



OGNIWO POLISH MUSEUM SOCIETY INC.
1417 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB R2W 3V3

ANNUAL REPORT

1 January 2016 – 31 December, 2016

as presented at the Annual General Meeting on February 25, 2017

Thank you to all volunteers: The museum would have not existed without the participation of all the volunteers who shared their time and talents. A special thank you goes to Marnie Johnston who took up the role of President, only to resign for health reasons in the fall of 2016. As a result, Vice-President Magda Blackmore took over the president's responsibilities for the remainder of the year.

EVENTS & EXHIBITS

March 18th

The year began with a community outreach event, where we hosted a *Pisanki* (Easter egg) workshop for members of the Canadian Polish Women's Federation Branch No. 7.



April 9 to 16th

Election Canada requested to use the museum for a provincial advance polling station. This cooperation allowed us great visibility within the neighbourhood. Persons coming to vote inquired about the museum's mandate and activities. Thank you to Dorothy Paryzek who accommodated this initiative by volunteering her time while the polling occurred.

June 4th and 5th

Museum volunteers manned an information booth at the annual Polish Fest/Sokol Days.

In June, Magda Blackmore had the opportunity to travel to Halifax, NS where she met with Jennifer Hevenor, Collection Manager at the *Pier 21 Museum*. As a result of this meeting, we received permission to use digital versions of archival photographs in our new immigration exhibit.



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June 17th

Members took part in a volunteer appreciation event. We spent a delightful evening at the Winnipeg Jazz Festival Latin Night.

August 7 – 13th

We mounted and manned a temporary exhibit for the Warsaw Pavilion at Folklorama. Our *Self-guided Tour of Poland* featured an itinerary of memorable tourist attractions, depicted through photos and artefacts. The exhibit received many positive comments and was a popular stop for Warsaw Pavilion guests. Facebook and Twitter helped spread the word in a truly interactive way.



August 28

Museum volunteers took part in the annual Heritage Days at the Cooks Creek Museum. Our booth presented traditional Polish cut-outs and included paper crafts for young visitors.

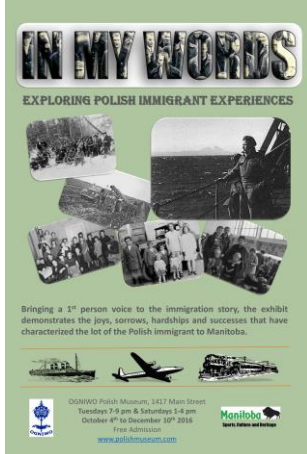




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September 30th

This marked the opening of our new exhibit *In My Words: Exploring Polish Immigrant Experiences*. Curator Dorothy Paryzek and several museum volunteers created a display that reflects on the immigrant experience through a first person narrative. Using oral histories, letters and memoirs we have recreated Manitoba Polish immigrants' histories. By applying thematic,



rather than chronological, categories the exhibit provides viewers with the means to compare the ordeals which early Prairie settlers experienced with those of Poles arriving in later years. New acrylic vitrines were put to good use in displaying documents, photos, etc. The opening included an audio-visual presentation of the story of the Sawicz Family, whose letters and photos were donated to the museum's archives. Guests expressed appreciation and recognition for the visual and emotional impact of the exhibit. We hope that this exhibit will be the launch pad for a series of related lectures and presentations over the coming years.

October 29th

Our 5th annual fundraiser, based on Polish liquors and food pairings - "Warm Your Spirits" – took place on this date. This year's theme showcased unique Polish cocktails that were complimented by traditional Polish appetizers. Our continuous work to promote the museum within the Winnipeg community resulted not only in a successful event, but also in generous donations which support our various programs and activities.

November 18th

The museum hosted a book launch titled *A Second Coming: Canadian Migration Fiction* (Guernica Editions). Our guest and author of one of the short stories, Ron Romanowski, read excerpts from "Adam and Leokadia". He was accompanied by Lillian Romanowski who read translations of Polish poetry. The presentation was followed by an interesting discussion about the history of Winnipeg's North End, as remembered by the artists and audience members.



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November 27th

Our final event for 2016 involved museum volunteers offering instructions in making traditional Christmas cards to students of the SPK Iskry School of Dance.

PROJECT GRANTS

An application was filed in January 2017 with *Library and Archives Canada* for a grant supporting our project titled “Development of Archival Collection at OgniwO Polish Museum, Winnipeg.” Following discussions with LAC we are hopeful that the grant will be approved later this year.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Continued work on basement improvements included the purchase of more metal shelving units, floor sealing/painting, and a general clean up of the entire space. We will continue to reorganize artefact placement and storage in 2017, as we make room for more archival materials. An improved work area and exhibit-creating area also needs to be implemented.

A larger infrastructure project is planned, including several needed repairs and upgrades. As estimates are gathered for roofing repairs, parking lot paving with wheelchair ramp, new replacement windows, and ceiling tile replacement, we will be filing grant applications to assist with this work through *Community Places*, *Winnipeg Foundation*, etc. It is hoped that this work will be completed in 2018.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Magda Blackmore audited the University of Manitoba course “Community Archives”. This will be especially beneficial as we manage our archives.



COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Accessioning donated artefacts is a never-ending job. It is thanks to our Collections Manager, Alycia Walichnowski, that this work is being done. We were very happy to welcome a new volunteer Sara Szewczyk who is receiving training on our Virtual Collections System and is assisting Alycia with the collection management tasks.

Another exciting area of Collections Management is the work done this past year by Marta Dabros. Marta has provided a great on-line solution for our library system and completed the task of cataloguing 581 volumes of books. Thanks to Marta's work we not only have our library in the best order it has ever been in, but we were able to assess the unique and rare volumes in our holdings.

MEDIA

PR and Social media have been well managed by Stefan Yurkiw and Dorothy Paryzek, and recently joined by new volunteer Mike Kulesza. Mike has worked on press and media releases this winter as well as managing the development of our new website.

Before the end of 2016, we commissioned a professional developer to help give our website a fresh, clean look, with enhanced capabilities. We hope to launch the new website by late spring/early summer of 2017.

FINANCIAL

The museum was the recipient of some sizeable private donations during 2016. 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 within our community and we have enjoyed mutually beneficial partnerships this year with:

- Warsaw Pavilion organizing committee – Folklorama 2016
- Consulate of Poland in Toronto and Honourary Consul for Poland in Winnipeg
- University of Manitoba, German and Slavic Studies
- Canadian Polish Congress, Manitoba Branch
- Cooks Creek Heritage Museum
- Iskry School of Dance
- Polish Gymnastic Association Sokol, Winnipeg (organizers of Polish Fest)
- Canadian Polish Women's Federation, Branch No. 7



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Respectfully submitted,

Magdalena Blackmore
President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2016-2017

Executive Officers:

Marnie Johnston	President (to Sept. 2016)
Magda Blackmore	Vice-President then President (Sept. 2016-Feb. 2017)
Krystyna Szypowska	Treasurer
Christine Tabbernor	Secretary

Directors:

Marta Dabros
Dorothy Paryzek
Christine Polimeni
Wanda Slawik
Ela Tukaj
Ola Tutaj
Ewa Wadowska
Alycia Walichnowski
Stefan Yurkiw