



POLISH-CANADIAN WOMEN'S FEDERATION

HEAD EXECUTIVE BOARD
FOUNDED 1956

FEDERACJA POLEK W KANADZIE
ZARZĄD GŁÓWNY

LA FÉDÉRATION DES FEMMES POLONAISES DU CANADA
COMITÉ CENTRAL EXÉCUTIF

REPORT TO PCWO - Semi-Annual, 2007

Yvonne Bogorya-Buczowski, President , Polish Canadian Womens' Federation

In January 2007 Branch No.1 of the Polish Canadian Women's Federation organized a New Year's celebration to which other branches were invited to attend. In February the branch no.2 from London celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Our Board participated in the ceremonies and awarded the most senior members Diplomas of Distinction to recognize their volunteer work for the community. This event was reported in the London Free Press Gallery and photos can be found on our website: http://www.federacjapolek.ca/ogniwo2/50-lat_en.html . Please visit our website to see more reports from various events, including our Annual Meetings. You can learn about our history and achievements. The website is in English and Polish and it provides links to all our branches (with their e-mail addresses). Many thanks to Ewa Zadarnowska and Margaret Boczkowska from Ottawa branch for many hours they've spent as volunteers to set up and update the website. We get quite a lot of enquiries resulting from that. For example a student from the University of Vienna writing a doctoral dissertation about women' solidarity wrote to us and interviewed me for the book after she found us on the Internet. We were approached also by producers of a video "Red on White: Journey to Freedom" about three Polish women who were deported to Siberian labour camps but in spite of that they survived the hardships and regained their freedom in Canada. I was asked to provide a commentary.

One of the important events this year was the International Conference of the World Polonia held in Warsaw, Poland in September 2007. There were four delegates from our organization participating: myself, Irene Kremblewski, our Vice-President, Sofia de Witt (Chair, Advisory Council on Multiculturalism) from Winnipeg, Teresa Szlamp-Fryga (Canadian Polish Congress) from Edmonton. Teresa was going afterwards to the Ukraine to participate as an observer during their election. The Conference took place in the Parliament of Poland. We were greeted by the President, Lech Kaczynski. There was a lot of discussion concerning the role of Polonia in preservation of Polish language and culture. One of the burning issues was the need to protect the good image of Poland with regards to information provided by some press reports regarding Nazi concentration camps in Poland. There should be more publications offering relevant historical data and witness accounts about this tragic period of Polish history. The President thanked the leaders of Polonia for their strong support of the Solidarity movement in Poland and the significant role they played in regaining independence of Poland, freeing it from the oppression of communism.

There was also a separate meeting of the World Federation of Polish Women which was led by Polish Canadians Women Federation. This international network of women representing various continents: North America, Australia, Europe, South America and Eastern Europe, was founded 30 years ago to assist Poland in its struggle for independence. However later on we concentrated on helping Polish women in the Ukraine, Lithuania and Belorussia. We discussed plans for the future, the need to revise our goals and regulations. There is a strong need to improve an image of Polish immigrant women and to share information about cultural and professional achievements of women residing outside of Poland. We are dispersed around the world but we can network electronically and do some joint projects. Our Board decided to assist by preparing an electronic Bulletin to foster communication and exchange of ideas.

Apart from our international activities we participate actively in Canadian affairs.

Our branch in Ottawa participates in Marathons to collect money for breast cancer. Both me and the President of Ottawa Branch, Ewa Zadarnowska took part in a ceremony at the Parliament Building dedicated to the 140th Anniversary of the first MP of Polish origin – E. Kierzkowski. Day before Ewa Zadarnowska attended the Second



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Annual Person's Day - Person's Tea Party to celebrate the memory of five women who made it possible for other women to be appointed to the Senate.

This year our Hamilton branch is leading the Foundation of Jadwiga Dobrucka set up by our founder. They announced a competition for four scholarships to be awarded to talented and needy youth to support their studies in Canada.

Every year we take part in the Christmas Around the World organized by the Community Folk Arts Council of the Metro Toronto. We are inviting you all to the Toronto City Hall on December 1st or 2nd (Saturday/Sunday – 10am - 3.00 pm) to see Christmas decorations, arts and crafts and taste food of different ethnic groups.

The Polish Canadian Women's Federation sent a letter to the Hon., Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (attached) to protest the use of brutal force by the police in Vancouver. We express our solidarity with the mother, Zofia Cisowski who should be compensated for her loss. An apology is needed from the authorities responsible for this tragic and unnecessary incident.

A new immigrant's life was lost due to a misunderstanding, lack of communication and neglect in providing sufficient care. Our branch in Vancouver was the first to make a donation to cover Mrs. Cisowska's legal and burial costs. On Saturday November 17 there will be a memorial service held in Vancouver for Robert Dziekanski, her 40 year old son who came here from Poland on October 13. Zofia worked all her life to collect funds to bring her son to Canada.