

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: December Action report

Ref: Hawaiian Islands Live (HIL)

Powers of Ten

Art & Astronomy

Keeping Up With The World (Keeping Up)

Enc: (1) Projects

(2) Public Outreach

(3) Conclusion

- 1. Projects worked on through the month of January 2019 are wide ranging and include four separate live show productions. Two of the live shows being developed are continuing productions, HIL and Powers of Ten. The third show is untitled, as it is only a 15-minute pre-show for the Art & Astronomy kids program; more information concerning this show and Art & astronomy will be delivered under section (2), public outreach. The final show is Keeping Up, which is a new prospective show that focuses on science, news, and technology. The Coordinator is hoping to regularly implement this show each month.
 - a. HIL: The current state of HIL is that the show is being dissected, and will longer be one large wide-ranging production, but 4 average length shows of 20-30 minutes each. This split comes from the fact that the show's topics have become too specific to be adequately fit into one production. Previously, HIL was designed to cover Hawaii's unique geology, ecology, and astronomy. However, as more time and effort were put into each category of the show, it became clear to the Planetarium Coordinator that attempting to fit all of this information into a ~40-minute time frame resulted in an overly saturated mess. Making it all digestible and entertaining was not properly feasible with the previous model, so now each topic will instead receive its own standalone program. However, for groups or audience members looking for a little of everything, a fourth show which will attempt to summarize the whole program, and act as a sort of teaser for each sub show, will also be produced. This summary show differs from the previous HIL by specifically avoiding anything other than a brief overview of each topic of discussion, only highlighting each topic's more unique or exciting aspects.
 - i. While this new type of programming is going to be better for the final production of HIL, it will be a considerable amount of work to complete all four programs. While the majority of research for the shows is complete, there is still information that must be gained, as aspects of the show that were once 15 minutes or less, are now being extended out to thirty 30 minutes or more. On top of requiring more qualitative information, these shows also require that this information be visually engaging to the audience. In order to ensure that HIL excites guests with its visuals, the Coordinator must find or create planetarium compatible resources that are relevant to the subject at hand, as well as unique. The combined effort required to properly control this schism is indeed great, but far from impossible.

- ii. While there is a lot of work to be done, there is no necessary completion date for all four programs as of this time. Instead of attempting to create all four shows by winter's end, the Coordinator intends on attempting to complete the summary show by the beginning of March, which will be in time for the Art & Astronomy program which will be taking place that month. This should be a simple enough task for the Coordinator, as all the summary show will be a scaled down version of the original program, and the work needed to complete the show will be consolidation of the script and the planetarium resources already assembled. It is the Coordinator's hope that all of the HIL shows will be complete before April, but the time-consuming nature involved with producing quality live-shows in house may prevent that from happening. More information concerning the progress of this ambitious schedule will be released in subsequent monthly reports and interpersonal discussions with the museum director as information becomes available.
- b. Powers of Ten. As of January 2019, it has come to the Coordinator's Attention that their show, Powers of Ten, is unsatisfactory to the Museum director and the board of directors, in not only substance but also visual engagement. While the manner in which this information was acquired was far from desirable, the fact remains that the show has been deemed unsuitable for public viewing and must be retailored. Work for Powers of Ten is not currently scheduled, due to the Coordinator's focus on HIL and Art & Astronomy, but effort to prevent the same result with other shows is currently in the works. Cooperating with the Museum Director, the Coordinator is gathering a review and support comity that can provide feedback on future shows, allowing the Coordinator to discern issues before they are seen by the public. The Director has also presented the Coordinator with some learning opportunities, such as speech coaching and job shadowing, all with the goal of enhancing the Coordinator's proficiency as both an educator and an entertainer. More information regarding these steps will be discussed in the future as they happen.
- c. The final project in the works is a completely different type of live show entirely, that being, "Keeping Up With The World". Keeping Up will focus on world events taking place over a month or two. The show is going to be 20-30 minutes long and it will be broken up into 3 main segments. These segments will be world events, science events, and technological events. This show is designed to be directly appealing towards college age students, specifically ACC students. While there is a lot going on in the planetarium at the moment, it is the Coordinator's hope that they can get this first show out by the end of February or beginning of March, if not, then the new goal will be the end of March. This may be possible, as the program itself won't require too much work. The majority of the effort put towards this will be finding interesting and meaningful events to discuss, and then using minimal planetarium assets that highlight or inform a little more about each event, such as showing where a specific country or city is when discussing a story relevant to that area.
 - i. The world events section will cover less known and more globally impactful events that are likely to be overlooked by U.S. news outlets. The show will attempt to break down the events taking place, how they arise, what their significance is, and possible resolutions of ongoing events. The Coordinator does not intend on including U.S. stories and events, instead, the goal of this part of the show is to give community members a look at the world that they normally wouldn't get.
 - ii. The 2nd part of the show will cover scientific events and research currently ongoing in the world. This segment will look at scientific papers, news stories, and research ongoing within scientific communities, with the goal of finding interesting and/or beneficial discoveries or news. This includes looking through a range of scientific communities such as, Archaeology, Anthropology, Astrophysics, and Biology, just to name a few. The ultimate goal of this segment is to look at new discoveries and educate people about science topics that they might not understand, giving them a better understanding of science in general.
 - iii. The technology segment will be similar to that of the scientific section, except with the aim being physical developments that have derived from research. Essentially, topics like gene editing, Elon Musk's Hyperloop, or Facebook's spyware phone app. All of these topics have the possibility of being brought up. The goal of the technology section is to inform people about what technologies are changing our world and showing them the impact that science and technology has on the world.
- 2. Public outreach for January 2019 has taken the form of Art & Astronomy. This new program will be a coordinated effort by the Museum's Planetarium Coordinator and Education Director. This program will be

a 2-hour event in which children aged 8-11, will explore certain astronomical, scientific, and artistic topics via the lenses of fulldome curriculum, interactive games and events, and arts and crafts. The goal of this program is to engage children about educational topics that may excite or intrigue them, while also providing them with a creative outlet in which to explore these topics with.

- a. The planetarium show for the first activity will be about star creation and the way light interacts with us inside our own galaxy. These topics will be explored by highlighting nebula and stellar nurseries visible in our sky, as well as their appearance up close. The show will also cover the effects of diffuse clouds throughout the milky way galaxy and how these clouds have affected astronomy here on earth. The live part of the show will only last 15 to 20 minutes and will be utilizing the planetarium's showier features in order to better illustrate the impact that nebulous gas has on Astronomy. Once the live show has completed, guests will be presented with the fulldome video "A Photon's Journey", which will explore star creation more in-depth, as well as how the light from said star manages to travel a thousand light years and into the eyes of a star gazer on earth.
 - i. While there have only been a few reservations for the Art & Astronomy program as of the time of this report's completion, the Coordinator will continue to prepare for the all three programs. Since this program is so new, it is possible that the community will just need time to properly realize that it even exists, and as a result, the other 2 activities planned through March will continue with the assumption that as long as the community is gaining awareness of this program's existence, then the museum is at least making progress towards bringing people in. If there's ever low or no attendance at one of the activities, then the resources for that show can just be recycled for repeats of the program another month.
- 3. The month of January 2019 may appear slow on the surface, what with a somewhat low attendance rate, but this low attendance means that Coordinator's attention is focused on development, rather than presentation. The new shows being developed are ambitious in their design, and when complete, will add a significant amount of new live content to the planetarium's library. With a mixture of live shows and group programs coming to the planetarium, 2019 is looking to be an eventful and exciting year. It is the Coordinator's hope that the shows and events created here will have a lasting impact on the museum and the community as a whole for years to come.