

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan  
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting  
August - September 2020

**COVID-19 REOPENING:**

- The Besser Museum is opened for self-guided tours from 10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Visitor capacity continues to be limited to 25 people in the building at a time. Planetarium capacity is limited to a maximum of 14 people in the planetarium at a time.
- CDC guidelines are still in place: masks, social distancing, disinfecting.
- Museum admissions and store sales are picking up some.

**ONGOING PROJECTS**

**FACILITY:**

- **HVAC:** Besser Museum received a contract from **R.S. Scott**, which included Apollo Engineering (John Richards) as the subcontractor, for the work needing to be done on the HVAC system.
  - Susan Edwards came to the museum this month to go over details of the HVAC project considering the collections storage master plan.
  - Susan will pass this information along to John Richards, who will be providing the designs to contractor for bids.

**HISTORIC VILLAGE:**

- **Log Cabin: STILL WAITING TO HEAR ON GRANTS**
  - Robert Kenel is a professional contractor specializing in log cabin restoration. He visited the Besser Museum in July and will be preparing a bid for the work that needs to be done the cabin. His website is <https://grizzlybobcabinfever.com/>
  - Kenel has worked on a project with architect, Rick Neumann. Neumann prepared the physical assessment of the log home for the grant applications.
  - A \$25,000 grant application was submitted to Alpena County Youth and Rec.
  - A \$10,000 grant application was submitted to Alpena County Older Persons
  - A \$5,000 grant application was submitted to CFNEM.
  - A \$10,000 cash match (funds from Giving Tuesday) was committed in the grants.
  - Alpena County Grants will not be award until December 2020 to be used in 2021.
  - Amanda is still working on the rough designs for the signage for the outside of all the buildings is being developed. Donor, Bob Smith would like his Candance Smith Endowment funds, held at CFNEM, to be used to purchase the signage for the village.

- Matt prepared the construction site around the log cabin by cleaning up the shrubs and overgrowth around the log cabin and removing a rotten tree.
- Kenel advised that the log cabin be blocked off to the public for safety. Matt roped off the cabin with caution tape.

### **GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:**

- **Chinook**
  - Tom Moran delivered the cradles for the Chinook on August 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - Plan to move the Chinook are set for September 23<sup>rd</sup>
    - a trailer from Moran Iron Works capable of hauling the 23-ton Chinook has been scheduled. Cost depends on the amount of time it takes.
    - Kel Mills from Able Crane has been hired. Cost depends on the amount of time it takes.
    - Estimate cost for moving the Chinook are between \$5,000 and \$3,500.
- **Katherine V**
  - Tuffy continues to work on the exhibit adding props and interpretation.
  - Matt and Tuffy continue to landscape and improve a walkway to the exhibit.
  - I am waiting on Zack Irving to continue work on LeBlance fishing family video.

### **ANISHINAABE EXHIBIT REVITALIZATION PROJECT (Native American Gallery)**

- Work continues. Consultant, Charlee Brissette visited Ziibiwing Center and meet with Willie Johnson to discuss our project.
- Anne Belanger, who will continue to serve as chair of the ad-hoc committee.

### **ART: Work is ongoing**

- Wilson Art Gallery Renovation: Besser Foundation \$25,000 Anniversary Gift
  - The modular walls from EmagiSpace were order and will arrive in October. The total cost was \$9,438.54.
  - New gallery lighting in the Wilson Gallery was purchased. The total cost was approximately \$4,000.
- 2020 Juried Art Exhibit:
  - Brochures were mailed out
  - Justin Cooper from the Art in the Loft will be our judge
  - We did state we will have an opening reception in the brochure, however that might be canceled, and no food will be served if it is held. The opening is scheduled for Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**ARTIFACT COLLECTIONS:** Major work has been ongoing in the collection storage areas. Both Matt and I have put in countless hours of physical labor moving furniture, shelving, and artifacts. We have been working to get these spaces organized and set up for our volunteers who are also putting in a tremendous amount of work to help get our collections organized.

- **Reorganizing of Space for Collection Storage**
  - What was Richard Clute's office space is almost completed retrofitted for permanent artifacts storage.
  - Currently the large room that served as an education/workroom is being used as temporary storage for the education artifacts.
  - The Library area is being reorganized for better storage area. This project will take a long time.
  - Professional museum storage sales rep from The Casper Corporation visited the museum and provided a design layout to maximum storage space in the new storage rooms. New storage units will be a big investment. We are also talking to Hal Niemann about acquiring more metal shelving. More discussion is needed on this project.
- **PastPerfect Data Software**
  - Volunteers continue to upload the handwritten accession logs into the new PastPerfect database. Great progress is being made in this area.
- **Temporary Custody donations**
  - Volunteers have returned to the museum one to two days a week to work in the Temporary Custody collection room.
  - WeMuseum professional, Laura Quackenbush visited the museum and worked with volunteers on July 31<sup>st</sup>.
- **Inventory**
  - Soon, the Collections Committee and Volunteers will be devising a plan to inventory and do condition reports on the objects in the collections.
  - Laura Quackenbush will provide consultation for this project also.
  - We hope to have an intern or possibly hire a new Collections Technicians that will work with Volunteers to accomplish this task.

**MISCELLENOUS:**

- **Education Outreach:** Museum staff is working on restructuring the educational outreach programs to meet the needs of parents and students due to the changes in the school systems caused by COVID.
  - I continue to meet with Amanda, Education Coordinator to discuss what outreach will look like. Goals are to make more self-directed activities for parents and students in each gallery. Also develop take-homes, digital programming, and small group activities. Amanda is also getting trained in the planetarium to be a backup presenter.

- **October 3, 2020 Fall Harvest Fossil Fest:** Due to COVID and the uncertainty of where we will be in the 8 weeks, the decision was made to cancel Fall Harvest Fossil Fest.
- **Season of Light Exhibit planning underway.** Staff held a meeting this month with DeLynn Medina to discuss exhibit design plans. We also devised a plan for a Season of Light exhibit opening.

## Season of Hope - Peace on Earth

of Light reception will look different this year. Due to COVID we must get CREATIVE for CHRISTMAS. Season Festivities include: Exhibit Opening, planetarium show, Santa, door prizes, crafts, cookies, and punch.

**Tickets:** \$15 adult / \$10 child / \$10 member

Tickets must be purchased before event – no tickets available at door

Limited number of tickets available (Half for Planetarium A/B – make sure to group properly)

**Guest Gift:** With ticket: Choice of Ornament / Judy Dawley book / Mystery gift bag for kids

**Dates/Time: Saturday (11/21)**

**Sunday (11/22)**

(Time slots) 11 – 12:30

12 – 1:30

1 – 2:30

2 – 3:30

3 – 4:30

Planetarium Shows + tour times – 45 min each with 30 minutes to clear out/clean for next tour

(Star of Bethlehem)

**Door Prizes:** We will seek donations from local businesses as we've done in the past. All guests will have a chance for a door prize drawing.

**Crafts:** Education Coordinator, Amanda will provide craft activities/stations

**Refreshments:**

Cookies – The museum has lots of cookies in the freezer donated from John Benson  
Punch

Founders Society may help host the cookie and punch table

**Theme:** DeLynn Medina and Marilyn Thom are helping with exhibit decorations

Blue / White / Silver

Snowflakes / Musical

Katrina is contacting organizations for the Community Tree Exhibit

Trees of Nations Exhibit