

# OGNIWO POLISH MUSEUM SOCIETY INC.

## ANNUAL REPORT

1 January 2017 – 31 December, 2017

### EVENTS & EXHIBITS

Ogniwo hosted a University of Manitoba academic course (POL2660) titled “*History and Film: The Polish Case*”. This course counted for 3 credits in the winter term, **January to April 2017**. Five film sessions were open to the public and were well attended.



**April 2<sup>nd</sup>:** the museum held a *Pisanki* (egg decorating) Workshop for members of the Saint John’s Cantius Fraternal Aid Society, as well as an open session for the community at large.

**April 21<sup>st</sup>:** the museum hosted a book launch “A Shared History” by Maria Anna Jarochofska (White Rock, 2016). The book is a compilation of unique stories about the hard work, passion and dedication of Polish-Canadian immigrants who helped build the Canada that we know today. Guest speakers were: Professor Daniel Stone and Professor Zbigniew Izydorczyk.



**May 12<sup>th</sup>:** we took part in Manitoba Day celebrations. Visitors were invited to view a National Film Board documentary titled “*Paul Tomkiewicz: Street-railway switchman*” directed by Roman Kroitor.

**May 16<sup>th</sup>:** the museum hosted an event to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the Santa Rosa Polish refugee camp in Leon, Mexico. The event was featured in an article in the Winnipeg Free Press newspaper and was very successful, with over 50 guests from the Polish and Mexican communities in attendance. Among the guests were: the Honorary Consul of Mexico Mr. James Erwin Downey, the President of the Mex Y Can Association of Manitoba Mr. Victor Ramirez, the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland Dr. Włodzimierz Czarnecki, and the President of the Canadian Polish Congress - Manitoba Branch Mrs. Grazyna Galezowski. Krystyna Szypowska presented on the history of Santa Rosa and the Polish Refugees of WW2, while Henry Kuzia hosted the event and prepared a mini exhibit of artefacts from Santa Rosa.



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**May 18<sup>th</sup>:** museum board member, Krystyna Szypowska, represented the museum at a reading of a Private Members' Statement in the Legislative Building. The letter commemorated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Polish immigration to Manitoba.

**August 7 to 13:** the museum mounted and manned a temporary exhibit at the Warsaw Pavilion during Folklorama. Our exhibit, at the RBC Convention Centre, featured Polish regional costumes. Facebook and Twitter posts helped spread the word in a truly interactive way. Visitors were encouraged to take photos in front of our new banner and post it on social media for a chance to win a prize.



**August 27<sup>th</sup>:** museum volunteers took part in the 45th annual Heritage Days at the Cooks Creek Museum. Our booth presented traditional Polish cut-outs and included crafts for young visitors.

**September 9<sup>th</sup>:** we took part in the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish Combatant's Association Dance Ensemble "Iskry". Our volunteers created a mini exhibit which was featured in the lobby of the Centennial Concert Hall.



**September 29-30, October 1:** Culture Days Manitoba were marked by new exhibit curated by Krystyna Szypowska *"Through the eyes of children"*. The exhibit was featured in a front-page article of the City and Business section of the Winnipeg Free Press, and generated great attendance from the community with over 60 visitors.



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**October 15<sup>th</sup>:** the museum held its 6th annual fundraiser based on Polish liquors and food pairings, titled “Warm Your Spirits”. This year’s theme showcased Polish Beer and comfort foods. The evening was a great success. Our continuous work on promoting the museum within the Winnipeg community resulted in excellent P.R., as well as generous donations to support our various programs and activities.



**October 21<sup>st</sup>:** museum board members, Magda Blackmore and Christine Tabbernor, represented the museum at the Saint John’s Cantius Fraternal Aid Society 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary banquet.



**October 22<sup>nd</sup>:** museum volunteers took part in the unveiling of a plaque commemoration 200 years of Polish Immigration to Manitoba. The ceremony took place at the Manitoba Legislature. The museum was one of the sponsors of the plaque.

**October 29<sup>th</sup>:** the annual volunteer appreciation day included dinner and a Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra concert.



**November 4<sup>th</sup>:** we participated in the Polish Fest organized by the Polish Gymnastic Association Sokol. To help celebrate 111<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization, our volunteers helped preserve Sokol’s history by putting together special mannequins to display the group’s historical costumes. The mini exhibit was featured at the Club Regent celebrations.

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**November 27<sup>th</sup>:** museum volunteers instructed students of the SPK Iskry School of Dance on how to make traditional Christmas decorations.



## PROJECT GRANTS

### Library and Archives Canada grant:

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> we were awarded a \$28,504 grant from Library and Archives Canada in support of our project titled “Development of Archival Collection at Ogniwo Polish Museum, Winnipeg”. This grant allowed us to hire an archivist, Marta Dabros, who did a preliminary assessment of archival holdings, and determined supplies and work required. She then researched archival software and made a general plan for the archival collection. The archivist began processing the collections, and has processed four to date, with the processing of a fifth one currently underway.

In late fall, Ogniwo applied for infrastructure grants to various entities:

- The first of these entities, **Community Places**, awarded us \$1,720 towards these much-needed renovations. Nic Curry, the MLA for Kildonan, visited the museum to announce the good news and shared the information on social media.
- The **Thomas Sill Foundation** awarded us \$4,000 for these much-needed renovations.
- We are waiting to hear from the **Winnipeg Foundation** regarding our grant application there.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Continued work on basement upgrades: we purchased of more shelving units, painted the floor, and cleaned most areas of the basement. Final decisions on the placement of artefacts and a proper exhibit-creating area are still to be determined.

## COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Accessioning donated artefacts is a never-ending job. It is thanks to our Collections Manager (Alycia) that this work is being done. We were pleased that Sara Szewczuk volunteered to assist, and is undergoing a training program with Alycia concerning collection management tasks.

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### MEDIA

#### **Free Press articles:**

- May 5<sup>th</sup> “Taking the long way home”
- September 29<sup>th</sup> “War Through the Eyes of Children”

**New website:** the museum launched its updated website on December 20<sup>th</sup> – the updated format will help us keep the community informed of our events and activities, and serve as a repository for information concerning our library, our artefacts, and our collections.

### FINANCIAL

The museum was the recipient of several sizeable private donations during 2017. Details of our financial year are provided in the Financial Statements attached.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Museum continues to support a variety of groups and activities and we have enjoyed mutually-beneficial partnerships this year with:

- Warsaw Pavilion organizing committee – Folklorama 2017
- Consulate of Poland in Toronto and Honorary Consul for Poland in Winnipeg
- University of Manitoba, German and Slavic Studies
- Canadian Polish Congress, MB Branch
- Cooks Creek Heritage Museum
- Iskry School of Dance
- Polish Gymnastic Association Sokol Winnipeg (organizers of Polish Fest)
- Canadian Polish Women Federation Branch No. 7. In the past year we renewed a close relationship with our partner organization by allowing them access to the museum building and have provided storage for their documents. The Federation gained a much-needed meeting place and we are hoping to benefit from their volunteer help.
- Saint John’s Cantius Fraternal Aid Society. We have agreed to share office space with the Society and provide them with access to the building for their meetings and events. They have issued a Letter of Intent to participate in our archival project under the LAC grant.

Respectfully submitted,

***Magdalena Blackmore***

President