Collections Report: August 2018

Read out temperature and relative humidity data loggers. A report was generated using the readings.

The current five dehumidifiers are emptied twice a day. The proposal generated to recommend the purchase of additional dehumidifiers was approved. A point was made by the Board to buy locally. We went to review the products on-hand at a local retailer, however the tank capacity was smaller than those proposed. The retailer has larger models for more money. The director is negotiating cost for the larger models. If that falls through, I will order the previously requested dehumidifiers through Amazon.

Was co-guest on a local podcast "Hot Take from the Kitchen" to speak about the Besser Museum and some of the new collections policies and procedures being instituted (as well as why they are being instituted). https://anchor.fm/steve-jakubcin/episodes/Episode-23--Christine-Witulski--Maggie-Malone-of-The-Besser-Museum-for-Northeast-Michigan-e23qpj

Attended a Collections Manager's roundtable in Flint, Michigan on the grounds of the Applewood Estate. The "Touch Factor" was the topic and it discussed how we can prevent damage to artifacts while still developing a welcome environment and inviting displays. [Notes on what was learned follows.] I was able to meet numerous people at this event and gain some valuable insight, not only about the topics, but discussing digitization of the collections and the equipment needed with the Applewood Estate's Assistant Collections Manager.

Went to the Ziibiwing Center in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan where I viewed the temporary and permanent exhibits. A lot of images were captured, including label images, in the event that we would like to contact the same institutions for similar images. I also spoke with their research center coordinator who gave some valuable online resources and insight on places to look for information about Native American groups in this area. [A written report was generated of this conversation about resources readily available and submitted to the director. A copy follows.] She mentioned that she didn't think that they had photographic resources for us, but that if we give her specific criteria, she will review the collections. We also discussed how they are currently developing policies and procedures for their digital files (images, oral histories, videos, etc.) that feature members of the tribal community. She indicated that they need to be kept on a dedicated server that is not connected to the internet, because many of those who gave the items do not wish for their image or their oral recording to have even the potential of going on-line, it was for the posterity of the tribe, not for general consumption. I realized that this discussion will have an important and very direct bearing on our own exhibit development.

The collections policy continues to be re-written based on AAM accreditation committee recommendations and examples from AAM accredited museums. Sections currently completed include: Introduction; Mission Statement; Vision Statements; History; Statement of Authority - including Corporate Responsibility, Board Responsibility, Delegation to Staff, Staff Responsibility, Procedures, Ethical Standards, Periodic Review, Exceptions; Collections Statement – including Statement of Purpose, Collection Categories, Scope of Collections; Acquisitions and Accessions – including Acquisitions Criteria, Legal Requirements, Special Considerations, Temporary Custody, Accessioning & Documentation, Collections Care, Conservation & Storage. The rewrite is approximately half done. I continue to work on documents and forms to bring Besser Museum up to best practice standards as well as limit liability.

The fireproof filing cabinets were approved and ordered. They will be received in September. Space was cleared in my office for them. After they are installed, collections files and collections related files will be brought upstairs for rehousing. This will make it easier for data entry to occur as well as filing research generated.

Attended the Ted Fines opening reception as well as his lecture about his photography. Assisted with set-up and/or take down.

Created field descriptions and an Excel file for Richard Clute to begin curating the Archaeology Collections. The information from the Excel file will be imported into PastPerfect.

Created field descriptions, template, and sample for researching the artists represented in the collections. All new collections volunteers will start with this process, since it tests basic research and data entry skills.

Attachments:

The Touch Factor and Historic Houses (Megan from Applewood Estate)

Greatest issue is that with a historic house, it feels familiar – the environment is not museum-like – which means an increased risk of touching.

It is often staff and other personnel that do most of the inappropriate touching, since they feel that the no touching rule doesn't apply to them.

- 1) What state of preservation will Applewood be in 100 years from now.
- 2) What is preservation? The activity of protecting something
- 3) What does preservation include? collections objects, historical buildings, grounds
- 4) Handling = Touching (not just lifting or moving) Handling is the #1 cause of damage
- 5) Need trained staff; minimal touching (only necessary touching); know how to touch or lift something; gloves are very important
- 6) Damage from touching might include: abrasion, breakage, soiling, etc.
- 7) Move slowly and carefully every time; be mindful of what your body is doing textile fibers break; many small touches add up to big abrasion over time; even coats rubbing can cause harm; if these touches are added to light damage occurring to objects in the house (placement by windows, lamps, etc.) it results in significant damage.
- 8) Oils and salts on our hands that get transferred to objects are hard to remove and cleaning can result in fiber loss.
- 9) Always wear gloves when working in and around objects (even when giving tours) it reinforces the message.
- 10) Put plug-in lights and fans on digital plugs, so that you can program them or use an app (SmartLife) to turn them on or off, it reduces the wear and tear on objects around switches or the items themselves.
- 11) Need visitor touching procedures: verbal notice before entering the collections spaces and trouble-spots, small groups of up to 8 people; docent or tour guide is in the back (if only one person giving the tour), so that you can have eyes on the visitors and ensure no stragglers; often will need to explain over and again about no touching, when you do, it needs to be done calmly, even the terms used are important (e.g. stewardship, preserve, etc.), persistence is key; there should be signage or ropes; need to provide clear alternatives to sitting on historical objects (they have the same chair throughout the house, that doesn't fit the décor, so that visitors know where they can sit.
- 12) Use of Art Guard (https://www.artguard.net/map-system/) (sensor squares that you place in or on objects, when the object is moved even slightly, it sounds immediately alerting to inappropriate touching)

Protecting Collections from a Visitor Centered Museum (Eric Drewry DIA security head, 313/833-3071, edrewry@dia.org; is willing to do site visits)

Often, visitor centric museums go against collections management/protection

DIA often puts glass over even their oil paintings, to avoid damage from people touching, in the case of their Serat the frame was part of the piece, so a plex shield was created for the entire piece

You can overly secure something, when this happens, it prevents people from making connections. (If seeing something on the internet was sufficient, we would never need to see something in person, there is a similar feeling when something is behind a vitrine.) Sadly, visitor friendly often means up close and personal.

There are often mixed signals we are sending [in addition to the tour guide who touches things while giving the tour], for instance, with art, putting an emphasis on getting close and observing the brush strokes.

40-50% of damage has a staff component. With both staff and visitors there is often a fine line between correcting and insulting. How do you correct someone's behavior without embarrassing them or making them feel that you are treating them like a child? Feedback (lights, buzzing, alarm) from systems/machines is easier to accept.

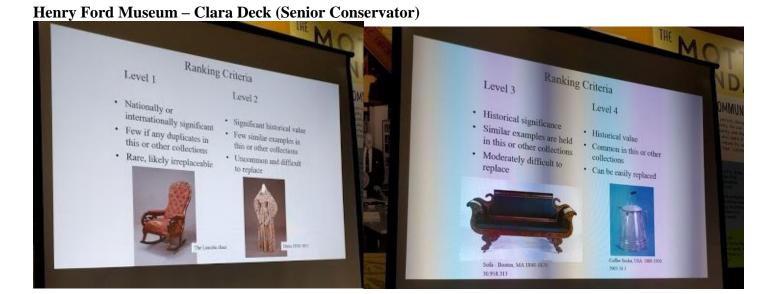
Instant feedback is better for reinforcing the no-touch factor, since cameras not linked to an alarm system often only shows evidence after the fact or if the guard was watching the correct screen at just the right time.

If looking for a camera-based security system, oftentimes, they use the buzz word "analytics". This can be something as simple as the camera being able to distinguish the amount of light in an area. Make them prove analytics; ask the question "what does your camera do that other cameras do not?"

DIA uses Acuity; the cameras need to be positioned correctly – so requires more cameras, but they allow for the creation of protection zones and the setup of proximity alarms that activate when someone enters the zone. These cameras are less expensive than adding more security staff. You can also use the data to create heat maps to show where a presence is needed – it allows you to work smarter.

Damage is a felony in the state of Michigan, if over \$1000.

Can use pinhole cameras in historical structures; you can have sensor cameras that can support multiple cameras on one sensor cable (cameras can be 39ft away from the box).



When They Won't Stop Touching - Angela Riedel, Michigan History Center

Problems: open display; ineffectual barriers; the lure (ohh shiny, I had one just like it); ignorance; visitor experience; staff; volunteers; docents

There are visual cues given by docents, volunteers and staff (touching during presentations, jumping barriers, etc.)

Sometimes instead of telling them, asking them "Why don't we touch" is a better reinforcement tool (they need to think it through, instead of something going in one ear and out the other).

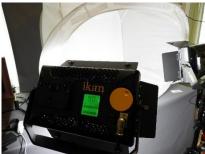
Use of proximity alarms (they use Doberman security (beam technology, break the beam and it goes off. This can be good if someone reacts to it immediately, but if no one does, it might become a game to set it off or reinforce that people aren't watching over the artifacts.

Nix open display – too easy to touch and not be able to control.

They use a stuffed animal with kindergarteners – they need to hug their stuffed animal the entire time they are on tour.

Post roundtable, there was a self-guided tour of the Mott estate home (and grounds).







Discussed with Malcolm Cottle the equipment and setup that they have for their digitization project. In addition to reference images and/or high-quality images, they are also going to be doing 360° photography to load into their PastPerfect Online program.

They will be using Photoshop and/or Lightbox.

They have their camera tethered to a monitor, so there is instant feedback on the quality of the photos being produced.

The LED lights are adjustable – you can set the levels to correspond with the camera, so your white comes out as a true white (not blue, yellow, or orange)

I got all of the information on makes and general costs. Perhaps will be good for a grant proposal – IMLS seems to do digitizing collections grants, which might allow for the purchase of these items.

Notes from talking with Anita Heard at Ziibiwing Center

Royce maps Michigan 1; 1836, 1819

Bands might sign and be given tracts or reserves

Treaty of 1819

If there was no village, it would have been seeded out to white settlement (might have happened in this area)

Even the reserves/reservations were eventually dissolved because they were on prime lands.

Resources to check:

Archive.org

Digital general (County history available in digital general.) [tips: searching Michigan pioneer and historical collection "historical commission" as author, key words then "thunder bay bands"

18th annual bureau of ethnology book

Look up date of northern treaty (1836 treaty) 1819 (south of Thunder Bay)

Plate number 139 cxxxix Michigan region about Macinac and Detroit 395 July 1855 Thunder Bay bands, 394

Michigan Pioneer (Michigan Historical Society) archives (also have treaty map...maybe Volume 26. Have treaty narrative of land cessation, peace treaties, etc.

Indian Claims Commission (final decisions of who is associated with those lands)

Brian at Clarke Historical Society – 989/774-3352

Michigan Archives: Anna or Jill 1-517-373-1414.

Minnesota Historical Society have photos from this area

Wisconsin Historical Society have photos form this area

We can contact the Ziibiwing with specific requests; if we like some of the images from their exhibitions, they can give us the contact information

Kapplers laws and treaties vol. 2. July 31, 1855 might want statute Ottowa. There is probably another treaty in 1836 to look up. Look up signers; need to verify all in census, genealogy, etc., to find the signatory from the area.

Schoolcraft's book indicates that the government often had other chiefs sign treaties

MI Pioneer vols 7, 26, 24

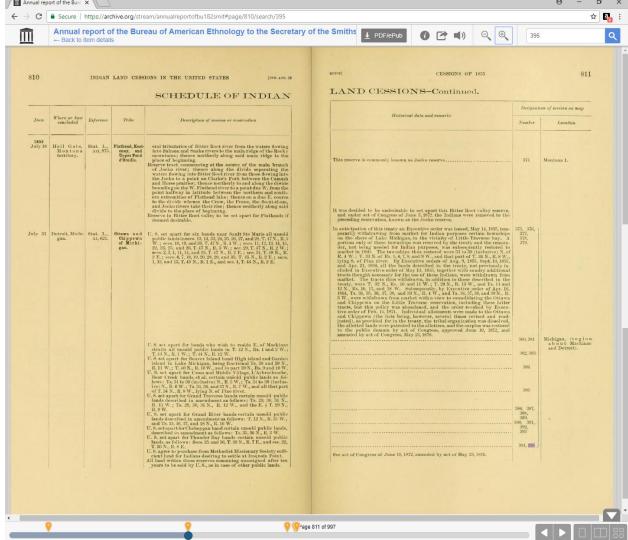
County history available in digital general.

Check with Alpena genealogy society

Contact for creation video at Ziibiwing: William Johnson (have card in purse)

Future resource sharing with Ziibiwing: Anishinabek Glenna Jenkins 775-4744 does presentations.

https://archive.org/stream/annualreportofbu182smit#page/810/search/395



"U.S. set a[art fpr Thunder Bay bands certain unsold public lands, described in amendment as follows: Ts. 35, 36 N. R. 3 W." [394; 395]

"All land within these reserves remaining unassigned after ten years to be sold by U.S., as in case of other public lands" [See act of Congress of June 10, 1872, amended by act of May 23, 1876]

