

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan  
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting  
October/November 2019

Museum Attendance in October: 1,547 (this includes paid, free, planetarium and Fall Harvest)

**1. Season of Light: We have had lots of volunteers helping to transform the museum for the holiday season.**

- a. DeLynn Medina and her mother, Marilyn Thom have out-done themselves once again with the main gallery exhibit. They start working on their props and decorations in late summer / early fall. Then they volunteer every day working with staff to decorate the main trees and put special touches throughout the museum.
- b. Michelle Miller brought in family and friends again this year to help decorate the Trees of Nations. We are so grateful for their help. They were able to decorate all 12 trees in under 3-hours.
- c. We have 15 trees in the Community Trees exhibit. For the past several years, we have been inviting non-profit groups to decorate a tree that helps communicate to the public the services they provide. These community partners lighten the load of our small staff, while adding a wonderful element to our Christmas exhibit.
- d. Education Coordinator, Amanda and Guest Services, Katrina decorated the Avenue of Shops. Katrina made adorable handmade ornaments and Amanda put her artistic design touches on several swags and garlands. Members of DKG also decorated a tree in the Avenue of Shops.
- e. Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> Big Holiday Crafternoon was successful. We hosted over 200 visitors. There were several crafting activities, music, and Santa for guest to enjoy. Johnathan presented our new Bethlehem Star planetarium show we purchased with funds from the Kellogg Youth Grant.
- f. **December 14<sup>th</sup>** will be the Evening of Lights from 6pm – 8pm. Refreshments will be provided by members of the Founders Society. We will also have music and planetarium shows.

**2. FUNDRAISING Activities:**

- a. **Jingle Bell Run:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Jingle Bell Run will be on Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:15. The Jingle Bell Run is the first entry at the Bolenz Holiday Parade. We never know how many participants we will get. The Dork Brother Race Team is helping host and promote this event. We will be starting the race at the St. Anne's Parish Hall and ending at the United Way office on Water Street.
- b. **GIVING TUESDAY:** This year's donations are earmarked for the Historic Village Fund. We have already collected over \$5,000 in donations. The online giving through CFNEM will be on Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- c. **Christmas Raffle:** We received a license to sell raffle tickets for some of the Christmas decorations that DeLynn made for the exhibit. The sale of raffle tickets will go one

during the duration of the exhibit. The drawing will take place January 5<sup>th</sup> when the decorations come down.

### 3. **Human Resources:**

- a. Dan Florip is still reviewing the museum's **Employee Handbook**: I need to contact him to see where he is on this project.

### 4. **Facilities:**

- a. Susan Edwards from R.S. Scott Associates has provided a draft of the space study. She is working with a mechanical engineering firm to get ideas and quotes for environmental control units – HVAC. We will be wrapping up this phase of the project by the beginning of December. We will then need to decide the next step.

### 5. **Native American Exhibit Project: ONGOING**

- a. Anne Belanger and I received a proposal to consult on the Native American exhibit from Charlee Brissette and Calvin Hartwig, members of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians. We are currently reviewing their proposals.
- b. Matt McCormack has made progress with family members of Edith Bondie. He has photos of several artifacts that belonged to Jim Pashagabo that the family is considering donating for the exhibit.

### 6. **Fisheries Exhibit:**

- a. Most of the work on the Chinook exhibit site is complete.
- b. Engineers from R.S. Scott have designed the cradle for the Chinook. The plans were sent to Besser Company. The Museum has not received an estimates or bids on what it would cost to build the cradle, or when the cradle would be completed. Our hopes are to have the cradles in place so that the Chinook can be moved early spring.
- c. Film producer, Zack Irving was able to go on aboard Albert LeBlance's fishing vessel to film. The next phase is to produce a short video to be used on our website and possible film Festivals.

### 7. **Art**

- a. **Juried Art Exhibit**: Exhibit will run through December 30<sup>th</sup>.
- b. **Shirley Ritzler Art Exhibit**: The prints for the Shirley Ritzler exhibit will be funded by the Candance Smith Fund. I am working with Allegra this month to get those in production in time for January.
- c. **Winter Blues Non-Juried Art Exhibit** will be held in January. Marketing for this event has gone out. Entries will be accepted the last week of January. Opening reception will be held Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>.

- d. **Noel Skiba Exhibit January 2020:** We will be hosting an exhibit by Noel Skiba in the Wilson Gallery in January 2020 through September 2020.
  - i. **Exhibit Opening will be January 11, 2020 at 4pm – 6pm:** Noel will hold a paint class from 1pm – 3pm. The artwork of participants will be on exhibit in the lower level classroom during her opening exhibit. The refreshments for this event will be a variety of soups and bread.

## **8. Collections:**

- a. Museum professional, Laura Quakenbush conducted the collections volunteers' workshop last Monday. There were 8 volunteers in attendance for this full day of training. A system was developed for our volunteers to proceed with properly documenting and shelving the temporary custody artifacts that are to be considered by the Collection Committee for acquisition into the museum's collections.
- b. Volunteers continue to work on data input into Past Perfect.
- c. Volunteers are working in cleaning and properly storing large photos. Archival boxes will be ordered to properly store textiles.
- d. A workshop to train members of the Genealogical Society how to properly store the glass negative plates in being arranged. Genealogical Society members have been working to document and properly store the Bernstock photo collection for the past 15 years. They reported they have finished that collection.

## **9. Education:**

- a. The Season of Light Christmas Crafting Family Day hosted over 200 visitors. This event will be held on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 2pm – 4pm. This year, we will only hold the Christmas Crafting Family Day and charge a \$1 admission per person.
- b. Amanda has sent a letter out to areas teachers about this year's Season of Light field trip experiences. Besser Museum usually hosts approximately 500 students during December. Johnathan has two options for planetarium shows depending on the age of the students.

## **10. Planetarium Highlights:**

- a. Johnathan continues to do an outstanding job in his position. Please refer to the Planetarium Coordinator Report

## **11. Other:**

- a. Accounting:
  - i. The work with Marie Williams is going great. There have been several positive changes made to our accounting system.
  - ii. We will be starting our audit in the next week or two.
- b. We will be working on the strategic plan for the Historic Village.
  - i. There have been renovations to all building except the Log Cabin. The Log Cabin needs repair. A log cabin builder came to the museum last

week to inspect the cabin and give us ideas of what we can do to preserve the cabin. I will need to contact an architect.

- ii. All the buildings could use more props and better exhibit development
- iii. All the buildings need interpretive signage outside of the buildings.
- iv. We are looking into ways we can make the buildings accessible throughout the year by adding Plexi-glass entries that allow visitors to see the interiors without being able to go in when there are no volunteers hosting the buildings. We have researched and visited other museums for ideas. We have already added Plexi-glass to the School and Log Cabin, whoever if someone wanted to step over it and get in the building they could. More works needs to be done.
- v. We are also making plans for pioneer gardens and flowerbeds around the historic buildings.