



Music House Museum

Perfect Pitch

Newsletter for Friends of the Music House Museum - Spring 2014 - Vol. 15, Issue 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Dorothy Clore*

Spring has been very slow to arrive in northern Michigan and since I'm composing this in March spring isn't very visible yet. But, along with the time change, we at the museum are springing ahead, feeling energized and excited about the coming season.

We had 100% Board member attendance at our annual meeting in February; one person even delayed her vacation in order to attend. At that all-day session we reviewed the goals set in our Strategic Plan and are pleased that we are on target with those we decided to work on in 2014. Our revenue is becoming more stable, and we are able to strengthen programs and services with our technology upgrade and new website design (see Development/Marketing Director's article). We have hired a new gift shop manager and you'll be introduced to her in this issue as well.

During the last few months we have also taken a hard look at our facilities and grounds. We had considerable discussion about the wisdom of looking for an entirely new location (within Traverse City) vs. staying where we are. The consensus is to stay put. The property is beautiful, the barn has great ambience for preserving history, there is plenty of parking, and the rental properties provide us with a modest amount of steady income. But the barn is a negative space as well as a positive one. It is expensive and inefficient to heat, especially during a snowier/colder winter such as the one we've just experienced. In spite of improved humidification, we need a climate-controlled, safe environment for our collection. We are working on some minor improvements to the entire main building (ex. new windows in the office and repair to one in the upstairs library) but these are stop-gap measures. The Board has completed a facilities survey and we are working with two volunteers, one of them an architect, to figure out how we can either add on to or build something separate from our barn that will be a better place for at least the instrument part of the collection. It's a work in progress and something that will take several years to design and implement.

Obviously this demonstrates an on-going need for increased revenue. Regardless of the plan for improved/new buildings, the aforementioned need is not new information. We all need or at least certainly could use, increased revenue - in our personal, professional and non-profit lives. But to me, at the Music House Museum, *our greatest need is for your support*, in whatever form it can take, and your personal participation. *We need to see you* on-site at our silent films and other events. *We need to hear from you* (electronically, on the phone, in the snail mail) to learn what you like about our operation, what you'd like to see improved. *Please show your support* for our work, our collection, our events in as many ways as you can think of.

I look forward to sharing an exciting 2014 season with each and every one of you.



Music House Museum's 2014 Board of Directors



VOICES FROM THE HORN - MAY 17TH

The date has been set for the exciting presentation about our phonograph collection written about in last Spring's newsletter, so *mark your calendar for May 17th at 7 pm*. 'Voices From the Horn' will offer a unique opportunity to see and hear our phonograph collection, normally kept behind glass for its protection. Historian Jim Warner is planning to open the cases and remove several of the most interesting phonographs and let you hear the historic sounds recorded over 100 years ago gleaned from both the Music House's extensive record collection, as well as some items from Jim Warner's personal collection. These phonograph records are time machines. You may be pleasantly surprised by what was possible during the acoustic era - especially from the early cylinders. You will hear original historic sounds, songs, speeches and vaudeville skits just as they were performed by the artists of that period - voices from the past via the horn.

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HUMBLE GENEROSITY OF CHUCK by Sally Lewis



Our friend, member of our Board of Directors and long time Museum supporter, Charles Heffer, passed away last May. Not only was he a vital part of the Board but he also contributed many hours of volunteer work over the years. Something that most were unaware of is that Chuck had also been quietly paying the mortgage payments for the Museum for the last several years as we have been dealing with challenging times during the recession.

His quiet generosity continues with through his legacy. Chuck gifted the Museum with, not only his property adjacent to the Museum's, but a very generous monetary contribution. His gifts have enabled the museum to completely pay off the mortgage, purchase a few instruments for the collection, and undertake some much-needed repairs to the building.

We are truly grateful to this very generous man whose gifts have helped us perpetuate our unique musical education and entertainment for generations to come.



MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE MHM TEAM by Dorothy Clore

We wish a hearty welcome to our new Gift Shop Manager, Kathy Mattson Holmes. In her application Kathy felt that "the position is a perfect match for me as I was the former owner and manager of Benjamin Twiggs in Traverse City." She also has been manager and sales associate at Papers and Presents, Up North Kids Bookstore, and the Yankee Candle Company, all in Traverse City.

Given her background and personality, we agree that Kathy is a great match for us and are very excited to have her on our team. In addition to her experience as a store owner/manager, Kathy graduated with honors from Eastern Michigan University (Major in Early Childhood Education; Minor in Math), and has been a Childcare Director at the Grand Traverse Resort. Currently she is working part time at a local elementary school.

When you visit the museum this year, please introduce yourself to Kathy, check out our new inventory and layout, and talk to her about volunteering if you would like to assist her.





Music House Museum's 2014 Events

Come Join the Fun!!!!

MAY

1st - Opening Day At the Museum!! 10 am to 4 pm

8th - Opening Celebration Party

Join us for snacks and a concert from Miriam Pico and David Chown, 7 pm to 9 pm*

17th - *Voices From The Horn* - The History of the Phonograph

Phonograph history and demonstrations with historian, Jim Warner, 7 pm*

JUNE

26th - *NMC Band Concert on the Lawn, John Beery, Conductor, 7 pm**

27th & 28th - *3rd Annual Antiques and Collectable's Consignment Sale, 10 am to 4 pm**

JULY

26th - Silent Film (TBD)

Featuring Dale and Gail Ziegler on the 'Mighty' Wurlitzer, 5:30 and 7:30pm*

AUGUST

23rd - *Murder at the Museum: Gangster's Paradise*

Join us for an evening of mystery and roaring 20's fun and refreshments! 7 pm*

SEPTEMBER

13th - *Family Day* - Special prices and fun for the whole family, noon to 4 pm*

26th - *Pizza and Pipes* - Delicious Pizza Dinner and a Concert

Featuring Red Wings Organist Dave Calendine, 6 pm*

27th - *National Smithsonian Museum Day*

27th - *Silent Film with Buster Keaton*

Featuring Dave Calendine on the 'Mighty' Wurlitzer, 5:30 and 7 pm*

OCTOBER

18th - *Silent Film - Phantom of the Opera*

Featuring Fr. Andrew Rogers on the 'Mighty' Wurlitzer, 5:30 and 7 pm*

26th - *Halloween Spooktacular with OTP's Aged to Perfection*

Spooky Radio Plays for your Halloween Enjoyment, 5:30 pm*

NOVEMBER

28th - *Christmas Concert and Sing-a-long*

Featuring Fr. Andrew Rogers on the 'Mighty' Wurlitzer, 7 pm*

29th - *Silent Film - Show People with Marion Davies*

Featuring Fr. Andrew Rogers on the 'Mighty' Wurlitzer, 5:30 and 7 pm*

***Check our new website for event details at www.musichouse.org**

Also follow us on Facebook or call us at (231)938-9300

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT *by Bruce Ahlich*

The Collections Committee was established by the Museum's Board of Directors two years ago to manage its Collection of automatic instruments, antique phonographs and antique radios, as well as other collectable assets.

This past spring and summer, the volunteers cleaned out the Workshop identifying items to be retained and those to be disposed of. This spring we are completing an inventory of the collections, both displayed and undisplayed items. It is amazing what the Museum owns, has displayed or has the potential for display.

One of the frequently identified opportunities for improvement is the static nature of our displays. With the best of intentions, some of the displays have become cluttered to the point that some Museum treasures, that could be demonstrated, are overlooked. As such, we are focusing on uncluttering and reorganizing the General Store and the Music Room.

Plans are to move all five of the Museum's disc music boxes together into the General Store, move phonographs from the General Store into the Music Room so that they be demonstrated and reorganize the juke boxes and barber shop area of the saloon.

The following restorations are planned for 2014:

1. Bruder Columbia band organ: \$18,000 project that the Board has designated to be funded through donations.
2. Bentham 1910 mechanical singing bird: this rare treasure, built by one of the premier European builders of these devices, was in a display case unappreciated. It has been removed and will be used for demonstration purposes. It has been shipped to a restorer in Alabama who will clean the feathers and mechanically recondition it. It will be on display for May 1st, the opening of the Museum.
3. Vorsetzer restoration: Early (1910-1917) Welte-Mignon reproducing player device presently being restored in Grand Rapids. It sits in front of the piano to play it with little mechanical fingers.
4. Wurlitzer Theatre Organ completion: a grant has been applied for from the Fanny Wurlitzer Foundation to assist in funding this \$15,500 project. It will complete the toy chest, add a missing rank of Oboe Horn pipes, and a missing, to be renovated, Harp/Marimba percussion unit.



5. Black Forest Organ Clock: Install appropriate clock movement and face to fit it.

6. Frati Fair Organ: This little organ (96 pipes) is a rare treasure that has been on display among the phonographs. Originally used in a small carousel owned by John Duester in Suttons Bay (1890-1910), it had been stored in an area barn until acquired by the Museum in rough shape 1985. Some rebuilding and restoration work was completed on it, but it was never fully playable. Hopefully that will be fixed this summer.

7. Prince and Co Melodeon: This beautiful rosewood encased instrument (1850) belonged to the daughter of the first mayor of the "village" of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Minor cleaning and repair is needed and will be undertaken in the Museum's work shop.



BRUDER “COLUMBIA” RESTORATION FUNDRAISER

Last year, the Music House Museum (MHM) successfully raised over \$80,000 for the restoration of the Amaryllis (Mortier) dance organ replacing its aging leather valves and sealing cracks in its wind chests. This was accomplished in June of last year when Johnny Verbeek and his son came from Belgium and brought it back as close as possible to its original 1924 condition.

As the Museum enters its 32nd year of providing education and entertainment to its guests, it is time to address the same issues with its “Columbia” fair/band organ. This instrument is the second largest instrument in our collection and celebrated incidentally its 100th anniversary last year.

The Columbia was built by the Bruder family of organ builders from the Black Forest region of Bavaria specifically for use with merry-go-rounds and fair midways around 1913. Imported by Berni Organ

Company of New York City, a broker of Band Organs from European builders, the Columbia found its home on a pier in Wildwood New Jersey where it provided years of entertainment from a roof top pavilion. Rumor is that it could be heard for one quarter mile above the din of the crowds and machinery. This amusement park was subsequently destroyed by Hurricane Sandy in 2013.

The organ was removed in the 1970s suffering years of weather and neglect. Going through several owners and storage location it was purchased by the MHM, together with a collection of its original books, in 1981 for \$18,000 and it underwent extensive rebuilding and restoration.

The “Columbia” is a “Serenadum” model fair organ measuring 11 feet long, 9 feet and three inches high and 3 feet and 3 inches deep. It has two detachable wings. Its façade is decorated with gold and silver leaf and hand painted panels and is considered the best example of this rare style and size of fair organ. It plays using a 52 note keyless system using perforated cardboard books and has 186 pipes representing 20 musicians.

The Museum’s Board of Directors authorized a fund raising campaign to restore the Bruder and so we begin again.



Example of “primary wind chest” leather valves becoming unglued and needing replacement



The following work has been identified as needed:

1. Rebuilding of all primary and secondary valves controlling air entering the pipes and percussion.
2. Replacement of organ pipes that have fallen out of the display.
3. Move the motor driving the bellows to a historically accurate location in the instrument
4. Purchase of new books (old books are deteriorated beyond use) to supplement the few newer books that can be still played.
5. Lubrication and general maintenance of all moving parts
6. General cleaning of the façade (by Museum staff and volunteers)

After entertaining several bids, the Board chose to proceed with a restorer in the Chicago area who also does work for the Sanfilippo Foundation’s extensive collection of automatic instruments. The project will require that the organ be transported to Chicago in the fall of 2014. The total cost of the project is \$18,000 (ironically the 1981 purchase price) which includes labor and parts, transport costs and new book purchases.

The project is being funded solely by donations. Any assistance that you can provide is greatly appreciated. Donations may be sent to the MHM or made on-line at www.musichouse.org and earmarked “Bruder”. For more information call 231 938-9300.

BEST WISHES AND GRATITUDE



We have regretfully accepted the resignation of past Board member Mike Smith, who took an out-of-state job at the end of 2013. Mike joined us in 2010, served as Vice-President, and was an integral part of our technology committee. He also was in charge of landscaping and helped with events, workshop cleaning, and provided thoughtful insights during Board discussions. We miss him and wish him all the best.

THE BOARD WELCOMES CYNTHIA CIARAVINO

We are excited to welcome Cynthia Ciaravino as our newest member to the Museum Board. Cynthia is a graduate of Albion College with a B.A. Her professional experience has been as an educator and, personally, she and her husband have been collectors and have a wealth of knowledge in music boxes, cylinder machines, Victrolas, phonographs and jukeboxes as well as other areas of antiques. She is also a music lover and has studied violin, piano and voice. She comes to be board recognizing that the Museum is a unique educational organization and an essential part of our area.

OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME:

Become a Member of the Music House Museum

As always, we are most grateful for your purchase of a membership at the Music House Museum. Memberships not only provide support for the Museum programs, but also benefit you with free admission, guest passes and 10% off purchases in the Museum Gift Shop. Please consider becoming a Music House member in one of the following categories:

Individual - \$35.00

Couple - \$40.00

Grandparent - \$45.00

Family - \$50.00

Supporting - \$100.00

Sustaining - \$250.00

Benefactor - \$500.00

Angel - \$1,000.00

We also offer Student memberships at \$5.00, and free Teacher memberships.

The Music House has long depended on our Volunteer. We would not be where we are today without their support. There are volunteer opportunities in many areas including help at events, decorating for the Holidays, School Days, leadership, cleaning, gardening, working in the office, gift shop and on the Mini-City. We are also in need of help on small maintenance projects such as painting, moving and reorganizing displays, and minor repairs.

Due to aging, health concerns and other unforeseen events our Volunteer Corps was seriously depleted this past year, so we are asking you to step up and VOLUNTEER! It is great fun and is so important to the success of the Museum.

For the most part, we request help only as the need arises, so your obligation is minimal. Please let Ellie Holdsworth (billell@chartermi.net, or 231-264-5451) know to add you to our Volunteer roll. You can also sign up through a page on our new website www.musichouse.org Thank you in advance!

VOLUNTEERS: OUR LIFE BLOOD



TECHNOLOGY AND MARKETING by Kelly Roberts-Curtis

My how time flies...it seems a short time ago that I was introducing myself as the new Director of Marketing and Development for the Museum but on May 1st it will be two years. So much has happened over my first two years at the Museum and I am proud to have contributed, at least a little, to all of the exciting growth. Admittedly, my first year was a learning experience. I learned about and fell in love with this amazing place; I wrote my first grant...and then learned how to write a successful one; I learned that there are many challenges to marketing our little gem; and I've gotten to know and have worked with so many amazing people.

This winter has been far from dull! Last winter the Board realized that it was time to update the Museum's Strategic Plan. Northsky Nonprofit Network, a part of Rotary Charities, was the best choice to work with. We received a grant from Rotary Charities of \$8000 which covered most of the cost of, not only the Organizational Assessment and Strategic Plan, but helped to pay to hire a firm to do a technological assessment. We discovered this assessment was necessary to achieve many of the goals identified in our Strategic Plan.

The tech assessment was a bit overwhelming as the recommendations would require a \$20,000 investment in tech improvements. The Board committed to making this investment and, once again, we turned to Rotary Charities who came through with a \$15,000 grant to help with this major tech overhaul. We cannot thank Rotary enough for their generosity.

Needless to say, there has been a lot going on at the museum. We now have a new server that will support our growth well into the future, several new computers replacing our mish-mash of hand-me-down computers and monitors, upgraded software to replace all of our

out dated software including a new point of sales program, a new collections and membership and donor organization program and new operating systems so that all of our computers are now on the same page, new laser printers, a new phone system, new wiring that will allow us to be wireless throughout the Museum and, the thing I am most excited about, a new website! Thank you to Matthew Crain and Crain System Groups for much of the work on these upgrades.

Our new website is up and running although we are still adding to it. There is more to come including an online store. Ray Weigel of Traverse City Web Design has been working hard over the last few months to create our new site. He has been great at working with us on the design and has been so patient when we have said 'I'm not excited about 'this', can you do 'that' instead?' He has also been training me to be the webmaster so deserves kudos for his patience as this code thing is new to me. Please check out our new website (www.musichouse.org) and if you have a story to share email me at marketing@musichouse.org. You may even be published in our new blog!

It is a very exciting time at the Music House Museum. We have been featured on numerous in news stories in print and on T.V., we have increased our walk in traffic by 20% and our family traffic by 180%. These are exciting statistics but we are still referred to as the 'hidden gem'. While I love the 'gem' it is time for us to shake the 'hidden'. Thank you for sharing with friends and family. If you are on FaceBook, please 'like' us and feel free to share our posts. If you are on Twitter, add us. You can check us out on Pinterest as well.

We have a great season of music and fun planned. I hope to see you all at the Museum soon. Thank you for your continued support.

Fun at the Volunteer/Member Christmas Party 2013





Antiques
and
Collectibles



GET READY FOR THE BIG SALE!!

Are you in the market for a treasure? Do you have treasures that you don't have room for and wish to make a few dollars on? You are in luck! Our third annual Antique & Collectibles Consignment Sale is planned for Friday and Saturday, June 27 & 28, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Our first two were great successes, with amazing deals for the shoppers, consigners gaining some money and space, and the Museum made a few dollars too.

Organizers will be on-site Saturday, June 14 and Tuesday, June 17, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. to provide consigners with instructions and tags for your items. Please keep in mind that we accept items starting at a value of at least \$10.00. Intake of items will take place on Thursday, June 26, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

If you any questions please contact Ellie Holdsworth (phone: 231-264-5451; email: billlell@chartermi.net) or Dorothy Clore (phone: 231-331-6587; email: dorothyclore@charter.net).

MUSEUM OPENING CELEBRATION!



WITH MIRIAM PICO AND DAVID CHOWN

THURSDAY, MAY 8TH AT 7 PM

Join us as We Celebrate the
Opening of Another Exciting Season!

There will be sweets and treats, beverages and great music from the amazing Miriam and Dave! We will also fill you in on all of the Museum news and the exciting 2014 Season.

TICKETS \$10 ADULTS AND \$5 KIDS
PURCHASE AT WWW.MUSICHOUSE.ORG

OR CALL (231)938-9300



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