

**OGNIWO POLISH MUSEUM SOCIETY INC.  
ANNUAL REPORT**

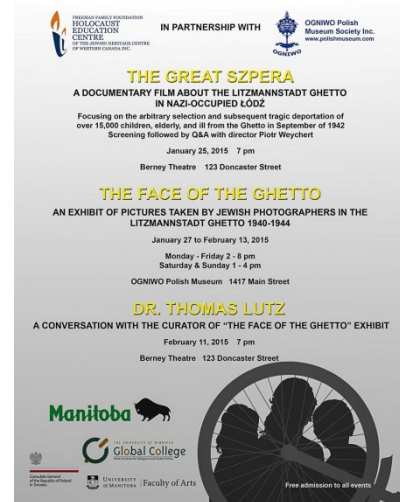
**1 January – 31 December, 2015**

as presented at the Annual General Meeting on March 5, 2016

## Events & Exhibits

The onset of 2015 saw us continuing our partnership with the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada in organizing three events marking the United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27) and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The North American Premiere screening of *Wielka Szpera* (The Great Szpera) by Polish director Piotr Weychert on January 25 was powerful, moving, and well attended. CTV Morning Live – Winnipeg broadcasted the next morning from the museum and featured *The Face of the Ghetto* (An exhibit of pictures taken by Jewish photographers in the Litzmannstadt ghetto 1940-1944) travelling exhibit. The exhibit officially opened to the public on January 27. Thanks to numerous volunteers from both organizations who generously gave their time, the museum was open daily for a three week period. The final event was a lecture and community conversation with Dr. Thomas Lutz, curator of the exhibit and senior consultant with the Topography of Terror Foundation in Berlin, Germany, which was held on February 11.



We were very pleased to receive positive reviews from Dr. Lutz on how we chose to organize and hang the travelling exhibit in our museum space.

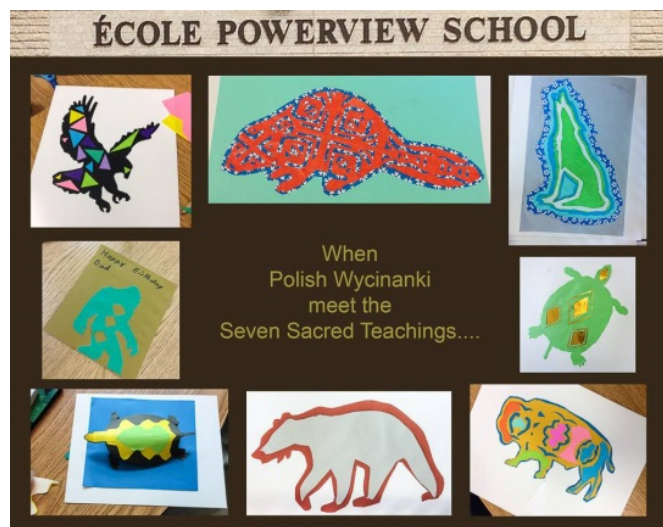
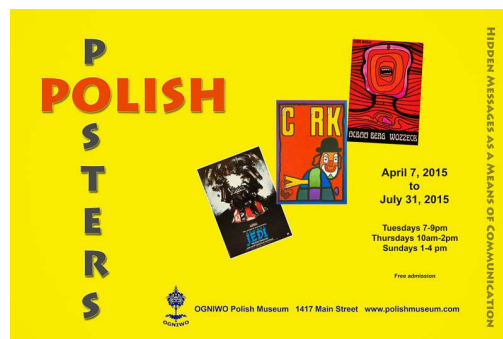
Despite the many hours of work, this experience of collaborating with the Freeman Family Foundation, turned out to be well worth the effort and forged many friendships and connections between our two organizations.

March found us organizing our annual Pisanki Workshops, coordinated by Marta Dabros and supported by our volunteers. We were again featured by CTV Morning Live – Winnipeg and were able to invite some guests from the community to help explain Polish Easter traditions and make pisanki on air.



March also became the perfect opportunity to increase our social media presence by participating in #MuseumWeek 2015 on Twitter (March 23-29). #MuseumWeek is a growing international phenomenon which has allowed us to forge some new links with museums around the world. Our participation resulted in many new followers, including Muzeum Etnograficzne (Warsaw), Muzeum Emigracji (Gdynia), Culture.pl, and ICOM (International Council of Museums) Canada, as well as others both in Manitoba and abroad.

April saw us fill our exhibit space with our collection of amazing Polish Posters, including many that had not been seen by the public in the past. May had us participating in Manitoba Day (May 12), International Museum Day (May 17) with a craft drop-in session, and running a Wycinaki Papercutting Workshop at Ecole Powerview School in Powerview-Pine Falls (May 29).



The summer months had us focused on promotion and outreach during Polish Fest (June 6-7) as well as at Cooks Creek Heritage Days (August 30).



A new temporary exhibit was created for the cultural display at the Warsaw Pavilion during Folklorama. This year's theme of *Threads* highlighted the beauty and history of traditional weaving in Poland and the art and innovation of contemporary Polish weavers. We provided an interactive craft component, showing children and the young at heart how to weave with everyday items. By far, the most popular element of this exhibit was our guest weaver, Susan Styrchak.



During the fall months, under Magda Blackmore's direction and initiative, we focused on reorganizing the basement and disposing unnecessary items. It is an ongoing project to reorganize the museum's artefacts and archives to make them more accessible.

Our fourth annual fundraiser took place on October 23. The "Raise Your Spirits" fundraiser took a twist and paired meads with medieval-inspired foods. As always, it was the hard work of our volunteers that made for a successful evening.



In December, we participated in the Iskry School of Dance *Mikolaj* Christmas concert by offering a traditional Christmas craft session for the children. Teenagers, working in teams, were challenged to create traditional Polish Christmas Szopki (crèches) in 40 minutes, with prizes awarded for the highest scoring creations. Although a hectic event, the organizers were pleased to have our volunteers come out and are looking forward to partnering with us again in the future.

## **Project Grants**

A grant proposal was submitted to Heritage Resources for a photographic exhibit by Mirek Weichsel, entitled Flatlands, which was not approved. We submitted an operating grant as a Level II museum in Manitoba for 2015, for which we received approval and funding. Magda Blackmore, Marta Dabros, Christine Tabbernor worked on an Archives Canada grant which would allow us to hire an archivist. Unfortunately, although the grant was submitted electronically, it was not received by the granting body. This grant will be resubmitted in 2016.

## **Infrastructure**

We have continued to reassess our existing physical resources, disposing of many items which are no longer feasible to use, such as large bulky cases, old heavy accordion-style panels, as well as items from the basement which were taking up space but were no longer serving a function. Thanks to Marta Dabros, we were able to secure metal shelving from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The shelving has already been installed and is being put to good use as we organize our storage space.

## **Professional Development**

Our members and directors enthusiastically upgrade their skills through participation in workshops and courses pertaining to the maintenance and ongoing development of the museum. This year, our members attended the following:

- Engaging Your Community: a Fundraising Workshop for Arts & Cultural Organizations - ArtSupport Manitoba (March 26)
- Museums and Education Course – Association of Manitoba Museums (May 13)
- Designing & Launching Social Media – A Guide for Non-profits” – Volunteer Manitoba (June 18)
- Ancestral Evidence: Names, Places, and Documents – 2015 International Seminar - East European Genealogical Society (August 1)

## Collections Management

Our Collections Manager (Alycia Walichnowski) has continued to review and maintain our collection management system, accessioning and deaccessioning artefacts as needed. This continues to be a time consuming process and additional assistance would benefit the museum greatly.

Our Archivist (Marta Dabros) has continued to organize our books, creating entries in a new library system. As well, she has started the process of reviewing and organizing the materials in our collection which are archival in nature.

## Financial

The museum was been the recipient of several sizeable private donations during 2015. Details of our financial year are provided in the Financial Statements attached.

## Community Involvement

The Museum continued to partner with other organizations in mutually beneficial ways this year with:

- Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada
- Polish Gymnastic Association Sokol Winnipeg (organizers of Polish Fest)
- Warsaw Pavilion Organizing Committee – Folklorama 2015
- Cooks Creek Heritage Museum
- Iskry School of Dance.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Paryzek  
President

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|---------------------|------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Board of Directors: | Executive: | Dorothy Paryzek     | President      |
|                     |            | Magda Blackmore     | Vice-President |
|                     |            | Christine Polimeni  | Treasurer      |
|                     |            | Christine Tabbernor | Secretary      |

|            |                     |                    |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Directors: | Steve Yurkiw        | Ewa Wadowska       |
|            | Alycia Walichnowski | Krystyna Szypowska |
|            | Marta Dabros        | Ola Tutaj          |
|            | Elizabeth Tukaj     | Marcin Cychowski   |
|            | Wanda Slawik        |                    |