



Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Besser Museum, Museum of Alpena Michigan
Museum of Alpena, Michigan, 491 Johnson Street 49707-9998

From: Planetarium Coordinator of Besser Museum

To: Executive Director of Besser Museum

Subj: October Action report

Ref: Powers of Ten Script

Hawaiian Skies Live Outline

GLPA Schedule

- Enc: (1) Projects
(2) Public Outreach
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1. During the Month of October 2018, there were three projects that the Coordinator worked on. The shows were Powers of Ten, Hawaiian Skies (name WIP), and Ojibwe Skies (Name WIP). All three of these shows are live performances that integrate the planetarium's visuals with the oration of the coordinator or other planetarium employees. These shows are designed to be at least 30 minutes long and will be placed on the schedule interchangeably throughout the year, with the exception of Ojibwe Skies, which is designed as a seasonal show. Like all live shows currently in our library, these shows are being developed 100% in house, and are intended on being permanently added to the planetarium's library. Any and all scripts or outlines for these shows are available upon request.

a. Powers of Ten. Last month, it was mentioned that Powers of Ten was being developed for Fall Harvest Day, which it was. The reason as to why work continues on the show is because it is currently being adapted as a full-length production. In short, Powers of Ten was being designed for Fall Harvest Day's 20-minute time slot, and the show is now being adjusted in length to fit the needs of a 30-minute or longer production.

i. The adjustment process involves adding in new material, as well as bolstering topics already discussed. While the work process is less time consuming than it was last month, Powers of Ten still produces the unique obstacle of requiring a larger amount of research and fact-checking than the average production. Of course, this isn't the only aspect of producing a live show, as once all the facts are assembled, they need to be written into the script in a way that comes off as presentable to a general audience. Once the script is finished, there is the matter of proof reading and fine-tuning its contents to match up with the planetarium's visuals. Suffice to say, a lot of work is involved with production, despite that difficulty, Powers of Ten, the full-length show, is on track to be finished by the end of October and should be on schedules the next time there is a change to the planetarium show schedule.

b. The production of Hawaiian Skies is coming along well so far this month. While the majority of content was originally designed for the Pokémon show, Hawaiian Skies has been developed out of the vacuum left by Pokémon Skies Live cancelation. As a result of this situation, assets from Pokémon Skies are being utilized to

construct Hawaiian Skies, with information, locations, and night sky objects being repurposed to be more relatable to a general audience. As of now, the outline of the show is complete, with the next step being the construction of a well-written script and a working ATM-4 script for the planetarium. With work continuing at its current pace, the show is projected to be finished by November's end.

c. Ojibwe Skies. Work on this show is currently on Hiatus. Since the start of the month, there has been little if any progress on the creation of the show. This delay in work comes from two different aspects. The first one being the lack of source material to work with, until the Museum has a copy of the Ojibwe Astronomy book, there is little to be done as far as script writing goes. This is not the only issue though, as even if the Museum had a copy of the book, it is doubtful that much work would be done on Ojibwe Skies. This is due in part to the lack of communication that the Coordinator has received from both the Ojibwe Community and the artist for the book Ojibwe Astronomy.

i. As of the end of October, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe has yet to respond to communications via Facebook. Going by the tribe's website, they do not have any form of digital contact beyond their Facebook and twitter, so any further attempts to contact the tribe will utilize their phone number and address. Now the reason that contact with this tribe is important for the show is because during Ojibwe Skies the Coordinator will be relaying Ojibwe culture and history as a matter of fact. Without help from the tribe, information would come from Ojibwe Astronomy, and a number of online resources. While this information may be accurate and inoffensive, there is no way to say as such without direct communication from someone who comes from that group. The Museum must also ensure that the Coordinator is relaying information in a way that is acceptable to the people it is representing, as to offend or even ignore the local tribes is averse to the Museum's overall goal of accurately preserving art, history, and science. It is also more in the spirit of cooperation to work on this project actively with those of the Ojibwe tribe, since it is likely that they would want a role in the creation of the show, instead of just being relegated to that of a rubber stamp, a PC checker to overview the show once it is complete.

ii. The artist of the Ojibwe Astronomy book has done a fantastic job of creating a star map for the Ojibwe. Better yet, this star map can be projected over the entire dome of the planetarium, giving a more culturally accurate impression of Ojibwe astronomy. While the show could certainly be done without their work, it would suffer significantly as a result, and much work would have to be done in order to replace the aspects of the show in which this art currently fills. Contact with the artist has consisted of 1 email at this time, and more attempt to communicate will follow in November if no response has been received.

2. The public outreach for the planetarium can be divided into a few areas at the moment, Pokémon Go community day, STEAM and the Geminids Meteor shower.

a. Pokémon Go Community day, October 21st, 2018. Community day for the month of October was a large event in the game of Pokémon Go. This month, the planetarium attempted to capitalize on the event by bringing in players before the event, giving them special discounts and amenities just for showing up. However, the attendance to the planetarium's community day was practically nonexistent, with only 3 people showing up to utilize the museum's free entry aspect of the event. It's hard to say as to why this event had such a paltry attendance, but part of the problem was likely the inability to broadcast the event ahead of time, since finalization of the event took place only 2 days before the event started. Hopefully if the planetarium keeps trying with future events, people will eventually take notice, and begin to take advantage of the event's specials.

b. STEAM is still in its infancy and as a result, is mostly just thought extraction for the time being. More updates on this project will be available as they come to light.

c. Geminids meteor shower. As a reminder, the planetarium is hoping to coordinate with Ms. Maureen's golf course in order to host a dark sky viewing party for the Geminids' meteor shower. The Coordinator is still in talks with Maureen Caster French, and her coworkers for the golf course. Ms. Maureen has been very helpful with the process and has introduced the Coordinator to appropriate staff at the club. The Coordinator will be going to the club on Friday, November 2nd to discuss the event and stake out the area that the club is located at. Although Ms. Maureen has been very cooperative and helpful, other staff at her club have been aloof and difficult to connect with, requiring prodding from Ms. Maureen before initiating contact with the Coordinator. If setting up the event continues in this fashion it is unlikely that the Coordinator will attempt to reach out to this club again.

3. GLPA(Great Lakes Planetarium Association). GLPA will be broken up into four separate days, Wednesday through Saturday, days in which the conference actually took place. The description of the event will attempt to be succinct as the whole event was incredibly dense with information, to the point of even being overwhelming at times. If any topic covered in this report is of interest to the Director, more information can be relayed in future reports whether written or verbal. Due in part to the density of the event though, only more significant events and subjects will be covered each day.

a. Day one, Wednesday October 10. The first day of GLPA began with an optional event that was hosted by another planetarium organization known as LIPS, Live Interactive Planetarium Society. While the LIPS event at GLPA was called GLIPSA; for the sake of convenience, this document shall henceforth refer to the event as LIPS. LIPS, was an optional paid event that took place on the first day, covering the morning, and most of the afternoon. This event was optional, but it should also be known that LIPS did not overlap with any other events of the conference. While LIPS is normally \$30 additional dollars, there was a vacancy in the event due to a cancellation, and the coordinator happened to be in the right place at the right time to fill the vacancy. There were several programs throughout the day for LIPS, but the main goal was to bring planetarium educators together and allow them to share their knowledge and skills of live shows with other educators. Overall, the information gained from LIPS was probably just as useful as the rest of GLPA combined.

i. A short list of topics discussed at LIPS include color theory, psychology of expectation, utilization of audience participation, and proper mindsets on how to approach live performances. Each subject was relayed over the period of an hour, and each one involved different teaching methods. Some of the subjects were PowerPoint presentations, while others were group activities that required team work to produce a show topic. The show topic could then be built upon using a series of steps and concepts to shape the show into a more interactive and educational experience. Different people throughout the planetarium community presented different aspects of live shows during LIPS, giving their unique insight into different aspects of live shows important to them. While there wasn't a plan to attend LIPS initially, the Coordinator plans to take part in LIPS again if it is held at next year's GLPA.

ii. Once LIPS finished up, the events for the first day of GLPA began, which involved new member orientation for the Coordinator and other first-time attendees. This event was hosted by the GLPA chair, and other veteran members of GLPA, and was designed to breakdown what one should expect throughout the next few days. While brief, this was a good chance to meet more experienced members of the planetarium society, as well as meeting other first-time members.

iii. The last official event of the first day was a welcoming reception for conference attendees. This included information about recent changes in the event, as well as a brief rundown as to what people could expect at the 2018 GLPA conference, followed by a short vendor/sponsor highlight. The sponsor highlight was where several vendors got the chance to show off their equipment to attendees, receiving 15 minutes or so to highlight what makes their product worth buying. This Sponsor highlight was repeated several times throughout the event. While there were a lot of technically impressive pieces of equipment and full-dome shows, most items were beyond anything currently affordable by the Besser Museum. For the time being, a mental note of the more impressive items was assembled, but no further action with Vendors was taken.

iv. The final part of day one, and each subsequent day was a hospitality suite. The suite was close in essence to an open bar. While this event was purely optional, it gave the opportunity to mingle and talk with other conference members, getting to know people on a more personal level.

b. Day two, Thursday October 11th. The main events of day two were the paper sessions and the event at the Clark Planetarium.

i. The paper sessions of day two were a bit like LIPS, where different people from the community would have a topic in which they would want to discuss and would present it to attendees in a way benefiting their topic the most. These paper sessions are known as concurrent paper sessions, that is because there were always two paper sessions taking place at one time, in rooms bordering one another. Each paper was allotted 15 minutes of time, and each session had six papers, for a total of 90 minutes in length. The idea behind why there were concurrent sessions was because not everyone would be interested in the same topics. Essentially, with each paper only taking 15 minutes, and the two sessions happening next to each other, people were free to move back and forth freely, only attending sessions they found most interesting. While that was the intent, there were times when both sessions had interesting topics and one would have to be missed. Either way, the paper sessions were probably the most

beneficial aspect of the conference, as it allowed the Coordinator to gain insight into programs, events, and other aspects of planetariums throughout the great lakes, while also presenting an opportunity to work with and meet new people within the business.

ii. The events at Clark Planetarium took place on CMU campus, where the planetarium is located. The planetarium was a separate building in and of itself on campus. This allowed the planetarium to set up its own gift shop and mini museum displays. While it is doubtful that the Besser Museum could implement as many displays, the varied amount of displays present at the Clark Planetarium allowed for some interesting thoughts on what would be possible here at Besser. For instance, the planetarium had a few video displays outside the planetarium on small 24in TVs, which were each dedicated to either a slideshow of sorts of astronomical information, or were touch screen compatible and had interactive quizzes and displays programmed in. There were other small non-digital interactive displays, such as placing Ojibwe constellations on a Velcro mat that had a picture of the Ojibwe night sky on it.

1. The event at Clark Planetarium also allowed the planetarium to show off some videos and technical details, such as part of a full-dome video and a laser rock show, with the latter being the only one that the Coordinator could see utility in for the Besser Museum. While the laser rock show was visually impressive it is likely not viable for Besser, due in part to the price for the equipment and licensing. There's also the fact that the show had no educational qualities to it, which would make it an event for entertainment purposes alone.

c. Day three, Friday October 12th. The main highlight of this day was again the concurrent paper sessions, but there were also state meetings that brought planetarium members together by state or location.

i. The paper session for Friday was similar in substance to the ones from the previous day, however a different group of presenters and topics were instead discussed. One paper session of note from this day was "Finding and Encouraging Indigenous Voices" by *J. Creighton*. This paper session was about a show done by Ms. Creighton at her planetarium which would be similar to Ojibwe Skies here, except involving every indigenous race from the area to create multiple shows in a series about each tribe. This show would go through the mythology and history of the tribes, from their mythological creation stories to their astronomical stories, all the while giving insight and background about the tribes that were being discussed. Ms. Creighton said that the project took a long time due in part to the difficulty in getting tribe members involved with the process. IT was also mentioned that there was difficulty in some areas due to a lack of preserved information. Thankfully for Besser Planetarium, the goal of Ojibwe Skies is just the one tribe, and the Ojibwe culture and language are one of the most thoroughly preserved out of all the indigenous peoples.

ii. The state meeting for Michigan on Friday was a rather short meeting, only lasting 15 minutes or so. However, this brief meeting covered the next state meeting for Michigan Planetarium workers, which will be held in Detroit on May 18th, 2019, a much smaller and more informal organization in comparison to GLPA. While it has not been guaranteed that the Coordinator will attend this event, it has been highly encouraged by the Coordinator's former boss, Alex Mac. More information will be presented as it becomes known.

d. Day four, Saturday October 13th, 12 hours remain. The fourth and final day of the event was shorter than the rest. The third day was considered the final day for most people, with the 4th day having one paper session, a business meeting, and then optional celebratory events to close out the conference. While the paper session was the only event of typical professional development on day 4, the optional celebratory events gave the Coordinator one final opportunity to mingle with their peers before the conference ended, with networking being the main professional resource taken away from that session.

i. The concurrent paper event of day four was very similar to that of the previous day. There were two 1 ½ hour sessions held at the same time with people having the opportunity to move back and forth as they so desired. One really unique and memorable paper was about a shadow puppet show that was put on in the Clark Planetarium. Essentially, a puppeteer from CMU was enlisted to help produce a number of shadow puppets to go with the telling of a children's book, with the dome's projector acting as the light source, and the dome being the canvas for the shadows. The event shadow puppet story was surprisingly interesting and engaging and would be a great asset to reproduce. Unfortunately, an event like this would be a bit harder to reproduce at Besser Planetarium,

as the projector's in the planetarium there are cove mounted on the sides, instead of joined together in the center. The lager dome also gave a greater deal of space for actors to move around and greater space for props to be placed. While not impossible at the Besser Planetarium, the puppet show would not be as cheap and easy to implement as it was at Clark Planetarium.

e. This concludes the daily synopsis of events at GLPA 2018. In producing this synopsis, a lot of the daily events were left out, as a good deal of the event consisted of small interactions with other members of conference while at mentioned events, or smaller and briefer ones that were not brought up in this report. In brief, the greatest asset that GLPA had to offer was the interpersonal relationships that were built over the span of the four-day conference, and the Coordinator's main focus was to reach out make a memorable impression on many of the conference goers for the sake of future collaboration and support. For additional information on the GLPA schedule of events, please view the following link (<http://glpa.org/2018/schedule>) which details the four day list of events, breaking it down in a way that was attempted in this report. Additionally, any further information on any events mentioned either in this report or the link are available upon request.

4. Fossil Day/ Fall Harvest Festival. The event that took place on the first of October 2018 appears to have been a rather notable success for the planetarium. Throughout the day there were 4 or 5 shows in quick succession, with each one lasting 30 minutes or so. With the price of tickets set to \$1, every show appears to have sold out, bringing in the largest crowd to the planetarium since the Coordinator took their current position. While each show did sell out, there was not full attendance to each show, with some viewings not having everyone show up, leaving some seats empty. None the less, the show "Did An Asteroid Really Kill The Dinosaurs?", which shall from here on out simply be called Dinosaurs, gave the appearance of being a nominal success amongst audience members. While there were of course some people who doubted the science behind the show, folks seemed to enjoy it all the same, and those who couldn't accept the facts at least appeared to enjoy the entertainment aspects of the show. Overall, Fall Harvest/ Fossil day drew in a lot of people and gave the planetarium the opportunity to reach out to more people than they normally would, which ultimately allows the planetarium to achieve their educational goals.

5. Conclusion. The month of October was the busiest month so far since the Coordinator since they began this position in the Summer. There was a large-scale festival which packed the planetarium, which saw more people show up in one day than the combined total of all general admission guests since the Coordinator's start date. There was also the GLPA conference, a hasty and dense colloquium that oversaturated the Coordinator with new people and information. While hectic, there was a lot gained for the Planetarium in October, and the hope is that the Coordinator can build off of the successes of the month, drawing more people in during the off season.

Planetarium Pricing Proposal: Due to slower off-season sales and new information on the economic state of Alpena and its surrounding region, it has come to light that the price for planetarium tickets should be adjusted during non-tourism season. Two prevalent ideas on how-to go about this adjustment have come to mind as of this time.

Idea one: Offer a flat-rate discount on all planetarium tickets, reducing the price from \$5 to \$3. A rather straight-forward concept; reduction on price should increase demand for tickets.

Idea two: In lieu of a flat-rate discount, we could offer a planetarium/museum bundle for \$8 and present it as a seasonal special. Essentially, we would offer the same discount as idea one, but only to people who have already purchased museum entry. While both ideas would essentially perform the same function, it is my belief that people will be drawn to this idea more because it plays into the natural desire to obtain a deal or discount, and the temporary status of this event would also provide people with a sense of urgency to take part in it.