



Polanki, Inc.

The Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee Newsletter
June, July, and August (czerwiec, lipiec, i sierpień) 2022

Polanki Membership Meeting Monday June 6, 2022 6:30 p.m. Polish Center of Wisconsin

Program: Polish Fest Details and Logistics

**Hostesses: Pat Koronkowski, Diane Laus,
Marjorie Piechowski, Katherine Ratenski, and
Elena Shebelski**

To join the meeting via Zoom:

[https://wisconsin-
edu.zoom.us/j/94637263548?pwd=YVVuMzBJL
1ZxR0lPVEFyM1B2VjNCQT09](https://wisconsin-edu.zoom.us/j/94637263548?pwd=YVVuMzBJL1ZxR0lPVEFyM1B2VjNCQT09)

Meeting ID: 946 3726 3548 Passcode: 927741
Dial by your location
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) and enter
Meeting ID: 946 3726 3548

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From the President's Desk



(Photo courtesy of Laurie Ufnowski)

It's hard for me to believe that May is almost over and Polish Fest is around the corner. I want to thank everyone who responded to our request for help and a special "Thank You" to Diane Holytz for making phone calls to recruit volunteers.

I also want to give an extra special "Thank You" to Ewa Barczyk-Pease and Camille Shaw for their diligent work on the Cultural Village. I greatly appreciate your unending support. Finally, I want to thank all the others who have stepped up and volunteered to help out when needed. I am so PROUD of our Polanki membership. That is why we continue to THRIVE as an organization.

Let's pray for a successful Polish Fest and especially for our sales booth. I look forward to seeing many of you there. Let's come back strong in 2022 and begin the road back to normal.

My cell phone number is 262-347-8962. Please keep it handy if you need anything. Leave a voice mail if I don't answer. I will check my phone often.

Lastly, I want to wish everyone a beautiful and safe summer. Please take time and relax and enjoy. We all need and deserve to have some fun. I hope to see you at the Polish Center Café nights where we can share a glass of wine and just talk. I know I could really use that. Again, thank you for all you do for Polanki. It is such a pleasure and honor to belong to this organization.

Laurie Ufnowski
2022 Polanki President

Final Reminder: 2022 Annual Membership Dues

Please note that your annual active or sustaining membership renewal is due. *To renew, fill out the membership form (included with this mailing) and send it with your payment to Lynn Adams, Membership Chair, at the Polanki mail box.*

You can also send the form and payment directly to Lynn at her home address or *renew in person at the June 6 membership meeting. Note that members who have not renewed by the June membership meeting will no longer receive the newsletter and will not be included in the 2022 member directory.* Thank you in advance for your prompt renewals. Your continued support is important for Polanki's future success and planned activities that we are resuming.

You Have a Second Chance

By Kathy Murkowski

Tomasz Lenkiewicz presented a wonderful discussion of Casimir Pulaski - Rebel, Exile, and Legionnaire - at the May membership meeting. With numerous and colorful slides, his engaging presentation style prompted many questions. His knowledge kept us all wanting more and wanting to check out his grandfather's book about Pulaski. If you missed his talk or would love to see it again, come to hear him at Polish Fest. We will have the opportunity to hear Mr. Lenkiewicz speak on Saturday June 11 at 5 p.m. and Sunday June 12 at noon. Don't miss out!

Polish Fest Speakers

Here's a preview of the speakers and their topics to be presented at this year's Polish Fest. You will find them speaking in a tent within the Cultural Village.

FRIDAY JUNE 10

12:00 p.m. Steve Szabados
Finding Grandma's Polish Ancestors

2:30 p.m. Steve Szabados
Polish Immigration to America (genealogy)

7:30 p.m. Martin Kozon
*Danzig to Gdańsk, Lwów to Lviv:
Poland's changing borders since 1569*

SATURDAY JUNE 11

12:00 p.m. Steve Szabados
Polish Immigration to America (genealogy)

2:30 p.m. Steve Szabados
Finding Grandma's Polish Ancestors

5:00 p.m. Tomasz Lenkiewicz
Casimir Pulaski: Rebel, Exile and Legionnaire

SUNDAY JUNE 12

12:00 p.m. Tomasz Lenkiewicz
Casimir Pulaski: Rebel, Exile and Legionnaire

2:00 p.m. Don Pienkos
Role of Polonia in Poland's entry into NATO

3:00 p.m. Neal Pease
Poland and Ukraine through the centuries



June Birthdays

6/01 Molly Skwierawski
6/01 June Czarnecki
6/06 Esther Nowicki
6/13 Anne Gurnack
6/16 Urszula Tempska
6/16 Jennifer Flores
6/17 Rita Rose Mauermann
6/18 Jessica Ullstrup Condit
6/21 Teresa Jankowski
6/23 Angela Glowacki

July Birthdays

7/04 Elżbieta Walentynowicz
7/06 Audrey Skwierawski
7/10 Adrienne Zuber
7/14 Ewa Melenchuk
7/15 Anna Kozłowski
7/17 Tamara Johnston
7/17 Ruth Brzezinski
7/20 Kim Swedowski
7/28 Katherine Ott
7/29 Suzanne Holcomb
7/30 Laurie Ufnowski

August Birthdays

8/02 Joanna Frączek
8/04 Susan Cieslak
8/04 Charlene Kaletka Delaney
8/05 Barbara Rutkowski
8/06 Loretta Nyland
8/08 Kathy Camacho
8/08 Janine Adamczyk
8/09 Gloria Skwierawski
8/10 Dolores Winkler
8/10 Christine Ostrowski
8/19 Louise Cieslak
8/21 Jeanne Ziebka
8/25 Bernie Jendrzeczek
8/27 Paula Meisner
8/31 Susan Mikoś



Polanki sends best wishes for a speedy return to good health to the following *Active Members who are now recovering from surgeries and other health issues: Diane Holytz, Anne Wal, Ewa Melenchuk, and Teresa Frankowski.*

Congratulations to *Active Member Loretta Nyland*, whose grandson, Fr. Matthew Ferch, was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee by Archbishop ListECKI on May 21. His first assignment will be at St Francis Borgia in Cedarburg. Fr. Ferch spoke at the 2021 Polanki Christmas party about Our Lady of Częstochowa.

Please remember these Polanki members and those who are confined to their homes and greet them with a card, an email, a phone call or a visit. If you know of other members who are sick or who would appreciate sunshine greetings, please contact Judy Chattin or Edith Malson:

Edith Malson
(414) 744-9412-home

Judy Chattin
(414) 425-7965-home
(414) 429-2196-cell
j.chattin@sbcglobal.net

Songs of the Polish Soul

By Joanne and Michael Barndt

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in May with the generous sponsorship of Polanki Life Member Edith Malson, Polanki presented a spring concert, *Songs of the Polish Soul*. Kinga Vnuk and her ensemble, the Modern Minstrels, explored traditional folk melodies, instrumental works, song settings of Polish poetry and Kinga's own original works. Born in Poland, Kinga has focused her musical interest on the music of Poland and brings her skills as a composer, arranger, and performer to her work.

The Ensemble consisted of Tatiana Migliaccio, violin, Ingrid Tihcheva, cello, Marie Venné, flute, and Julia Vnuk, violin. Kinga alternated between piano and harp and sang most of the vocals, often joined by Venné and Julia Vnuk, her daughter.



Occasionally, the ensemble became a family affair as her husband, Jonathan Vnuk, and young son added percussion. Kinga's arrangements not only harmonize the instruments in the ensemble, but also add embellishments, particularly for violin and cello, challenging the skills of the performers.

The highlight of the concert was Kinga's adaptation of the writings of Renaissance poet, Jan Kochanowski, to music. One of the most familiar poets of Poland, Kochanowski writes of nature, life, and community celebrations. His most famous poem series, *Treny* (Laments), reflects on the death of his young daughter

Urszula. Kinga's melodic adaptations are true to folk music traditions and the mix of traditional songs, arrangements of poetry, and original material worked together to present a satisfying whole.



The concert was followed by a traditional Polish reception prepared by Polanki members and a gallery display of Kinga Vnuk's paintings. *Photos courtesy of Joanne Barndt*

Noc Świętojańska / St. John's Eve

By Susan Mikoś

In Polish tradition, the Summer Solstice on June 24 coincides with the Feast of St. John the Baptist. The night before – **St. John's Eve** – is a night of magic and miracles connected with the sun, water, fire, and fertility. According to beliefs dating back to pagan times, the earth glows with celestial fires; the sun dips into the rivers and dances in the sky. Devils and witches gather for feasts and revelry, and make mischief for humans. Animals talk to each other in human voices, and some plants take on magical properties. Certain flowers and grasses, made into wreaths, can foretell one's fate in marriage. At midnight, the barren fern blooms with a flaming flower -- if only one can find it.

On hills and mountaintops, or in forest clearings, huge bonfires are ignited by rubbing sticks together or striking flints, because the fire of this night must be “live” or “new.” Old and young gather around the fires for dancing, singing, and general merrymaking. When the flames die down, young men and girls jump over the fires in pairs;

if they keep their hands clasped together, it is a sign that they will soon marry.



Young people throughout Poland spend St. John's Eve in playing games and kindling magical bonfires. Special songs are sung, mostly having to do with marriage. The girls dress in long, loose white robes and weave wreaths of flowers and herbs. If they are close to a river or pond, they attach lighted candles to their wreaths and float them on the water. While the girls watch from shore, the boys retrieve the wreaths from boats or by jumping into the water. Legend has it that fate directs the wreath toward the maker's true love and future husband.

One of Polanki's earliest events was a *Świętojanki*, or St. John's Eve celebration, held in Mitchell Park on June 21, 1953. It involved a number of Polish organizations and drew some six thousand spectators. The program included an orchestra playing Polish melodies, a procession of boats carrying costumed singers, and lighted wreaths cast into the lagoon.

Ever since, Polanki has worked to keep this and other folk traditions alive. In 2015, Polanki's cultural booth at Holiday Folk Fair featured St. John's Eve customs; the exhibit was re-created at Polish Fest the following June. The bookmark distributed that year at the Holiday Folk Fair included the above picture and a brief description of St. John's Eve. The picture, owned by Polanki, was painted by Alicja Edwards, the sister in law of ***Polanki Life Member Heddy Moskaluk*** and sister of ***Sustaining Member Jerry Moskaluk***. For the past 30 years, Polanki members have been fashioning floral head wreaths for sale and for members to wear, carrying the tradition into modern times.

(Sources: *Song, Dance, and Customs of Peasant Poland* by Sula Benet, Polish Heritage Publications, 1996, pp. 71-73; *A Brief History of Polanki, Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee 1953-1973*, by Angela T. Pienkos, 1973, p. 6).

Editor's Note: Polanki received this thank you letter on May 28, 2022 from the Kosciuszko Foundation, which was sent to donors for the Help Ukraine Fund.

We want to thank all those who supported this year's Kosciuszko Foundation Ball for Ukrainian refugees. So far, together, we've already provided:

- **\$300,000 for food, medical supplies and other humanitarian aid** given directly to women and children fleeing Russian bombs,
- An additional **\$100,000.00 on educational programs** and grants - "Freedom Starts with Your Mind,"
- We are now offering grants of **\$2,500.00** per Ukrainian scholar who had to flee the war,
- **Free university courses** taught by leading U.S. professors, so-called "The Flying University," in the humanities and social sciences for Ukrainian students whose academic lives have been disrupted by the war.
- Nearly **\$20,000** for children's book in Ukrainian and Polish language courses (as a second language).

Over 300 distinguished guests and loyal donors attended this year's ball. Even though we were delighted to see all of our guests after two long years of the pandemic, we all knew the true purpose of the event. During

the evening, we ran a special donation campaign, in which our sponsor, **Ms. Krystyna Piórkowska, made a \$500 donation for each \$1,000 collected** during the evening.



As of today, we have raised nearly **\$1.5M** and this event alone brought over **\$400,000**. The proceeds will help with several associated charitable organizations across Poland and Ukraine like our main partners, the Folkowisko Foundation and the SOK Foundation, that are doing the hard work on the ground.

As the war continues, the needs change; therefore we strive to provide more educational programs, grants, while not forgetting about basic needs like food and medical supplies. Our speaker Katia Roman-Trzaska said, *"We will see the effects of this war for many decades to come. That's why our work is so critical. We are not just helping Ukrainians. We are investing and raising up the generations of all our countries."*

That's why we should not be indifferent. Please contribute towards our Help Ukraine Fund.



Twelve Random Facts About Poland

Retrieved and edited from [72 Interesting Facts about Poland | FactRetriever.com](https://www.factretriever.com/72-interesting-facts-about-poland/) on May 28, 2022

1. Poland's formal name is *Rzeczpospolita Polska* (Republic of Poland).
2. Poland has 120,562 square miles (312,255 km²) of area, which makes the country slightly smaller than New Mexico.
3. Poland's highest point is Mt. Rysy at 8,199 feet (2,499 m); its lowest is near Raczki Elbląskie at 6.56 feet (2 m) below sea level.
4. The word "Poland" is the Anglicized version of *Polska*, which is ultimately derived from the word for "field." Thus, Poland means "land of the Poles"—which could be a reference to the Polans, Polanies, or Polonians, who were to eventually unite the territories of Poland and establish the first Polish national dynasty, the Piast.
5. Poland joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004.
6. The Polish flag has two equal horizontal bands of white (top) and red; the colors derive from the Polish emblem, which is a white eagle on a red field. Poland's flag is similar to the flags of Indonesia and Monaco, which are red (top) and white (bottom).
7. Poland's national anthem is *Dąbrowski's Mazurek*. The anthem, commonly known as "Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła" ("Poland Has Not Yet Perished"), was written in 1797 by Jozef Wybicki. The anthem was composed in Italy, where Polish troops were fighting at the side of Napoleon.
8. The first Polish ruler recorded in history was Mieszko, about A.D. 963. In 966, he adopted Christianity, making Poland the easternmost country within the orbit of Latin culture.
9. The 380,000-acre (150,000-hectare) Białowieża Primeval Forest in Poland is Europe's last ancient forest and home to 800 European bison, Europe's heaviest land animals.
10. Polish King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk became known as the "Father of Europe." Of his nine children, one became a cardinal, four became kings, one was canonized, and the three daughters were married off to become mothers of the heirs of the greatest dynasties in Western Europe.
11. On November 11, 1918, Poland declared itself a republic, independent of Russia. Poles have celebrated their Independence Day as a national holiday on November 11th since 1937. However, public celebration of the holiday was forbidden from 1939–1989, while Poland was under a Communist government. Since the collapse of that government, Independence Day has become the most important Polish national holiday.
12. It is estimated that 100 million *pączki* are consumed every year on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday alone.



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A Note from the Editor

Thank you to all Polanki members who generously provided ideas, pictures and stories for this issue and throughout the year. Please note that this month's issue lists birthdays for all three summer months because this will be the last newsletter until our regular meetings resume again in September.

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

Marjorie Piechowski
2022 Polanki Newsletter Editor



(Photo courtesy of Marjorie Piechowski)

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