FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK

2019 was a busy year for the ‘Tri-Cities Historical Museum!’ The Board of Directors and Staff finished up the Strategic Planning process with the completion of an ambitious Strategic Plan which will be our road map for 2019 to 2024. We also celebrated 60 years of collecting, preserving and presenting the history of the Tri-Cities with fun events such as a trivia night, accompanying lecture series and a FUNdraising event at the Spring Lake Country Club, where we partied like it was 1999!

Looking ahead to 2020, the Education Department will offer more lecture series complementing the second floor exhibits which will include the West Michigan Pike: Michigan City to Mackinaw scheduled from January to June and the History of the Highland Park Association, from July to December. The Collections Department will host a series of workshops for members aimed at preserving your family treasures, such as photos and quilts, at the Community Archives and Research Center. The Exhibits Department will continue with the much needed refresh of our main floor permanent exhibits, and last, but certainly not least, our 2020 Millage Renewal Campaign Committee will embark on the campaign renewal for Spring Lake to ensure the financial future of our organization. All of these projects combined, help to make your museum a treasure of the Tri-Cities and we thank you all for your continued support!

If you have received this newsletter because you are a member, thank you for your support! If not, please consider purchasing a membership to the museum to keep up to date with museum programs and offerings. As the holidays approach you may also want to consider purchasing a membership for family or friends, especially for those who no longer live in the area, a membership to the museum can be a reminder of home sweet home!

Looking ahead, we are eager to start the 5th Annual Music at the Museum concert series which begins on Friday, December 6 and continues into 2020. The series kicks off with headliners the Way Down Wanderers and opening act Roosevelt Diggs. We have worked with Jack Clark and Marianne Fisher of Red House Concert Series again this year to bring you a variety of talented artists. There are a limited number of tickets available, so contact the museum right away to get yours.

And lastly, I would like to take a moment to encourage you to support the museum by giving financially to our organization, either for our Annual Appeal or consider a gift of $1,000 towards our Endowment Campaign to assure the financial future of the museum. We set a goal early on in 2019 to raise $60,000, which reflects $1,000 for every year the museum has been serving the Tri-Cities. Many of you have given to the campaign and we thank you, however, we are short of our goal so we are appealing to you. As you look to make your end of year annual nonprofit contributions please consider the Tri-Cities Historical Museum and our mission to Create Connections to Local History. Thank you!

Peace and joy to you and your family this holiday season.

ES, Just as a reminder, it’s never too early in the year to think about charitable donations made through your IRA. At age 70½ those with IRAs must begin withdrawing their Required Mandatory Distributions starting at 4% of the IRA’s value. Please consider the Tri-Cities Historical Museum when working with your fund administrator. A charitable distribution an IRA account results in zero taxes to the owners.
WEST MICHIGAN PIKE LECTURE SERIES

The Tri-Cities Historical Museum will be opening its newest exhibit, West Michigan Pike: Michigan City to Mackinaw in January of 2020. In conjunction with that exhibit, a series of lectures will be held covering a wide range of topics which relate to the history of traveling along the West Michigan Pike.

All lectures are free and will begin at 6:30 p.m. They will be held at Tri-Cities Historical Museum, located at 200 Washington Ave. Mark your calendars so you do not miss any of these exciting presentations.

- **Tuesday, January 21st:** “Michigan State Parks Along the West Michigan Pike,” presented by M. Christine Byron and Thomas R. Wilson
- **Tuesday, February 18th:** TBD Kurt Troutman and George Maniates present ?
- **Tuesday, March 16th:** TBD, presented by Dave Lorenz
- **Tuesday, May 21st:** “Michigan State Parks Along the Old West Michigan Pike,” presented by M. Christine Byron and Thomas R. Wilson
- **Tuesday, June 2nd:** “Food, Lodging, and Entertainment: The Michigan Pike in Grand Haven,” presented by Wallace Ewing

OLDE FASHIONED CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 7TH, 2019

Come join members of Tri-Cities Historical Museum as we host our first “Olde Fashioned Christmas” family fun day! Explore the museum and learn about the holiday season as it was celebrated in years past. It is your chance to learn about holiday traditions, create holiday crafts, play games and more! Event is free for all and will take place on December 7th, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. This event will take place right before the holiday parade, so bundle up, enjoy a day of fun and learning, and spread that holiday cheer at our “Olde Fashioned Christmas” event! For more information, please contact Erin Pilarski at 616-842-0700 ext. 132.

FAMILY PROGRAMMING
DUSTY THE ELF RETURNS IN DECEMBER

Dusty the Elf returns to Tri-Cities Historical Museum in order to spread holiday cheer! In previous years, Dusty, the museum’s “Elf on a Shelf” explored the museum, learned about exciting artifacts TCHM has, and was a spy for Santa, paying close attention to visitors to see if they should be on the naughty or nice list. He will return this year to explore more of what TCHM has to offer and even join us for our new holiday family fun day: “Olde Fashioned Christmas,” which is to be held at the museum on December 7th from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Dusty will try and stay out of trouble, but he cannot make any promises!

Starting Monday December 2nd, make sure to stop on by the museum to see what Dusty is up to each day. Do not hesitate to say hello if you spot him in our exhibits!

Be sure to follow us online on Facebook as we record Dusty’s stay at the museum.
UPCOMING EXHIBITS PLANNED FOR MUSEUM

The Tri-Cities Historical Museum has some exciting developments coming up in 2020! Our exhibitions department has expanded to include Kate Crosby, the new Curator of Exhibitions and Facilities Manager, and Jen Vos, a Curatorial Assistant from Grand Rapids. With new staff have come many changes for the museum, including a more robust rotating exhibition plan for the small, mezzanine, and Centennial Hall galleries, upgrades to the permanent exhibitions on the first floor, and changes to the outreach exhibitions located throughout the Tri-Cities. We are particularly excited by the opportunity to feature more community curators in our case on the first floor.

The first new exhibition in 2020 will be “West Michigan Pike: Michigan City to Mackinaw,” on display from January 16 to June 14, 2020 in the museum’s small gallery on the mezzanine floor. We hasten to add that this Pike is a historic highway and not the fish so many anglers prize for its fight. This exhibition will tell the story of the West Michigan Pike, a highway along Michigan’s western coast created by grassroots activism on the part of early automobile enthusiasts. The road passed through many of the tourist towns along the coast, including Benton Harbor, South Haven, the Tri-Cities, Muskegon, and more, bringing an influx of visitors to the area from all over the country. Parts of the West Michigan Pike now include US-31/Beacon Street, but even with the name changes the route is still drivable today. Working with the authors of Vintage Views Along the West Michigan Pike (Christine Byron and Thomas Wilson), this exhibition highlights how the West Michigan Pike shaped the tourist industry in the Tri-Cities in the early 20th century. The museum plans to host a lecture series in conjunction with this exhibition throughout the spring and early summer; be on the lookout for updates in the near future!

After “West Michigan Pike,” the small gallery will hold an exhibition on the Highland Park neighborhood from July 9 to December 13. Highland Park was established in the 1880s by the Highland Park Association for the purpose of creating a resort area to capitalize on the proximity to mineral springs and Lake Michigan. The neighborhood’s location in the dunes made it a unique and inviting area for summer cottages, but not without some challenges along the way; the dunes were so steep that many construction materials, including large quantities of lumber, had to be carried up by hand. At over 130 years old, the Highland Park historical district has become an icon of Grand Haven. Many of the cottages that were built in those first years still stand today with few external alterations, while others have been winterized for year-round inhabitation. If you have objects, photos, or stories about Highland Park that you would like to share with the exhibit, please contact us!

Centennial Hall will feature an exhibition on Entertainment in the Tri-Cities. This summer blockbuster will explore the history of entertainment and the entertainment industry in the Tri-Cities. Potential objects include musical instruments, historic photographs, outfits, and recordings, among others. Our goal for Centennial Hall in the next five years is to feature one blockbuster exhibit in the summer to highlight underrepresented and otherwise unpublicized Tri-Cities stories. Be on the lookout for updates in the near future!

In the mezzanine, the exhibit line-up includes “Into the Field,” featuring artwork by the Spring Lake Artists group, and ArtWalk 2020, which will run from September to early October.

The community curator case continues to be popular, with recent exhibitions featuring candlesticks, Halloween decorations, and a collection of nativity scenes. The community curator case gives members of the general public the opportunity to share objects important to their history with visitors of the museum. Our goal is to present one community curator case a month, and there are many opportunities available for 2020. If you are interested or would like to learn more, please contact Kate Crosby kcrosby@tchmuseum.org.

The museum is delighted with the positive feedback it has received after updating the Ekrens Store, and updates to the permanent exhibits on the first floor will continue in 2020. These updates include switching out objects, creating interactives for visitors, and refreshing the interpretation of the spaces. Switching out objects gives the museum a chance to “rest” objects that have been on display (decreasing damage caused by light) and to show off other objects that haven’t had a chance to shine yet in these spaces. Our goal with interactives is to increase visitor engagement with the scenes through a hands-on learning activity. Finally, refreshing the interpretation is part of routine exhibition maintenance, as much of the signage hasn’t changed since the museum opened in the Akeley building in 2004. With those points in mind, keep your eyes on the Fur Trader Cabin and the Logging Camp Lodge in 2020. These are among the spaces scheduled to be updated during over the course of the year.

The exhibitions department also plans to update the outreach exhibits on display throughout the Tri-Cities in 2020. If you have ideas for outreach exhibits, please let us know and we’ll be happy to discuss it! Interested in becoming a community curator for the first floor case or offering a suggestion for outreach exhibits? Want to volunteer your skills and/or knowledge? We would love to hear from you! Please email Curator of Exhibitions Kate Crosby at kcrosby@tchmuseum.org.

“Love it! Been coming here since 1991, it is awesome!”
Adam H, Commerce Township
FROM HEIRLOOM TO ARTIFACT: HOW THE MUSEUM COLLECTS ITS ARTIFACTS

At the Tri-Cities Historical Museum, we are frequently asked how donated objects are added to the museum collection. When someone donates an item to the museum, it does not go directly into the collection. Instead, it goes through a formal review process to ensure that the object fits the museum’s collecting criteria and that the museum can care for the object appropriately.

When an object is first brought to the museum as a donation, a temporary deposit receipt is given to the donor. Details and history about the item is compiled from the information the donor provides. While the object itself is important, the historical context and provenance (history of ownership) are what the museum really needs to tell the history. Together this information builds a story of what makes the artifact special. Often times without this information, even if it is little that can be learned or taught with the object.

The item and information then goes to the Collections Committee. The committee is made up of museum board members, staff and community members. They discuss if the object meets the museum’s mission, if the museum is properly able to exhibit and educate with the item, and if the museum has the resources to properly store and preserve the object. If the object meets all these criteria, then the committee votes to accept it into the museum’s collection. Paperwork known as a “Deed of Gift” is sent to the donor to be signed and sent back to the museum. The item is then added to the museum’s catalog and is assigned its own unique identification number, called an “accession number.”

The work of the Collections Committee doesn’t stop there, however. The committee helps manage the artifact through its entire existence with the museum. They discuss conservation and preservation methods for artifacts that are starting to deteriorate and select the items that are in most need of work. They make sure the museum’s storage facilities are maintained and any maintenance issues resolved to ensure we are taking the best care of the artifacts as possible. They also review both incoming and outgoing loans to ensure artifacts are accounted for and that all artifact movement is tracked. In short, the Collections Committee is essential in assisting the museum staff in providing the best possible care for the history that the community entrusts us with.

WHAT DO WE DO IN A DISASTER?

Disasters can strike anywhere and any time. In June of 2018 the Houghton Historical Society suffered damage from a natural disaster. Severe weather and heavy rainfall caused historic flooding and mudslides in Houghton County. Several inches of water and mud filled the historical society’s building causing damage to the structure and the collection. After the flooding was controlled and the building deemed safe to enter, the recovery and cleanup process began. Over several weeks many volunteers assisted in the cleanup and recovery to attempt to salvage their collection.

Our own collection has been affected by disasters in the past. A tree branch fell and punctured through the roof of the Community Archives and Research Center on July 7th, 2017. During the severe weather several inches of water flooded the document room putting a part of the collection in danger. Quick actions of the museum staff and several local citizens and businesses helped mitigate the damage. Again just this last summer a branch was thrown through the roof of the artifact storage building. The damage was minor and caught quickly and repairs were made.

What do we do when disasters strike? Museums put together emergency response and disaster recovery plans to prepare for these events. They identify potential threats to the collections and lay out step-by-step plans for the recovery process. We create evacuation plans for removing artifacts from affected rooms so they can be emptied quickly and efficiently. Curators from other nearby museums are often called to help with the recovery effort. They can help supervise volunteers to ensure artifacts are being moved properly. Artifacts require specialized care, so these plans often have the contact information for conservators to call upon when the recovery starts. Lastly we attend conferences and trainings that help us develop skills and plans that will protect the collections we care for.

This December I will be attending the Heritage Emergency and Response Training (HEART) program in Washington, DC. This week-long course hosted by the Smithsonian Institute and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) teaches students “first aid for artifacts.” Each year 25 people are selected nationwide to attend the HEART program, which provides expanded training to better prepare curators and first responders to work together to address emergencies and disasters that affect cultural institutions and historic sites. This training costs the museum nothing as all funding is provided through grants and government funding.

Information learned through the HEART program will prove to be valuable in updating our own museum’s disaster plans as well as assisting in protecting historical heritage throughout West Michigan. Additional information can be found at the website culturalrescue.ui.edu/heart/training/
Jennifer Vos was born in Grand Rapids, but spent her childhood in Lucille Ball’s hometown of Jamestown, New York. She showed a passion for history from an early age by devouring historical fiction and playing “dress up” with historical costumes. She attended Calvin University, earning a bachelor’s degree in History and Art History.

Deciding to pursue a career in museums, Jen spent a semester interning at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. She worked for three years at the Gerald R Ford Presidential Museum digitizing the museum’s artifact collection, and becoming well acquainted with the history of Jerry Ford’s life and the culture of the 1970s. Looking to learn and grow in the museum field, Jen entered graduate school at the Cooperstown Graduate Program in Cooperstown, New York. Jen worked with local institutions to create exhibits, conduct oral histories, and create a strategic plan. In 2019 she earned her master’s degree in museum studies and returned home to West Michigan.

She now resides in Grand Rapids with her three-legged cat, Artemis. Jen enjoys playing board games with her friends, listening to podcasts, and photography. She recently joined the staff of the Tri-Cities Historical Museum as the Assistant to the Exhibits Curator and Facilities Manager and is excited to familiarize herself with the collection and create exciting new displays that bring the history of the Tri-Cities to life.

Margaret Paxton was born in Birmingham, Alabama, but spent her childhood in the Indianapolis area. She grew up loving art, history, and reading. Margaret attended Indiana University and earned a bachelor’s degree in Art History with a minor in Gender Studies in 2019.

She has held internships at the Mather’s Museum of World History in Bloomington, Indiana in collections, where her love of object care and collections practices took off. She also worked in the Curatorial Department at the Grand Rapids Art Museum, where she researched copyright information of the collection. After graduating college, she accepted a seasonal job at ArtPrize as their Communications Assistant, where she learned a lot about arts non-profit management, communications and marketing. She recently accepted the Assistant to the Collections Curator at the Tri-Cities Historical Museum and is excited to help the museum reach its goal of accreditation and help the collection grow.

Margaret currently lives in Grand Rapids with her two cats, Bean and Saga. She is hoping one day to get a dog. Margaret enjoys fiber arts (weaving), cooking, baking, and hanging out with her family in Grand Haven during the summer. She is very excited to begin her career in Museums with the Tri-Cities Historical Museum.

We are pleased to welcome the newest board member of our Board of Directors, Ernie Petrus. Ernie was voted in as a new board member at the most recent Annual Membership Meeting. Ernie is a Spring Lake resident with over 28 years’ experience as a business professional. Ernie has a diverse background in Marketing, Sales and Strategy development and unique ability to see opportunity where others don’t.

Ernie is the owner of Gateway Business Coaching LLC and specializes in Strategic Planning, Sales, Marketing and Channel Development. He has also taught business classes as an adjunct professor at Muskegon Community College and Grand Valley State University. Ernie has also previously served on the Spring Lake Library Board of Directors, Village of Spring Lake Zoning Board of Appeals and the Rotary Club of Spring Lake.

We are grateful for his willingness to be a part of the Board of Directors and look forward to working with Ernie in 2020.
MAKE AN END-OF-YEAR GIFT TO THE MUSEUM

Although the holidays are upon us, there’s still time to plan your end-of-year giving! Please consider making a charitable gift to the Tri-Cities Historical Museum.

In 2019, the Tri-Cities Historical Museum welcomed more than 53,500 visitors, engaged over 2,000 local students, and celebrated the opening of several fascinating exhibits, including the extremely popular “Tri-Cities: A to Z.” Visitors to the museum left glowing reviews about their experiences, including:

“What a wonderful museum. Glad we stopped!”
“Thank you for helping keep our history preserved.”
“Love this museum! A treasure to the community.”

This year we also embarked upon a new five-year strategic plan aimed at growing the museum’s value to our community by enhancing our exhibits, expanding our strong ties to local schools, and using our local history collections to engage students, visitors, and researchers in exploring the past.

The museum has a track record of excellence, and we are looking forward to building upon our successes in the coming years.

You can help us reach our goals. Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated:

- $50 can provide one hands-on, in-classroom history lesson from our Curator of Education
- $100 can provide supplies to develop new outreach exhibits for locations throughout the Tri-Cities.
- $250 can provide high-quality storage materials to help preserve and care for our collection of over 65,000 artifacts.
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- $1,000 can support the future of the museum by growing our endowment fund.

WAYS TO GIVE

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In addition, if you have an IRA, please consider making a charitable gift to the Tri-Cities Historical Museum with your distribution. At age 70 1/2, people with IRAs must begin withdrawing their Required Mandatory Distributions starting at 4% of the IRA’s value. A charitable distribution of an IRA account results in zero taxes to the owner. Consult with your fund administrator for more information.

THANK YOU!

60TH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS

With the holiday season quickly approaching, the staff at the Tri-Cities Historical Museum have been reflecting upon the many things we are thankful for after a very productive year at the museum. We’d especially like to give thanks to our wonderful members and friends who supported our 60th Anniversary Fundraiser on October 10th. The event brought more than 100 people to the Spring Lake Country Club to celebrate our diamond anniversary and raised over $10,000 in support of the museum.

Local businesses and artists were essential in making this event a success. Thanks to their generous donations, we put together five fantastic live auction packages (including romantic stays at private locales, behind-the-scenes experiences at the Grand Haven lighthouse and the Musical Fountain, and more) and 35 silent auction baskets with themes such as, “All Sorts of Sports” and “West Michigan Road Trip.” We also greatly appreciate the work of the museum’s Board of Directors, who provided bottles of wine and gift cards for our extremely popular Mystery Wine & Dine.

Hosting an anniversary event offered us a unique opportunity to look back upon the museum’s first 60 years of operation (1959-2019) and provided us a chance to share some of the plans we have for the coming years. It was fantastic to see the enthusiasm in the crowd as we discussed our new strategic plan, our ongoing work with educators, and our plans to continue to grow our connections to our local communities.

So, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you. Your support for the Tri-Cities Historical Museum is so important and means so much to the staff working every day to fulfill our mission of “Creating Connections to Local History.” We truly appreciate you, and we look forward to sharing our next 60 years with you.

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NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS

Curator Society:
Kevin Carbary and Carol Alexander
Bari S. Johnson

Archivist Society:
Robb and Ruth Robbins

Collector Society:
Mangery Juk
John Leitner and Cindy Krause

Family:
Vernon and Mary Ackerson
Marilyn Green
Iain Novoselich
Richard and Wanda Ponsahair
Corwin Vander Veer

Individual:
Steven Coute
Library of Michigan
Jens Olsen
Rhonda Stephenson
Tyler Weavers

Senior Couple:
Debra Donan
Jon and Betsy Jellema
George and Sandra Kalnurn
Richard and Karen Meads
Robert and Janice Sluka
William and Linda Vivian

Senior:
Ed Baldwin
Judy Draper
Marilene Helmers
Martha L. Hendricks
Connie Holley
Beverly Hundley
Jani Ingersoll
Mark King
Trudy Paleo
Kim Street
Paul and M. Elyse Veach
Sharon Weavers

Renewing and new members are listed in the River Winds on a quarterly basis. Members listed are dependent upon date of renewal.

*New members in bold type

Thank you to the Tri-Cities Women Who Care for awarding us $30,000 to renovate our Education Room at their September meeting. More information to follow in our Spring 2020 issue of the River Winds.
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Remember to check us out on facebook.

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