

Minutes of the 52nd International Convention

Polish Singers Alliance of America
Buffalo Marriot Niagara Hotel
Buffalo, New York
May 25-28, 2023

Prior to the meeting, a special presentation of flowers was offered to former General Director Isabella Kobus-Salkin in honor of her many years of service to District VII and the Central Administration upon her retirement from directing Jutrzenka and working with District VII. The meeting was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by Kol. Mary Lou Wyrobek, Chairman of the Pre-Convention Committee, with welcoming remarks. The National Anthems of Poland, Canada and the United States were sung. Kol. Wyrobek led the assembly in a moment of silence after inviting all to offer names of deceased members of the PSAA. Serdeczna Matko was sung. Kol. Wyrobek called attention to the refurbished Cardinal Hlond Trophy on display. Kol. Adrienne Kusmierczyk was appointed as temporary secretary. Committee assignments were presented (Exhibit B) and approved (Majka/Modrzynski). Kol. Gary Bienkowski provided the report of those present on behalf of the Mandate Committee and a roll call was taken: 14 Honorary and 21 Delegates.

A motion to approve the agenda was made and carried (Exhibit A) (Zagorski/Modrzynski). As it was determined that stipends for Convention Officers, including secretaries, be waived, no motion was presented. The slate of Convention Officers was presented (Exhibit B) and a motion to approve them was made and approved (Cofield/Zagorski). Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland Deborah Majka administered the oath for Convention Officers. Kol. Michele Cofield assumed the Chairmanship and offered a welcome. She called attention to the Proclamation of Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz on display.

A motion was made (Iskra/Juszczak) and passed to accept the minutes from the 51st International Convention. The Correspondence Committee, Kol. Cofield, spokesperson, read an email from Joseph and Christine Wesolowski on their congratulations to the PSAA on the occasion of their Convention and a proposal to merge Districts I & IV (to be discussed) and funds be given either to District IV or the Scholarship Fund. A surprise donation was received from Cleveland's former PSAA member choir – Harmonia Chopin Choir who upon hearing of our Convention sent a \$2000 donation. Upon discussion with them, they determined it was appropriate to deposit the monies for our Scholarship Fund. Report of District Presidents and Choirs has been waived as participation in the Newsletter has been excellent precluding the necessity of including the reports here. Committee reports were given. Kol. Bienkowski, Audit Committee Chair, complimented Frances Cirbus on her reports and confirmed the accuracy of them. A motion was made to accept the audit report (Pogorzelski/Iskra). There were no appeals or grievances, so there was no committee report. The Financial reports (Exhibit E) were reviewed by Treasurer Frances Cirbus. Kol. Pogorzelski commented on the excellent reports and a motion to accept the report was approved (Pogorzelski/Bienkowski). The Budget report (Exhibit F) was presented by Kol. Wyrobek who encouraged everyone to sell the annual raffle/lottery tickets. Kol. Ziemak requested that an email of the winners be sent at the conclusion of the raffle, which can be done. Winners are also posted on the website. A motion was made and approved to accept the budget report (Pogorzelski/Juszczak). Constitution/By-Laws changes were recommended to allow for some flexibility regarding the Convention as to what events are held and how they are handled. A number of events are made optional, not mandated. A motion to accept the changes was made and approved (Pogorzelski/Whitman).

Old Business covered included a “thank you” from Kol Wyrobek for the reports and photos provided for the Newsletter. There being no other Old Business, New Business was brought up. The vote on combining Districts I & IV will await the arrival of Kol. Ray Jakubowicz, District IV President. As the annual Lottery was already discussed, the discussion focused on the future of the PSAA. Membership, particularly of the young, is a huge issue. Among the problems and questions discussed was the importance of face-to-face invitations and discussions with people, and being a regular presence through concerts and singing at events. It was noted that this requires a level of quality to the performances. Kol. Modrzynski noted that poor performances are not going to draw new people even if we advertise. Kol. Bienkowski noted the need to get involved with youth. Chopin

Singing Society #219 has a relationship with the Polish Saturday School and their choir. This is a great venue, but not everyone can work with children. It was noted that the PSAA must be advertised more. Kol. Grazyna Karpiuk noted that culture and tradition means something and programming makes name recognition possible. While every area is different, it is helpful to have relationships with priests whose parishes perhaps have a children's choir and to maintain relationships with other organizations. Kol. Juszczak observed that networking is necessary, getting in touch with Veterans, Polish Schools, community events of different organizations. Obviously engaging youth and financial concerns are issues that are not unique to Polish choirs only. Kol. Majka noted that Philadelphia has a relationship with the Adam Mickiewicz School, but they currently have no children enrolled, only adults. Schools also have their own programs and requirements. Kol. Ocetek also brought up the need to be welcoming to new members and the need for quality of programming and performance. Kol. Wyrobek noted the availability of the Leokadia Dombroska Scholarship to encourage young people in performing Polish music or maybe joining a choir. Kol. Kaponyas suggested partnering with existing Polish Schools and preparing a package of information to approach them. Kol. Kolczynski and Kol. Miluk-Kolassa agreed that speaking with parents to mobilize and offer a proposal to the school and parents is possible. Kol. Kurdyla proposed that we gather names of Polish Saturday Schools and present a letter from the PSAA. Assistant Director Lesniak offered to prepare the letter to directors of Polish Schools. Kol. Kurdyla also suggested the value of singing at masses and inviting people to join. Kol. Pogorzelski and Kolczynski brought up the financial concerns and the need for grants. The Ministry of Culture and Consuls should be engaged with PSAA. Knowledge of writing grant proposals is of great value. Kol. Wyrobek reminded those gathered that the PSAA does offer a grant for events.

With the arrival of a Letter of welcome and packages of coffee from the Buffalo Convention Bureau, a break was taken. Upon return delegates present introduced themselves. As District IV President, Raymond Jakubowicz, arrived, the assembly returned to the letter from District I regarding a merger which had been tabled temporarily from the New Business discussions. As there is only one active choir in District I, the merger was proposed by the President of District I, Joseph Wesolowski (not present). Kol. Jakubowicz indicated that the proposal was acceptable and as the District was not in need of the approximate \$500 from the Treasury of District I, monies could be donated to the Scholarship Fund. A motion was made and approved to combine districts and place funds in the Scholarship Fund (R. Jakubowicz/Zagorski). Kol. Ocetek continued with New Business indicating that he had organized concerts and festivals in the New York area from 1997-2006 and was hoping to again do so with the Camerata Silesia from Katowice in April or May of 2024. If choirs and the PSAA could assist in offering the 26 individuals housing, travel, and board. Kol. Miluk-Kolassa indicated that the Lublin Medical School Choir is also interested in contact with us. Kol. Wyrobek noted that substantial financial support is not possible as the grant that the PSAA offers is for our member choirs, though moral support and assistance with arranging concerts is a possibility. Chairman Cofield noted that Officers' reports were inadvertently left off the agenda. As reports from the President (Exhibit C) and Vice President (Exhibit D) were included in the Delegate packet and could be read, General Director David Zagorski was called upon to offer his report. He thanked the choirs for their diligent efforts and reported on his activities, particularly in Philadelphia and with the District VII choirs, as well as in selecting music for the competition focusing on songs that could be sung by the various choirs at their events.

There being no further new business, the agenda turned to the election of officers. The proposed slate is as follows (see Exhibit B):

General Choral Director – David Zagorski
Assistant Choral Director – Maria Lesniak
President – Mary Lou Wyrobek
Vice President – Gary Bienkowski
General Secretary – Donna Serafin
Treasurer – Frances Cirbus

Kol. Serafin had introduced herself earlier. The remaining proposed officers are currently serving in their positions. A call for nominations from the floor was made. There being none, a motion to close the nominations and request the secretary to cast one vote for the proposed slate was made and approved. (Syrek/Majka). Subsequently the administration of the oath of the newly elected officers was completed by Honorary Consul of

the Republic of Poland Deborah Majka. The report of the Resolutions Committee (Exhibit G) was made with the addition of encouraging the dialogue between Poland and Ukraine currently taking place regarding the Wolyn Massacre. Discussion followed regarding the references to Ukraine. Kol. Ocetek thought that it created division within the group. There was concern that certain resolutions could reflect badly on the organization and negatively affect its 501c3 status. Kol. Wyrobek noted that the report essentially becomes part of the minutes of the organization and is disseminated only to members. A motion to delete the reference to condemning the invasion by Russia was proposed (Ocetek/Kobus-Salkin) and with a paper ballot passed by a majority. However, discussion continued with Kol. Whitman noting that there is no impact on the 501c3 status. A new motion to revisit the topic and accept the resolutions as presented (Majka/Juszczak), again with a paper ballot was passed (21-12) and the discussion closed. Sergeants at Arms Bienkowski and Iskra completed the counts.

The next agenda item was the designation of the site for the 53rd International Convention in 2026. Kol. R. Jakubowicz indicated that District IV would likely be unable to hold the Convention despite being next in line, given the merger of Districts I and IV. As there were no definite volunteers, the discussion was tabled to be addressed at next year's annual meeting of the Board of the Central Administration. The selection of chorus positions for the competition followed with representatives of the choruses choosing by lottery the order within female, mixed and male. As there was concern that the order as designated on the agenda and the By-Laws may make it difficult if members are in mixed and male especially given only one male chorus. The order was adjusted to be: male, female, mixed. The singing order for competition is as follows based on the lottery:

Male Chorus – Chopin Singing Society #182

Female Choruses: Kalina Singing Society #221, Jutrzenka Singing Society #226, Marcella Kochanska-Sembrich Chorus #321

Mixed Choruses: Aria Chorus #303, Chopin Singing Society #219, Symfonia Choir #228, Hejnal Chorus #323, Polonia Choir Society of Edmonton #332

Instructions as to rehearsals, the competition and continuing events were provided. Announcements on upcoming anniversaries included Jutrzenka's 90th and the Chopin Singing Society's 125th both in 2024. Thanks were extended to the Convention Officers and Pre-Convention Committee for their efforts. There being no further business, Kol. Wyrobek officially dismissed the Convention Committees and Officers, and a motion was made (Zagorski/Bienkowski) and approved to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 p.m. A closing song commenced led by Kol. Zagorski. A list of delegates and honorary members in attendance can be found in Exhibit H.

The following is a list of Honorary Members presented to and approved by the Kapituła. Awards were presented at the Sunday brunch:

1. Chopin Singing Society #182 – Mariusz Bryszkiewicz
2. Chopin Singing Society #182 - Arthur Sroka
3. Chopin Singing Society #219 – Geraldine Szemraj
4. Kalina Singing Society #221 – Theresa Krawczyk
5. Kalina Singing Society #221 - Donna Serafin
6. Jutrzenka Singing Society #226 - Leokadia Juszczak
7. Jutrzenka Singing Society #226 - Helena Luczyn
8. Jutrzenka Singing Society #226 - Zofia Panek
9. Polonia Paderewski Chorus #287 & #311 – Anna Gniadek
10. Polonia Paderewski Chorus #287 & #311 - Alina Klimaszewska
11. Polonia Paderewski Chorus #287 & #311 - Wanda Sowinska-Grzyb
12. Aria Chorus #303 – Danuta Dulewicz
13. Aria Chorus #303 – Bogdan Modrzyński
14. Aria Chorus #303 - Jadwiga Slusarczyk
15. Marcella Kochanska-Sembrich Chorus #321 – Elizabeth A. (Konieczny) Whitman
16. Hejnal Singing Society #323 – Maria (Maryla) Kopytło
17. Hejnal Singing Society #323 – Mirosław Kostro

Subsequently an email vote was taken in October 2023 to award Adrienne Tworek-Gryta of Buffalo with an Honorary Membership. As an honoree of the Chopin Singing Society #219 2023 Concert, her biography indicated considerable efforts in her history to promote Polish music to the general public. She was unanimously approved. An additional honorary membership was awarded to Oksana Ostashevsk, director of the Polonia Choir Society of Edmonton, at the April 2024, 25th anniversary celebration of the choir and the retirement of Ms. Ostashevsk. This, too, was completed by email vote of the Kapituła. Ms. Ostashevsk started the choir and has provided quality presentations of Polish music and composers to the general public for 25 years.

The Competition was held on Saturday, May 27, 2023 at the hotel and the announcement of winning choruses was made on Sunday at the brunch. The winners were:

Male Chorus:

Chopin Singing Society #182 – 91.36

Female Choruses:

Marcella Kochanska-Sembrich Female Chorus #321 – 92.52

Kalina Singing Society #221 – 89.53

Jutrzenka Singing Society #226 – 88.35

Mixed Choruses:

Polonia Choir Society of Edmonton #332 – 96.46

Aria Chorus #303 – 93.95

Chopin Singing Society #219 – 92.46

Hejnal Chorus #323 – 91.06

Symfonia Choir #228 – 88.86

The Director of the top scoring chorus which received the Hlond Trophy is awarded the Antoni Kazmierczak Award, thanks to a generous donation from the Mazurek Family. The winner is Oksana Ostashevsk, director of the Polonia Choir Society of Edmonton #332.

In a meeting of the Board following the Convention meeting, District VII presented two candidates for the Leokadia Dombroska/Polish Singers Alliance of America Scholarship which was approved. The candidates are Mark Filatov and Nicholas Kaponyas who assist the Jutrzenka Singing Society as Director and as accompanist. The resumes were presented by Leokadia Juszcak, President of Jutrzenka. The Board approved the awarding of the two scholarships. Mariusz Bryszkiewicz was named as Librarian. Mark Filatov will become the Assistant Librarian in an effort to make music available through Google Docs.

Special thanks are offered to the 52nd International Convention Committee Members:

Gary Bienkowski, Frances Cirbus, Michele Cofield, Adrienne Kusmierczyk, Irene Kmiotek, Donna Serafin, Mary Jean Syrek, Paul Wisniewski, Christine Witkowski, and Mary Lou Wyrobek, Chair.

A list of honorary members and delegates in attendance can be found in Exhibit H.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Wyrobek
Convention Secretary

Adrienne Kusmierczyk
Convention Secretary

Exhibit A: Proposed Agenda

1. Convention called to order Chairmen of the Pre-Convention Committee Kol. Mary Lou Wyrobek
 - National Anthems
 - Invocation, including a moment of silence in memory of deceased members
 - Pre-Convention Committee Chairman’s remarks.
2. Convention officially opened by President of PSAA – Mary Lou T. Wyrobek
 - Temporary secretary appointed by President
 - Review of Committees by the President
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Report of Mandate Committee each session (attendance)
Deciding on authenticity of questionable Mandates (if necessary)
5. Roll of delegates – first session of the day only, unless necessary to vote.
6. Vote on compensation of convention Officers.
The recommendation is for no stipends to be offered.
7. Election of Convention Officers
 - Chairman
 - Vice Chairman (1 Male and 1 Female)
 - Secretary
 - Assistant Secretary (ideally from the same District)
 - Sergeant at Arms (2)
8. Administration of Oath to the Convention Officers
9. Remarks
 - Chairman of Convention
 - Introduction of local dignitaries, representatives of other organizations as necessary
 - Reading and/or presentation of proclamations
10. Approval of minutes from the 51st International Convention
11. Report of Committee on Correspondence – each session
12. Report of District Presidents & Choirs – set aside due to the annual reports submitted to the Newsletter.
13. Reports of Committees
 - Audit
 - Appeals and Grievances, if any
 - Budget
 - Constitution – recommendations regarding Convention
14. Old Business
 - Newsletter
 - Other
15. New Business
 - Combining Districts I & IV
 - Discussion of the future of PSAA
 - Lottery
 - Other

16. Nominations and Elections of Central Administration 2023-2026
17. Report of Resolutions Committee
18. Designation of Site for the 53rd International Convention
19. Administration of oath to the newly elected officers
20. Selection of Chorus Positions in Competition by Chorus Presidents
2017 – mixed, male, female
2023 -female, mixed, male – requested change to avoid overlap: male, female, mixed
21. Miscellaneous Announcements/instructions of the Pre-Convention Committee
22. Dismissal of all Convention Committees
23. Motion to adjourn
24. Closing Song

Exhibit B: Recommended Convention Officers

Chairman – Michele Cofield, Kalina Singing Society #221

Co-Chairmen – Mary Jean Syrek, Kalina Singing Society #221; Gary Bienkowski, Chopin Singing Society #219

Secretary – Mary Lou Wyrobek, Chopin Singing Society #219, Kalina Singing Society #221

Assistant Secretary – Adrienne Kusmierczyk, Chopin Singing Society #219, Kalina Singing Society #221

Sergeant at Arms – Brent Iskra, Chopin Singing Society #182; Michael Zachowicz, Chopin Singing Society #221

Proposed Slate for Central Administration Officers:

General Choral Director – David Zagorski

Assistant Choral Director – Maria Lesniak

President – Mary Lou Wyrobek

Vice President – Gary Bienkowski

General Secretary – Donna Serafin

Treasurer – Frances Cirbus

Committee Assignments for the 52nd International Convention of the Polish Singers Alliance of America

Mandate Committee: Gary Bienkowski, Brent Iskra

Correspondence Committee: Michele Cofield, Donna Serafin

Budget Committee: Mary Jean Syrek, Mary Lou Wyrobek

Audit Committee: Gary Bienkowski, Mary Jean Syrek

Constitution Committee: Gary Bienkowski, Mary Lou Wyrobek

Resolutions Committee: Debbie Majka, Mary Lou Wyrobek, Michael Zachowicz

Exhibit C

President's Report Polish Singers Alliance of America Buffalo, NY – 52nd International Convention Report for 2017-2023

It has been my privilege as President of the Polish Singers Alliance of America to represent you, our dedicated members, in the wider community, as well as participating in the wonderful events you celebrate. This was, of course, interrupted by Covid, which postponed our 2020 Convention for three years and left many choirs without activities for a good part of that time. We did have a full range of activities prior to Covid, and I am happy to report things seem to be back in near-full force. I was very pleased to present a plaque of the Hlond Trophy to the Polonia Choir Society of Edmonton #332 in celebration of their accomplishment of attaining the highest score at the 51st International Convention. As we no longer allow the Hlond to travel, we assisted the Choir in planning a reception in honor of their accomplishment and the plaque presentation was made in April of 2018. As a note, the Hlond Trophy has been refurbished as was reported in the December 2019 newsletter at a cost of a little over \$2000. In 2019, I also attended the Choir's 20th anniversary celebration. I attended the joyful 100th anniversary celebration of District VII in October of 2017, and enjoyed a delightful evening of song and dance. Filareci Dudziarz celebrated their 110th anniversary in October of 2017, and I was honored to sit with Vice Consul Piotr Semeniuk and his lovely wife, as well as District I President, Joseph Wesolowski. Christine and Joseph Wesolowski organized a reception for potential new members of the PSAA in Chicago, where we hosted the Holy Trinity Choir, the Chopin Choir, and the St. Hyacinth Choir. Unfortunately, our efforts were not successful, but we made some pleasant connections with their directors and officers. On a more successful note, our second PSAA Grant awarded to Symfonia and Chopin choirs for a series of events honoring the 200th birthday of Moniuszko proved to be more successful as we recruited the Cantabile Choir of Oakville, Ontario as a new member in 2019. Unfortunately, COVID shut them down, but they have resumed activities in the recent past. The many celebrations of Poland's 100th anniversary of rebirth were incredible. I was also honored to award Honorary Memberships to Dr. Mieczyslaw Biskupski, who completed our history book after the untimely death of Dr. Blejwas, and to JoAnn Falletta, Music Director, and Daniel Hart, Executive Director, of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra who travelled to Poland in March 2018 at the invitation of our honorary members, Krzysztof and Elzbieta Penderecki. I joyfully participate in all of District IX's Festival of Carols as a singing member of the Chopin Singing Society and Kalina Singing Society, and attended their respective 120th anniversaries. I am grateful to the Kalina Singing Society for the Scholarship they provide for a student at Buffalo's Community Music School and annually enjoy their Wigilia and Scholarship Dinner. Of course, I am grateful to participate in the wide variety of events that Chopin Singing Society presents, especially our signature Dyngus Day Celebration which made a come-back this year working with St. Stanislaus Church. Speaking of anniversaries, I was happy to join Polonia-Paderewski choirs for their 70th anniversary which included two of their founding members, Antonina Bogdanska and Teresa Plawska. A few anniversaries which I was not able to join in on were Hejnal and Marcella Kochanska Sembrich's 30th and Jutrzenka's 85th, Celebrating the accomplishments of the members and choirs and of the Polish community at large has been a most humbling and enriching experience. These past six years brought much sadness due to the deaths of so many of our dedicated members: Frances Gates, Barbara & Ed Blyskal, Bernice Gruszka, Helen Pater, Adeline Wujcikowski, Yaga Chudy, Christine Kuczara, Louis Gill, Emil Mazurkiewicz, Eugene Pilis, and our talented directors, Jerzy Garbien, Janusz Sporek, and Anthony Tabish who succumbed to Covid. The loss of these stalwarts of the PSAA has been devastating, but we are forever grateful for their unceasing work in promoting Polish music and culture, and pray that the heavenly choirs are that much more glorious. I joyfully acknowledged the 100th birthdays of Eugene Trela of Chicago, who passed on soon after his celebration, Genevieve Zielinski of the Chopin Singing Society, who has also passed on, and the recent celebration of Jane Hauck's 100th – all proof positive that singing is good for your health, a great selling point for future members.

I am most pleased that District IX has initiated and, despite a one-year hiatus due to Covid, continued presenting a Scholarship benefit concert featuring young artists, some of whom have received the Scholarship.

This is thanks to the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College who funds the artists and provides advertising. The concerts began in 2018, had to be cancelled in 2020, but resumed in 2021 and a concert was held in 2022 to benefit Ukraine, as well as the Scholarship Fund. This year's Convention Concert will feature some of the Scholarship Winners and a collection will be taken for the Scholarship Fund. We have awarded a total of ten scholarships and will be entertaining new candidates at the Convention. Recently we increased the award to \$1500 from \$1000. Any district can present a candidate for consideration through the District President on an annual basis. Three of our awardees sing with PSAA choirs, one on a periodic basis.

As president, I stand in a long line of leaders who have guided the Alliance in its goal of promoting Polish Culture through song. Like them, I have presided over the meetings of the PSAA Board when we were able to hold them and have helped to coordinate the Pre-Convention Committee, a small but dedicated ensemble. My predecessors had a vision of what they wished the organization could accomplish. So, I outline a few accomplishments in these past six years and some hopes for the future. I am happy that much of the work of the Convention is accomplished via email, including the distribution of music. I apologize for the lateness of sending music, but that was a result of a number of programming delays. Each of these past six years, I have prepared the Newsletter with your assistance. I welcome your input and suggestions on improving it. I remind you that choruses should provide a brief narrative of their events, rather than the formal reports that were once a part of the Convention. We do have reports in Polish and English. I may be wrong, but I believe the vast majority of Polish-speaking members also speak English. The reverse is not true. For me, as editor, it would be helpful if reports were in English. We do welcome photos of your events, but be sure to include a caption. You have been very good about providing reports which has allowed us to forego the submission of reports as part of the Convention – both for Districts and Choirs. The date of the newsletter coincides more closely with our fiscal year which ends in April, rather than the Christmas-time mailing that was done previously. It allows for a full report of your Christmas activities and loosely coincides with the summer hiatus that most choirs take.

One of the innovations of the last convention was a financial incentive for choirs who creatively engage in a collaborative program, preferably engaging young people with Polish music, whether in the native tongue or in translation. We awarded two, prior to Covid, and hopefully can resume that with this year's programming. One of the two was previously mentioned and resulted in a new choir being added to our ranks. I continue to encourage the translation of Polish music whenever it is feasible, something which is available particularly with Koledy. The Chopin Singing Society participated in a program celebrating Chopin and Copernicus in February. The audience was not only from the Polish community, but included mathematicians and even the Finnish mother of someone who worked on the Webb telescope – photos of which were a part of the presentation. It was a collaborative program financed by the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College and was a great success. Such collaborations are essential for the continuance of programs of Polish culture. Our resolutions at the last Convention included association with organizations for youth. I am happy to say that, in Buffalo, the Chopin Singing Society has begun an association with the local Polish Saturday School, whose choir participated in the District IX Christmas Program in Buffalo, and the Christmas Program in Hamilton also included a young choir. From the newsletters, I know that the Marcella Kochanska Chorus featured a Ukrainian Choir of young children in their Christmas program. Such efforts must continue.

Among the other resolutions from the 51st Convention was the establishment – mainly from District VII - of a committee to look into the possibility of grants. Polish Slavic FCU has historically been supportive of the activities of the PSAA, but looking for other sources would be helpful. Mr. Sporek was spear-heading the activity, which came to a halt with his illness and untimely death. In Buffalo, we have been able to receive some grants from the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College, which the PSAA Vice President and I serve on, including one supporting the concert for this Convention, as well as ongoing support for the Scholarship Fundraising Concert that District IX runs. Both Kalina and Chopin Singing Societies have a relationship with Canisius College. The Polish Government in the past year and a half has been directing much of its grant monies to programs for Ukraine and for Ukrainian refugees, so that source has been somewhat stymied. We actually anticipated a small grant from the Polish Government for the Convention scheduled in 2020, which came to naught with Covid. These days, grants are geared to cross-cultural programming and working with inner city youth. At one point, the Chopin Singing Society received a County Grant. While currently off the list, we hope to

re-apply going forward, though the process is onerous and requires updated By-Laws, Whistleblower Policies, Conflict of Interest forms, and favors the above-mentioned activities with disadvantaged communities. I remind you that the Central Administration offers a \$1,000 grant for a collaborative program, preferably one that engages youth - one grant per year. The Board will entertain proposals at the Convention.

Also resolved was finding a place for a display of our materials – there are some items at the Polish Museum of America in Chicago. We have not moved forward on this. Dr. Biskupski at Central Connecticut State University currently has some of our items. As it behooves us to divest ourselves of our Library at OLC-St. Casimir, I have reached out to him. Music in the library, will be scanned, posted to the website and one copy maintained. A Committee who can assist in the dissemination of these items will be formed at the Convention. The Polish Museum may also be an option. Regardless a list of items would need to be created. A resolution to review the dues we pay to other organizations resulted in the ending of our membership in the Polish American Congress with the approval of Frances Gates and Debbie Majka. Dues were deemed to be excessive given our membership numbers. We do encourage districts and/or choirs to be a member of their local group.

I don't know that we will make it to our 150th, but our 140th is coming up in 2029. I am recommending a number of adjustments to the By-Laws to loosen the requirements of the Convention in order to hopefully make it more feasible going forward. We essentially created a 2 ½ day format for this Convention with most attendees arriving on Friday. We also need to move forward on combining Districts I & IV as there is only one active choir in District I. Efforts to recruit others, as noted above, failed.

I thank my fellow officers of the PSAA: our Treasurer, Fran Cirbus, who has computerized everything and has efficiently managed our finances; our Vice President, Gary Bienkowski, who supports all the PSAA endeavors; our General Secretary, Adrienne Kusmierczyk, who handles the membership rosters and membership cards, our General and Assistant Directors David Zagorski and Maria Lesniak for their cooperation in presenting this Convention. I am grateful for the generosity of Izabella Kobus-Salkin over these many years, as she enters retirement due to health concerns, and to Jasia Mazun of Symfonia, who retired after 19 years as President of the Choir. I appreciate the work of the District Presidents and look forward to future visits for our annual meeting. I would remind everyone that essentially we are volunteers. For the most part, we have forgone accepting any stipends. A modest stipend is offered in a Convention year to our choral directors, but it is not the amount that a professional should receive. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you these past years, and thank you for all you do to promote the culture and music of Polonia. I hope we can still look forward to future events together, something to be discussed at our sessions. Gora Piesn.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou T. Wyrobek, President