

Collections Report: June 2018

Introduction and orientation to the museum, including receiving keys, introduction to staff, and received a tour of the facilities and grounds. Paperwork necessary for being an employee was completed.

Assessed the gallery and collection areas for possible placement of temperature and relative humidity dataloggers. Reviewed recommendations and research performed by the previous collections manager regarding the devices. Created a memo with alternate proposal for dataloggers; post approval, the dataloggers were purchased. Upon arrival they were configured and placed throughout the museum complex. Note: the dataloggers have a full readout at the end of the month/very beginning of the next month, however, the devices purchased allow for a visual indicator of both temperature and relative humidity, and the information on the devices can be gathered as needed using Bluetooth technology (and the manufacturer's application), if a gallery or collection space needs more focused attention. Dehumidifiers were activated in collection areas in which they were found, including: textiles, center storage throughway, center storage patio, and the archive/library. (Note: based on humidity levels and best practice for maintaining the collections, additional dehumidifiers/humidifiers should be purchased if we are unable to maneuver our air handling system into the output required by best practice based upon collections. An assessment including cost, placement, and needs is being researched by Matt Klimczak and me. A proposal will be generated soon, based upon the outcome of the assessment.)

Created accounts and/or filed tax exempt status with supply companies like Gaylord, University Products, Amazon, and Walmart (on-line).

Ordered some products needed for immediate collection care.

Signed up to receive notices for the museum-based listservs using work email. (This allows for networking and information sharing among museum professionals).

Fielded research requests as well as artifact donation requests and submissions.

Created documents more in line with best practices and museum standards for gift agreements, loan out, loan in, research requests, collection use requests, temporary custody forms, etc.

Created and edited moratorium article and associated paperwork, including the application. Also spoke with some institutions and read in the listserv archives about moratoriums and other museums' policies as pertain to accepting donations – walk-in/drop-off or otherwise.

Familiarized self with the collections office, organized and reviewed items throughout the office. More work still needs to be done in this area, but in the meantime documents pertaining to accepted donations that had not been completely accessioned were found, as were some photographs that had been missing.

PastPerfect upgrades were purchased and then installed by our computer liaison. Security and backup measures were setup within the system. Instructions were given on a case-by-case basis to the front desk workers who needed to create reports or access information. Began the review and cleaning of collections data currently housed in PastPerfect.

Began data entry into PastPerfect of the first accession files. Discovered discrepancies and holes in the files, particularly as to donation source, cataloging, research, and accurate tracking of deaccessioning. (Also noted: filing cabinets are not fireproof; file folders are not archival. Full assessment and proposal of needs to follow later.) Due to contradictory or insufficient information about items that had been deaccessioned being located within the collection files, data entry was halted to accumulate the information about past deaccessioned items.

Found the deaccession notebook, which contains information up to 2011. It doesn't contain much of the information that is needed to remain accountable to the public regarding deaccessioned items. A future project will entail going through past director's files and collection/board minutes to find references pertaining to deaccessioning and disposal. Suggested entities to whom the Besser Museum might have transferred the items might also be contacted to ascertain if they received the deaccessioned items. Currently creating an Excel spreadsheet of information from the paper copies. Reformulation of policies and procedures will occur based on the findings from this notebook.

Attended a meeting of the Native American Exhibition committee.

Attended the Besser Museum annual meeting.

Participating in the FunArt Exchange at the Thunder Bay Arts Council Gallery.

Introduced to community leaders and constituents at Log Cabin Day.

Where I'm going

July:

Continued accumulation and compiling of deaccession information.

Condition report and create paperwork for the art included in the upcoming exhibition – “Urban Explorer: Remnants Photography” by Ted Fines

Ensure the moratorium is in place online and that the front desk workers know how to handle the situation, if a prospective donor walks in with an object or objects.

Continue working through my office to find necessary paperwork and account for the objects therein.

Enhance knowledge of Alpena and the surrounding area covered by the Besser Museum

Begin a thorough assessment of needs to put us in line with best practices.