



Polanki, Inc.

The Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee Newsletter

September (wrzesień) 2021

SEPTEMBER 20, 2021
MEMBERSHIP MEETING 6:30 P.M.
POLISH CENTER OF WISCONSIN
6941 South 68th Street, Franklin, WI 53132

To provide as safe a meeting as possible, we will expect in-person attendees to wear masks.

Hosts: Polanki Board of Directors

Program: Polish Rummage Sale and Costume Sale

Zoom Connection – to be sent separately

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President's Message, continued

This Sunday, September 12, your help is needed for Polanki's sales booth at the Polonia Sports Club. Contact Jean Wroblewski (jean.wroblewski@yahoo.com or 414-405-7753) if you can help with this fundraising event. We have had stalwart volunteers for our last in-person events but we would enjoy seeing new faces. Volunteering is a wonderful way to make friends and really enjoy Polanki. The event itself is very enjoyable, so give it a try. Polanki is most enjoyable when a member is involved and generously gives of her time and talent. Please join the membership meeting either in-person or on Zoom. It is time to re-connect.

Camille Shaw, 2021 President

From the President's Desk



(Photo courtesy of Joanne Barndt)

Although there is still uncertainty, change, and worry, there is also hope, flexibility, acceptance and compassion. Hopefully, our September membership meeting will be a time to reconnect. Our flexibility comes into play by offering a Zoom connection for members who prefer not to meet in person. Since we have not held a combined Zoom and in-person meeting before, please show compassion as we learn new techniques.

Following our recent tradition, the September program will be a Polish rummage sale to benefit Laski School for the Blind in Poland. Please bring items to donate that someone else can purchase and enjoy, along with your stash of coins. Polanki costume pieces will also be for sale. They are very reasonably priced and will allow members to buy pieces to wear for fundraising events.

The Polanki library will be open a half hour before the meeting, giving the opportunity to borrow books from the library or to purchase used books for your enjoyment. For some members this may be a time to introduce yourself to this Polanki gem.

Polanki Meeting Update

By Kathy Murkowski and Ewa Barczyk-Pease

2020 was not the year of our dreams. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic our life changed. Everything we did had to be altered from the way we work, shop, and worship to the way we meet and socialize. Polanki could no longer meet at Villa St. Francis because of safety concerns for our members and Villa's residents due to Covid-19 so we pivoted to ZOOM meetings. Technology allowed us to share why we sheltered in place.

The Polanki Board of Directors looked for a new place to meet since Villa St. Francis no longer was an option. A list of criteria were discussed, and venues were reviewed. The criteria included location- near the majority of members, accessibility, safety, parking, cost, and an area to socialize with food.



Over 20 places were considered, from parks such as the Domes, Hubbard Lodge, South Shore Park Terrace, private clubs including Elks Club, Whitefish Bay Women's Club, Jewish Community Center, St. Francis Community Center, Serb Hall, parishes/schools (St. Gregory the Great, Blessed Sacrament, Convent of Sisters of St. Francis Assisi and Alverno College).

After much discussion it was decided that the ***Polish Center of Wisconsin (6941 South 68th Street, Franklin, WI 53132)*** was the best venue for us. It met the majority of the criteria and one of the best for cost per meeting.

Picture retrieved from Polish Center of Wisconsin Facebook page

Our meetings will now be on the ***third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.*** because of the availability of space. Please note the new time as well as the new date. We will continue to have a Zoom option and the Polanki Library will be open for a half hour prior to the meetings for members to explore and enjoy.

Precautions for In-Person Meetings

As mentioned, the Zoom option will continue to be available for future meetings. In light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, heightened by the delta variant, Polanki will continue to follow CDC guidance. The CDC recently recommended that in areas of high transmission, even vaccinated people should wear a mask. High transmission areas include Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, and Washington counties.

Following these guidelines, ***we ask that you wear a mask*** while engaging in our in-person meetings and other indoor activities, disinfect hands frequently, and practice social distance. Above all, if you feel ill, do not participate in person. The sooner the pandemic is under control, the sooner we can get back to enjoying each other in less restrictive environments.

We look forward once again to seeing many of you in person at the Polish Center of Wisconsin.





September Birthdays

9/02 Nancy Rydell
Joanna Frączek
9/04 Mirosław Rogalski
9/05 Jenny Skwierawski
9/07 Judy Chattin
9/12 Diane Ullstrup
9/13 Barbara Mueller
9/16 Joanne Barndt
9/17 Susan Mullikin
9/21 Teresa Frankowski
9/27 Juliane Gaseor
9/29 Heddy Moskaluk
9/30 Dana Michaels

Community News and Information

The Polish Center of Wisconsin continues to host a Piwo Patio Party and Café on Wednesdays throughout October from 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Polish Heritage Alliance General Membership Meeting September 23 at the Polish Center of Wisconsin.

Polonia Sport Club is having its Harvest Festival (*Dożynki*) on September 12th at 10200 West Loomis Road, Franklin, WI, 53132. Celebrating fall with a traditional Polish Harvest celebration, starting with a Catholic mass with Archbishop Jerome Listecki at 1 p.m. at the beautiful, newly renovated mountaineer chapel.

This will be followed by delicious Polish food and roasted chicken. Music by DJ Szymon of Silver Orkiestra. Youth & adult soccer games, bounce house, air hockey, foosball, volleyball court, Polish Bolesławiec pottery and woodwork on sale. Fundraising raffle with various prizes that include a top prize of \$5000! Free admission and parking.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!



If you know of any Polanki members who are sick, please contact Judy Chattin, who is serving as Sunshine Co-Chair this year along with Edith Malson.

Edith Malson (414) 744-9412

Judy Chattin (414) 425-7965



Polanki sends our condolences to Active Member Judy Chattin, whose brother-in-law passed away on August 12.



Congratulations to Jessica (Ullstrup) Condit and Jeff Condit!

Baby Benjamin arrived on August 23 at 10:15 a.m., 7 pounds 10 ounces, 21 inches. Jessica reports that he is strong and healthy!



Photo courtesy of Jessica Condit

Pani Ada Dziewanowska (1917-2021)



Memorial Mass and Reception will be held on Friday September 24 at St. Josaphat's Basilica at 2:00

Celebrants: Most Reverend Jerome Listeki, Archbishop of Milwaukee and Fr. Mike Hammer

Reception will follow at the Polish Center of Wisconsin. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly asks that donations be made to Syrena Polish Folk Dance Ensemble in her honor.

Wisconsin Assembly Recognizes Kościuszko Monument Restoration

by Susan Mikoś

On July 31, Wisconsin State Assembly Rep. Sylvia Ortiz-Velez presented a citation to the Restore Kościuszko Monument group for preserving and maintaining the Kościuszko Monument and its surroundings. The citation also references Polanki and the Lincoln Village Business Association.

In the early 1900s, leaders of Milwaukee's Polish American community decided it was time they paid public tribute to their most important national hero, Tadeusz Kościuszko – a Polish military engineer and champion of human rights, who fought for freedom in the American Revolution and in Poland. Representatives of several Polish organizations formed a committee and began raising funds to create a permanent memorial. They held fundraising picnics and performances. Polish parishes and fraternal organizations systematically solicited contributions from their members. Many donations were twenty-five cents, and some were as little as five cents. In eighteen months, the committee raised over \$13,000 (roughly \$360,000 in today's dollars) and announced an international competition to select the artist.

A special committee chose Italian-born sculptor Gaetano Trentanove to create a bronze statue of General Tadeusz Kościuszko on horseback. Trentanove, a charismatic artist who divided his time between Milwaukee and Florence, created the mold and personally supervised the bronze casting in Florence. The statue was shipped in two parts to Milwaukee, where it was mounted on a marble base at the north end of Kościuszko Park, in the heart of the city's largest Polish neighborhood. Milwaukee's Polish community proudly presented the Kościuszko Monument to the City of Milwaukee in 1905.

According to the Milwaukee Sentinel, some 60,000 people attended the dedication ceremony, which generated great excitement across the entire South Side and brought visitors from around the country. In 1951, the statue was moved from its original location to the southern part of Kościuszko Park, on Lincoln Avenue. Over the years, countless parades, patriotic celebrations, political meetings, and other important events have been held in the shadow of the Kościuszko Monument.

Over more than a century of exposure to the elements, however, the bronze significantly deteriorated. Diane Buck, a local art educator, identified the Kościuszko Monument as one of a “Dirty Dozen” Milwaukee sculptures in dire need of conservation. In 2008, radiography and metal analysis revealed extensive damage to both the exterior and interior. Members of the Lincoln Village Business Association and Polanki, the Polish Women’s Cultural Club of Milwaukee, formed the Restore Kościuszko Monument Committee and launched a fundraising campaign.

Over the next five years, hundreds of individuals and organizations contributed more than \$300,000. Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee contributed an additional \$110,000 to upgrade the area surrounding the monument. In the spring of 2013, the statue was removed to the McKay Lodge Art Conservation Laboratory in Oberlin, Ohio. The bronze was repaired, cleaned, and given a fresh patina, similar to the original. New landscaping, lighting, and a flagpole were installed to provide the statue with a suitable setting.

The restored monument was rededicated on November 11, 2013 – Veterans Day in the U.S. and Independence Day in Poland. Some two hundred people braved an early snow storm to celebrate Kościuszko’s return to the park that bears his name. The outdoor ceremony included laying of a wreath, speeches by community leaders, and a performance by the Syrena Polish Folk Dance Ensemble. Milwaukee Public Television created a documentary film, *Memorializing Kościuszko*, to tell the story of Kościuszko the man, his monument in Milwaukee, and the community effort to restore it.



Looking to the future, the Kościuszko Monument will receive ongoing care. The bronze needs regular cleaning and waxing. In addition, the landscaping around the Monument requires upkeep. In 2017, Polanki established an endowment fund with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, to ensure that the Kościuszko Monument survives for future generations.

Community volunteers keep watch over the area and help tend the gardens, including several Polanki members who are regular participants. In the surrounding neighborhood, new immigrants are taking the place of the original Poles, but Kościuszko’s legacy is universal. More than a century after the statue’s creation, Milwaukee residents and visitors of all ethnicities still pay tribute to the Polish general who championed liberty and human rights for everyone.

Photo courtesy of Susan Mikoś

Polish Costumes for Sale at the September 20th Polanki Meeting

By Kathy Wiczorek

In conjunction with the annual Polanki rummage sale to benefit Laski at the September meeting, a collection of Polish costume-styled garments will be sold. Over many years, members donated to Polanki a variety of embroidered and smocked blouses, velvet beaded and embroidered vests, floral skirts, and embroidered and tulle aprons that Edith Malson graciously stored and loaned out.



Due to the large selection of garments, including costumes donated and stored at the Polanki Library, a committee was formed to assess the entire collection. The committee concluded that some clothing will be permanently preserved along with the Ada Dziewanowska dance costume collection, but the majority will be sold at the September meeting. Historically, Polanki members have been encouraged to wear folk costumes at public events such as the Holiday Folk Fair and Polish Fest. Over the years, stylized costumes have evolved, sometimes known as "tourist" clothing that blended regional

creations using embroidery and beading with floral designs. These vintage garments represented in the photos are some of those handcrafted items purchased in Poland or made by Polanki members.

We hope new and existing members who do not have any Polish-inspired clothing will consider purchasing a garment, not only to preserve a Polanki tradition of wearing costumes, but also to help promote the variety of colorful handcrafted textiles associated with our culture and heritage. Additionally, all purchases will benefit a newly established Polanki Costume Fund for the maintenance and preservation of the permanent costume collection for future generations.



Photos courtesy of Kathy Wiczorek

As expected with any vintage clothing, there are some condition issues; however, the committee decided the garments are wearable and are priced to sell from \$5 to \$45 for skirts, vests, blouses, aprons and scarves. Additionally, some linens are also available for purchase. Many thanks to Camille Shaw, Tamara Johnston, Susan Mikoś, and Bernie Jendrzczak for taking the time to evaluate all the donated textiles.

Any questions, please feel free to contact Kathy Wiczorek at 262-785-1196 or kwiczorek@sbcglobal.net

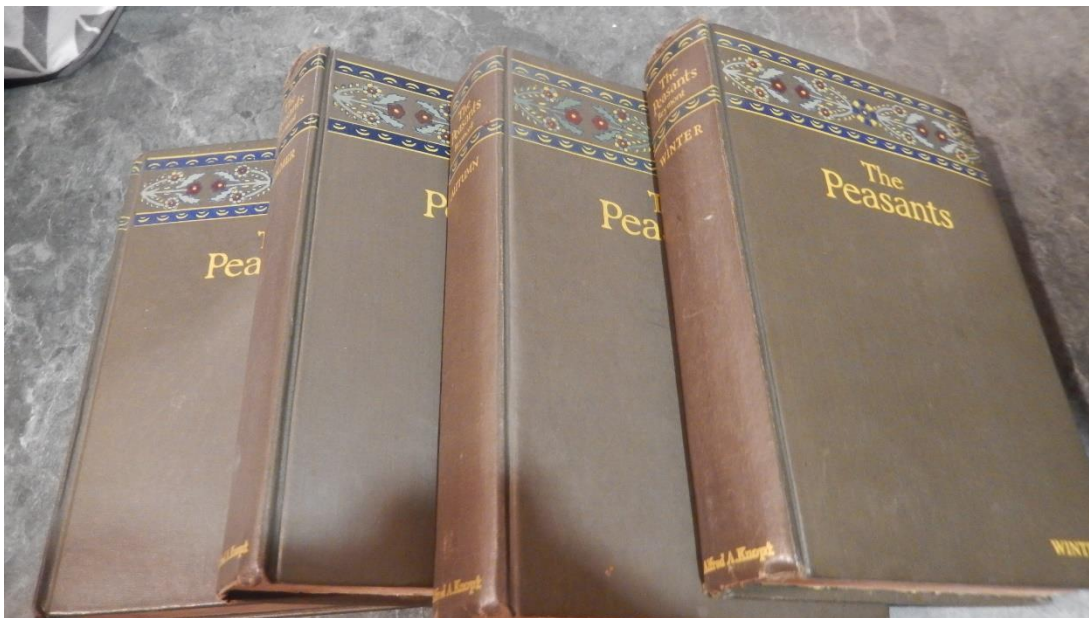
Kathy Wiczorek, Development Committee Chair

What's New in the Polanki Library?

By Susan Mikoś

We've been busy through the summer, processing donations and participating in sales events at the Polish Center of Wisconsin and Polonia Sport Club. We also assisted patrons with family history and musical research, and loaned books to a few dedicated readers.

Among the Library's recent donations is a sought-after English translation of Władysław Reymont's Nobel Prize winning novel, *The Peasants* (*Chłopi* in Polish). In four volumes (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer), it follows an eventful year in the life of the Boryna family. As compelling as the family drama is the picture of Polish village life that Reymont evokes, with vivid descriptions of holiday customs, wedding celebrations, social relations, and the daily struggle for survival. If your ancestors came from a Polish village and you would like to understand what their lives may have been like, this is a must-read.



(Photo courtesy of Susan Mikoś)

Select Polanki in Amazon Smile!

amazonsmile If you shop with Amazon you can support Polanki, at no cost to you, every time you shop! Simply set up Polanki one time as your Amazon Smile non-profit recipient and Amazon will then donate 0.05% of your eligible purchases to our organization. When customers sign up for AmazonSmile, they're asked to select one of over a million charities to support. When you click on the Polanki unique link, you will skip this charity selection process. Instead, you will be taken to smile.amazon.com and will automatically be asked if you want to support POLANKI. **The POLANKI unique charity link:** <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/39-6068373>

Polanki information and the Polanki link to Amazon Smile is on the Website at www.polanki.org

Editor's note: For many years Polanki has contributed to Laski, a school for blind children near Warsaw. This story was retrieved from *Crux* on September 2, 2021 <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-europe/2021/09/blind-polish-noblewoman-who-founded-religious-order-set-for-beatification/>

Blind Polish noblewoman who founded religious order set for beatification

By Paulina Guzik September 1, 2021

Although most eyes will be on Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, a spiritual father to St. John Paul II, during a September 12 beatification ceremony in Warsaw, a blind countess who founded a religious order in the country will also be raised to the altars that day. Countess Róża Czacka, born in 1876 to one of the most prominent noble Polish families of the time, was only 22 when she lost her sight in a horse-riding accident. She later created the Society for the Care of the Blind, and then founded the Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross, turning tragedy into sanctity.

Mother Elżbieta, born Countess Róża Czacka, in a 1926 file photo. (Picture credit: Franciscan Sisters the Servants of the Cross.)

Beginning in the 1940's, Wyszyński – then a priest – was a frequent guest at her society's headquarters. The future cardinal and Czacka were close friends until the nun's death in 1961, and both were deeply devoted to the Virgin Mary. It is therefore fitting they will be beatified together in the same ceremony.



A blind noblewoman finds a purpose

In 1898, Poland was still divided under Russian, Prussian and Austrian rule after the partitions of the late 18th century. Czacka's parents didn't want to give up on restoring the sight of the 20-year-old heiress, and she went through a series of operations. Once she went to the doctor on her own and asked him to tell her frankly whether she was going to be able to see after another operation. The doctor didn't give her hope on ending her blindness, but told her, "You have the education, take care of the blind people in the region, because no one does."

Sister Alberta Chorążyczewska, an author of the *positio* in the beatification process of Czacka, told the story to *Crux*. "She locked herself in the room for three days after hearing this from the doctor and then left her house and said – I packed myself and decided to go," said Chorążyczewska, adding that the decision "was sacred" for the countess.

At the threshold of 20th century, she started an almost 10-year journey across Europe. Completely blind, Czacka went to France, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, and Germany to discover the latest methodologies on caring for the blind. She returned to Poland with a modern library and equipment to teach the blind to read and write. Chorążyczewska said Czacka didn't think twice when she decided to contribute her financial heritage to the work of her life, and the Society for the Care of the Blind was created in 1911.

Soon, it grew into a venue with an orphanage, school, workshops, Braille library and a mission to take care of the adult blind people and their families in Warsaw. "She lost her sight. But with helping the blind, teaching them how to read and write she brought a life back to them and to herself," Chorążyczewska told *Crux*. "She realized that even without sight, you can be fully human. You can have an occupation, you can help others and you can be useful in society," she added.

Founding a religious order and the move to Laski

In 1918, after Poland gained its independence during the First World War, she became Mother Elżbieta and founded the Franciscan Sisters the Servants of the Cross. It was not easy, however, for a blind woman to start a new order, and one of the priests of the archdiocesan offices was reported to say, “What a whim of a blind lady to set up an order.” However, her aristocratic blood got her a hearing, and finally accepted. In 1922, she moved her Society for the Blind to Laski, a village north-east of Warsaw, and established what was one of the most advanced educational centers for the blind in Europe.



Mother Elżbieta, born Countess Róża Czacka, in a 1936 file photo. (Picture credit: Franciscan Sisters the Servants of the Cross.)

“Without her deep faith she couldn’t stand multiple tragedies and hardships she’s been through,” said Mother Judyta Olechowska, the current superior of Franciscan Sisters the Servants of the Cross. “Losing her sight was only the beginning of her way of the cross,” she said. In 1939, during the German invasion of Poland and bombardment of Warsaw, Czacka received a head injury. During the 1944 Warsaw uprising, Czacka allowed her blind protégées to fight the Nazis in the only way they could – by helping the Underground Polish Army soldiers.

Her school and home for the blind in Laski were almost destroyed during the war after being bombed by the Germans. Her beloved library was turned to ash. And yet, she comforted a friend afterwards by saying, “Look at the damage in Warsaw: The city was leveled, and Laski only got some windows broken.”

“During those dramatic times, she showed great courage, internal serenity and complete trust in God,” Olechowska told *Crux*. “This work is from God and for God. There is no reason for it to be operating otherwise,” she said, quoting Czacka. Laski soon became a magnet for people searching for God and faith. Lay people and nuns were working together as a team, which was not that common in the Church in the mid-20th century.

In 1950, Czacka became sick with cancer, which eventually led to her death on May 15, 1961. “We have a clock in the museum we’re creating,” Olechowska told *Crux*. “This clock is something that Mother Czacka owned but it tells a lot about her.” The simple wooden box hides a beautiful 19th century antique clock. “That was our mother – a countess from the noble house that traded everything for the simple life of God’s servant; the servant of the blind, and in that simplicity she led her life.”

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A Note from the Editor

As we try to resume in-person meetings and public events, we will keep you informed and updated as circumstances change. ***At this point we are planning our traditional Christmas party and the College Achievement Awards Tea, both to be held at the Polish Center of Wisconsin.***

If you have ideas for future stories or potential meeting programs, please contact me or submit ideas at marjorie.piechowsk@sbcglobal.net or 414-963-9055.

Marjorie Piechowski
2021 Polanki Newsletter Editor



(Photo courtesy of Marjorie Piechowski)

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