Tokarczuk, 2018, 15). While Tokarczuk's words are uniquely accessible to those living in Poland amid the historical markers of the war, the piece serves as a familiar companion to anyone left frustrated by the senseless and sometimes tragic nature of this world.



## **It's a Small World** **by Camille Shaw**



St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's days were on the horizon and that means it is time to head south to New Orleans. On the way we planned short visits with various relatives, with one being at Crown Point, Indiana. The surprise and small world feeling came at lunch at Crown Point. My brother-in-law arranged for a luncheon and invited a gentleman from his writing class at the retirement campus. We met Mr. Stanley Kobata, who immigrated from Poland to the U.S.A.

*(Photo courtesy of Joanne Barndt)*

Before the lunch, I was sent a seventy-five page essay that Stanley had written on the holocaust and the sometime reaction of people who like to blame the Poles for mistreatment of the Jews, with little knowledge of the facts. I must admit that the tone that was apparent in the essay made me fear a heavy mood for our luncheon. Fortunately, my fears were totally unfounded. Stanley is a charming individual. He would have to be; he married a Polish girl from Milwaukee who lived near 27<sup>th</sup> and Oklahoma (perfect location-so near to Leon's), he knew about Polanki and, wait for it, knows Jerry and Heddy Moskaluk.

Lesson learned. Keep an open mind, reserve judgement, talk about Polanki, and a charming and memorable event may result. This is not finished as Stanley requested that I inform his kids of his charm. Certificate of charming gentleman to be created and sent.



**Palm Sunday in Poland**

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