

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan  
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting  
January 2019 – February 2019

**1. AAM Reaccreditation:**

We did it! We received accreditation.

- 2. HR Committee:** The Board of Trustees formed an ad-hoc HR Committee to help review the **Employee Handbook**: The handbook makes no mention of sick days or how to account for time off when sick. The handbook also states that employee vacations are determined by years of service, but that the vacation time resets at the start of the fiscal year. A Board discussion on both these topics needs to occur.
- a. Should vacation time be awarded on the employees' anniversary date?
  - b. Should the handbook be revised to mention sick days (pay)? Should it be part of their vacation days? Should full-time employees receive up to 3 personal/sick days per year?
  - c. I have sent the LARA Michigan State law for sick days, which only pertain to Attended and will be joining the Northern Michigan Human Resource Committee. They formed 30 years ago, and meet at ACC 9 times a year to discuss HR issues such as changing laws, practices, etc. They bring in guest speakers, glean from each other's years of experience, and hold training conferences.
  - d. I will be participating in two HR webinars through Skill Path; one on April 12<sup>th</sup> and one on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

**3. Facilities:**

- a. I am waiting to hear from Susan Edwards from R.S. Scott Associates on the progress on their plan.
- b. Good Design submitted a first draft of an exhibit redesign for the upper level. Still waiting to hear back on that.
- c. Matt Klimczak's monthly Facility Report provides more details. Matt is currently doing an assessment of how much it cost to light each gallery in the museum. The most expensive gallery to light was the Wild Life Animal gallery.

**4. Native American Exhibit Project: ONGOING**

- a. Communicating with Good Design to finish the exhibit concept and narrative.
- b. Research and development are ongoing.

**5. Fisheries Exhibit:**

- a. The GLFT Grant was denied funding. There were several competing grant applications that were submitted during this cycle. The committee will regroup and discuss what's next.
- b. Zach Irving completed the video interview tour with Tuffy. We will eventually get that up on the internet for self-guided tours.
- c. An interview with Albert LaBlance and his brothers is being arranged. Proposal for this project was presented to the Board. Funding will come from the restricted Katherine V exhibit fund.
  - i. The Katherine V restricted fund currently has \$5,148.93 available. The CFNEM Special Fund with designated funds for the Fisheries Exhibit has \$7,481.22.

**6. Art:**

- a. **Erv Lewandowski & Mark Beins:** During this exhibit, Erv Lewandowski held three seminars on the Business of Art that were well attended.

- b. **Winter Blues:** The exhibit will be open until April 6<sup>th</sup>.
- c. **Shirley Ritzler Art Exhibit and Fundraiser Proposal:** Shirley Ritzler is a local artist from the 1980--who has taken different elements from local homes and developed paper cutting art. For the past several months, research was conducted to evaluate the feasibility of using the prints of the original exhibit that was displayed at the Besser Museum in 1981 as a fundraiser and art exhibit. After working with Allegra Printing, it was decided, due to the low quality of the prints, that the best option would be to make have prints mounted on foam core for the exhibit. The cost of the exhibit would be \$850.00. It was also discussed that the best option for a possible item in the gift store was to make a coloring book, rather than note cards or postcards. The original prints do not print well on a small postcard or note card.
- d. Chose the Yaacov Agam artwork to be exhibited in May. Collections Manager, Maggie will work with Vicki Wright to reframe the artwork. The Education Coordinator, Amanda will develop lesson plans on the Agam artwork for the spring field trips

**7. Collections Highlights:** (see full report)

- a. Maggie continues to make progress on inventorying the museum's collections. Volunteers have begun to assist with the inventory. Maggie's monthly Collections Manager report provides more details.
- b. Maggie has processed the Cranbrook Animal education collection and they are ready to be transferred to John Benson for display at JJs. The Besser Museum will provide the educational materials for the outreach program. Amanda Kucharek will be working on creating a template for a kid's educational activity placemat. The placemat will have promotional information about the Besser Museum included.
- c. Plans to purchase supplies using the Giving Tuesday funds is being discussed and Maggie is compiling some proposals for consideration.

**8. Education Highlights:** (see full report)

- a. Working with Education Coordinator, Planetarium Coordinator and Board member, John Caplis to create an educational training program for young museum professionals. This program will benefit current employees, along with potential university interns and museum volunteers. The vision is for the Besser Museum to be an institution known for providing professional development opportunities for individuals in the museum field.
- b. The first Art and Astronomy program: The second program had seven children. The next program is schedule for March 30<sup>th</sup>. After the last program we will reevaluated the program and decide how best to move forward with future programming.
- c. Staff is working as a team to develop programming for the Apollo 11 exhibit.
- d. Calendar of event includes Spring Fieldtrip programs, Log Cabin Day, Fall Harvest Fossil Fest, and Season of Light.
- e. Developing evaluation and program assessments is also ongoing.

**9. Planetarium Highlights:** (see full report)

- a. We are still waiting to hear if we will be awarded the \$2,500 CFNEM Youth Advisory grant for a show to complement the Apollo 11 exhibit. YAC will notify applicants in March if they are a recipient of a grant.
- b. Working is ongoing with the Education and Collections department on the Apollo 11<sup>th</sup> exhibit and programs. The tentative plans are as follows:
  - i. May 30 a Communication Conversation facilitated by ACC instructor, Tim Kuhnlein
  - ii. July 13 a moon gazing/telescope event at Rockport
  - iii. July 20 a free family fund day to celebrate the first man on the moon.

- c. Working is ongoing to create a planetarium focus group to provide programming feedback.
  - i. Johnathan visited John Caplis' AHS astronomy class
  - ii. Kristin Sharpe has also offered to have Johnathan observe her classroom
  - iii. Thunder Bay Theater Director, Jeff Mindock will be working with Johnathan and the staff to develop presentation skills and team building.
- d. March Museum Membership Appreciation campaign offered free planetarium passes to members from March 11 – March 31. All visitors will provide survey.
- e. Johnathan's monthly Planetarium report provides more details.

**10. Other:**

- a. Accounting: I am continuing to work with Marie Williams making changes to the accounting system. Improvements are being made to utilizing the donor restricted funds as appropriate.
- b. Kennedy Lundquist is an ACC work-study student assigned to the Besser Museum through one of her ACC instructors. Kennedy is majoring in Business/Marketing/Advertising and will be working on helping create a marketing plan starting with an advertising schedule. Kennedy will help organize all the markets where the museum can advertise both free and paid. She will create a check list to make sure events are being promoted in a timely fashion.
- c. Working on creating a procedure (training) manual for the front desk – ongoing.

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