



President's Report December 2007

Another year draws to a close and the Committee of Management has been working consistently on a number of projects during the last year. These include:

- ❖ Organising and cataloguing the existing collection;
- ❖ Seeking funding for new projects; and
- ❖ Oral History Project.

Organising and cataloguing the collection:

The Committee of Management have organised a number of working bees at Millenium House sorting through the collection, packing items into acid free folders and boxes. Some progress has been made in this activity but there is still much to do.

Seeking funding

The organization was successful in obtaining funds from the Blum foundation and the Victorian Multicultural Commission for organisational support. The Museum received \$500 from the Blum Foundation for the project to conduct a seminar/workshop titled 'z pokolenia na pokolenie' - 'from one generation to the next'. The initiative for this project came from Lucyna Artymiuk. The aims of the seminar/workshop included:

- To provide practical skills and knowledge
- To share the experiences of discovering your family history
- To enrich people's understanding of their cultural background
- Enrich the community by providing the resource of skilled family historians

This seminar took place on the 24th of November 2007 and was held in the Elwood Neighbourhood Learning Centre. Twenty-two people participated from around Victoria with some coming as far away as Warragul and Traralgon. Most people were interested in how to discover their roots in 'Kresy' and other eastern territories. A number of people's parents had already passed on and they now wished to reconnect with their Polish ancestry. Two participants were going to Poland for the first time while others just wanted to know more about where their parents and grandparents lived. One lady wanted to trace her Polish ancestor who arrived in Australia in the 1850's. Six speakers covered the following topics: personal stories of discovering one's ancestry; practical tips about how to navigate the military archives; Polish-Jewish ancestry; conducting oral histories, issues relating to the Kresy and eastern territories; computer exercises – use of internet sites, searches and other available resources. The speakers included community activists, historians, academics and a representative from the Victorian Genealogical Society. Feedback from participants rated the day a great success. Six new members joined the Polish Museum and Archives as a result of the seminar.

Oral History Project

We haven't collected many stories this year. We hope to consolidate the materials we have collected thus far by transcribing the interviews and transferring them from digital tapes onto DVD.

Plans for 2008

- Increase the Museum's profile and membership
- Create better links with other like-minded organisations
- Hold a planning day to map out future directions
- Convene a special interest group into Polish genealogy led by Lucyna Artymiuk
- This group will offer short courses/lectures on specific topics every three months or so and share information via the internet / newsletter.
- Continue with preservation work, cataloguing and conducting an inventory
- Seek additional funding
- Transcribe oral history interviews to increase their availability and transfer interviews from digital tapes to DVD
- Continue collecting oral histories
- Other activities

Finally I would like to thank the committee of management for all their good work and on behalf of the Committee of Management I would like to thank our membership for their interest and support.

Helena Evert
President