



Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan

Besser Museum, Museum of Alpena Michigan

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

Enc:

- (1) January Goals
- (2) Attendance
- (3) Astronomy Update
- (4) February Goals

1. January 2020 is simultaneously a new month, a new year, and a new decade, all at once. While this conspiracy of dates is worth celebrating, the time for jubilation has come to an end and business as usual is now subjugating our calendars. January's business as usual, just like last year's, is to attract more people to the planetarium while sharing the joys and wonders of the universe with all who sit down in the planetarium's aged seats. One of my goals for accomplishing this is the use of a 360 camera. This camera may seem simple but having the ability to record our own footage and pictures for the dome is invaluable. With this technology we can not only improve our productions for those who step through the planetarium's doors, but we can also reach out to those who lack the ability to do so. With our own in-house videos and pictures, we can share the Besser Museum's goals to a wider audience than we ever could without one via the internet.

This is why I've been working on using our borrowed camera so much in January. As of right now I am still a novice when it comes to the use of such a tool but in the past month, I've learned not only how to operate this new camera but also the basics of the video editing software aftereffects. There are still many things that I can improve on, so for the time being I'm going to continue my work with this technology and push its boundaries even further.

2. Attendance for January can be described as just ok. In total we sold 132 tickets, with a good source of that coming at the start of the month, just after the new year. This is far from peak season though, so the limited numbers are to be understood. Due to January being a slow season, I reduced the number of showings on the schedule for each day, taking the 1:00pm program off until the warmer seasons arrive. This gives me more time to work on other projects, but also increases the longevity of our projection lamps, which we still don't have a suitable backup for. As for normal attendance statistics, I can't discern any patterns this month that indicate a show or day's popularity. What I mean is that while Friday was the busiest day and Oasis in space was the most attended show, this has more likely a result of people just showing up on those couple of post-holiday showings. This is good in its own way though, because it means that a non-insignificant number of people thought of the museum and planetarium when they had time off. This would make me think that people would come to more planetarium showings if they were at times/ days that

they were off, but we already tried that with late showings last year, so it's probably best to just continue our large volume of showings on Saturday and be open for people around holidays when we can for now.

3. The February skies are going to be rather uneventful for big flashy events, however, there are a number of beautiful objects in the sky that you may want to observe anyways. Our month starts out with a waxing moon that rises earlier each day, peaking with a full moon/ super moon on the 9th. A super moon is a full moon when that involves the moon being slightly closer to earth than normal, causing the full moon to look nominally larger in the sky. For most people the size difference is indiscernible and will go unnoticed, but with enough moon-gazing, you too can fully appreciate the splendor of a super moon. After the 9th, the moon will continue to rise earlier and earlier, all the while waning towards a new moon. This means that in the weeks after the 9th, casual stargazing will be possible again, as the moon's brightness will no longer wash out the night sky with its shimmering light.

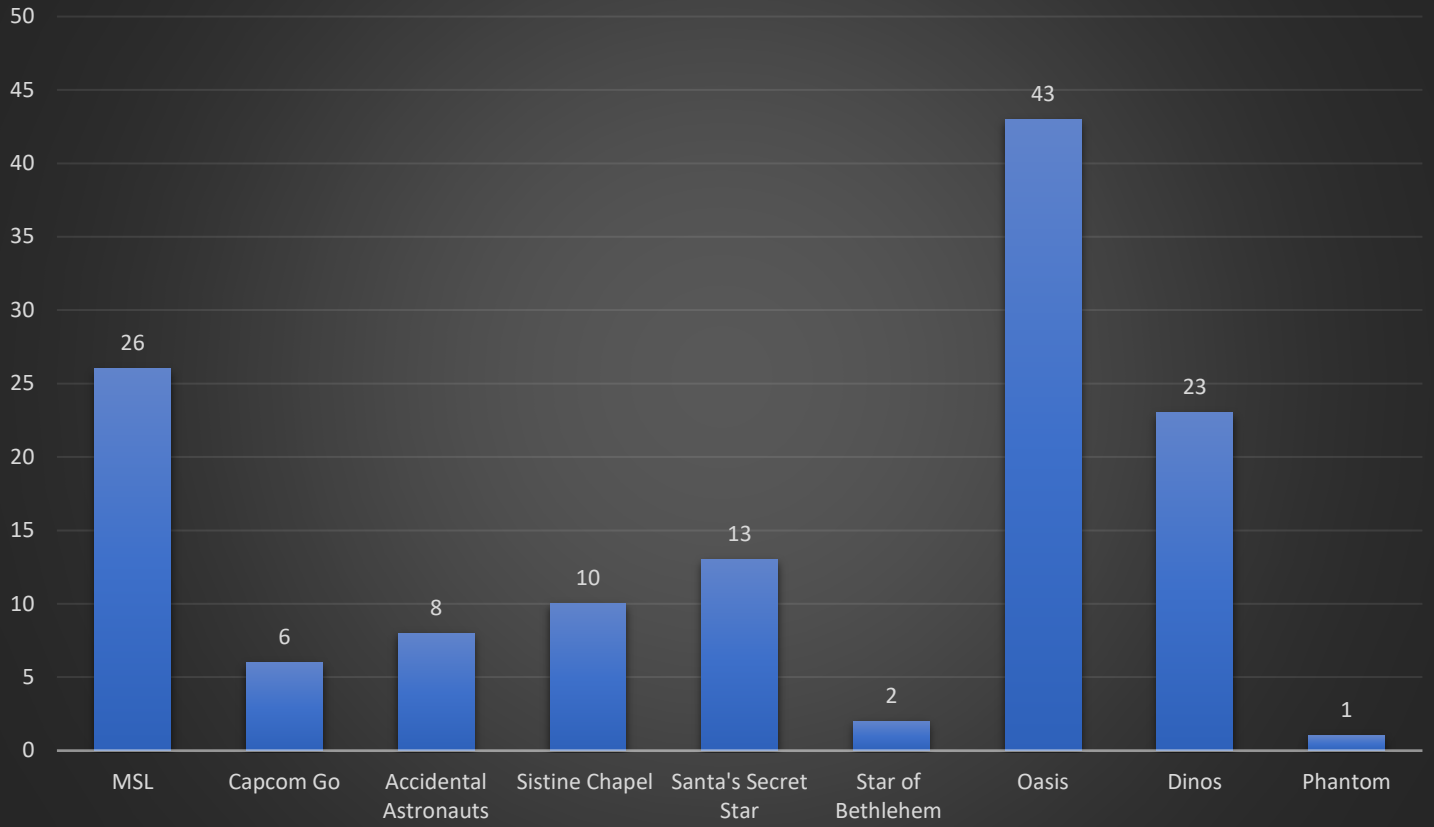
Other than the moon, another celestial body will be making a guest appearance in our sky in February, Mercury, the smallest planet in the solar system. Mercury will be reaching its highest point in the evening sky on the 10th, the day after the full moon. Leading up to and away from the 10th, Mercury will be above the horizon and visible to the naked eye in the west, looking like a large and bright star. Mercury won't be in the sky for long though, so cast your gaze to the west around sunset and try to spot this magnificent little planet. If you're having trouble finding Mercury, locate the brightest planet Venus, which will be a bit above and to the south of Mercury in the west.

4. February, like January is a month that I intend to use for the purpose of working on my 360 video goals. I made some progress on January by figuring out how to work a 360 camera, learning basic video editing in aftereffects, and how to convert to certain video types. All of that was necessary in order to take video footage and play it on the dome. As of now I'm still a novice when it comes to this process, but with time I'll be able to improve the content that we will make. All of this is important to me because I think that it will open up a lot of possibilities for the Besser Museum and allow for us to create our own fulldome videos and even allow us to expand our digital footprint.
5. For my last part of the report, I would like to add a couple of purchase requests that would be beneficial to the planetarium. The items I would like to purchase are a new laser pointer, a meteorite, a mouse pad, and if possible, projector lamps.
 - a. Our current laser pointers are old and have different technical issues that make them tough to use. Due to these issues I would like to request a new pointer for the planetarium, which I will link below. The laser pointer I would like to purchase is bright, affordable, and rechargeable. Having a

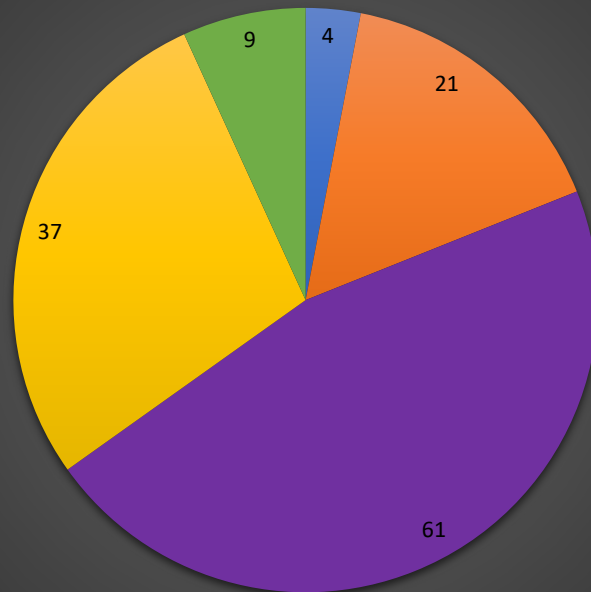
rechargeable laser pointer will save us money on batteries too, as we will no longer need new pointer batteries every month or so.

- i. https://www.amazon.com/Jemine-Pointer-Visible-Rechargeable-Adjustable/dp/B081LDJ57N/ref=sr_1_27?crd=1J3VD02183U4&keywords=rechargeable+laser+pointer&qid=1580399692&srefix=rechargeable+lase%2Caps%2C171&sr=8-27
- b. As of right now the museum does not have its own meteorite. This means that we are relying on John Heath’s personal collection to provide us with one. While John is fine with us using his for now, he has asked that we get our own so that he doesn’t have to worry about his getting stolen or damaged.
 - i. https://www.amazon.com/Dancing-Bear-Authentic-Certificate-Authenticity/dp/B01MCZ5FS4/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?keywords=meteorite&qid=1580400062&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyQUhFSjFFNFZHVFZSJmVuY3J5cHRlZEIkPUeWMDQ4NjlwMUU4TUtQQ0ZHODhKOCZlbnNyeXB0ZWZlZkPUeWMDIwMUION0NENzI5UkFERyZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNRPXRydWU=
- c. Lastly, we still need new projector lamps sometime this year. While our current lamps are fine having a fully functional backup will be necessary in the near (1-2 years) future. Whether it is this year or the next, the projector lamps will reach a point where they are too weak to provide adequate brightness for the dome. This will result in reduced quality of movies and full dome content and will also render projector calibration impossible, something that we need to do almost every week during Lafarge’s busy seasons. I would recommend purchasing these lamps sometime before the summer rush, that way we are fully prepared for the coming rush of tourists to Alpena.

Shows

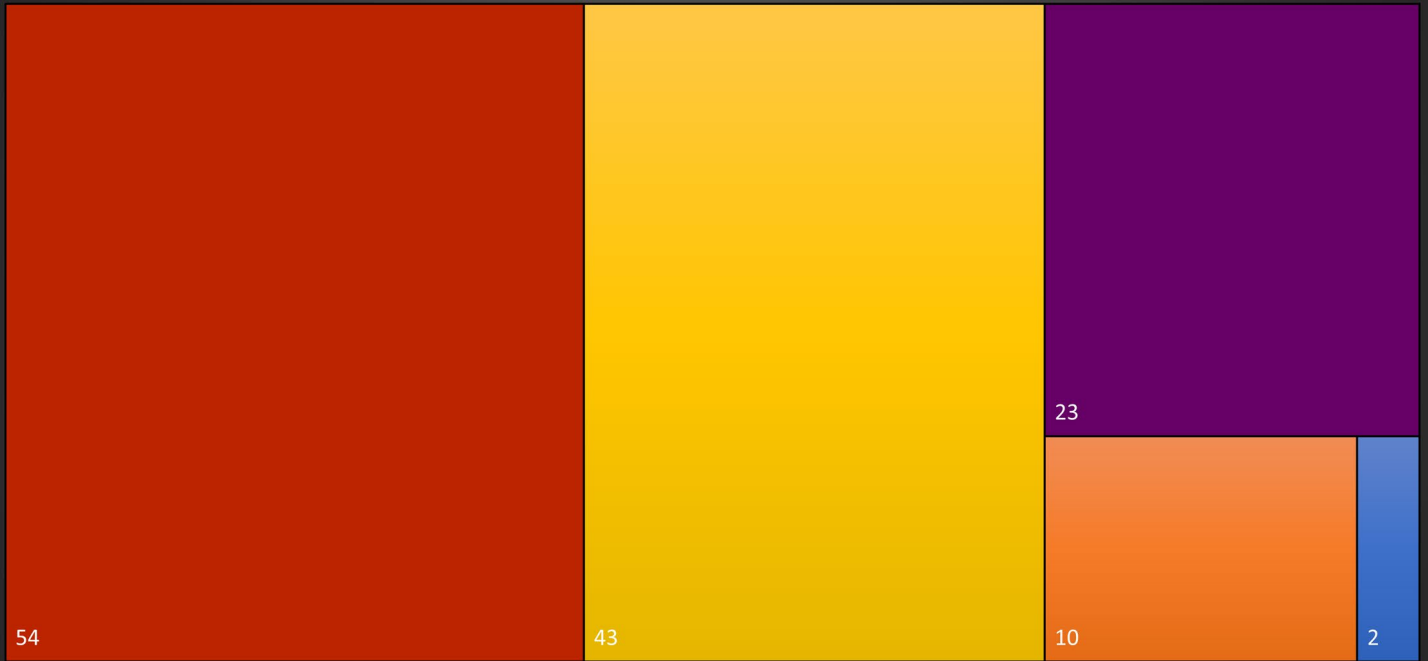


Showtimes



■ 12:00 ■ 1:00 ■ 2:00 ■ 3:00 ■ 4:00

DECEMBER ATTENDANCE



Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday