



WCHM News

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum



First Canoe & Brew Successful

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the first (annual?) WCHM Canoe & Brew turned out to be a wonderful day. With some careful planning, a few pandemic precautions, and some luck with the weather, the event went well and everyone was safe and comfortable. The event was held at Pine Brook Farm on September 27th to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the museum. "One of the great attributes of Pine Brook Farm is the large event space they have, both indoor and outdoor," event organizer Debbie Koehn explained. "Most of the activities were outdoors, and we limited the event to 50 attendees so there was plenty of room to social distance, even during dinner inside the barn."

Indian summer weather prevailed as the event started with an outdoor social hour on the hillside above the barn. Les Fils du Voyageur strolled the area and sang songs of the Voyageurs while attendees enjoyed beer sampling from Round Man Brewery and a wonderful view of the surrounding countryside. Birchbark canoe builder Ferdy Goode was on hand to talk about a recent addition to the WCHM collections - his Eastern Cree Crooked Canoe. As a light rain began to fall it was time to move under the barn roof anyway for the chicken dinner, with a masked Second Wind Stringband providing tunes. After dinner there were a number of door prize drawings as well as the drawing for the annual canoe raffle (won by Jim Hart of Illinois).

War Canoe Restoration Complete

"We are done!" WCHM Shop Manager Jamie Dunn recently announced. Over the past year, while the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum has remained closed to the public, work has quietly progressed in the museum workshop on restoration of a twenty-five foot 1925 Old Town War Canoe. The canoe is owned by Mike Cichanowski, founder and CEO of Wenona Canoes, and was received on loan by the museum for restoration in the summer of 2019. It is unknown at this time when the canoe would be returned, or whether it may be available for viewing by visitors to the museum anytime in the future.

Most of the restoration work was done by WCHM volunteers Jamie Dunn and Mike Johnson. "There were many broken ribs and planks that had to be replaced, including the ones with the gunshot holes," says Dunn. "And all the original seats were solid, but I had to re-cane them - all ten of them," says Johnson. "The decks were the most difficult, the wood needed to be bent in two directions," Dunn continued, "Rollin Thurlow [Northwoods Canoe Company] was a big help in advising us on how to keep them as close to original as possible."



Cedar Strip Canoe Building Class Rescheduled For 2021 Two Options: May 19-28 and September 17-26



Josh Tolkan, graduate of the Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building in Port Townsend, Washington, and Artisan in Development at North House Folk School in Grand Marais, Minnesota, was scheduled to teach a class in Cedar Strip canoe building at WCHM in 2020, but the class was canceled due to the pandemic. The class has now been rescheduled for 2021 with two options, one in the spring and one in the fall. These are great introductory classes because they will teach traditional boat building techniques, modern composite techniques, and produce an amazing canoe for you to take home.

The first class is scheduled to start on Wednesday May 19th and continue daily through Friday May 28th. The second class will be September 17th to 26th. These are ambitious ten-day projects, and you will need a team of two to four people to work with, so plan to bring a partner or two. Each class is limited to two teams. Canoes will be constructed of clear Alaskan yellow cedar and red cedar from the West coast shipped in specifically for this class.

The cost for each team is \$3,550 (includes all materials for each team to build and take home one cedar strip canoe). For more information or to register call 715-635-2479 or email to info@WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org.



WCHM Workshop Remains Closed

During the winter months the WCHM exhibit hall is typically closed because the space is not insulated or heated. But the workshop area is heated, and is usually at its busiest this time of year. This year, however, is different, and the workshop remains closed and will remain closed at least through the end of the year and likely into the spring. "With the pandemic out of control, especially here in Wisconsin, we felt we needed to tighten our restrictions even more this fall," says Shop manager Jamie Dunn. "We have several people with ongoing projects, but we have put those on hold and are not accepting any new projects at this time."

Thank You to Our 2020 Business Supporters

Crystal Creek Natural, Spooner WI Shell Lake State Bank, Shell Lake WI

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News Briefs & Upcoming Events



2020 Canoe Raffle Winner Announced

And the winner of the canoe raffle is ...drum roll please... Jim Hart of Wadsworth Illinois! The drawing took place during the recent Canoe & Brew event held on Sunday September 27th. Jim now has a choice of one of two canoes, a 15' solo rigged cedar canvas canoe built on the original MacKenzie-Yost Nakoma form, or a tandem rigged 15' cedar canvas canoe built on the MacKenzie-Yost MyPal form. Thank you to Mike Johnson and Jamie Dunn for their hard work in construction of both of these excellent boats built in the WCHM canoe shop. And congratulations to Jim, we're glad to see such a great supporter of WCHM win the 2020 raffle. He'll be mulling over which canoe to claim in the next few months and we'll get it to him sometime before the spring paddling season.

WCHM Continues Video Production Program

The WCHM's first video endeavor, the "Back Door Tour" series, continues to add new episodes. The intent of the series is to give viewers a glimpse of the activities going on at the museum even though it is closed due to the pandemic. Four episodes have been published, with topics ranging from collections inventory to the arrival of new collections pieces. Future episodes may cover the moving and storage of canoe building forms, a live after-school virtual tour, and completion of restoration work on the Old Town War Canoe in the workshop. The WCHM videos are being published on Facebook and YouTube. To find the WCHM YouTube channel search YouTube for Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum.



Canoeecopia To Be Virtual in 2021

Canoeecopia, the world's largest canoe, kayak, and standup paddle expo, will be held virtually in 2021. Darren Bush, owner of Rutabaga Paddlesports and producer of the event, announced in late October "We've given it considerable thought, and for the safety of everyone involved, we've made the hard, but necessary decision to take Canoeecopia 2021 virtual. We intend the dates to be the same as scheduled, March 12-14, 2021, and while we'll miss our in-person paddling family reunion, we plan to make our virtual event as close to the real thing as we can." Canoeecopia was one of the first casualties of the pandemic in 2020 as it was canceled on the eve of its opening day. Within a few days most other upcoming spring events had also been cancelled. It is unclear at this time how WCHM might participate in 2021.

2021 Canoe & Wooden Boat Show?

The WCHM intends to put on its 11th annual Canoe & Wooden Boat Show as part of Canoe Heritage Day on Saturday May 29, 2021. Cancelled in 2020, this one day free event typically includes museum tours and open house, the unveiling of new displays, workshops in the canoe shop, and live music and food and beverage in the beer garden. "We may have to re-design some of the components of the event," says WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke, "but since the event is primarily an outdoor event anyway we believe we can produce it safely." Canoe Heritage Day is produced by the WCHM each year on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Exhibitor booth space is free, and reservation forms should be available soon after January 1st on the WCHM website at www.WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org, or by request to info@wisconsin canoeheritagemuseum.org or 715-635-2479.



2020 WCHM Election Results

The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum has for the first time held its annual election by mail, and consequently had its largest voter participation in its ten years. Forty-nine votes were cast and four incumbents were re-elected to new three year terms on the WCHM Board of Directors. Those incumbents (and their vote totals) were Jamie Dunn (48) of Spooner WI, Dan Miller (45) of Cape Vincent NY, Liz Vollmer-Buhl (44) of Eugene OR, and Jim Czajkowski (44) of Wauzeka WI.

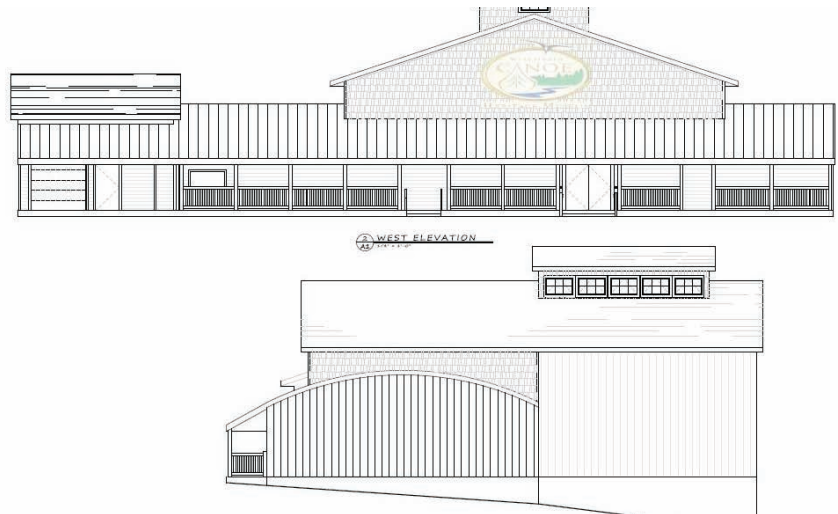


The WCHM board currently has eleven directors, with three or four elected each year to three year terms. After each election officers are selected by their fellow directors for one year terms. Prior to 2020 elections were held at an annual membership meeting, which required members to attend to vote. This year voting was done by mail and reported to the membership during an annual membership meeting held online via Zoom on September 16th. During the same meeting Rich Taylor was selected as President, with Lynn Herman, Anna Demers, and Debbie Koehn selected as Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary respectively for one year. “We are very pleased with the increased participation in the election this year and are grateful to all the members who took the time to fill in and return their ballots,” says WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke. “We may want to consider continuing the use of the postal service for elections in the future.”

Possible Building Expansion Explored By WCHM Board

As part of the ongoing execution of a strategic plan for the future of the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum through 2025, the WCHM Board of Directors is exploring the possibility of expanding the main museum building with a substantial addition. Preliminary drawings created for the project by Cody’s Design Shoppe show a building addition that would nearly double the amount of exhibit and display space for the museum.

“These drawings are just a first draft and are meant to foster discussion among the board about the possibilities that are out there,” explains project manager Jamie Dunn. “They are meant to best utilize the property footprint that we have as well as fit in with the existing building, but at this point it’s anybody’s guess what an addition might actually look like.” The WCHM Strategic Plan calls for an exploratory architectural plan for a museum building expansion. It specifically states “Shop committee shall submit reasonably detailed recommendations for expansion of the building to a local contractor or architect for a cost estimate and submit such estimate to the board and fund raising committee” (Appendix A, Building & Facilities, Strategy #3: Maintain Museum Building, Task #2).



The current WCHM building and property is owned by the City of Spooner and is leased to the museum on a long term basis. “There are a lot of issues that need to be addressed,” says Dunn, “such as ownership of the final structure and of course how we pay for it all. But it’s exciting none the less.”

Contact WCHM

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Thank You to These Supporting Members

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