

## **MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

*Regular Meeting*

**Wednesday, September 9, 2020 – 7:00 pm**

Monroe County Museum – 126 South Monroe Street – Monroe, Michigan 48161  
ELECTRONIC VIDEO/TELECONFERENCE VIA ZOOM MEETING

Pursuant to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order No. 2020-154 (rescinding previous orders), modifying the State's Open Meetings Act issued July 17, 2020, this meeting will be held using remote participation via Zoom Meeting.

Public Comments may be submitted to the Monroe County Museum System Director Andrew Clark at [andy\\_clark@monroemi.org](mailto:andy_clark@monroemi.org) until 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 to be included as part of the public record for this meeting. Click [here](#) for the required format.

### **You are invited to a Zoom webinar.**

When: Sep 9, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

**Topic: Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees 9/9/20**

**Please click the link below to join the webinar:**

<https://zoom.us/j/97273467375?pwd=S3hodlRsNmY2VlI2U2l4anRYNjNjdz09>

**Passcode: museum**

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13017158592,,97273467375#,,,,,0#,,842642#

or

+13126266799,,97273467375#,,,,,0#,,842642#

**Or Telephone:**

**Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):**

**US:**

**+1 646 558 8656 (New York) or**

**+1 301 715 8592 (Maryland) or**

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**+1 669 900 9128 (California) or**

**+1 253 215 8782 (Washington) or**

**+1 346 248 7799 (Texas)**

**Webinar ID: 972 7346 7375**

**Passcode: 842642 (if joining by phone)**

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## AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of August 12, 2020
5. Public Comment
6. Committee Updates
  - 6.1. Executive Committee
  - 6.2. Awards Committee
  - 6.3. Markers Committee
  - 6.4. Projects Committee
7. New Business
  - 7.1. Eby Log House Update with Phil Goldsmith, County Attorney
  - 7.2. Museum Reports
  - 7.3. October and November meeting discussion
    - 7.3.1. October in-person outside at Territorial Park
    - 7.3.2. November meeting – Veterans Day/County Holiday
8. Old Business
9. Public Comment
10. Board Comments
11. Adjournment

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 7 pm – Location TBA

<b>2020 MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>	<b>2020 COMMITTEES</b>
Chair: Brian Egen, District 6 Vice-Chair: Jeremy Potter, District 1 Secretary: Thomas Heywood, District 2 Trustee: Mary Strevel, District 3 Trustee: L William Conner, District 4 Trustee: Richard Micka, District 5 Trustee: Tony Trujillo, District 7 Trustee: Michael Humphries, District 8 Trustee: Nicholas Guthrie, District 9 Immediate Past Chair: Hobby Nels Trustee Emeritus: Richard Sieb	<b>Executive Committee</b> Chair: Brian Egen Members: Jeremy Potter, Thomas Heywood, Hobby Nels, Andrew Clark, and JJ Przewozniak <b>Awards Committee</b> Chair: Mary Strevel Members: Tony Trujillo, Thomas Heywood, and Andrew Clark <b>Markers Committee</b> Chair: Jeremy Potter Members: Brian Egen, Nicholas Guthrie, Michael Humphries, Lynn Reaume, and Andrew Clark <b>Projects Committee</b> Chair: Michael Humphries Members: Bill Conner, Brian Egen, Tony Trujillo, and Andrew Clark

### **Mission Statement of the Monroe County Museum System**

At the Monroe County Museum, we fuel and cultivate our visitors' curiosity through the exploration of Monroe County's rich and varied stories, joining together to unearth meaning and illuminate relevant connections between the past, present, and future.

MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL BOARD of TRUSTEES  
MEETING MINUTES

August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Brian Egen, Chairman      Tom Heywood, Secretary      Michael Humphries, Member  
Richard Micka, Member      Hobby Nels, Past Chairman  
Mary Strevel, Member      Tony Trujillo, Member

Excused: Nick Guthrie, Member      Jeremy Potter, Vice-Chairman      Richard Sieb, Emeritus  
Absent: William Conner, Member

Museum Staff: Andy Clark, Director      J.J. Przewozniak, Deputy Director  
Lynn Reaume, County Historian

This meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. and roll was taken. There was a quorum.

Motion was made by T. Heywood to accept the meeting agenda; seconded by R. Micka and approved.

Motion was made by M. Humphries to approve the July, 2020 meeting minutes, seconded by M. Strevel and approved.

Public Comment #1: none via internet.

Executive: Chairman Egen said they met with social distancing. Lantern Tours was cancelled this year due to the COVID restrictions.

The Deputy Director explained the app “OnCell” for digital tours which allows our content to be presented in new ways offering educational and marketing opportunities with a lot of customization. The app will allow connection to our resources and be easy to share. There is an annual fee for the service, and is available across the country. A Custer tour, Architectural tour and Territorial Park walking tour are the first being worked on, with many other suggestions to follow.

Discussion then focused on the Eby Log Cabin/House, whose ownership has still not been resolved. We are waiting for legal counsel to answer the March letter. Material objects are soon to be fully removed in anticipation of a move by the Historical Society.

There is also a logo being developed that represents all the Museum System sites.

Awards Committee: M. Strevel said this year’s cancellation will be combined with the 2021 awards.

Markers Committee: L. Reaume reported that the Custer Home marker has been removed and stored by the site owner to avoid negative Custer publicity. He will replace it when the current public sentiment is better. The Markers committee will meet before the next Trustee meeting. Director Clark outlined the posts that are ready for installation.

Projects Committee: Chairman Humphries suggested a second round for fall, to offer the remainder of this year's monies (ca. \$8-10,000.) Applications will be online and open September to October 17<sup>th</sup>, with the award decision in November.

New Business: Museum Report: Director Clark noted the new hires Ann Morris and Heather Piegza. Motion was made by M. Humphries to accept the report, seconded by M. Strelvel and it was passed unanimously by poll vote.

Old Business: there was none reported.

Public Comment #2: none was received via the internet.

Commissioner comments: remarks were made on the difficulties COVID-19 has brought.

The Trustees are looking forward to the millage in May of 2021, and the virtual tour production.

With no other business, motion was made by R. Micka to adjourn, seconded by M. Strelvel and the meeting was ended at 8:36 p.m.

Lynn W. Reaume  
Acting recording secretary  
3 September 2020

## **MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM**

### **Director's Report**

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

### **COVID-19 Organizational Operations**

As Monroe County is in Level 2: High Risk, public access to the galleries at the Monroe County Museum are restricted to Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 am to 5 pm, and Sundays, 12 pm to 5 pm. Public access to the Monroe County Archives is currently prohibited. The grounds of Territorial Park and Heck Park are open but the buildings remain closed. St Antoine's is not impacted by any COVID-19 restrictions.

Staff members continue hybrid work schedules.

### **Maintenance and Operations**

#### *Museum*

Our reconfigured pandemic proofed guest services counter is supposed to be finished this week. Once it is functional, we will transition to using the front entrance as our primary entry.

#### *Territorial Park*

Preservation work on the schoolhouse is set to resume in early October.

Currently I'm getting bids together for another round of tree removal, brush clearing, harvesting, and stump grinding. I anticipate the work will be completed sometime in October.

You may recall that last month I happily reported that one of our apple trees planted last year bore fruit. In a fate that is perhaps in line with how 2020 has been going, someone harvested it before museum staff did. We will not be able to enjoy the fruit of our labor.

### **Eby Log House**

Due to the uncertainties surrounding the issue of ownership with Eby Log House, museum staff removed nearly all of our artifacts from the structure on August 13th and 14th. On September 1st, with no notice, representatives from the Monroe County Historical Society called the MCM requesting that we remove the few remaining items – passenger seats from the cargo van and bedding we wanted to keep isolated from the main collection. When we arrived they had already started removing the flooring. No work plan has been submitted to the MCMS which furthers the assumption that they have no accountability to us or the County of Monroe, in general.

The objects removed from ELH are currently stored in the MCM's second floor temporary gallery while being processed by Lynn and the Local History Division staff. Due to an overall lack of storage, an ELH/open storage exhibit will be placed in the center of the gallery for the foreseeable future.

Many thanks to JJ, Lynn, Robert, Heather, Gerry, and Lisa for the work they did getting the items transferred to the MCM in such a relatively short amount of time.

### **Custer Statue**

There are no updates at this time.

### **Christmas Tree Festival**

Due to all of the uncertainties surrounding the pandemic and anticipating that there will not be an substantial improvements to operations between now and December, Christmas Tree Festival will be held under an altered format with the working title of Christmas at the Museum. One of the major factors in the decision is the current lack of tree display space because we have absorbed the items from the Eby Log House and the South Lobby is currently the holding area for all items pulled out of the galleries due to the pandemic. With these restraints, we are unable to provide the space traditionally required to accommodate all of the trees. However, we still have plenty of wall space and will be encouraging organizations to put their efforts toward wreaths for 2020. Additionally, we will have an oversized community tree in Sieb Hall that we will decorate with custom ornaments provided by participating community organizations. As previously stated, with the South Lobby serving as a storage space, the holiday/winter village will be relocated to the second floor temporary gallery where it will be placed along the perimeter walls. Museum staff will undertake extra decorating in order to partially fill the absence made by the lack of trees.

### **Historical Projects Fund**

Applications for a fall disbursement from the Historical Projects Fund was posted on September 1st. The funding is provided from the remainder of the spring disbursement which is \$14,000; the maximum single award for an organization is \$6,000. Applications are due October 17th.

### **October/November Meetings**

As you will note on the agenda, we will be having a discussion about our October and November meetings.

Since it is appearing likely that we will still be conducting our meetings over Zoom for a while, I would like to propose that our October meeting be held in person at Territorial Park while we still have the reasonable expectation of fair weather. The meeting would be conducted outside the barn with seating set at six feet apart.

The date of our regularly scheduled November meeting this year falls on Veteran's Day, a County of Monroe holiday. I would like to suggest an alternate meeting date of either November 4th, November 18th, or cancellation.

**Personnel Updates**

All open vacancies have been filled. The second part-time presenter, Robin Laurinec, started in August. The operations attendant position has been filled and he should be starting in either the second or third week of September.

**Upcoming Closures**

Aside from the continued closures on Mondays through Wednesdays due to the pandemic, the next planned closure of the MCMS is Wednesday, November 11th for Veteran's Day, a County of Monroe holiday.

## MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak

Thursday, September 3, 2020

**COVID-19:** In pursuant to Monroe County's COVID-19 preparedness & response plan, and in consideration of *MI Safe Start* (<https://www.mistartmap.info/>), our abilities to enact general museum programming continues to undergo careful and constant scrutiny. The most recent discussion within this topic is Christmas Tree Festival.

**Continuing Education:** New Programs staff have participated in the Native Knowledge 360° courses. In the near future, the Programs Division will participate in *Bringing History to Life: Engaging the Public With Living History*, presented by the Historical Society of Michigan.

**RRTP:** A broad scope of site improvement work was conducted this month in preparation for a living history event On August 22<sup>nd</sup>. This included heavy site cleanup and organization, and work in service of creating a period-correct setting that is organic, functional, and tidy. The site was thoroughly cleaned, many items were carefully organized and put away, modern stored items were moved off-site or hidden from view, deteriorated modern items were purged from the site, some period tools were rebuilt/made, and numerous other improvements were conducted over the course of several days. Recognition is due to the Programs Division for the rapid and enthusiastic effort to care for the site.

The site buildings have been treated for an infestation of stinging insects. We are still awaiting word on the timing of noxious plant removal. Bids are currently being solicited from contractors for the removal of select dead and/or dangerous trees, and select land clearing/enhancement. The overall intent is the product of a prioritized decision made in consideration of visitor safety, overall site aesthetic, the propagation of native species, and creation/enhancement of interpretive spaces.

Ongoing conversations and developments continue on many facets of the site, including plumbing, bridge enhancement, ironwork and structural improvements, basement cleanup, fencing, barn repairs, accessibility and security, and the eventual introduction of period animals and agriculture.

**Living History @ RRTP:** On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, a small-scale living history event was held @ RRTP. I'm happy to report that the guest reenactors conducted themselves in a safe manner, adhering to all requirements laid out in the *Reenactor Waiver* and *COVID-19 Advisory*. FigureGround Productions conducted filming throughout the day, and roughly 20-40 visitors attended. The purpose of the event was to develop a meaningful connection with a core group of excellent reenactors, create an opportunity to film, and have a "test run" of a public event on a small scale. All accounts from staff and participants indicate a fun and meaningful event.

**Digital Tours:** Population and development of our digital tour platform, OnCell (Stqry) continues. Current tasks consist of completion and fine curation of tours, and the creation of Developer Accounts to host the app. As of now, we are on-track to release the app in early October.

**Museum Presenter Training:** A presenter training manual and regimen remains in the final stages of development. The comprehensive manual has undergone extensive review and will be implemented in the Programs Division this month.

### **Miscellany:**

- Recognition is due to all MCMS staff who helped with the laborious move of artifacts on August 13 and 14. It was a tremendous effort that constitutes a meaningful act of preservation of many artifacts in our collection.
- Robin Laurinec has been hired as a Museum Presenter. Orientation and initial training has begun. Now fully staffed, Programs Division group tasks and cooperative projects will begin.
- A Social Media Policy has been delayed due to pressing matters @ RRTP and other tasks. Work will restart ASAP.
- I'd like to recognize Scott Sieler and his agent Steve Alexander for the donation of several boxes of books to be included in the Programs Resource Library, gifted from the Estate of William and Jeanne Lyons.



LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report  
For August, 2020

The research room was not open to the public in August. This has allows us to tackle projects uninterrupted (except for phone calls, email and people knocking on the door.)

Rachel processed obituary requests for 16 individuals, with 80 obits. She handled 4 phone calls and 47 emails. She has been doing the lengthy topical filing from months of newspaper cutting.

Robert handled 18 outside calls and 17 emails. He processed the 300+ "Found in Collection" Lawrence Frost postcard collection; assisted the Programs Division with photographs for a virtual tour and processed accessions. He and JJ moved the building's old screens to Third Street for storage and assisted in glass removal for large exhibits. The attic remains a constant for he and I to reorganize to maximize our storage as we continue to process backlog.

August Accessions:

- 2020.24 Mrs. Betty Frazer: a Wing County History and Pageant book
- 2020.25 James Geiermann: Berlin Township senior photographs
- 2020.26 Kyle Reed: 3-D printer, PPE face shield & spool of filament for 3-D printer. These were involved with Monroe High School filling the gap and making PPE during COVID.
- 2020.27 James Geiermann: 1898 Indian head penny collected by his father

My big August project was the Monroe County Schools; Ash Township, Arthur Lesow, and Walter Knapp records in old backlog, and the hurried staff removal of the Eby cabin items. They contents are now in the upper gallery and awaiting whatever processing needs to be done. The larger items will be turned into a (storage) display. We just don't have the room.

I continue to work from home 2 days a week and Facebook post. August Facebook reach for Collections was way up with 12,191. I started inputting and checking the data from the old Archives accession index cards which were never input. This will give us a better idea of archives donation records.

Historical Markers: Berlin Township officials picked up August 13<sup>th</sup> the cased new historical marker and post to install themselves. Dedication is scheduled for October 17 at the library branch. St. Mary's would like the county to install the post; we still have the new marker. The Custer Home marker is wrapped and stored at the property owner's site- the recent unrest about the statue and possibly anything Custer as a target motivated him to remove it for safekeeping. He plans to reinstall at an unknown date.

County website Obituary search #1 with 11,194 page views of 2,396 unique page views; Museum #38 with 521 page views of 425 unique page views; Archives #100 with 142 page views.

With so much to do,

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian  
03 September 2020

# Monroe County Historical Commission

## August 2020 Museum Exhibits Report

Traditionally, the old museum joke goes that when a visitor asks you “what’s new?” the response is to say “nothing – it’s all old.” But, in reality, our business is keeping “what’s old” refreshing and new. August gave us an opportunity to do just that. As part of an effort to closely examine and measure the Navarre chair in the so-called “French exhibit,” we decided to give the display a make-over while the huge panel of glass was removed from the front. The exhibit, which contain many iconic Monroe area artifacts, was in need of a major overhaul – having been relatively unchanged for over 20 years – but because it was necessary to do our job within a six hour schedule, the thing was given a haircut and a shave instead of surgery.

The contents were re-arranged to provide proper focus on the most unique pieces. A number of generic artifacts were removed and a few more specific ones introduced. This included a section of Navarre’s original French Pear tree and forged fireplace pan. The main title and all the labels were re-written and replaced, along with a color version of the Charles Lanman painting of his childhood Habitant house.

Re-visiting the accession information concerning the wonderful etched French wine glass allowed us to tell a new story about an old item. The glass was one of several secreted out of revolutionary France in the 1790’s. They survived the ocean journey to the New World and were eventually purchased by John Anderson here at the River Raisin Settlement. During the battles of Frenchtown they were reportedly buried to protect them from Native looters. There is also a lineage of ownership from Anderson’s time to the period when the surviving glass was donated to the museum. Unfortunately, due to label length restrictions, we couldn’t tell every detail but at least this artifact now has a new image.


On other fronts, we provided nine “Live in ‘65” artifact photos and stories for Lisa’s day by day accounting of the 1965 Monroe Monster affair presented on-line over the latter half of August. Our old canoes, a dug-out and a birch bark example, were provided with a cedarwood display stand so that both vessels now sit next to each other at a height that the public can appreciate all the details of their construction. Labelling and research continues on this exhibit and the “canots” should receive their proper labelling by next month. As far as we know, neither were smuggled out of Revolutionary France, but they will surely tell a fascinating story.

So, to summarize the month of August, “what’s new is old and what’s old is new.”

Respectfully submitted,  
Gerald P. Wykes  
Exhibits Coordinator

September 2nd, 2020

**Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees**

Guest Services Division Report  August 2020

The month of August passed quickly beginning with more interviews for the Program's Division Presenter vacancy. We interviewed three highly qualified candidates, and it was truly a pleasure to be asked to sit in on each. After weighty discussion, Robin Laurinec was selected. She gave a fascinating presentation on the intersectionality between urbanization and isolation, with connections to our present-day COVID-19 challenges. She and Heather, Program's other new Presenter, have been joyous to work with and bring unique skills & abilities to the MCMS. Their Guest Services training has consisted of going over guest registry procedures, opening and closing procedures, and protocol for things such as donations, COVID-19 accommodations, and other office how-tos.

My efforts to acquaint myself with our finances continues as I was introduced to deposit and petty cash policies. Lynn, despite the demands of the Local History Division, has graciously made herself available to answer any questions that arise. Andy has also been incredibly patient and takes time to check in on my progress as I forge ahead. I feel very grateful to be meeting this newness with such help. Though these processes are taking me a good bit of time presently, I anticipate as I get more comfortable with them I will pick up speed.

This month reflected our highest visitorship since our reopening in June- a trend I hope continues into the fall. Though we try to anticipate every possible outcome as the status quo is ever-changing, the autumn/holiday season usually inspires the community to venture out and visit. With the Front Desk project nearing completion (all that's left to do is put the glass in place), I am hopeful that we will have the opportunity to welcome more visitors safely in the coming months.

Submitted by Megan Mullins, Guest Services Coordinator