## OGNIWO POLISH MUSEUM SOCIETY INC. ANNUAL REPORT

1 January 2018 - 31 December, 2018

## **Events & Exhibits**

At the onset of 2018, Ogniwo launched its new website, including a new look, easy to use tabs and an expanded platform with which to interact with virtual visitors. Updates and improvements are now easy to maintain by our volunteers. Facebook and Instagram allow us to connect instantly with people around the world.

We continue to expand our library of oral history interviews. Marta Dąbroś and Krystyna Szypowska met with Chris Curry who gave his oral history interview. Mr. Curry's recollection on immigration to Canada and establishing his own business enriched the museum's archival collection. Throughout the year our archivist and volunteers Ewa Wadowska and Wanda Slawik continued to collect oral histories of Polish seniors residing at the Polish Manor in Winnipeg. To date four interviews were recorded (Alina Chmielowicz, Maria Wadowska, Genowefa Matkowska, Stanislaw Kmiec).



Wednesdays, 6:00pm to 8:00pm First class: October 10°, 2018 Fee for 8 week course \$160 Contact: info@polishmuseum.com Location of classes: 1417 Main Street We hosted conversational Polish language classes "Polish for Beginners". Starting on February 21 eight two hour sessions were offered to community learners. A second session of language classes was offered in October.



Dr. Kulczycki

Archivist Marta Dabros continued work on archival collection. Results of her work were regularly posted on social media. One of the most interesting outcomes of the archival project was a donation of a Polish World War II uniform and photographs which sparked a quest to find the original owner. Mr. Lukas Kulczycki - a medical officer in the Polish army before becoming a doctor and moving to Swan River, Manitoba in the early 1950s - was re-united with his uniform at 106 years of age. On March 19th Marta Dabroś presented "Ogniwo Polish Museum

Archives – an introductory workshop."

Another result of recent archival work was the academic collaboration with Michalina Petelska of the University of Gdansk and Magda Blackmore (University of Manitoba). The project consisted of a series of short articles for the Polish educational website *HISTORIA POSZUKAJ*, aimed at students and teachers to teach history via objects.

(https://www.historiaposzukaj.pl/wiedza,obiekty,687,obiekt\_kuzia.html).



Archive work



March 10<sup>th</sup> the Canadian Polish Women's Federation hosted International Women's Day. Members of the Womens' Federation, joined by members of the Ogniwo Polish Museum, had a great evening at the museum learning how to do découpage. Thanks to instructor Wioleta for a very successful event!

←International Women's Day

On March 18<sup>th</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.

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, in collaboration with the Canadian Polish Congress MB Branch, Ogniwo museum hosted an evening with the new Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto Krzysztof Grzelczyk. The Consul General took this opportunity to present, on behalf of Andrzej Duda President of Republic of Poland, Kazimierz Pater with the Order of Polonia Restituta.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, the museum hosted a *Wycinanki* (paper cuts) Workshop. In attendance were students from the Polish School of Dance Iskry.

From August 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> the museum mounted and manned a temporary exhibit at the Warsaw Pavilion during Folklorama at the RBC Convention Centre. Our exhibit *THREADS*, featured the importance of traditional weaving in the folklore and traditions of Poland. Facebook and Twitter posts helped spread the word in a truly interactive way. Visitors were encouraged to take photos in front of our colourful display and post it on social media.

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, museum volunteers took part in the 45th annual Heritage Days at the Cooks Creek Museum. Our booth presented traditional Polish *wycinanki* and included crafts for young visitors.



Culture Days Manitoba (September 29-30, October 1) were marked by a new exhibit featuring Winnipeg-born visual artist Julianna Zwierciadlowska- Rhymer. The exhibit consisted of works influenced by the artist's family story and immigration to Canada as well as her own experiences of post-communist Poland.

← Culture Days guest artist

On October 20<sup>th</sup> we participated in the Polish Fest organized by the Polish Gymnastic Association Sokol at Regent Casino. Museum volunteers created a mini-exhibit promoting the upcoming commemoration of 100 years of Poland's regaining its independence after World War I.

On November 1<sup>st</sup> museum volunteers attended the official launch of the CZAS digital collection. CZAS, established in Winnipeg in 1915, is the oldest surviving Polish-language newspaper in Canada. In 2003, CZAS Polish Press Ltd., donated its collection of bound newspaper issues covering the period of 1915-2003 to the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections. Ogniwo museum created a mini exhibit from our Collection to help celebrate this event.

Museum volunteers participated in special program commemorating 100 Years of Poland's Independence on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Hosted by the Canadian Polish Congress MB Branch, this cultural event included a new exhibit "Canadian Polish Soldiers from Winnipeg Fight for Poland's Independence" curated by Ogniwo. The exhibit was later displayed at the Polish Canadian Gymnastic Association Sokol Winnipeg, where some of the events to mobilize fighting men took place. Currently, a digitized format is available on the museum's website.

On November 27<sup>th</sup>, museum volunteers instructed students of the SPK Iskry School of Dance on how to make traditional Christmas decorations. A record number of 40 young students attended this year's session.



Christmas children's workshop

Magda Blackmore and Wanda Sławik attended the Manitoba Legislative Assembly for the presentation of a special members bill by Nic Curry (MLA Kildonan), celebrating 200 years of Polish culture in Manitoba and 100 years of Poland's Independence.

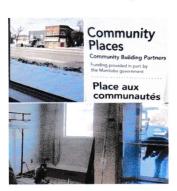
To bring the year to a close the museum held an annual volunteer appreciation lunch (December 16<sup>th</sup>) hosted by Ela Tukaj.

# **Project Grants**

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) grant

The completion of our first grant (2017) from Library and Archives Canada ("Development of Archival Collection at Ogniwo Polish Museum, Winnipeg") occurred in early 2018. LAC awarded us a further \$30,000 to continue our project under the direction of archivist Marta Dąbroś.

## MB Community Places Program (CPP)



In late November, 2017, the CPP program awarded \$1949 as a matching grant for upgrades to our facility that included replacement of exterior window and door glass, replacement of ceiling tile and some LED lighting upgrades. Changes to the program

gave us a very tight window to complete the work by March 31st.

←Window replacement

The Winnipeg Foundation & Thomas Sill Foundation Further infrastructure upgrades were approved by The Winnipeg Foundation for \$5000 (matching) to pave the rear parking area and for lighting upgrades. The Thomas Sill Foundation granted us \$4000 to support the project. Completion was September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018.



Parking paving

#### **Infrastructure**

In addition to the work described for infrastructure upgrades under Project Grants, several other important improvements were completed by museum volunteers.

In order to pave our parking area, the existing platform and steps were removed and then rebuilt by Walter Tukaj, Dennis and Christine Tabbernor.

The replacement of ceiling tiles and light bulbs in track and pot lights was completed by Walter Tukaj, while the overall contract management to replace glass, lighting and tiles was managed by Ola Tutaj.

Continued work on basement upgrades was facilitated by the purchase of more metal shelving units, painting of the floor, and cleaning of many areas of the basement that had not been touched in years. Christine Tabbernor painted and built shelving and secured it to walls and beams for stability. A dedicated archival storage area was created and many artefacts found better storage in the process.

Safety and security in our rear parking area was also upgraded, with new motion-detector lights, security camera and new signage, to discourage illegal parking and loitering.

### **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 Szewczyk volunteered to assist, and is undergoing a training program with Alycia concerning collection management tasks. Ewa Wadowska and Wanda Slawik lent their expertise in restoring and mounting our collection of wycinanki. This much needed work will continue in 2019.

←Interesting artefact

The future of our collections management system and the software system we currently use (*Virtual Collections*), is now at risk, because it is no longer being supported technically. A project to solve this problem for several museums in Manitoba was begun in 2018, under the umbrella of the Association of Manitoba Museums and includes Ogniwo Museum, as well as the Transcona Museum, Dalnavert, The Sport MB Museum, and the Craft Museum. Alycia Walichnowski and Christine Tabbernor are contributing many volunteer hours to this project by attending meetings, helping to define the project, and assisting with grant applications, etc.

## **Media Interface**

- Global TV "106-year-old WW2 veteran reunited with uniform weeks before death" (May 4, 2019)
- River City 360 Radio interview with Marta Dabroś. Robert and Sonny of the Winnipeg Foundation recorded an episode, featured on 93.7 CJNU every Thursday at 12pm and Saturday at 8am.
- Winnipeg Free Press "Grants improving the community" By: Nic Curry Kildonan MLA Constituency Report
- Polish American Association and Canadian Embassy in Poland posted links to the museum's short articles for the Polish educational website HISTORIA POSZUKAJ.
- The Times "Polish Communities Celebrate Freedom" (November 21, 2018)

### **Financial**

The museum was the recipient of several sizeable private donations during 2018. 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 in Manitoba, creating partnerships with:

- Warsaw Pavilion organizing committee Folklorama 2018
- 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.
- Saint John's Cantius Fraternal Aid Society.

Respectfully submitted,

Magdalena Blackmore

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President

## **Board of Directors 2018**

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