



## Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan

Besser Museum, Museum of Alpena Michigan

Museum of Alpena, Michigan, 491 Johnson Street 49707-9998

Enc: (1) April goals

(2) Accomplishments

(3) Lifelong Learners

(4) Acting Class

(5) Attendance

(6) May goals

1. April's goals were originally as simple as completing as much of the Hawaiian shows as possible. With April complete, the show Hawaiian Islands Review was finished and delivered to the Lifelong Learners. While there are still the main shows on each topic that can be developed (Astronomy, Geology, Ecology), most of the research and fact checking is now done for all of these projects, and the biggest aspect of completing the shows will revolve around script writing and ATM-4 production.
2. While the majority of the month was spent working on Hawaii, other projects and tasks popped up throughout the month. One of the larger tasks that needed work was Michigan Skies Live (MSL), which needed some content adjustment in order to be relevant throughout all of spring. Essentially, some of the night sky objects we were pointing out in during the show, were going to set completely below the horizon before the end of April. Together with John Heath, a list of new objects was assembled and implemented into the show, giving MSL more longevity for Spring.
  - a. There was also the announcement of the black hole picture that was released on the 10<sup>th</sup>. A little time has been dedicated to creating a small lesson that will educate guests on this momentous event. It also works out that the galaxy in which the black hole is part of (M87) is located in the Spring sky, so part of May will be dedicated towards making this black hole mini lesson part of MSL Spring. This timing is almost perfect, as the topic is fresh in the public's mind, but also easily added to the current MSL program.
  - b. Other accomplishments throughout April include the 2 classroom visits to Posen Consolidated schools, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit seeing requiring me to produce and present a short 20-minute lecture on the basics of black holes; a subject as interesting as it is complex. Both visits to Posen schools went well and the students at the school were very receptive to a guest speaker. The children at Posen asked a plethora of questions, and they appeared genuinely interested in the subjects discussed. When asked whether or not the kids would want to visit the planetarium, nearly all of them expressed interest in doing so and their teacher, Kristin Sharpe, was enthusiastic about establishing a field trip to the museum.
    - i. Overall, the trips out to Posen were a pleasant experience that will hopefully benefit the museum. In the future, when possible, it would likely be opportune to make similar trips out to surrounding schools and present similar lectures. While there will still be a need to expand the planetarium's live show catalogue, these trips shouldn't hinder the long-term goal of expanding said catalogue, as long as new material for these lectures don't require a significant amount of new material.

3. Last year, an associate for the Lifelong Learners approached me with an interest in seeing a show based around geology and alternative science topics (topics not relating to astronomy). This action had the effect of motivating the production of live shows based on alternative topics, and an already present concept for a Hawaiian show was changed in order to fit this new concept. While the Hawaii based show has changed a lot, a final product in the form of Hawaiian Islands Review was finalized and presented this month. Overall, the Lifelong Learners seemed to enjoy the presentation in which they were given, while a couple guests stated that the delivery process could have been better (that is speechcraft on the my behalf), the majority of the group seemed to truly enjoy the topic and information about Hawaii. This feedback and the event tell me that there is a desire for non-astronomy shows within the Alpena community. This may seem like new information but looking at some of our most popular fulldome videos, there's always been a desire for alternative topics. This can be seen in the popularity of Habitat Earth and Dinosaurs, as well as the interest in the Sistine Chapel show. The fact is that while astronomy will likely always be the focus of the planetarium, expanding into alternative topics has been shown to spark public interest, and as a result, should not be dissuaded.
4. Starting on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, I began meeting with Jeffery Mindock for acting classes. So far, the classes have covered very basic bits of information about acting, mostly just relaxing and warming the body and mind up for performances. Other aspects that Mr. Mindock has taught have included different performance and writing techniques. Overall, the acting classes have been rather exciting and educational, and I'm looking forward to continuing my education in the dramas and arts.
5. Attendance for April 2019 has been a little lower than normal, with the majority of guests coming in at the start of the month. A few possible reasons for this drop could be the weather, overlapping show topics, and scheduling confusion. Scheduling confusion may come from the fact that April's schedule states April 1st-21<sup>st</sup> on top of it. This may have given guests the idea that there wouldn't be any shows during the 9 days of the month. Regardless of the reason, it's doubtful any one cause is behind this lull in public attendance.
  - a. While attendance for public shows may have been lower than average for April, the museum more than made up for it with group shows. Between the school groups and the Lifelong Learners, it's estimated that 125 people came through the door of the planetarium. And even if a ticket wasn't purchased by every guest, it's still 125 people that are now thinking about their planetarium experience.
6. With the completion of the Hawaiian Islands Review, and the public release of the Apollo 11 exhibit, two major projects have almost simultaneously come to an end. While there is certainly still plenty to accomplish, including other Hawaiian shows, I will try and use May as an opportunity to rest, and catch up on smaller side projects that have had to be put on hold due to more time sensitive goals for the planetarium. Some of these projects are as follows: adjusting MSL Spring to include the new black hole picture, prepping MSL Summer for 2019, using Ms. Sharpe's lesson plan outline to create a lesson plan for each show, and finally, research and work on developing a streaming/ broadcasting presence for the planetarium through the internet.
  - a. The one topic that is of special importance to me is that of streaming/broadcasting, and I would like to explain why this project is important. While dome casting from other planetariums will of course be nice for times when other planetariums are having events, this project is mostly based on streaming/ broadcasting the planetarium's screen to people without a planetarium.
    - i. The concept is rather simple in theory, use the renderbox view that the planetarium projects, and stream/broadcast that as a 360-degree video on the internet. The end goal is to make the planetarium more accessible to people and allow them to tune in and utilize the planetarium from home using their computer or VR headset. As of right now, there is either none, or very few planetarium's who engaged in this activity, and I have been unable to find any equivalent I believe that investing time in this untapped market could allow the Besser Planetarium to extend their presence to locations and people who would never be able to visit the planetarium in person. And even if we don't develop this now, I am almost certain someone else will in the future. I also believe that

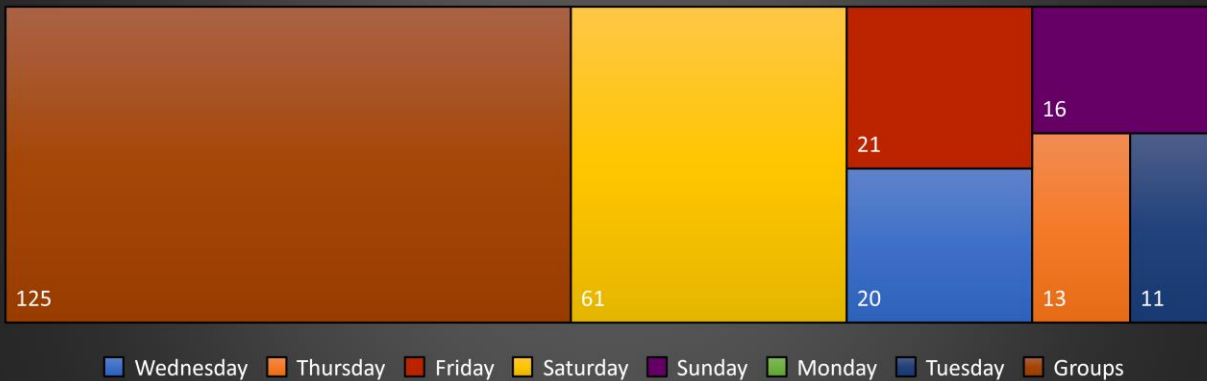
if the planetarium wishes to remain relevant for as long as possible, that effort into this market should be explored.

- ii. As far as expenses go, cheap and free software/ hardware will be used to test this concept as far as long as possible, so the overall cost to the museum should be incredibly low. The software that I'll attempt to use is OBS Studio (<https://obsproject.com/>) which is a free streaming program that can be downloaded on any machine running windows, Mac OS, or Linux. I intend to use free platforms to broadcast our video as well, such as YouTube and/ or Facebook.

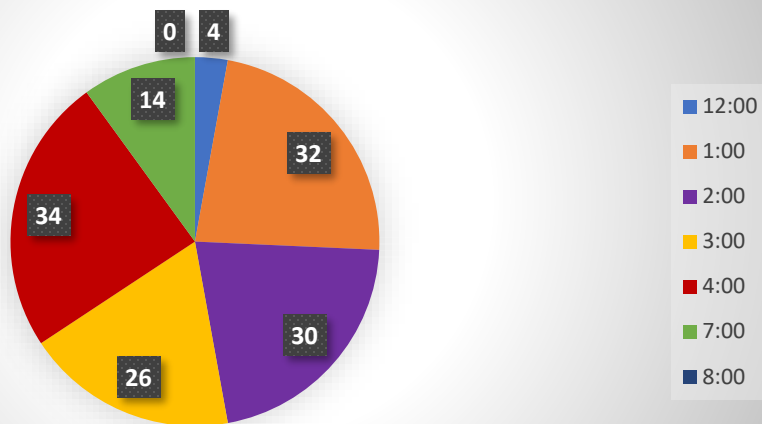
The only new hardware that I would like to get for this project right now, is a google cardboard VR headset. This is the most basic of headsets and consist of a cardboard or plastic container with some cheap lenses attached to it. These VR headsets are incredibly cheap because they rely on a person's phone to be inserted into the headset, and the image will just play off of that. The desired headset will be the MaxBox VR (<https://vr.google.com/cardboard/get-cardboard/>), which has an astronomy aesthetic and will also be able to house my phone, all while costing only \$9.00. The reason for purchasing a VR headset will be so that I can test how well the broadcast works on VR, which will be vital if this project will actually be broadcasting to people's personal VR sets. I have taken the liberty of contacting the company that makes this headset and will update you as I continue to work on it.

- iii. While there is a lot to say on streaming/ broadcasting, ultimately time and money will come into question. The benefit of this project is that, all things remaining constant, if it gets up and running, there won't be that much extra time and money needed to support this service. I could start things off by simply choose to stream public live shows, like MSL. This means that we won't have to adjust the schedule or develop any new content at the start. If there is enough interest in this, I can develop more live shows that will fit this format. As far as money goes, websites like You Tube can actually be financially profitable if enough viewers end up watching the content, as these websites pay content creators who have engaging material.

# APRIL ATTENDANCE



# Showtimes



# Shows

