



Polanki, Inc.

The Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee Newsletter

December (grudzień) 2022

2022 Polanki Christmas Party
December 18, 2022
Polish Center of Wisconsin
11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.



[Photo courtesy of Susan Mikoś]

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From the President's Desk



[Photo courtesy of Laurie Ufnowski]

Dear Polanki Members:

I can hardly believe we are in the final month of the year and the holidays are upon us. Our November was extremely busy and now December is starting out the same way. I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving celebrating with family and friends. I know I did. It was a beautiful day.

As we start the Christmas season the Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum and Polish Center trees have been beautifully decorated thanks to our members. Each site looks fabulous and thanks to Jean Wroblewski, the Dousman Stagecoach House trees have some of our finest glass ornaments. Ewa Barczyk set a beautiful Wigilia table for display with posters explaining our Polish traditions and Kathy Wieczorek set up beautiful costumed mannequins.

I am so proud of our Polanki members who made our Polish heritage and culture shine in these displays. I want to personally thank Ewa Barczyk, Nadine Flemming, Louise and Paul Cieslak,

President's Message, continued

Teresa Frankowski, Camille Shaw, Margaret Wadzinske, Kathy Wieczorek and Jean Wroblewski for their decorating skills at the Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum. We could not have done it without all your help. I also thank everyone who volunteered to help decorate even if you were not able to participate. It just shows the support we have from our members to share our wonderful Polish culture with the Milwaukee community.

We also had an excellent turnout at Holiday Folk Fair and a very successful sales booth. Again, our members came through to make this event a huge success for Polanki. I also want to encourage all members to bring a sweet treat for the reception table for Ewa Barczyk's book signing on Monday December 12, 2022 at the Polish Center from 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Denna and Darla Flemming have volunteered to arrange the reception table so if you could have your treats there by 5:45 pm that would be great. If you are coming to the event please feel free to bring your dessert plate when you arrive.

Finally, I hope you plan to attend the Polanki Christmas Party at the Polish Center on December 18, 2022. Nadine Flemming and her committee have a fabulous event planned. I cannot wait. It will be a wonderful way to celebrate this beautiful season.

I want to say "Thank You" again to all our wonderful members for all your support this past year. I am so very proud of our organization and all of you members. We have created much goodwill in our community. We have also shown our community so many things about our traditions and culture. We have a strong camaraderie amongst our members and it shows through in all that we do.

I wish all of you a beautiful holiday season and a very Merry Christmas! I also hope the New Year brings everyone much good health and happiness. Happy holidays and *Wesołych Świąt!*

Laurie Ufnowski
2022 Polanki President





December Birthdays

12/03 Janet Protasiewicz
12/05 Elaine Posard
12/07 Shirley Sternig
12/14 Denna Flemming
12/16 Jane Dunn
Jean Wroblewski
12/20 Maria Adamiec
12/21 Carol Knudson
12/26 Halina Sosnowski

January Birthdays

01/01 Beth Gavin
01/06 Sybil Grandeck
01/09 Sandy Je T'aime
01/10 Rose Meinholz
01/19 Diane Ufnowski
01/21 Rebecca Kiefer
01/27 Theresa Markowski
01/31 Roma Numrych

Deadline Reminder:

College Achievement Awards

Each year Polanki recognizes students who have demonstrated high academic achievement and who are committed to understanding, preserving, or disseminating Polish culture and/or language. Awards range in amounts from \$1000 to \$2000. The application deadline is January 10, 2023. Please share this information with friends and relatives who might be eligible to receive one of these college achievement awards. **To download an application form, go to www.polanki.org.** The Awards Tea is planned for April 23, 2023 at the Polish Center of Wisconsin.



This month we have received several reports of illness from Polanki members. Polanki sends best wishes for a speedy recovery to the following:

*Veronica Artus, Sue Brown and Adrienne Zuber, who have contracted covid
*Arlene Rehbein, who is dealing with both covid and shingles
*Elena Shebelski, who is having injection treatments for her lower back and sciatic nerve as a result of compressed vertebrae
*New member Teresa Kurszewski, who has had knee surgery
*Valerie Lukaszewicz, who is rehabbing at
Harbor Residence
5700 Mockingbird Lane
Greendale, WI 53129

Valerie's phone number remains the same as in the directory.

Please continue to remember Polanki members who are confined to their homes and greet them with a visit, a card, an email or a phone call, especially during this holiday season.

Contact Judy Chattin, who is serving as Sunshine Co-Chair this year with Edith Malson, with any news to share.

Edith Malson (414) 744-9412
Judy Chattin (414) 425-7965-home
(414) 429-296-cell
j.chattin@sbcglobal.net



Elżbieta Walentynowicz Obituary

Elżbieta Helena Walentynowicz (nee Szczecinski) passed away peacefully with her husband and daughter by her side on November 11, 2022 at the age of 70. Beloved wife of Janusz Walentynowicz. Loving mother of Magdalena Walentynowicz. Dear sister of Grażyna and Ireneusz. Beloved daughter of Helena. Further survived by extended family and friends.

Elżbieta was a member of SS Cyril & Methodius Catholic Church for nearly 30 years. Elżbieta held multiple jobs, but her passion was teaching. She was a teacher in Poland for many years before arriving in the United States. In Milwaukee, she was a teacher of the Polish language, culture, and history, and the first coordinator at the Polish Saturday School. Elżbieta was also a member of Polanki, the Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee, volunteering her time and cooking skills at Polanki events. Elżbieta lived her life and served others with genuine love, kindness, and her ever-present smile.

The family sends heartfelt thanks to the fantastic registered nurses, assistants, techs, physical and occupational therapists who provided care and comfort over the past several months. Special thanks to Jennifer Connelly MD, Magdalena Flejsierowicz MD, Christopher Schultz MD, Annie Schuette APNP, Nathan Zwagerman MD, Diana Maas MD, Stephanie Romeis APNP, and Marianne Crabb APNP for taking an amazing care of Elżbieta over the years. The family also thanks Karen Fitzgerald RN and all the nurses and CNA at Horizon Home Care & Hospice for their care during Elżbieta's final days.



A memorial service was held at SS Cyril & Methodius Catholic Church, 2427 S. 15th St., Milwaukee, on Saturday, December 3rd from 9:30-10 am with Mass at 10 am.

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas!

By Camille Shaw

Polanki members had a busy and productive week decorating the Dousman Stagecoach Inn Museum in Brookfield on Tuesday November 29th as well as decorating the big tree in the Great Hall of the Polish Center of Wisconsin after a two-year covid hiatus. What a week! Polish costumes, handmade Polish ornaments, glass ornaments and a variety of szopki turned the Museum into a delightful Polish inn for the Open House on December 3-4.

This project was special as we were given free rein to transform the three floors into a Polish holiday delight. Ewa Barczyk set a Wigilia table with Bolesławiec table ware and her artistic food. Costumes and szopki of various kinds, lent by Kathy Wieczorek, Jean Wroblewski, and Camille Shaw, welcomed guests into the bar room and continued inviting them through the home.





The second floor was made colorful with various costumes displayed in the bedrooms. The third floor welcomed children and the young at heart to make holiday cards for nursing home residents. Handmade ornaments and glass ornaments brightened the tree and shelves in the temporary art studio.

Thank you to Paul and Louise Cieslak, Laurie Ufnowski, Jean Wroblewski, Margaret Wadzinske, and Ewa Barczyk-Pease for their decorating skills and contributions of Polish Christmas artifacts. Thanks also to Polanki members for volunteering during the Open House, including the Flemming family, below.



Photos courtesy of Susan Mikoś

The next decorating event involved several Polanki women and one male volunteer who decorated the Christmas tree in the Polish Center's Great Hall, beautifully covering it with handmade Polish ornaments. The decorating team was grateful for Michael Ufnowski's height, youth and ability to climb ladders.



Besides Michael, the bottom two thirds of the tree was filled by Laurie Ufnowski, Camille Shaw, Teresa Frankowski, and Nadine Flemming. It was a delightful event made easier with tree set-up by Dave before the members arrived and cookies with hot coffee provided by Jeff and Martha. This was a pleasant and collaborative event!

[Photos courtesy of Camille Shaw]



Thursday November 30 was a lovely Polish holiday high tea at the Woman's Club of Wisconsin. Camille Shaw acted as an advisor on Polish customs and Diane Holytz generously donated her skill and time to make jeżyki to decorate the tables and be used as favors. The guests were delighted with these colorful ornaments.

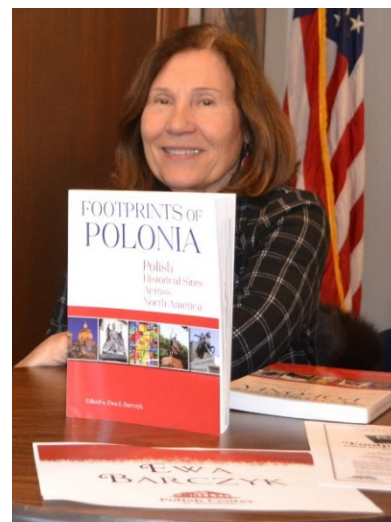
Ewa Barczyk-Pease attended the tea and helped to explain the Polish Wigilia customs and told her now famous carp/bathtub story. The Danish chef at the Woman's Club presented a beautiful, delicious, and authentic tea table. Many Polanki members generously participated by lending precious treasures that were displayed and greatly appreciated by non-Polish neighbors. Ewa and Diane are shown on the next page.



Polish Tea at the Woman's Club of Wisconsin



Woman's Club Tea (left) and
Polish Center Christmas Bazaar
(below)



[Photos courtesy of Camille Shaw, Susan Mikoś and Ewa Barczyk]

2022 Holiday Folk Fair

By Marjorie Piechowski

One of the most touching and successful events at the Holiday Folk Fair was Polanki's invitation for children and adults to make cards for Ukrainian children. Polanki's cultural booth, featuring both Polish and Ukrainian Christmas customs, provided a variety of construction materials that produced an array of sincere and original cards. Our Ukrainian colleagues shared time in the cultural booth and collected several boxes of cards that they will send to Ukrainian children and families in time for Christmas.



[Photos courtesy of Ewa Barczyk and Susan Mikoś]





Polanki and Laski: A Beautiful Partnership

By Marjorie Piechowski

For many years, Polanki's Christmas party raffle, along with donations from individuals throughout the year, a Polish rummage sale at the September meeting and Coins for Laski at all of the meetings, have added up to a very generous donation to Laski through Polanki. The beginnings of this "heart project" between Polanki and Laski were recounted by long-time Polanki members Heddy Moskaluk and Angela Pienkos.

The most significant person in this association between Polanki and Laski was Harriet Gostomski, Heddy's aunt and one of Polanki's founding members. Mrs. Gostomski's name is proudly etched in a brick in the Laski chapel honoring her support to Laski. On personal visits to Poland she would take private donations from Polanki members to the religious sisters at Laski to support the school's mission of educating children with visual impairments. On group tours to Poland she also introduced Laski to other travelers on the tour.

In the early days of Laski, due to the economic hardships in Poland, there was a great need for basics of daily living. Around 1980 Polanki members started to donate warm winter knitwear that was shipped to Laski to be distributed to students for Christmas. Heddy Moskaluk, with the same generous heart as her aunt, would ship and pay for the knitted items to be sent to Poland. As material goods became more readily available in Poland and shipping expenses skyrocketed, Polanki's donations became monetary rather than goods. Heddy Moskaluk, until her retirement from Polamer, also took upon herself to pay the exchange fees for this process. In gratitude for all of the Polanki members' generosity there is a plaque honoring Polanki for their generosity to Laski. It can be found attached to the outside of a building on the Laski campus.

Laski today is a thriving community that provides education from early childhood through secondary school to more than 300 students from ages 4 to 24, while teaching academic and practical subjects that will lead to future employment or higher education. Sites now include the Róża Czačka School and Educational Centre for Blind Children in Laski near Warsaw, the St. Teresa Special School and Educational Centre for Blind and Visually Impaired Children in Rabka, and the Centre for Early Support for the Development of Blind and Visually Impaired Children in Gdańsk-Sobieszewo. Laski also operates two institutions in Ukraine, which have been profoundly affected by the ongoing invasion from Russia.

Students live on Laski premises, with a variety of modern classrooms and other buildings that include a printing press, a music studio, workshops, swimming pools and a wide array of outdoor amenities. Since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, Laski in Poland has opened its doors and arms to dozens of Ukrainian mothers and their blind children who were forced to flee from Ukraine.



Thank you to all Polanki members for your past contributions and your continuing generosity to Laski and the children they serve. This year's raffle at the Christmas party will especially benefit both Polish and Ukrainian children.

[Photo courtesy of Laski]

Robert Thompson, Polanki, and Panufnik's Bassoon Concerto

By Susan Mikoś

Robert Thompson, a retired UWM professor of music and a distinguished bassoonist, was the guest speaker at Polanki's November membership meeting. In 1985, with Polanki's support, Professor Thompson commissioned a Bassoon Concerto from the prominent Polish composer, Andrzej Panufnik, a political exile then living in London. Panufnik dedicated the Concerto to the recently martyred Polish Solidarity priest, Jerzy Popiełuszko. Panufnik personally conducted its premiere performance with the Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra on May 18, 1986 in Vogel Hall. Polanki hosted an elegant Polish reception at UWM's Golda Meir Library.

The Bassoon Concerto has since been recorded and performed internationally. It is recognized as an outstanding chamber music composition, as well as a poignant tribute to Father Popiełuszko and the cause of Polish freedom.

A recent scholarly book by Andrea F. Bohlman, entitled *Musical Solidarities: Political Action and Music in Late Twentieth-Century Poland*, published by Oxford University Press in 2020, devotes eight pages to Panufnik's Bassoon Concerto and mentions Polanki's important contribution: "... a Milwaukee-based Polish-American society, 'Polanki,' underwrote the commission and supported its world premiere, in Wisconsin, and its Polish premiere, at St. Stanisław Kostka" [Popiełuszko's Warsaw parish], which took place in 1987 (p. 190).

Of all Polanki's many cultural projects, our underwriting of Panufnik's Bassoon Concerto has perhaps had the widest reach. Since only a handful of today's Polanki remember that historic event, it was especially meaningful to learn about it from Professor Thompson himself and to listen with him to a recording of his performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.



Professor Thompson and Tamara Johnston



Michael Mikoś and Francis Wasielewski
Professor Robert Thompson

[Photos courtesy of Susan Mikoś]

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A Note from the Editor

Thank you to all Polanki members who provided ideas, pictures and stories during this last year.

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

Marjorie Piechowski

2022 Polanki Newsletter Editor



[Photo courtesy of Marjorie Piechowski]

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