

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

Museum Attendance September 2019: 696 visitors
The October 5th Fall Harvest Fossil Fest Attendance: 575

1. Human Resources:

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

2. Facilities:

- a. Susan Edwards from R.S. Scott Associates is working on space study. Matt and I meet with Susan in September to discuss the space study and reallocation of space. Susan provided a draft of proposed changes to the exterior and interior of the lower level on 10/7/2019. After I have time to review the drafts with Matt, they will be provided to the Facility Committee and a meeting will be scheduled.

3. Native American Exhibit Project: ONGOING

- a. Anne Belanger and I meet with Frank Ettawageshik at his home in Harbor Springs on September 26th to discuss the Native American exhibit.
- b. Anne Belanger and I held a phone meeting with Charlee Brissette and Calvin Hartwig from the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians to discuss contracting with them to be consultants for the NA exhibit. They will submit a proposal for consideration.
- c. A meeting to host representatives from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Little Traverse Band of Odawa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians at the Besser Museum is being coordinated to meet sometime in November.
- d. The new exhibit from the Clarke Historical Library, Native Treaties: Shared Rights will be installed in the Native American Gallery to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Treaty of Saginaw was installed last month. This exhibit was funded by the Cook Family Fund.
- e. Matt McCormack has 30 hours left for research in what was budgeted. Over the past 2 years, Matt has pulled together family genealogies, news articles, and photos of Native American families from Northeast Michigan.
- f. Alpena News ran an article on the installation of the Native Treaty exhibit and the work underway to renovate the NA exhibit. They will also be running an article on Indigenous Peoples Day. And will credit the museum for providing information and contacts for this article.

4. Fisheries Exhibit:

- a. The retaining wall around the Katherine V has been put into place. The retaining wall around the Chinook exhibit is partial done. We are waiting for more blocks from L&S. MacArthur's Construction has been contacted to come and back fill and level the area in preparation of where the dock will go alongside the Chinook.
- b. Engineers from R.S. Scott are working on the design for the cradle for the Chinook. They are talking with Besser Company to complete this project. The Museum has not received an estimate or bids on what it would cost to build the cradle, or when the cradle would be completed.
- c. Film producer, Zack Irving received permission to go aboard Albert LeBlance's fishing vessel to film. We are waiting to hear if Zach was able to board the boat and capture footage.

5. Art

- a. **Juried Art Exhibit:** Noel Skiba will be this year's Juried Art judge. We have received over 70 entries to date. Entries are being accepted from October 6th through October 12th. The exhibit will open Saturday, October 26th.
- b. **June Perry's** opening art reception was well attended. Her artwork will be on display until October 31st.
- c. **Shirley Ritzler Art Exhibit and Fundraiser Proposal:** The prints for the Shirley Ritzler exhibit will be funded by the Candance Smith Fund. I need to contact Allegra this month to get those in production in time for January.
- 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.
 - ii. During her 2020 exhibit, the museum will also offer two more opportunities to participate in an Art Experience with Noel
 1. Summer (June date to be determined): Picnic & Paint in the Park by the lakeshore. Participants will paint the boat harbor at Bay View Park
 2. Fall (September date to be determined): Picnic & Paint in the Park by the riverfront. Participants will paint the covered bridge at Island Park.

I will be contacting the City officials to see if the museum needs to get permission or permits to hold these events in public parks. Noel will also be making a signature piece for the museum to use as a fundraiser, possibly on a Christmas ornament, book bag, prints, etc. This is yet to be determined.

6. Collections:

- a. The new storage area shelving is in place. Judy Dawley and Doris Puls are making progress on transferring and organizing the Temporary Custody donations onto the shelves.
- b. Volunteers continue to work on data input into Past Perfect.
- c. Brian Jaeschke, Registrar of Collections and Archives at Mackinac State Historic Parks will conduct a 4-hour workshop for our museum collections volunteers and Collection Committee Members on November 4th.

7. Education:

- a. There are several new programs Amanda Kucharek is working on. Please refer to the Education Coordinator report for more details.
- b. Amanda is planning the Season of Light Christmas Crafting Family Day. This event will be held on Saturday, November 16th at 2pm – 4pm. In previous years, the museum held the evening Season of Light Gala from 6pm – 8pm and a Free Family Fun Day. This year, we will only hold the Christmas Crafting Family Day and charge a \$1 admission per person.
- c. Amanda is also planning the Season of Light field trip experiences. Besser Museum usually hosts approximately 500 students during December.

8. Planetarium Highlights:

- a. Please refer to the Planetarium Coordinator Report
- b. Jonathan is working to develop an astronomy club, which has been a long-term goal of the museums. His inaugural Telescopes 101 event was well attended.
- c. Jonathan continues to reach out to community partners across Northern Michigan. He will be visiting the Headlands Dark Sky Park and has arranged for representatives from the Dark Sky Park to visit the Besser Museum.
- d. Jonathan also received a call from the Alcona High School about a potential independent study program at the planetarium for a student wanting to pursue astrophysics. He will be meeting with the counselor from the school to discuss the possibilities. We hope this is the first of many students in Northeast Michigan to pursue this opportunity.

9. Other:

- a. Accounting:
 - i. I am continuing to work with Marie Williams making changes to the accounting system.
 - ii. We are preparing to start our annual audit.
- b. Season of Light: November, Saturday 16th – plans are underway. Volunteers have already started working on exhibit props.
- c. The CFNEM Giving Tuesday will take place December 3, 2019. This year our campaign will be to raise funds for the Historic Village. The campaign brochure was developed in house thanks to the efforts of great teamwork. The brochures will be included in the newsletter, which will go out the first week of November. We will be marketing our Giving Tuesday campaign through our website, Facebook, Alpena News, True North Radio and newsletter.

- d. Besser Company has sponsored radio commercials for the museum on True North Radio for the next 5 months.
- e. 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.
 - 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.
 - vi. We will also make plans to develop the Nature Trail behind the village. Work is being done by Scott Brooks (Katrina's husband) to make new wooden signs for the Nature Trail to replace the signage that is now deteriorating. Scott made wooden sign holders for the antique farm equipment outside. Matt had the signs installed in time for Fall Harvest.