2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Roy Bernick and his early 20th Century Ford.
MISSION
The Stearns History Museum connects people to the power of history and culture by collecting, preserving, and interpreting our historical and cultural resources.

VISION
The Stearns History Museum will be a place where citizens of Central Minnesota can honor their diverse history and recognize that the past is what built the present and is a road map to the future.

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As of March 2019
Joanie Albers, visitor/membership services coordinator
Richard Barchenger, facilities assistant
Caitlin Carlson, program curator
Eric Cheever, collections & exhibits curator
John Decker, archivist
Amy Degerstrom, development associate
Carie Essig, executive director
Gena Hiemenz, executive assistant/communications & donor relations associate
Ann Meline, deputy director
Heather Nissen Hall, collections assistant, Saturday visitor assistant
Steve Penick, director of archives
Rod Runge, finance coordinator
Jessie Storlien, archivist

Steve and Joanie work to sell hot dogs and chips at the Taproom Takeover in July 2018 at Third Street Brewhouse in Cold Spring.
My goal with this board chair’s annual letter is to avoid boring you.

From 2018 to early 2019, we have made dramatic progress in people, programs, and partnerships.

Rather than me talking about the Board’s accomplishments, let’s hear from some of the people who are making the museum a success: our executive director and key staffers.

I asked them what they are most proud of during the past 18 months.

They replied (yes, the executive director gets more than one):

“A new parking lot: this expensive and necessary infrastructure was literally crumbling under my feet when I started in 2018. Costco came through as a generous neighbor and, when rebuilding the other roads into Heritage Park, replaced our parking lot, including the subsurface, with no expense to the Museum.

World War II reenactment: This was the first “leap of faith” project as a new director. Staff idea, staff designed, staff executed we welcomed more than 700 people to the Museum, many new visitors. Most left exclaiming they would return in 2020 for the next one, and that the program exceeded their expectations.

The History Maker Gala: We had a high-profile speaker to help kick off a three-year celebration of Women in Sports and the history of Title IX. We created interest and energy for history with both long-term supporters and new guests. SHM raised more funds and had a near-sellout crowd in attendance. We set the stage for many good things to come.”

— CARIE ESSIG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Since last October, Eric Cheever and I worked together to develop a unique living history event called ‘At War and At Home: The WWII Experience.’ I am quite proud of my part in this, as I was able to put a spotlight on the Home Front experience and use that as inspiration for designing programming that engaged children and adults. Our numbers were great, and we had people stay for hours, truly immersing themselves in the experience and leaving with a memory that I hope will stick with them for a while.”

— CAITLIN CARLSON, PROGRAM CURATOR

“The wow moment for me came when I took a moment to run through what had been accomplished in the last year – fire suppression system, lighting, new ceiling, and all that entailed. Whipping the storage building into shape. Opening three new exhibits plus several temporary exhibits. Finally, catching up on accessioning and getting a firm hand on collection management. Recovering from the disruption caused by construction and garage demolition as well as rebuilding the large collection space and reshelving all the artifacts. Pulling together the WWII living history event and creating momentum for future living history projects - and a world of possibilities going forward.”

— ERIC CHEEVER, EXHIBITS & COLLECTIONS CURATOR

“My best moment was the receipt of a grant to support Women in Sports research from the Minnesota Historical Society, with a focus on Title IX. I had great help from my coworkers and local historians to make it happen and look forward to the work that will come from it.”

— AMY DEGERSTROM, DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
“One of my bigger accomplishments of the last year was reviving and redesigning the Museum’s GiveMN page. It hadn’t updated in quite a few years. I rewrote and refreshed the page’s content in time for our Annual Appeal and Give to the Max Day in November. It’s now tied to our website and allows donors and members another avenue to give to the Museum.”

– GENA HIEMENZ, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

“A defining moment for the past year can be simplified into two words. Making connections. Staff attempts to achieve this goal for the audience we serve, whether completing a large inventory project, finding an obituary for a loved one, or anything in between.”

– STEVE PENICK, HEAD ARCHIVIST

“Planning, organizing, and hosting the Family History Conference with the St. Cloud Area Genealogists was one of my highlights of 2018. We received such wonderful feedback about the event that we are currently planning another Family History Conference for April 2020.”

– JESSIE STORLIEN, ARCHIVIST

Thank you, staffers.

Another set of heroes are the people, businesses, and organizations listed on the following pages as donors and supporters of the Museum. These wonderful people stepped up to help us raise more than $180,000 for a fire suppression system, electrical upgrade, alarm system replacement, and other capital items. Their generosity also helped us expand our programs and exhibits.

A considerable development during the past 18 months has been the construction of the Costco store next to the museum. The construction challenged our staff, board, and visitors. Attendance suffered during the construction last summer. However, Costco has been a good neighbor.

The museum isn’t aging gracefully. We have a list of items that need to be replaced or refurbished. With your help, all will get done.

I want to leave you two critical updates.

First, the board has updated and approved new vision, mission, and values statements. Everything we do in the coming years will be held up to the mission and vision.

The board is working to formulate a possible capital campaign not only to fix what is broken or damaged but to take the museum to the next level.

What an exciting time for your museum, our collective history.

John Bodette
Board Chair
Stearns History Museum

The newly-paved Stearns History Museum parking lot, Spring 2019.
A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Stearns History Museum began a transformation in 2018. It underwent many changes – inside and out.

Our Annual Report will highlight the programs, attendance, and financial accomplishments of 2018. Please contact me at the Museum if you have any questions about the information in this report. Again, thank you for your support, your interest, and your patience in 2018.

Two projects took center stage in 2018.

Construction dominated our time inside the building. The Museum raised $180,000 to install a fire suppression system, replace the ceiling and lighting in the front half of the Museum, and install a new security system. Thank you, Mike and Karel Helgeson, for your generous commitment to a matching grant to kick off the campaign. To install the system, staff removed one-third of the Museum galleries and reinstalled new exhibits. The Bucket Brigade, Pan, and Just for Fun: The Toys We Loved replaced Art-It-Find on the main level of the exhibit galleries.

Development of 19 acres on the northeast corner of 33rd Avenue and Second Street South for a Costco caused significant disruptions of utility services and access to the Museum most of the summer and into early fall. SHM also lost its workshop space to the development of a new road and accessed off of Second Street. The results of the construction were a new location for the Heritage Park Skate Park, which will be finished by summer 2020, a new road into the Museum parking lots, and a brand-new parking lot thanks to the generosity of our new neighbors.

In addition to my arrival, we welcomed two new staff members to the Museum. Caitlin Carlson became our Program Curator, and Heather Nissen Hall joined as a curatorial associate. We are grateful for their expertise and passion for history.

Finally, we launched a year-long strategic planning process to update our mission, vision, and plans for the Museum’s future. We aim to reveal the new strategic plan to the public in December 2019.

Releasing the annual report after the annual audit is complete has been our practice for several years. Next year, we will adjust, and the 2019 Annual Report will be released by May 1, 2020. The intent is to release while a summary still feels relevant, and the financial report will be unaudited numbers from the previous year. The annual audit and 990 will be available to the public as they are completed.

My door is always open. Please stop in anytime! Thank you for your support!

Carie Essig
Executive Director
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### CURRENT ASSETS
- Cash and cash equivalents: $133,280
- Restricted cash: $24,316
- Grants receivable: 10,000
- Other assets: 15,416
- **Total current assets**: $183,012

### NONCURRENT ASSETS
- Investments: $330,265
- Net property and equipment: 946,840
- **Total noncurrent assets**: $1,277,105

### TOTAL ASSETS
- **Total assets**: $1,460,117

### CURRENT LIABILITIES
- Accounts payable and accrued expenses: $39,162
- Deferred revenue: 25,775
- **Total current liabilities**: 39,187

### LONG-TERM DEBT
- Long-term debt: $136,676

### TOTAL LIABILITIES
- **Total liabilities**: $175,863

### NET ASSETS
- Without donor restrictions
  - Undesignated: $7,149
  - Designated: $1,277,105
- **Total net assets without donor restrictions**: $1,284,254

### TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
- **Total liabilities and net assets**: $1,460,117

### REVENUES AND SUPPORT
- County appropriations: $600,000
- Grant revenues: 187,806
- Program income: 13,892
- Donations: 51,093
- Net investment income (loss): (26,740)
- Donated services, materials, and equipment: 206,905
- Memberships: 45,851
- Admissions: 10,269
- Museum store sales: 4,311
- Special events: 37,915
- Miscellaneous revenues: 17,372
- **Total revenues & support**: $1,148,674

### EXPENSES
- Educational services: $146,216
- Museum exhibitions and collections: 91,419
- Archival and research services: 11,972
- Museum operations: 151,572
- Total program services: 901,179
- Management and general: 83,910
- Fundraising: 69,455
- Total support services: 153,365
- **Total expenses**: $1,054,544

### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS
- **Change in net assets without donor restrictions**: 94,130

### CHANGE IN TOTAL NET ASSETS
- **Change in total net assets**: 94,130

### NET ASSETS - Beginning of year
- **Net assets - beginning of year**: $1,190,124

### NET ASSETS - End of year
- **Net assets - end of year**: $1,284,254

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In the fall of 2019, the certified public accounting firm of Miller, Welle, Heiser & Co., LTD, conducted an audit of the Stearns History Museum's 2018 financial records. The Museum received an unqualified opinion, which states that the statements are presented in a fair and unbiased manner. The complete 2018 audit report is available upon request at the Stearns History Museum. The 990 tax statement is available online at stearns-museum.org.
Collections and Exhibits were defined by preparing for, engaging in, and recovering from significant building projects and the construction of our new neighbor, Costco.

Approximately two-thirds of all the artifacts in the building had to be removed, recorded, and placed in storage to accommodate the installation of a new ceiling, lights, and fire suppression system. We then had to tear out several of the permanent display cases on the first floor of the gallery to make way for the new pipes.

While the project progressed, we began the task of recording the accession numbers of the five thousand displaced objects.

Near the end of the fire suppression project, we learned that the garage/shop building needed to be emptied and cleaned for demolition. We also would need to move the 12x12-foot shed, housing our lawn and garden equipment. We did this with the help of volunteer Roger Klein.

When September arrived, we were able to move back into the galleries and begin to rebuild. Every existing exhibit needed a substantial overhaul. These included Flowing Through Time, Surviving the ’70s, On Solid Ground, the WWI exhibit and the Alice Whitney exhibit. The Pan exhibit was rethought entirely and built from the ground up. Bucket Brigade was pulled together and opened in October. Work then began on the toy exhibit and the Christmas display.

883 ARTIFACTS WERE ACCESSIONED IN 2018. IT WAS A BUSY YEAR.
PROGRAMS

Staff transition, road construction, and the installation of the new fire suppression system had an impact on programming. However, it picked up the last quarter of the year with a bus trip to the Bell Museum in September and our most popular annual events – Halloween Historia and KringleFest – in October and December.

The Museum also hosted more than 400 area students during the fall months. They included second-graders through high schoolers who engaged in several different activities throughout the building and grounds, including scavenger hunts, team-building events, and family history research. New and exciting programming for 2019 is well underway so stay tuned!

“You have an amazing crew! We really enjoyed our time at the museum. Parents were impressed with the whole day.”

MARY SCHAFFER, TEACHER
ST. BONIFACE SCHOOL, COLD SPRING

The new grocery store checkout counter was a big hit with the kids at the Museum. The staff was able to freshen up the Children’s Room with a donation from Central Minnesota Noon Optimists.

Students from Madison Elementary School, St. Cloud, respond to their guide during a 2018 school tour.
Throughout the past year, staff and volunteer projects reflected the Research Center’s commitment to the Museum’s mission. Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Program provided funding for both an archival inventory, completed in June 2018, and a new microfilm reader scanner received in November 2018.

Other related inventory projects include library books, 2017-2018; maps, 2019; and family histories, 2018-present. The metadata collected provides the Research Center with controlled language and increases accessibility.

The groundwork for our next Oral History project has begun. In 2019, an organized plan with clear objectives and potential partners is being established, including grant opportunities, interview numbers, and topics.

Staff worked with the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization to identify historical sites, completing the project in early 2019. Database projects to record local family businesses and century farms in Stearns County have been underway since January 2018.

Community outreach was provided through presentations and social media. The Research Center and the St. Cloud Area Genealogists had a Family History Conference in April 2018. Staff also presented at the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums in April 2018, Great River Rotary meeting in June 2018, Tree Shakers Genealogy Program in October 2018, and the Chamber Leadership meeting in November 2018.

In 2018, SHM’s Facebook page ended the year with 3,665 followers.

**TOP FACEBOOK POSTS OF 2018:** Persian Supper Club, Sears Homes, Collegeville Depot, Baby Jesus is Missing, Super Bowl Blizzard.

**EACH POST REACHED MORE THAN 15,000 PEOPLE!**
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Diane Wojtanowicz

The Order of Saint Benedict received the 2018 Zapp Historian Award with John Bodette (center), chair of the Stearns History Museum Board of Directors.
An employee with the Stearns County Parks Department helps a student split granite with plugs and feathers at Quarry Park. The Museum has an ongoing partnership with Quarry Park and the Stearns County Parks Department.
St. Cloud State University graduate students partnered with Stearns History Museum during the University’s yearlong 150th Celebration during 2018.
John & Roeann Ostendorf
Yvonne Ottem
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Stearns History Museum

St. Cloud State University graduate students were in-studio guests for WJON’s Back in Time program.
A 4-H member washes cattle at the 2018 Stearns County Fair.

Eric Stalboerger
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