

# Canadian Orthodox Pioneer Museum, Sifton, Manitoba

## Report for 2007 Season

The Museum season at Sifton ran from the time of the annual Pilgrimage, June 23, to September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007. This was its first season of operation, and with the assistance of a Virginia Farah Foundation grant of \$2,000 USD, and a Young Canada Works grant to hire a student, \$2,750.59, plus admission donations and Kiosk purchases, we were able to produce an exhibit "Crowns of Wild Flowers: the Wedding of Han'ka and Petro, 1927" and successfully operate the Museum. It brought out approximately 200 visitors, including the opening day and the final event, which was a concert of Ukrainian Wedding Music and More, blessed by Vladyka Seraphim, and attended by 55 persons from Sifton and surrounding communities.

Michael Luciuk, our summer student, did an admirable job of community outreach, including the holding of Wednesday Akathists and Sunday Reader's services, attracting between 6 -10 persons, including some children. He visited each and every family that is part of the congregation, and spent time getting to know persons, local farmers and others. He displayed remarkable maturity in what at times was not an easy situation, and was a missionary in every sense of the word. It was heartening to see the work he did and we give thanks to God that he applied his strength to turn this prairied furrow. Dot Connelly graciously provided space in her home for our student and many local persons helped Museum efforts on a day to day basis.

Vasil Szalasznyj hand-carved a sign for the Museum, and Michael and Sargee Katchur built a very fine bench for the Quiet Garden on the side of the church. Michael worked on a stone walkway/trail, which various visitors found quite lovely; he also painted the outhouse.

Our total salary commitment for Michael was \$4,231.68 (with deductions) for a total of 38 workdays at \$12/hour. With previous monies donated to the Archdiocese we are able to pay our 35 percent of his salary, while YCW paid 65 percent. The Kiosk, when all bills for goods were paid, made nearly \$400 in the black. At Sifton, there is some discussion of the Museum paying for the insurance on the Church, as the Historical Society cannot do it for much longer. Perhaps some of the money made can go towards this. Michael took two leaves (Assembly and family holidays) and made up the extra time by working on parish registers, creating a template for future searches, and colour-coding records by province, then by parish.

Next year's season will feature the exhibit, God willing, "A Prairie Childhood." With the museum furniture purchased and our experience, we are in a good position to keep the Museum running. The closing concert with the local orchestra, stories, duets and jokes ended on a note of good will and fun, with all of us singing "De Zhoda v Rodini" "Where There's Unity in the Family" and enjoying homemade glazed donuts and sandwiches. The toonie admission and all of the local effort to make the event work brought in \$184.00.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katya Szalasznyj  
Curator

**Sampling of Visitors' Book** – visitors from Dauphin; Winnipeg; Minneapolis; Sault Ste. Marie; Rhein; Victoria; Atlanta Georgia; Edmonton; New Hope, Penn; Pine River; Ashville; St. Albert; Lincoln Nebraska; comments: "excellent tour," "awesome," "amazing."