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# POLISH-AMERICAN ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED



IN 1934

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All members and friends of Polish-American Engineers Association are cordially invited to attend our meeting.

**DATE:** Friday, October 18th, 2013

**TIME:** 7:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** Copernicus Center  
Kings Hall  
5216 W. Lawrence Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

**SPEAKER:** Dr. Jan Plachta  
Senior Structural Engineer USACE

**TOPIC:** Huey P. Long & the Bay Bridge

**SPEAKERS:** Barbara and Leonard Myszynski  
sOlar eye communications

**TOPIC:** *Bridging Urban America – The Story of Master Engineer Ralph*  
Promotion of the Documentary movie about Ralph Modjeski



**Dr. Jan S. Plachta** is a Senior Structural Engineer at the Chicago District Corps of Engineers office. He graduated with a civil engineering degree from the Technical University in Vienna, Austria. He has M.S. degree in Structural Engineering, from the Illinois Institute of Technology, and a PhD degree in Soil Mechanics from Politechnika Krakowska in Krakow, Poland. He worked on a great variety of Chicago District flood control projects, does perform Dam Safety inspections and other Corps of Engineers major civil works projects, like Lock and Dam structures on the Mississippi River, Ohio River, and Illinois River. He has published numerous technical articles in professional periodicals documenting the accomplishments of engineers of Polish heritage and has made several presentations at the Corps of Engineers Conferences, and at the ASCE, SAME and PAEA meetings

## Abstract

The Huey P. Long Bridge designed by Ralph Modjeski was the first bridge to span the Mississippi River at New Orleans. The dual track railroad portion with its total length of 22,995 feet was the longest high level railroad Bridge in the world. The 8,076foot long highway portion originally consisted of two lanes cantilevered off each side. It has been called by the Historic American Engineering Record “One of the great engineering accomplishments for railway and highway bridges built in the country.

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge is one of the most impressive engineering structures in the United States. The bridge has been recognized by the American Society of Civil Engineers as a nationally significant structure from the standpoint of engineering as well as its importance in the transportation history of California

and the nation. This enormously expensive project was accomplished by the California Department of Transportation engineering team led by Charles Purcell. Purcell had no experience in design on any type of large bridges and he turned to some of the best-known and most experienced bridge engineers in the country, including Ralph Modjeski, Leon Moisseif and Daniel Moran. Ralph Modjeski was nominated as Chairman of this Board of Consulting Engineers, he is considered to be the “mastermind” of Bay Bridge

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**BASIA MYSZYŃSKI**  
Producer, Director, Writer  
sOlar eye communications



**LEONARD MYSZYŃSKI**  
Producer, Director of  
Photography, Editor  
sOlar eye communications

Born in California, Basia received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama from the University of California, Irvine and an MFA in Directing at the Polish National Film Academy where she began her partnership with Leonard. Their first short documentary *Ingwar* was sold to German television, leading to the creation of **sOlar eye communications**, a California-based production company.

The filmmakers continue to work for a diverse clientele, producing documentaries, TV spots, and promotional videos & advertising campaigns. Telly award-winning spots include *Gangs & Family Violence*; bonus content for a Grammy-nominated DVD *Monsters, Inc. Read-Along* for Walt Disney Records about the band *Riders in the Sky*; *John Farrar Making Music & Olivia Newton-John in Benefit Concert*. Centennial tributes include *Seegerstrom Family Farming Operation* for Orange County patrons of the arts and *Building on a Century of Service* for Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce, among others.

Fulfilling a personal dream of educating young filmmakers, Basia taught film direction at the prestigious Orange County High School of the Arts for several years.

Leonard’s insight and diverse experience combined with a deep passion for fine arts have enabled him to produce powerful ad campaigns and film content throughout his career in the US. He has won numerous awards for his TV spots, film shorts and stunning photography, such as APA Los Angeles - Photo 11 Awards and APA San Francisco - *Something Personal or Not* exhibit. His haunting images of Jewish cemeteries entitled "*Ghetto Field*" and "*Winter of 1997*" remain in the personal collection of the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, California.

In 2005 Basia and Leonard founded OC Influential Productions, LLC, producing films about influential people in Orange County history, art & culture. Their first feature-length documentary ***Modjeska-Woman Triumphant*** aired on PBS stations throughout the US, winning Basia a Best Director award from The Women’s International Film and Television Showcase.

***Bridging Urban America – The Story of Master Engineer Ralph Modjeski*** is a documentary about one of America’s leading bridge builders and his contribution to the modernization of America, transforming cities and commerce through innovation and ingenuity & how eight strategically designed North American superstructures remain globally significant today. The project is currently in production, sponsored by Eric Wintemute of American Vanguard, Modjeski & Masters, US Polish Trade Council, NY State Bridge Authority

and organizations such as the Polish American Congress-Illinois Chapter, Polish-American Engineers Association, Modjeski descendants, and private donors. Due to the scientific nature and complexity of the project, the project is seeking completion funding.

The filmmakers' goal is to build a cinematic history of Polish heritage for the next Polonia generation by making films about accomplished Poles in America available on DVD in both Polish & English.

Both are members of the International Documentary Association and Polish-American organizations, such as PNA, PAC, ACPC and the Polish University Club of Los Angeles.

Leonard and Basia are married with four children.

## Administration Updates

*Follow up to our September Message...*

**Scholarship** Committee consisting of Roman Korczak, Jacek Szostka, Grazyna Czyszczonek and Michael Niedzinski reviewed documentation of eight applicants for the Ralph Modjeski Scholarship and after consideration selected two recipients. They are:

- **Mr. Marek Mroczek** - Senior at University of Illinois studying Material Engineering  
*Note: Mr. Mroczek will attend our October meeting to personally receive the scholarship*
- **Miss Natalie Trochimiuk** - Junior at George Washington University studying Systems Engineering

On Sunday October 20<sup>th</sup> Polish American Congress will host **The Heritage Awards Banquet**. **Basia and Leonard Myszynski** will be the recipients of the award. Thus far 10 members of PAEA indicated that they will attend the banquet.

Our **Christmas Party** is tentatively scheduled for Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup>. More details are forthcoming in November bulletin.

We would like to acknowledge a very generous \$200 **donation** made by one of our members **Mr. Stanley Witczak**. This will be matched 3:1 by his employer yielding a **total of \$800 for our Scholarship fund**.

**2013 MEMBERSHIP DUES.** Please note that the dues schedule for 2013 did not change. Dues are \$50 per year, senior citizens and students \$25 per year. We strongly encourage you to pay your dues in January or, if not possible, in February. 2013 membership cards will be provided to all those who paid their dues. Questions? You may inquire at the meeting or send an email to: [paea.info@gmail.com](mailto:paea.info@gmail.com).