



# Polanki, Inc.

The Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee Newsletter

January (styczeń) 2021

## Polanki Upcoming Events

Polanki's final Christmas event will be held on **January 6, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** Zoom information and details about the raffle items will be sent **separately by email.** President Camille Shaw will be pulling names for a raffle benefiting Laski, the home for blind children in Warsaw, Poland. Members without email can call Camille at 414-475-5124 for telephone log-in information.

### January Membership Meeting on Friday January 8, 2021 at 7:30 by Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86001456223?pwd=czd4WVRZNVk5azV4bU9IMStQUjhlZz09>

Meeting ID: 860 0145 6223

Passcode: 958327

Dial-in:

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 860 0145 6223

Passcode: 958327

## In This Issue

Page 2: January Birthdays; Get-Well News, Directory Changes and Additions

Page 3: Obituary for Barbara Januchowski

Page 4: Obituary for Barbara Milner

Page 5: The Tradition of *Szopki* in Poland and Polanki

Page 6: The Feast of the Three Kings – *Trzech Króli*

Page 7-8: 2020 Had Some Bright Spots

Page 8: *Dziękuję bardzo!* From Nadine and Denna

Page 9: January 11, 2021, Final Deadline for College Achievement Awards; Community Events at PCW

Page 10: Polanki Board Members and Note from Editor

## President's Message



(Photo courtesy of Camille Shaw)

### Farewell 2020!

Though 2020 was different and challenging in so many ways, it came to a close with a bang. Polanki received a generous Milwaukee County CARES for Arts and Culture Grant. Thank you to the following members who worked hard to get the application in with short notice: Susan Mikoś, Marjorie Piechowski, Jean Wroblewski, Anne Wal and Kathy Wiczorek deserve our gratitude.

A newsletter from Laski announced another highpoint. "We are ending 2020 on a high note - on October 28<sup>th</sup> a wonderful message crossed the world. Pope Francis has confirmed by decree a miracle through the intercession of Mother Czacka, the last condition of her beatification. **The Polish Church will have a new Blessed!**" A good reason to celebrate on two sides of the ocean. Blessings and wishes for good health, peace, and friendship in the New Year. Your support and communication during these months are so appreciated. We look forward to 2021 and hope that with the vaccine we will be able to see each other at in-person events. Happy New Year to all of Polanki's members and their friends and families.

*Camille Shaw*

*Polanki President 2020*



## January Birthdays

- 01/01 Beth Gavin
- 01/06 Sybil Grandeck
- 01/09 Sandy JeT'aime
- 01/10 Rose Meinholz
- 01/19 Diane Ufnowski
- 01/21 Rebecca Kiefer
- 01/27 Theresa Markowski
- 01/31 Roma Numrych

## Directory Changes and Additions

Please make the following corrections to your 2020-2021 membership directory for the following Sustaining Members:

Corrected Address for Margaret Skwierawski  
4263 W. Highland Blvd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Corrected zip code for  
Nancy Purtell  
53185

Corrected Address for Jane Sorenson  
6170 Walnut Ln.  
Unit 106  
Cudahy, WI 53110



We are happy to receive no reports of members who are dealing with health issues, very welcome news at this time of year. However, we encourage all Polanki members to keep in touch with those who are confined in their homes. Please remember them with a card, an email or a phone call, especially during this holiday season.

If you know of any Polanki members who are sick or in need of sunshine greetings, please contact Judy Chattin, who is serving as Sunshine Co-Chair this year with Edith Malson. Their contact information is:

Edith Malson  
(414) 744-9412

Judy Chattin  
(414) 425-7965-home  
(414) 429-296-cell  
[j.chattin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j.chattin@sbcglobal.net)





**Our Deepest Sympathy to the family of  
Sustaining Member  
Barbara Januchowski**

who passed away on December 8, 2020 at the age of 82. Barbara was the loving sister of Phyllis (the late Dennis) Roche, Kathy (Ken) Herrman, and John (Paula) Januchowski. She also was the proud aunt of Micki Sparr, Pat Look, Jeff Roche, Kevin Roche, Steven Roche, Sandi Szczech, Raymond Walther, Stephanie Wojnar, Scott Herrman, Mark Herrman, Laurie Mistr, Anne Zelenak, and Joel Januchowski. She will also be missed by many great nieces, nephews, cousins, family, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents Joseph and Helen, sisters Ruth Drechsel, Jean Szczech, and Ramona Walther, and brothers-in-law Roger Drechsel, Dennis Roche, Joe Szczech, and Lee Walther.

She was an active member at St. Charles Borromeo, volunteered at the Polish Center of Wisconsin, and also helped out at the Xaverian Missionaries. Barbara attended daily mass followed by breakfast at McDonald's with friends from St. Charles. She worked at Wisconsin Gas Company as a Data processor. Visitation was held at St. Charles Borromeo, 5571 South Marilyn Street, Milwaukee, on Friday, December 18, 2020 from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM. Mass of Christian Burial at 12:00 PM. Interment Saint Adalbert Cemetery.



*April 18, 1938 - December 8, 2020*



**Our Deepest Sympathy to the family of  
Sustaining Member Barbara Milner**



*October 16, 1938 - December 19, 2020*

Barbara Milner (nee Jegier), age 82 of Hartford, Wisconsin passed away Saturday, December 19, 2020 at the Kathy Hospice in West Bend, with her loving husband by her side, holding her hand.

Barbara was born on October 16, 1938 in Milwaukee to Ted and Myra (nee Polinski) Jegier. On May 21, 1977 she married Ronald Milner at St. Peter Catholic Church in Slinger. She worked at Globe Travel in Milwaukee for 39 years. After retirement she had a parttime job at the Schauer Arts and Activities Center in Hartford for 11 years.

Barbara is survived by her husband of 43 years, Ron, brother Ted Jegier, nieces Ann (Scott) MacPherson, Karen (Kevin) Kapplusch, and Diane (Larry) Abel, nephews, Jolin (Andrea) Jegier and Dan (Sarah) Jegier. She is further survived by other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, sister and brother-in-law Judith and Stanley Les, sister-in-law Judith Jegier, and very special cousin Marilyn Bogan.

Visitation for family and friends was held Tuesday, December 29, 2020 from 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. at Shimon Funeral Home (824 Union Street Hartford, WI 53027). A Mass of Resurrection for Barbara was celebrated following visitation at 11:30 a.m. at St. Peter Catholic Church (200 E. Washington Street, Slinger, WI 53086) with The Very Reverend Father Rick Stoffel officiating.



# The Tradition of *Szopki* in Poland and Polanki

By Susan Mikoś

Since the Middle Ages in Poland, various kinds of crèches, or *szopki*, were carried from house to house by Christmas carolers. These took on a special character in the city of Kraków, where carpenters and masons used the winter months to build fanciful structures that incorporated elements from Kraków's architectural monuments, such as St. Mary's Church and Wawel Castle. The *szopki* are made of wood, plywood, cardboard and decorated with colorful tinfoil.



(Pictures courtesy of Susan Mikoś)

Making *szopki* is a tradition that has been passed on from generation to generation. Every year, the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków organizes a competition in the Market Square, where master craftsmen and amateurs alike present their creations for judging in various categories. The 2020 competition, although held virtually, still attracted 87 entries in several categories, including families and children.

Polanki owns two prizewinning Kraków *szopki*. One, made by Marzena Krawczyk, received a second prize in the 2011 competition. It is lighted from the inside and features a revolving *lajkonik* (mythical Tatar horseman) figure. The other was a third prize winner made by Włodzimierz Łesyk in the late 1970s. The *szopka* by Marzena Krawczyk is pictured on the left.

Christmas tree at the Polish Center of Wisconsin decorated by Polanki (2014), with *szopki* by Włodzimierz Łesyk (left) and Marzena Krawczyk (right).



## The Feast of the Three Kings – *Trzech Króli*

Epiphany is a big celebration in many places in Poland, featuring street parades, caroling of songs, and reenactments of the Nativity scene. The street parades usually involve a procession of the three wise men who give people candy and small treats in some towns and cities. Local parish priests preach about the significance of Epiphany and many houses are blessed.

To symbolize the Star of Bethlehem that was seen above the manger on the night of the Jesus' birth, which led the Wise Men to the newborn King, young boys would dress in long, white pants with robes of black paper and paper crowns on their heads. One of them carried the star on a long pole lit from within by a candle so that it could be seen at night. These carolers would walk throughout the village singing carols telling the story of the birth of Christ and the Three Kings, accompanied by a musical instrument. Beginning at the manor house or church rectory, they would then stop at various homes, standing before a window to sing a carol. After obtaining permission to enter the house, the boys would then continue to sing both religious and popular Christmas carols.



The *Three Kings* or Three Wise Men are an integral part of the Christian church and their name day is celebrated on January 6. In Catholic homes, the local parish priest writes the initials K+M+B for Kaspar, Melchior and Balthazar, in chalk at the top of entrance doors. Some people place above their doors three small boxes, each containing water, incense, and chalk in memory of the wise kings' gifts to Jesus. Another custom is taking small boxes containing chalk, a gold ring, incense, and a piece of amber to be blessed in church, in memory of the gifts of the Magi.

In the mountains, people may bring chalk to church on this feast day to be blessed. Upon their return, they write these initials on the door themselves, not to be disturbed until the following year. These initials written with blessed chalk, along with the palms from Palm Sunday and blessed candles from Candlemas Day, together are a force to avert disaster.

Epiphany was a holiday that was cancelled during the Communist regime in Poland, but it was restored as an official public holiday across the country in 2011. *Three Kings day* is also the traditional day to take down the Christmas tree decorated on Christmas Eve. [*Polish Three Kings Cake*]





## 2020 Had Some Bright Spots!

Yes, 2020 was a year that we all wanted to end, looking forward to a brighter new year when life returns to normal, although most likely it will be a new and different normal. Still, 2020 had some bright spots. For Polanki, through the magic technology of Zoom, we were able to resume monthly meetings, see each other's faces and hear each other's voices, reminding us of the value of our shared commitment to Polish culture and friendship. A vaccine is on the way and spring will be here in less than 100 days! As we enter 2021 with renewed hope for a happier and healthier year, these bright spots are a reminder of the commitment and positive role of Polanki in our lives.



*Active Member Joanne Barndt* shared these reflections on the last year: As 2020 comes to a close, my thoughts have drifted back to the book we read for the Polanki Book Group, "The Zoo Keeper's Wife," and a book I read as a child, "The Diary of Anne Frank," and the movies about WWII. This year has been hard, especially not being able to hold hands or give hugs or have as many people as we would like in one room. But I am grateful to be living in 2020 and not 1940. While Anne Frank had to be perfectly still during the day, unable to communicate with her school friends, I am calling people on the telephone, emailing people on my computer, participating in Polanki and other meetings over Zoom, and smiling to myself that I did not have to drive in the dark or the snow.

Unlike the Poles who were living in cages in a zoo, I am living in a safe, warm apartment surrounded by my books and music CD's, the TV, and a kitchen full of goodies. Thanks to Social Security and Medicare, I do not have to worry about how I am going to pay for food, rent or health care, and I can talk to my doctor without ever leaving my apartment thanks to telehealth.

As Anne Frank looked out her window at the birds flying freely longing to be free herself, I am walking in the park enjoying the fresh air away from auto emissions. And while those in hiding were wondering what was happening in the world beyond their hiding place, I am bombarded by 24-hour news and able to vote by absentee ballot in a free world. In the '40s, no one knew how long the war would continue, but I know that I am getting my vaccination next month and at this time next year, will be looking toward and working toward a brighter future for everyone.

*Active Member Kathy Wiczorek* also shared some positive thoughts about 2020 and Polanki: At the April 2020 Polanki Board meeting, Camille received approval to organize a development committee, known as the Development Team. The volunteer members are Bernie Jendrzyczak, Sandy JeT'aime, Susan Mikoś, Marjorie Piechowski, Camille Shaw, Anne Wal, Kathy Wiczorek (chairperson), and Jean Wroblewski. In October and December, the Development Team met via Zoom to discuss ideas and suggestions to support Polanki's mission during these challenging times. Little did we know at the time the Development Team would be writing a CARES Act grant application in December and would successfully receive \$8,538 to support Polanki. The grant was awarded by a Milwaukee County program, Imagine Milwaukee, that coordinated the distribution of federal covid relief funding for local arts and cultural groups.

For 20 years, We Energies Foundation has been supporting Polanki through corporate matching of my artisan sales benefiting Polanki's fundraising events in the Milwaukee area. More importantly, the Foundation has continued to support Polanki during this pandemic with a quarterly donation of \$500 to provide some financial relief for its fixed operating expenses. Since most of our regular fund-raising activities were canceled because of the virus, these examples of financial assistance have helped to manage our ongoing expenses.

During October's celebration of Polish American Heritage Month, my hand-crafted Polish Heritage Pandemic Face Masks were distributed free to Polanki members at the Polanki Library and through the postal service. It was great to network with enthusiastic members as they selected masks from a variety of Kaszubian and Lowicz folk art designs and traditional floral fabrics. A signature mask from red and white striped fabric was crafted to resemble the male Kraków regional costume dance trousers. The red and white striped *Polska* mask was a hit with the guys too.

In November, a caseload of We Energies annual cookie books was distributed to members. Christmas, winter holiday-themed and Polish heritage facial masks were available for purchase and continue to be available through the Polanki Facebook page. This event was another opportunity to socialize in person (wearing masks and social distancing) at the Polanki Library.

Overall, Polanki members have displayed their traditional strength and resilience during this challenging year and look forward with optimism to a better 2021.

## **Dziękuję bardzo!**

We hope you enjoyed the various offerings for the Polanki virtual Christmas Party. Attendance ranged from 30 to 40 members at each event.

Special thanks to Bernie Jendrzeczak for showing all her lovely folk art, Anne Wal for her easy and humorous poppyseed demonstration, Ewa Barczyk and her extremely educational information regarding Wigilia, Camille Shaw for contacting Kinga Vnuk to lead the Kolędy and both Camille and Marjorie Piechowski for all their help making our gatherings come to fruition.

We will wrap up our celebrations with the January 6 raffle and a few parting gifts: a small cookbook of traditional holiday recipes submitted by members and pictures of holiday decorations.

As we've said since the very beginning, we are praying for the end of the pandemic so we may all get together soon. Get your COVID immunization as soon as possible!

*Nadine and Denna Flemming*







# Final Notice:

## Polanki College Achievement Awards

By Joanne Barndt

Polanki, the Polish Women’s Cultural Club of Milwaukee, recognizes students who have demonstrated high achievement and who are committed to understanding, preserving, or disseminating Polish culture and/or language. Awards range in amounts from \$1000 to \$2000.

### CRITERIA

1. College junior, senior or graduate student in an accredited degree program during the 2020-2021 academic year
2. U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident
3. Wisconsin resident OR attending a Wisconsin college or university
4. Of Polish ancestry OR have studied Polish language, history, society, or culture OR significantly engaged in Polish culture
5. Minimum 3.0 GPA on a four-point scale preferred

**Application Deadline: Monday, January 11, 2021**

For additional information about the 2021 awards or to download an application form, go to [www.polanki.org](http://www.polanki.org). Please share this information with friends and relatives who might be eligible to receive one of these academic achievement awards.

**The Awards Tea is planned for April 25, 2021 at the Polish Center of Wisconsin.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Planned Community Events at the Polish Center of Wisconsin**

**Paçzki Day:** February 16, 2020 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Lenten Fish Fries:** February 19 and 26, 2021; March 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2021

**Lectures by Professor Neal Pease on Polish History—ongoing on YouTube**

**You Tube Log-In:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah4hKS4HH4Y>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<i>President</i>	Camille Shaw (414) 475-5124
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</i>	Anne Wal (414) 287-1530
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</i>	Laurie Ufnowski (414) 525-1094
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jean Wroblewski (414) 405-7753
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	Tamara Johnston (610) 986-7386
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	Kathy Camacho (414) 988-9355
<i>Historian</i>	Joanne Barndt (414) 962-5634
<i>Publicity</i>	Susan Cieslak (312) 953-4312
<i>Membership</i>	Maria Adamiec (262) 960-0924
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Marjorie Piechowski (414) 963-9055

\*\*\*\*\*

## OTHER POSITIONS

<i>Sunshine Co-Chairs</i>	Edith Malson (414) 744-9412 Judy Chattin (414) 425-7965
<i>Advisors</i>	Ewa Barczyk-Pease (414) 412-6456 Susan Mikoś (414) 628-1937
<i>Auditing Committee</i>	Judy Chattin Sue Konecny Heddy Moskaluk
<i>Web Master</i>	Dana Michaels (414) 418-5414

## A Note from the Editor

Thank you to all Polanki members who provided ideas, pictures and stories during these last few months. We appreciate your patience and cooperation during this unsettled time and look forward to meeting again in person in 2021.

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

Marjorie Piechowski  
2020 Polanki Newsletter Editor



*(Photo courtesy of Marjorie Piechowski)*

Polanki Newsletter published by

Polanki, Inc.  
P.O. Box 341458  
Milwaukee, WI 53234  
[www.polanki.org](http://www.polanki.org)

*Editor* *Marjorie Piechowski*

*President* *Camille Shaw*



Like us on Facebook!