



# CURRENTS

## **A Hospital Without Walls**

by Debbie Gough | Page 3-5

## **Meet New Staff & Farewell for Now**

Staff Changes Worth Noting | Page 6-7

## **Don't Let the Novelty Wear Off**

by Diana Peterson | Page 8

**Epidemics in the Valley**  
by Carrie Ronnander | Page 9

2020 ANNUAL REPORT		Page 11-23
--------------------------	--	---------------

# From the Director



“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo.

“So do I,” said Gandalf,” and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them

to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*.

In Tolkien’s trilogy, a dark force threatens to destroy Middle Earth. Frodo, a Hobbit, and Gandalf, a wizard, are part of a small group sent to stop this growing danger. Things looked pretty bleak at this point in the story.

I have felt like Frodo this year, many times in fact. Perhaps you have too. It has certainly been a challenging year, a phrase that has become quite tiresome but is so accurate. But as Gandalf so wisely points out, we cannot control events larger than ourselves. We can control how we respond.

Chippewa Valley Museum’s response to the events swirling outside its doors has been to listen, learn, and adapt. Listen to health expert recommendations on how to keep people safe and a business open during a pandemic. Listen to visitor concerns about how the museum handles social issues in exhibits and programs. Learn new technology to better connect with audiences online. Learn how other museums reopened. Adapt expectations and plans. Adapt programs to reach audiences where they are at.

There have been beautiful moments this year. Community members and the Eau Claire Community Foundation gave enough funds for Chippewa Valley Museum to purchase TWO badly needed boilers. In January, the 35-year-old ice cream parlor compressor was replaced, also thanks to a generous member donation. Instead of a Fourth of July Fun Fair with 2,500 visitors, the museum’s Virtual Fourth of July drew 3,491 viewers to its slate of recorded speeches and performances, live Cake Walk, and community scavenger hunt. On July 15, ninety people hopped online to reminisce about the great and terrible 1980 windstorm. This was the museum’s best attended Zoom program last year.

While museum attendance dropped 60% last year

– fueled by three months of closure and 85% decline in summer month visitation – overall revenue for 2020 was just 4% less than in 2019. Emergency grants and member donations made up for the losses in earned income.

Some of the most beautiful moments have been personal messages from members expressing their faith in and commitment to Chippewa Valley Museum and its place in the community. Thank you. Know that your words are worth their weight in gold.

Frodo and Gandalf were only in the early days of their journey when they had the exchange above. Things were about to get much more difficult, and they were to be tested time and again. Chippewa Valley Museum will continue to be tested and I don’t know what lies ahead. I do know, with your help, Chippewa Valley Museum will continue to listen, learn, and adapt. Chippewa Valley Museum is your museum. It is relevant and it is needed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Ronnander".

Carrie Ronnander  
Director

## LOOKING FOR MORE?

We’re asking all of our members to share their email address with us. We’ve been sending out regular updates about Chippewa Valley Museum to everyone on our email list. So, if you’re not hearing from us as much as you’d like to, go to [cvmuseum.com](http://cvmuseum.com) and add your name and email address in the **Stay In The Loop** section at the bottom of our homepage.

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# A Hospital Without Walls

## The Visiting Nurse Association of Eau Claire

By Debbie Gough

In February 1903 Mrs. Mary Carson McGrath gathered thirty prominent Eau Claire women at the Porter Avenue home of her sister Fannie Carson Lockwood to organize the Eau Claire Visiting Nurse Association, the first in the state. McGrath, who shared in her father's million dollar estate, (her own estate would be worth \$380,000 in 1925) had married Captain H.J. McGrath in 1898 when she was 43, only to have him die in the Philippine American war the next year. As a wealthy single woman, she devoted herself to charitable causes, including the Children's Home and later the Red Cross. Her sister was the wife of C.W. Lockwood, president of Eau Claire National Bank. They were joined in the leadership of the organization by three other wives of bankers, plus Mrs. Anabelle Cutter, whose husband owned Cutter Boot and Shoe Factory (which she ran after his death in 1906) and Miss Minnie Smith, whose father was an attorney. The initial membership of thirty women each paid \$6, the equivalent of \$175 today, to join. McGrath would serve as president of the VNA for twenty-two years and provide major financial support.

Why found such an organization? Eau Claire already had two hospitals and a well-established medical community, but it did not have an organized system for providing medical care to those who could not afford it. If you were truly destitute, the Commissioner of the Poor would pay your medical bills, but in 1897 only 90 families, or 354 people out of a population of around 18,000, could depend on the city. The loss of jobs as a result of the decline in the lumber industry heightened the problem of poverty. With communicable diseases rampant and knowledge of proper hygiene not well known, the need for help was clear. Associated Charities, the volunteer group organized in 1897 to coordinate aid to Eau Claire's poor, reported that 17% of "destitution" was caused by illness. By 1903 it was clear that their "Invalid Supply Department", which gave nourishing food to the sick, was not sufficient since "in the majority of cases [service was] given in some haphazard manner and by incompetent persons."

The concept of visiting nurses began in England, inspired by Florence Nightengale, and the first such organization in the United States began in Boston in 1886. By 1903 there were fifty-three associations, mostly in the east. Following in the long tradition of upper class women providing social services to the poor, these organizations

were often the pet projects of such "lady bountifuls" like those introduced above.

In Eau Claire the newly formed VNA was greatly aided by Associated Charities which allowed it to share office space in the back of Dr. Ivan Wilttrout's medical practice on Barstow Street. Mrs. (Ivah Mary Benson) Wilttrout, the secretary of Associated Charities, initially supervised the visiting nurse. The VNA would not have been successful without the cooperation of many other organizations—many, but not all, comprised of women.

While the VNA was run by prominent women, well qualified nurses provided the actual service. In fact, part of the appeal of visiting nursing was the belief it would increase the status of nurses striving for recognition for their profession. Working alone in the homes of the poor would give them an importance recognized by society. It seems to have done that in Eau Claire. In 1905 the VNA obtained the endorsement of the Eau Claire County Medical Society. A resolution written by Dr. Hans Christian Midelfart stated: "we most heartily endorse their efforts, recognizing therein the initial step to a work of incalculable benefit, not only to the individual sufferer and his family, but to the community at large, a further step in the advancement of the welfare of the commonwealth."



Logo used by the VNA in the 1930s.

Information they received from the Henry Street Settlement House in New York and the Visiting Nurses Association of Chicago guided the Eau Claire organization. Mrs. McGrath went to Chicago to investigate its program and paid for the first nurse — Miss Bertha Sofisberg — to train there for three months.

While initially the nurse went anywhere, the VNA soon learned that she had to limit services to those who could not otherwise afford care. In the first year the nurse made 904 visits to 118 patients, and by 1909 she made 1800 visits to 398 patients. In the early years the patients suffered predominately from communicable diseases. At one time in 1909 the nurse served 14 cases of consumption, 15 cases of diphtheria and five cases of scarlet fever. Chronic diseases or “old age” represented a small percentage of cases.

So what did the nurse actually do? An excerpt from the nurses’ register of 1907 gives a taste. In the morning she was called by a physician to work with a typhoid patient with a fever of 104.5 degrees. Since this was her first visit “and much depending upon the way the case was started,” she spent the entire morning there — giving a sponge bath and instructing “the mother how to give a bath in bed, without having the bed swimming.” The afternoon went like this:

*I visited an old lady with a badly swollen ankle. Applied antiphlogistine to the ankle. From there to a little girl suffering from an attack of indigestion, gave instructions as to the case. Down the street to a lady suffering from anemia. Here I also gave instructions. Still further down the street to a lady with consumption and suffering from a severe pain in her abdomen. Applied antiphlogistine to the abdomen and gave her a good tonic. From there I went to the 6th ward to another tubercular patient, applied antiphlogistine to her chest and gave a tonic. Then returned to my first patient of the morning and gave a temperature bath.*

As the 1909 report commented, “The smallest part of her work . . . is her actual personal care of the sick. Her greater efforts are [what is referred to above as “instructions”] in showing them how to live in a healthier, more sensible way. She teaches the patient, or the others of the house, the simple and easy way to follow the doctor’s instructions; how to bathe; apply compresses and preparations; what food to purchase and how it should be prepared and preserved.” While the nurse was often first called by the family or a neighbor, she always worked under a doctor’s orders.

The visiting nurse provided much more than medical care. An important part of the services provided by the nurse came from the “loan closet.” VNA members met ten times a year to sew (they were also aided by several church

groups). In 1917 their loans included 105 baby garments, 27 sheets and pillow slips, 10 rubber sheets, 10 wheel chairs, 14 bedpans, and 11 syringes. Breast pumps, crutches, even beds were also supplied. They also provided nutritious food like milk, homemade soup and jams, eggs and juice. In addition to smaller items, the VNA owned four tents they loaned to tuberculosis patients, since fresh air was considered by many to be the best way to both cure and stop the spread of this disease.

In 1916, after having a string of wonderful, but short term nurses, Marie Scheffer became the visiting nurse. She remained for 46 years, and essentially defined the work of the VNA. Her yearly reports showed a compassionate, nonjudgmental attitude that was not always evident in those working with the poor. She was described as “unfailingly loyal, reliable, competent, kind, skilled and ready to perform without question or reward.” In the 1940s she served as the president of the State Organization for Public Health Nursing and as president of the Eau Claire district of the Wisconsin State Nurses Association.

Unlike many VNA organizations around the country that quickly hired an executive director to supervise the business end of things, the Eau Claire organization did not. The board of directors met monthly to review the nurse’s activities and when another nurse was added in 1926, Scheffer became “nurse director.” Mrs. Elinor Owen, wife of Ralph Owen, worked in the office three mornings a week in the 1930s, but it wasn’t until 1940 that a full time clerical person was hired.

In addition to overseeing Scheffer, the board’s primary responsibility was fundraising. In the year ending February 1908, it spent \$775.72, while dues totaled \$535.14. For several years starting in 1912 it sold a calendar (making \$101), but still had to rely on generous donors. In 1914 it held a tag sale in which members — many of the most prominent women in the city — literally stood on street corners on a cold, windy, rainy day collecting contributions in tin cans. “Such wonderful tributes to the work were paid throughout the day. Widows mites, pennies, and nickels and dimes from many who had been assisted by the nurse in time of sickness, with many words for the nurse and the work.” It reported, “that more interest was developed by this Tag Day than could possibly have been aroused in any other way; for if one contributes to a cause one feels that he is a part of that cause.” They netted \$562.02 — the equivalent of \$14,607 today. In 1932 the Community Welfare Fund (or Community Fund, then the Community Chest) was created establishing for the first time a stable source of funding for the next thirty years.

Around 1916 the VNA began to emphasize maternity and new baby care. While most of their visits were still for either acute or long-term care, more time was spent on preventive care. For two years Mrs. McGrath paid for a “baby basket” equipped with what mothers would need for their babies for every family that needed it. A nurse visited every two weeks giving “friendly advice ...for personal cleanliness, proper food, rest and exercise,” and called attention to the warning signs of problems. In a sign of the times, the VNA boasted that “Many mothers who would have had a midwife now go to a physician because they can have the nurse come.”

Starting in 1929 a nurse visited every newborn (578) and followed up if needed. In 1932 The Business and Professional Women’s club provided funds for a new project that sent informational cards to all mothers of babies at one, three, six, nine and twelve months old. This continued for 15 years.

World War I brought challenges. The VNA annual report emphasized that with men at war, families were left living on a stipend that covered only essentials—thus there was more need for the VNA. Then came the flu pandemic. The number of patients increased from 414 to 578 patients, with 127 in 45 families having the flu — only three died. For the first time, Miss Scheffer used borrowed cars, since taking the trolley or walking wasted valuable time. This convinced the VNA to purchase a car in 1921.

Clinics also became an important part of the VNA’s work, usually in conjunction with other organizations. In 1918 the VNA worked with the Anti-Tuberculosis Association to sponsor Chest Clinics. Working with the Elk’s Club, starting in 1922 it took part in “Child Health conferences” where physicians gave children age one to five check-ups while nurses gave mothers information on the care and correct diet for young children. The years from one to five were called “the neglected age” when malnutrition started. In 1926 baby clinics started. In 1928 “Summer Round-up Clinics” for school age children began in cooperation with the PTA. In 1938 the VNA convinced the Health Department to set up immunization clinics wher VNA nurses “rounded up” the preschool children and helped with the clinic.

The Great Depression presented new health challenges. The 1931 report lamented, “The unemployment of this past year makes constructive work difficult if not impossible in many homes. We are wondering how many more cases of rickets and tuberculosis in young people ten or fifteen years from now will be traced to deprivation and malnutrition at the present time. Unless we all work together to supply the need many of our welfare visits may be useless.”

Fortunately, many did continue to help. The Service League, an organization established in 1930, was particularly involved. It established the “Maternity Loan fund” which paid hospital bills for any needy woman, and a VNA nurse consulted with each woman prior to receipt of the money. As a result, 98% of babies in Eau Claire were born in hospitals.

In 1934 the Service League started the Corrective Fund “for children in need of correction of defects, especially tonsils and glasses.” Among the heart-wrenching cases was that of a two year old girl who was almost blind. It took the nurse weeks to convince her mother that a doctor could probably make her see. With no money, she went to the Child Health clinic, got an exam and was referred to free medical care. After many visits to the doctor’s office and nursing care at home to clear up a deep-seated infection, finally glasses donated from the loan closet and lenses donated by the Optical Company through the Community drive allowed her to see.

By 1940 many things had changed. The City-County Health department was created and took over all of the clinics and much of the communicable disease nursing. The VNA reported that this allowed them to “devote much more time to good bedside care to the sick in their homes, our first and always most important objective.” With the availability of drugs for many acute illnesses, by 1950 VNA patients were increasingly the “elderly aged and incurably ill.” But there was still much work to be done. In 1941 the three nurses made 5750 visits to 2088 patients. Many more changes were to come after the war, but the VNA as an organization would last until 1997, long after most of its counterparts had gone.



Mary Carson McGrath was a founding member of Eau Claire’s Visiting Nurse Association.

# Meet Our Newest Staff Members

## Rachel Meyer, Development Manager

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As the first staff member to hold the title “Development Manager,” Rachel explains that her role is to move the museum from where it is to where it needs to go. She spends a lot of her time building relationships with visitors, members, staff, and corporate sponsors.

After spending seven years as a teacher, Rachel realized her passion was in grant writing and finding funding opportunities for programs. She earned her master’s degree in Philanthropy and Development from St. Mary’s in Winona.

Rachel’s favorite part of her job is watching communities come together and create solutions. COVID-19 provided her with a unique challenge to inspire the staff, the members, and the community to come

together to provide new funding opportunities for the museum.

Although creating a social media campaign calendar and refining her filming techniques were not part of her job description, she eagerly took on those roles to help the museum move into an all-virtual realm this spring. She has continued to progress in this role as the museum slowly begins to open up to small in-person events while livestreaming programming at the same time.

Now Eau Claire residents, Rachel and her husband Seth grew up in Chippewa Falls. In their spare time, the couple enjoys paddle boarding, hiking, snowshoeing, and all outdoor activities.

If you want to get on Rachel’s good side, you can bring her cheese or hum a few bars from the soundtrack of *Dirty Dancing*, which is her favorite movie hands down.

## Jodi Kiffmeyer, Archivist

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Jodi came to the museum just as the pandemic came to Wisconsin. Social distancing at home allowed her to get to know the photos and archives the museum has stored digitally. Jodi is not one to sit around complaining about her circumstances. She jumped right into increasing her social media presence and took on several new projects as well, including working on the COVID-19 Diary Project at the Chippewa Valley Museum.

Partnering with Greg Kocken (Head of Collections and Archives at UWEC) and Cheryl Jimenez-Frei (Asst Professor of History), Jodi helped launch the Chippewa Valley COVID-19 Archives ([www.uwec.edu/covid19project](http://www.uwec.edu/covid19project)). During her time at home, Jodi also participated in a crowdsourcing project for the US Holocaust Museum locating articles from the *Leader Telegram* about specific events during WWII.

Jodi has always loved history and finished a Masters in Library and Information from the UW Madison iSchool in 2020. Her family has lived in Chetek for generations and some of her earliest memories are asking her grandmother to share stories about her family.

In addition to her duties at CVM, Jodi is on the board

of the Barron County Historical Society and volunteers in their Archive near Rice Lake where she calls home.

Visitors can take advantage of Jodi’s expertise in research by making an appointment to use the library for a nominal fee (members receive free library time with an appointment). She is typically at the museum on Tuesdays and Thursdays but is willing to be available on Tuesday nights or Saturdays to help visitors find research time in their schedule.

When she’s not at CVM, Jodi is probably spending time with her family: husband James and three sons Ethan, Elliot, and Armin (ages 15-22). She also loves reading, researching, writing, and doing yoga. The only weakness we can find in Jodi is her inability to resist buying more fountain pens. Maybe the museum will be receiving a new collection someday.



## Frank Barby, Facilities Engineer

Frank is our Facilities Engineer, and joined our team in August, 2019. Having worked as a physicist and engineer in both the public and private sectors, Frank is no stranger to the mechanical and electrical needs of our museum. And being responsible for all the physical aspects of our museum's assets is no small chore. He covers our main building, our detached collections building, the log house, the schoolhouse, and the Schlegelmilch-McDaniels house on Farwell Street.

Since coming to CVM, Frank has overseen the replacement of two boilers, the relighting of the schoolhouse, and an extensive shop and ready-materials reorganization. Additionally, he has instituted several energy saving measures, such as LED lighting and electrical control timers. Of note, to the delight of our younger patrons, Frank reworked the wiring and brought the dollhouse's internal micro-light system back to life.



## So Long, For Now...

In 2000, Dorie Boetcher joined the Chippewa Valley Museum as a part-time Retail Manager, thinking she would be at the museum for a few years before heading back into the accounting world. Twenty years later, and now the museum's Finance Manager, Dorie is tidying things up, finishing one last financial review, and making plans for retired life. Yes, after first announcing last winter she planned to retire in May 2020, she will be leaving her position this coming January. Fortunately, she agreed to delay her retirement early in the pandemic in order to help the museum navigate financial challenges. We are ever so grateful.

Dorie (Johnson) Boetcher grew up in Lake Geneva and came to Eau Claire in 1974 to attend UW-Eau Claire. There she met her husband Steve and completed an accounting degree. She went on to work at Land O'Lakes for 18 years then left to be closer to home and to spend more time with her girls, Lindsay and Ashley. In 2000, with one daughter in high school and another in middle school, Dorie was looking for a different career opportunity. Enter Chippewa Valley Museum.

Dorie managed the museum's store and ice cream parlor, coordinated private and fundraising events and managed visitor services during her first 15 years at



Chippewa Valley Museum. More accounting work was asked of her over the years. In 2015, she officially became the museum's Finance Manager.

But all good things must end. We will miss Dorie's cooking (her annual meeting meals were pretty epic), penchant for games (CVM game nights and scavenger hunts), castoff toys scattered about her office (the benefit of being a retail manager for years), and wizardry with numbers (this speaks for itself). Enjoy the grandkids. Enjoy retirement.

A promotional banner for the Chippewa Valley Museum. On the left, there is a stack of books. In the center, there is a circular logo with the text "CHIPPEWA MUSEUM VALLEY". To the right of the logo, the text reads "DON'T PUZZLE OVER WHERE TO FIND GREAT BOOKS AND PUZZLES...." and "Check out our online store at [cvmuseum.com](http://cvmuseum.com)". On the far right, there is a hand holding a puzzle piece. The background of the banner is a collage of various images related to books and puzzles.

# Don't Let the Novelty Wear Off

By Diana Peterson, Curator of Collections

At the Chippewa Valley Museum, we categorize our collections by topic such as accordions, eyeglasses, petticoats, and teapots. The organization makes it easy to find artifacts for new exhibits. But there are a few mysterious categories including The Novelty.

What is a novelty? According to The American Heritage Dictionary it is either (1) something new and unusual, an innovation or (2) a small mass-produced article, often a toy or trinket. So what does the Chippewa Valley Museum consider a novelty? Here are a few of the fun items that are classified as such in our database.



1. A miniature, tin aqua-colored dustpan that was found in a box of Cracker Jacks. It's so little, you could use it to clean the crumbs up after you ate your snack.

2. A hosiery hanger imprinted with Oak Park Dairy's business information. I guess when women got up in the morning and saw their dry pantyhose, it reminded them to run out to the porch to grab the milk.



3. An ashtray given out by Uniroyal that looks just like a tiny tire. We don't want to encourage any lethal behavior, but this is so darn cute; use it to corral your spare change.

4. A 1980 graduation kit from UWEC. This spoof included items like the Waterstreet Journal, a brochure about a fun study abroad . . . in Afghanistan, and a rock from the Chippewa River.

5. A sewing needle case that looks like a slice of Holsum bread. Just don't mistake it for your sandwich—it would be one sharp bite.



6. A fork that contains a hidden pen from Norske Nook. You can eat your pie with the fork, and then use your pen to sign the credit card bill.

7. A compact mirror featuring the portrait of Mayor Fred Stussy. A photo of our good mayor, elected in 1928, looking a bit confused, is seen every time a lady powders her nose. Perhaps this is why everyone used to know who their elected representatives were.



8. A Hotel Eau Claire convention kit. This suitcase-shaped box contains everything you need to survive a convention: Anacin, smoker's drops, Tums, and what every convention goer needs — Alka Seltzer

9. Sheet music for the song, "Beautiful Eau Claire." Composed by Roy Charbonneau, the document has photos of Eau Claire, an 1891 map of the city, and a welcome to the Legionnaires. With all the bad luck they've experienced in other cities, they may be looking to return to Eau Claire for their next convention.



10. A blotter advertising a free bottle of white pine compound with a purchase of The Bilious Man's Friend bottle of medicine. For only \$1, you got both of these "can't live without" products. Male or female, if you have excess bile, this is a deal you don't want to miss.

# Epidemics in the Valley

by Carrie Ronnander, Director

In 1866, Chippewa Falls, with a population of 1,000, reported 23 cases of smallpox and three deaths. About that time, Eau Claire built a “pest house” on land that became Carson Park. Accessible only by boat, the pest house was used to quarantine smallpox patients.

Epidemics are not new to the Chippewa Valley. Below are short takes on some epidemics experienced here.

## *Diphtheria*

“Every year since 1870 we have had epidemics of diphtheria, and at no time since then have we as a community been free from diphtheria troubles over two months at a time.” — *Eau Claire Daily Free Press*, April 16, 1885

With 41 diphtheria cases in the city and one death Eau Claire’s Board of Health ordered the West Side High School closed on October 18, 1885. Only four days earlier, the West Side School Board had announced the school would remain open despite the high number of diphtheria cases. A tussle over authority began. Ignoring the Board of Health, the West Side School Board ordered its high school to re-open. The mayor then sent police to bar teachers and students from entering the school. School board members arrived and directed the janitor to ring the bell and call students to class. Police officers tried to block student entry, but some students found their way in through a side door. With tensions high, the School Board backed down and agreed to close the school until November 2.

When West Side High School reopened on November 2, “all was serene and orderly,” according to the paper. A month later, Eau Claire’s East Side High School closed for fear of diphtheria.

## *Smallpox*

The world has been smallpox free since 1980, but it was a disease feared for millenia. Smallpox was a highly contagious disease that could scar and blind its victims. In severe epidemics, such as those that ravaged indigenous populations after Europeans arrived in the Americas, smallpox proved fatal in 3 out of 10 cases.

Communities responded to smallpox by quarantining and isolating patients. In November 1902, 1st, 8th, and 10th ward schools in Eau Claire closed because of smallpox.

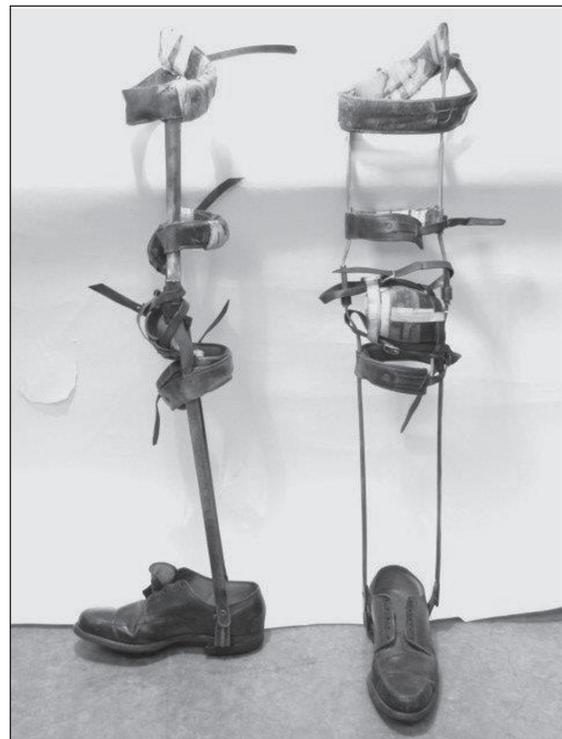
Earlier in the year, schools extended winter break due to smallpox. The local Board of Health rented the Farwell House at Farwell & Main to use as an isolation facility. Local news reports indicated division in the community’s response to the epidemic. Several City Council aldermen accused physicians of not reporting active cases. People complained house quarantines weren’t being enforced. Residents also complained about local health orders and others who didn’t follow orders.

Smallpox fears continued into the 1930s. Universal vaccination efforts eliminated the public health threat, and then the disease entirely.

## *Polio*

President Harry Truman declared polio a threat to the U.S. in 1946. In August that year, Eau Claire recorded 25 cases of polio. The YMCA closed. So did beaches. School was delayed. Two children died.

Poliomyelitis first appeared in the U.S. in 1894. Polio causes paralysis, sometimes permanently, and is fatal in



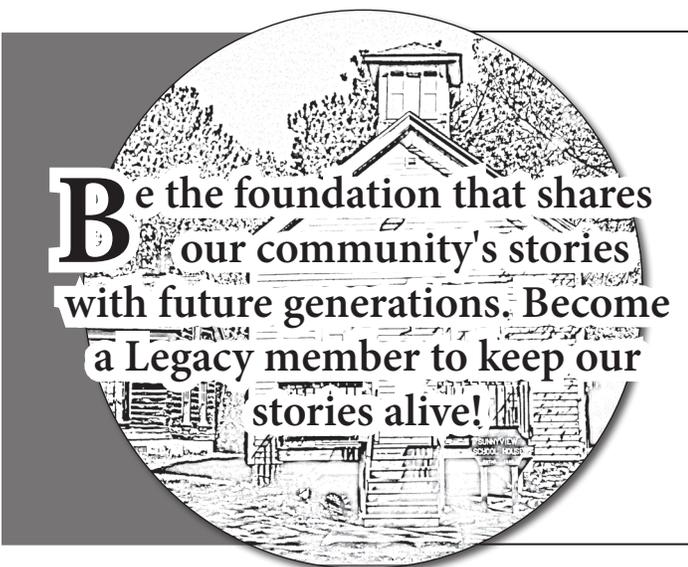
Leg braces worn by Elton Koepke. Elton, a 3 sport athlete from Bloomer, contracted polio in 1940 at the age of 17.



Tuberculin inoculation syringes - in the early 20th century, tuberculosis killed more Americans than any other infectious disease.

2-5% of cases in children. By mid-20th century, parents so feared the disease they would forbid their children to gather at public pools or beaches. The Salk vaccine first became available the summer of 1955 but a local shortage in Eau Claire prevented Faye and Carolyn Gabrielson from being vaccinated. Ten-year-old Faye contracted the disease in August 1955, leading to a nine month hospital stay and a year out of school. As an 8th grader, Faye attended Eau Claire Junior High, a three story structure without elevators. Her friends carried her wheelchair between floors. When asked about polio, 13-year-old Faye told the school newspaper, "It's a good thing it happened to me rather than to some other girl - I can take it. Maybe some other girl couldn't."

Because of vaccines, the United States was declared polio free in 1979.



Legacy Members become lifelong members of the Chippewa Valley Museum by giving a gift to the endowment that equals 20 times the annual membership fee. Legacy members receive the same benefits as annual members at the comparable levels. There are five participation levels:

- Patron Legacy Member:** \$50,000
- Leader Legacy Member:** \$20,000
- History Maker Legacy Member:** 10,000
- Pathfinder Legacy Member:** \$5,000
- Friend Legacy Member:** \$3,000

Learn more by calling (715) 834-7871



## GINGER BREAD HOUSE CONTEST

HOUSES DISPLAYED DEC. 5 – DEC. 19

Ba Humbug to Covid! Get into the holiday spirit and start dreaming, planning and building your one-of-a-kind gingerbread house to enter into the Chippewa Valley Museum Gingerbread House Contest.

VIRTUAL & IN-MUSEUM OPTIONS

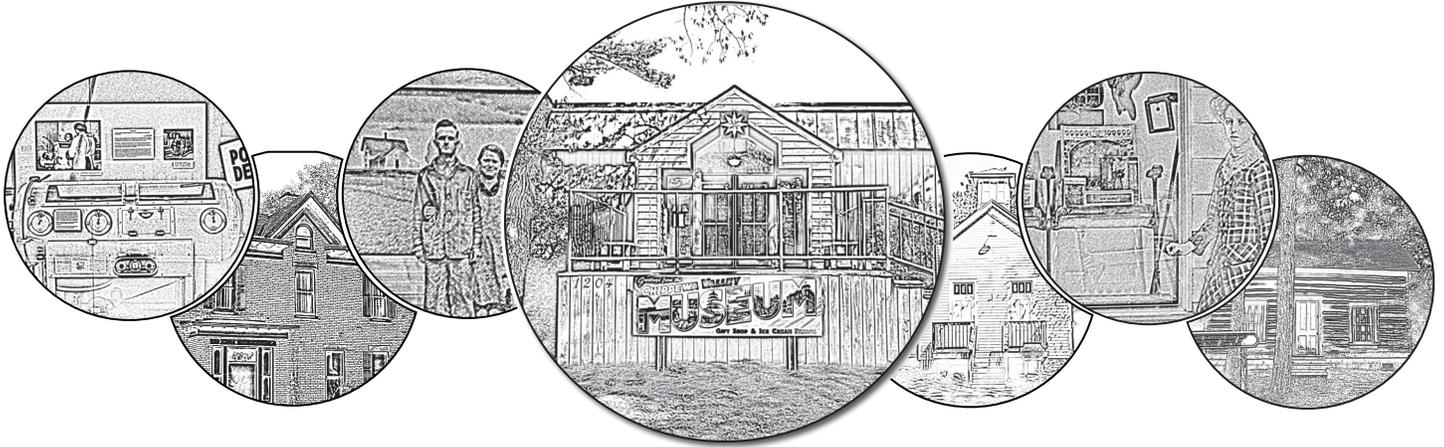
Entry Fee

**\$5**

Due Nov. 21



REGISTRATION & INFO  
AT [CVMUSEUM.COM](http://CVMUSEUM.COM)



# CHIPPEWA VALLEY MUSEUM 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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*“Your emails [Museum News & Happenings] are informative, yet at the same time delightful. And the events that you keep creating are varied and educational, yet with a hint of fun. You and your staff are amazing. Thank you for keeping the museum a great asset to all of us.”*

- Letter from a Chippewa Valley Museum Member



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
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American Association  
for State and Local History





## FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

The new buzz on Facebook is “Where are those stairs?” Beginning in June, Chippewa Valley Museum staff posted weekly photos of stairways and asked people to guess where they were. I enjoyed “sharing” these posts to see if my Facebook friends recognized the stairs. Later in the day, now and then photos of the stairway appeared on Facebook along with its location. I recognized the stairs from McPhee Center down to the lower campus at UWEC, but I didn’t know the stairs behind the VFW on Starr Avenue. The museum staff found a fun way to engage members and friends on Facebook.

In late 2019, the Chippewa Valley Museum Board of Directors asked, “How do we bring more guests and new members into the museum?” “How do we increase memberships and business relationships?”

A Development Manager was added to the staff, a development plan was drafted, and calls made to members and past members. Business relationships and memberships began to be developed. Programs were planned, events scheduled, fundraising discussed, class tours organized.... Enter the pandemic.

Chippewa Valley Museum entered a new era in its history: closure, social distancing, and stay at home orders. Life for all businesses, employees, parents, students, and nonprofits like the museum changed. It took employee dedication and innovative ideas to move a building

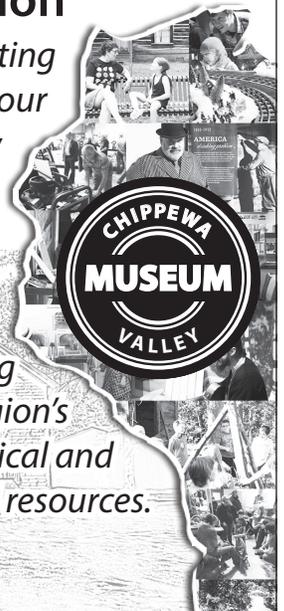
full of artifacts, programs, events, tours, and fundraising to virtual museum experiences. Members of the museum, businesses, foundations, and community members gave donations to help the museum continue to operate.

A BIG thank you to the community. A BIG thank you to you, the museum’s members, volunteers, staff, and Board of Directors. Answers to our questions and challenges in 2020 came from all of you! The stories the Chippewa Valley Museum tells go on and change as we grow and change. The vision of the future is sometimes in the past.

*Donella Magadance*  
Donella Magadance, President

### Our Mission

*Connecting people to our community and inspiring curiosity by collecting, preserving, and sharing our region's historical and cultural resources.*



## SPECIAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS ≡



Artists and their friends and family were invited to an opening reception for the *Warmth and Whimsy* folk art exhibition in February.

**Public events and special functions are an opportunity to share the experience of Chippewa Valley’s culture and history. Here’s a look at some events we offered our visitors this year:**

*Remember When Heritage Fundraiser, October 2019.* Museum members and friends gathered at The Florian Gardens to recollect childhood experiences and support Chippewa Valley Museum. Guests brought favorite childhood toys to create a pop-up exhibit and were entertained by emcee Judy Clark interviewing Colleen Bates and John Frank about their childhoods.

*Holiday Toy Trains, Nov-Dec. 2019.* Volunteers from the Standard Gauge Module Association ran *Holiday Toy Trains* on 14 separate program days for 1,395 people. From 2015-2019, *Holiday Toy Trains* drew 7,578 people to the museum.

*Folk Arts Festival, Leap Day, February 29.* For its 10th celebration, the Folk Arts Festival included forum speakers and live music performances. An outdoor Barn Quilt display (January-April) and juried art show (*Warmth and Whimsy*, January – March) provided additional folk arts programming.

*29th Annual Fourth of July Fun Fair* became a Virtual Fourth of July with a community scavenger hunt, live-streamed cake walk drawing, and videos of a 1918 4th of July proclamation read by Eau Claire City Council President Terry Weld, 1875 4th of July speech performed by Richard Kraemer, DIY Face Painting demo by Lily Schwartz, and Lumberjack music by Scott Dyar. Online content was viewed 3,419 times.

## PROGRAMS & EDUCATION

1,041 students in 26 school groups visited in-person between October and March 12. 2020 had a 73% decrease in school visits compared to 2019. Eight elementary classrooms (143 students) helped pilot virtual tours and live distance learning sessions in the spring. 6,719 guests took part in 72 virtual and in-person programs, only a 2% decline from last year's program attendance. They enjoyed programs like:

*Adventures in History Book Club*, in partnership with L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, continued to meet monthly and is now in its 5th year. The club began monthly virtual meetings in May.

*Themed Fun Nights* during Holiday Toy Trains included Cookie Decorating, Lego Contest, and Caroling. (pre-pandemic)

*A Wisconsin German Experience at the Schlegelmilch House* open house with language and cultural activities. (pre-pandemic)

*Warmth and Whimsy Art Show* reception for 78 artists and their friends and family. (pre-pandemic)

*Youth Programs* for Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Daisy Scouts, and Reading Literacy. (pre-pandemic & virtually during pandemic)

*Walking Tour of the Third Ward* with UW-Eau Claire University Archivist Greg Kocken. (socially distanced)

## Groups from 15 Communities Visited the Museum

1,568 individuals in 42 groups, preschool through adult, participated in guided learning experiences.

Museum Educator Karen Jacobson delivers a virtual field trip to area children.

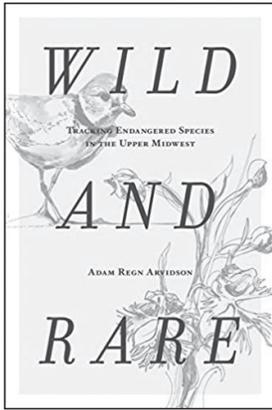
Alma	Chippewa Falls
Altoona	Downsville
Bruce	Eau Claire
Cadott	Fall Creek
Cameron	Knapp

New Richmond  
Osseo-Fairchild  
Owen-Withee  
Somerset  
Sparta



# COMMUNITY CENTER & RESOURCE ≡

The Chippewa Valley Museum provides a gathering space for others and works with partners to extend in-person and virtual programming. Private events and rentals declined by 68% compared to 2019, all due to COVID-19 related cancellations. Community groups met in person the first five months of fiscal year 2020. Chippewa Valley Museum also supported virtual events organized by others.



## Sampling of Partner and Private Events at the Museum ———

*Chippewa Valley Book Festival Luncheon*, with author Adam Regn Arvidson speaking about his book *Wild and Rare: Tracking Endangered Species in the Upper Midwest*, October 2019

*Wisconsin City/County Management Association Meeting*, December 2019

*Children's Museum of Eau Claire Holiday Party*, Schlegelmilch House, December 2019

*One Read Eau Claire Book Discussion*, March 2020

## Community Virtual Events

*L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library Summer Children Programs, "Unsung Heroes of the Chippewa Valley"* slideshow, produced by UW-Eau Claire intern Alex Michalski, July 2020

*Downtown Eau Claire Inc (DECI) International Fall Festival*, CVM videos - "A Piece of Hmong" and "Nyckelharpa: A Traditional Swedish Instrument", September 2020

## Monthly meetings (October-March)

Aging and Disability Resources Center of Eau Claire (ADRC)

Memory Café

Eau Claire County Dementia Coalition (quarterly)

Brain & Body Fitness, in partnership with the YMCA

Chippewa Valley Railroad Association

Clearwater Fiber Guild

Genealogical Research Society of Eau Claire

Historic Preservation Foundation

Tree City Guild Rug Hook Crafters

## SOCIAL MEDIA ≡



### Followers:

Oct. 1, 2019 – 3,059

Sept. 30, 2020 – 3,674

### Reach:

Before COVID-19 - 168,307

Mar. 16 to Sept. 30, 2020 - 385,264



### Followers:

Oct. 1, 2019 – 314

Sept. 30, 2020 – 1,177

### Reach:

Before COVID-19 - 22,463

Mar. 16 to Sept. 30, 2020 - 47,554

## ≡ EXHIBITS

The Object Theater production *This Day*, long a fan favorite, permanently closed in winter 2019 as a result of equipment failure. A new Object Theater production is under development. Only a few visitors saw the traveling exhibit *Neighbors Past and Present: The Wisconsin German Experience* as it opened just weeks before the three-month pandemic shutdown. *Listen Up! Folk Music in the Valley*, scheduled to open late spring 2020, was rescheduled to 2021. Two traveling exhibits from the NEH on the Road program happened in the same year, one running from mid-November through early January, the other from September through mid-October.

### Long-Term Exhibits \_\_\_\_\_

*Changing Currents: Reinventing the Chippewa Valley (2014)*, Barland Gallery

*Farm Life: A Century of Change for Farm Families and Their Neighbors (2004)*, Rural Heritage Wing

*This Day (2005)*, Farmhouse Object Theater

### Traveling Exhibits \_\_\_\_\_

*Power of Children: Making a Difference*, NEH on the Road program, Ayres Associates Gallery

*Neighbors Past and Present: The Wisconsin German Experience*, Max Kade Institute, Library Hallway

*Jacob Riis: How the Other Half Lives*, NEH on the Road program, Ayres Associates Gallery

### Short-Term Exhibits \_\_\_\_\_

*Racing in the Chippewa Valley (2019)*, Ayres Associates Gallery

*Warmth and Whimsy Art Show (2020)*, Ayres Associates Gallery

*This and That (2020)*, Ayres Associates Gallery

*History Quest (2010)*, Children's Gallery

*Eau Claire by Air (2014)*, L.E. Phillips Memorial Auditorium

Members of the Museum were invited to a *Jacob Riis: How the Other Half Lives* exhibit preview. Care was taken to preserve social distancing guidelines and limit how many viewed the gallery at a time.



## COLLECTIONS ≡



Curator of Collections  
Diana Peterson accepts a  
donation of artifacts.

The Chippewa Valley Museum has 22,739 objects in its collection. There were over 350 object donations in 2020. Some highlights include:

- A collection of 100+ Barbie dolls, clothing, and accessories from the 1960s
- 1950s Eau Claire fire turn-out gear and 1963 backpack fire extinguisher
- Toys from 1960s-1990s including Lincoln Logs, pull-toys, a Mandrake the Magician kit, Sesame Street items, and Mr. Potato Head
- Muskellelunge caught October 11, 1979 on Fireside Lake, which feeds into the Chippewa River

The museum's largest artifact is the Historic Schlegelmilch House at 517 S. Farwell Street. Members of the Schlegelmilch and Barland families lived in the house from 1871-1977. A year-long weekly social media campaign on the history of the Schlegelmilchs and the house started in June.



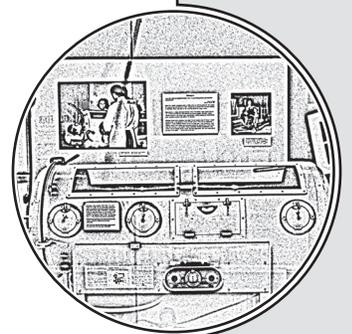
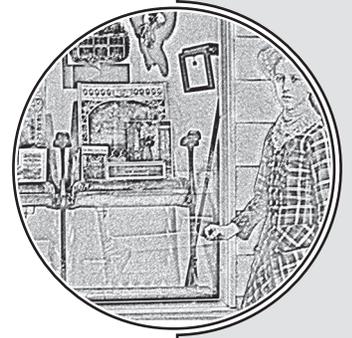
Archivist Jodi Kiffmeyer  
working by video conference.

## Library and Archives

The Library and Archives responded to 79 research requests by email, telephone, and in person. There were also 22 requests for prints and digital files of historical photos. The collection currently contains 5,262 archival materials and 20,249 cataloged photographs. Many of our new items include COVID-19 diaries submitted by members of the public.

The new archivist, Jodi Kiffmeyer, joined the staff in February. Special thanks go to volunteer Debbie Gough, who helped keep the library and archives running the months between archivists. This spring, Jodi collaborated with faculty from UW-Eau Claire to launch the Chippewa Valley COVID-19 Archive Project, a crowdsourced digital archive of people's experiences in the Chippewa Valley during the pandemic. Submissions continue to be accepted and may be viewed at the archive website: [www.uwec.ly/covid19project](http://www.uwec.ly/covid19project).

Over the summer, Hannah Lahti, graduate student at Loyola University, interned in the archives. She assisted with maintenance of the COVID-19 Archive and conducted background research for a walking tour of downtown Eau Claire to be uploaded on the Clio website ([www.theclio.com](http://www.theclio.com)).





# 13,033

Adults: 6,707 in-person  
Children: 2,523 in-person  
Virtual Visits: 3,803

*Fun fact:* More people participated in virtual than in-person programs.

## VISITORS



# 851

Membership Revenue  
\$69,632

*Fun fact:* Members gave \$15,854 to our Re-Opening Campaign.

## MEMBERS



# 5470

Total Hours

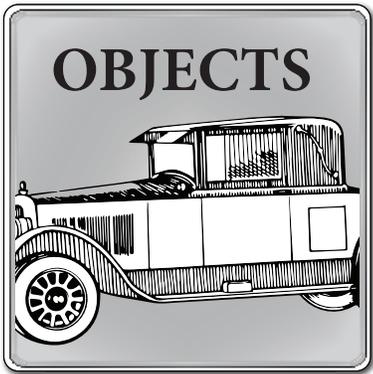
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People

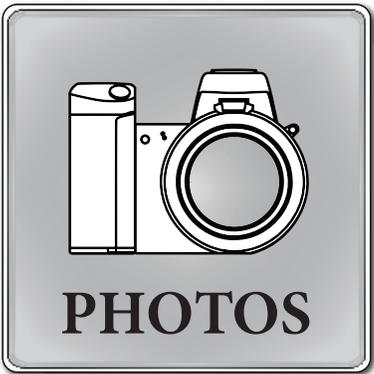
*Fun fact:* 12 Teen Guides put in 367.75 hours to support museum operations and programs.

## VOLUNTEERS

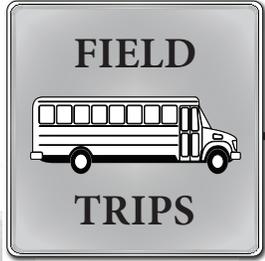
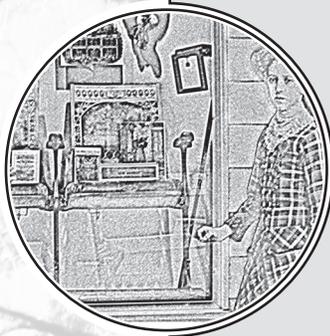




**22,739**



**20,249**



**1,067**  
Students



**72**  
Workshops, Lectures,  
Outreach, etc.



**2,916**  
In-Person  
**3,803**  
Virtual



**8** Rentals  
for **\$680**



**\$4,708**  
Dollars Sold



**\$6,775**  
Dollars Sold



## ≡ GRANTS & SPONSORSHIPS

### Grants Awarded in FY20

AnnMarie Foundation: Rent for traveling exhibits (October 2019)	\$1,650
<i>Listen Up!</i> exhibit (September 2020)	\$1,725
Downtown Eau Claire Inc (DECI): COVID-19 Relief	\$1,500
Eau Claire Community Foundation: Boiler	\$8,630
Quick Response Community Fund: Phase 1	\$3,000
Historic Preservation Foundation: Jacob Riis traveling exhibit	\$800
National Endowment for the Humanities: CARES Act	\$53,225
Nordson Foundation: Children's Programming	\$7,000
US Bank: Operations	\$1,500
William J. and Gertrude Casper Foundation	\$1,000
Chippewa County school/youth field trips	
Wisconsin Humanities Council: Object Theater	\$10,000
Xcel Energy Foundation: General Operations	\$5,000
Wisconsin Humanities Council: CARES Act relief: Phase 1	\$7,500
CARES Act relief: Phase 2	\$5,789
Total COVID-19 related emergency grant funds: \$71,014	

### Grants Awarded in Previous Years and Continued in FY20

Community Foundation of the Fox Valley:	\$50,000
Object Theater technology	
Eau Claire Community Foundation: Music exhibit	\$10,000
Mayo Clinic Health System Hometown Grant:	\$9,000
History bike tours, bike rack, tour pamphlets	
National Endowment for the Arts:	\$20,000
Folk and traditional music fieldwork, podcasts, music exhibit	
Wisconsin Arts Board: <i>Hmong Today</i> , fieldwork and exhibit	\$5,240

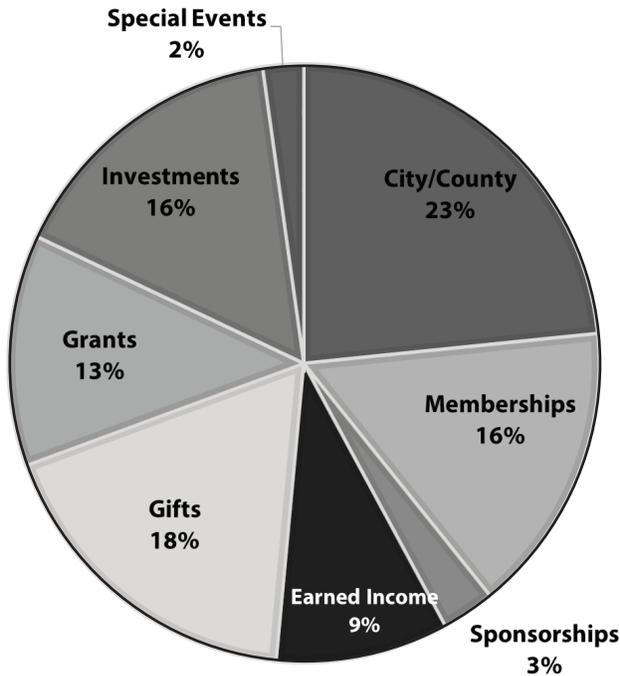
### Corporate Sponsors

Angel Mirror, Ashbaugh Printing Co., Apex Engineering, Banbury Place, C&M Home Builders, Cascade Tissue Group, Charter Bank, Chestnut Consulting, Festival Foods, Great Northern Corp., Market & Johnson, Inc., McDonough Manufacturing Co., Northwest Office Supply, Northwestern Bank, People's Bank Midwest, Royal Credit Union, Trust Point, Visit Eau Claire, Volume One, WESTconsin Credit Union, Xcel Energy



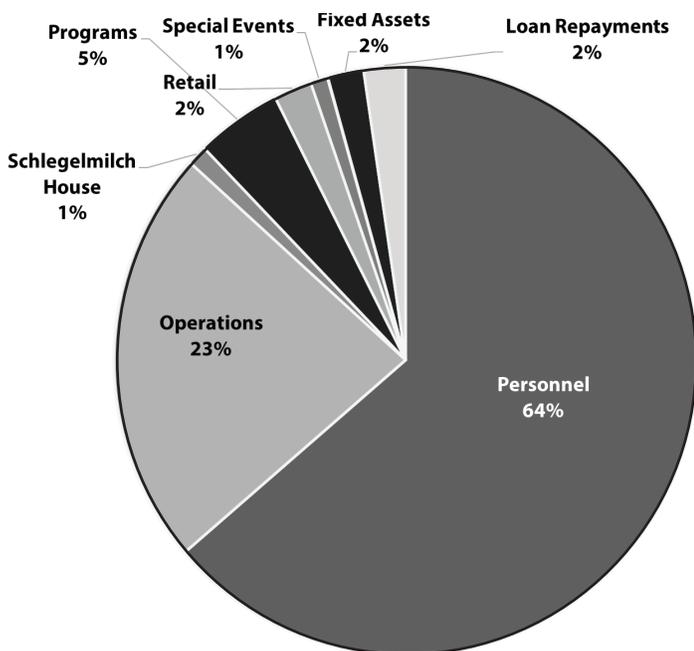
# INCOME STATEMENT

## INCOME



INCOME	FY20	FY19
City County	\$103,593	\$102,417
Memberships	\$69,632	\$84,861
Sponsorships	\$12,900	\$-
Earned Income	\$41,740	\$84,160
Gifts	\$79,538	\$40,331
Grants	\$55,397	\$81,630
Investments	\$69,909	\$31,927
Special Events	\$9,842	\$27,564
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$442,551</b>	<b>\$452,891</b>
Carry Over Funds	\$64,660	\$20,781
Borrowed	-	\$10,000
Forgiven Loan	\$49,900	\$10,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$557,111</b>	<b>\$494,372</b>

## EXPENSES



EXPENSES	FY20	FY19
Personnel	\$274,567	\$261,028
Operations	\$99,248	\$78,326
Schlegelmilch House	\$4,740	\$5,426
Programs	\$7,583	\$14,723
Grants Programs	\$13,016	\$28,806
Retail	\$9,096	\$10,856
Special Events	\$4,126	\$9,312
Miscellaneous	\$109	\$761
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$412,485</b>	<b>\$409,237</b>
Fixed assets	\$8,630	\$-
Loan Repayments	\$10,000	\$15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$43,115</b>	<b>\$424,237</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>\$125,996</b>	<b>\$70,135</b>

Note: Figures are derived from internal financial statements. Outside review will begin in November 2020.

## ≡ FOUNDATION & DONORS

The Chippewa Valley Museum Foundation (CVMF) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charged with overseeing the Museum's endowments and other investment funds in order to advance the museum's mission.

The CVMF Investment Policy Statement states that up to 4% of the Foundation's managed assets may be distributed annually to the Chippewa Valley Museum. At the end of FY20, CVMF managed assets were valued at \$767,754. The Foundation distributed \$31,568 for museum operations and programs and special allocation of \$43,500 to fund the first year salary of a new development manager position. CVMF is also named as the beneficiary in a life insurance policy valued at \$36,410.

### Legacy Membership Program

Legacy Members become lifelong members of the Chippewa Valley Museum by giving a gift to the endowment that equals 20 times the annual membership fee. Legacy members receive the same benefits as annual members at the comparable levels. At the end of FY20, there were 57 Legacy Memberships.

### Development

Membership gifts and dues are the largest source of income. The museum received \$25,000 from Eau Claire County, the full amount requested in 2020. An agreement with Visit Eau Claire and the City of Eau Claire provides almost 4% of the hotel room tax the city collects for its Community Enhancement Fund. In response to the immediate financial crisis caused by the pandemic, the museum participated in Together Chippewa Valley, a joint fundraising campaign with 18 other nonprofits. Together Chippewa Valley raised \$9,848 for each nonprofit. Below are individual and family gifts. Business gifts are recognized on the grants and sponsorship page.

#### Gifts, \$2,500+

Together Chippewa Valley  
Dr. and Robert Lotz memorial  
Dean Arnold  
Kris Becker and  
Mark Vollendorf  
Laurie, Andres, Jacob Gapko  
Mary C. Harmon  
Johanna Warloski

Sandy Robbers  
Shea/Atkins family  
Jeff and Katy Stevens  
Paula Utphall  
Shannon and Timothy Young  
Thomas and Sheila Zahorik

Jon and Maureen Homstad  
Paul and Beverly Jacobson  
Jack and Sally Kaiser  
Dan and Kerry Kincaid  
Krische family  
Brian and Mildred Larson  
Nanette and Ivar Lunde  
John and Shyre Mann  
Jim and Sharon Manz  
Thomas Miller and  
Mary Ryan-Miller  
Bonnie Owens  
Jane Pederson and Ron Mickel  
Dan Perkins  
Jerome and Kathryn Reinecke  
Judith and Steve Schilling  
Kathleen and Donald Weber  
Dave and Becky Wood  
Helen and Norb Wurtzel  
Larry Zorn

#### Gifts \$1,000-\$2,499

Louis G. Arnold  
Tom and Mary Burt  
Julie and Pieter Graaskamp  
John G. Kinney  
Chuck and Ellen Lindvig  
Susan M. McLeod

#### Gifts \$500-\$999

Tom Airis  
Richard and Rochelle Arnold  
Thomas H. and Jill Barland  
Ken and Vicky Berg  
Thomas L. Bruckner  
Mrs. Don Etnier  
Debbie and Robert Gough  
Elizabeth Hanson and  
Richard Kraemer  
Patti and Dave Hoban

# STAFF & BOARD

## Staff

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Angela Allred, Program Coordinator  
Frank Barby, Facilities Engineer  
Dorie Boetcher, Finance Manager  
Karen Jacobson, Educator  
Jodi Kiffmeyer, Archivist (started Feb. '20)  
Olaf Lind, Communications Specialist  
Rachel Meyer, Development Manager (started Jan. '20)  
Diana Peterson, Curator of Collections  
Liz Reuter, Archivist (through Dec. '19)  
Carrie Ronnander, Director  
Jill York, Operations Manager

## Chippewa Valley Museum Board

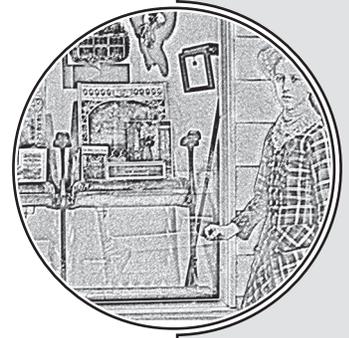
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Joseph Bauer, Gingras, Thomsen, & Wachs Lawyers  
Jay Bearson, Jay's Sign Service (appointed Jan. '20)  
Pieter Graaskamp, retired  
Melissa Jones, stay-at-home parent  
Sheila Kohls, Royal Credit Union  
Carla Leuck, Charter Bank  
AJ Liedl, Royal Credit Union/UW-Stout  
Chuck Lindvig, retired  
Donella Magadance, retired, President  
Heather Ann Moody, Ed.D., UW-Eau Claire American Indian Studies  
Mary Ann Hardebeck, Ph.D., Eau Claire Area School District  
Travis Schroeder, Pablo Group  
Jerry Shea, Market and Johnson, Vice-President  
Jeff Stevens, Chestnut Consulting, Secretary  
Karen Tomesh, Commonwealth Development Corp, Treasurer

## Chippewa Valley Museum Foundation Board

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Becky Adamski Krische, Century21, Treasurer  
Ryan Balts, Royal Credit Union, Vice President  
Douglas Hoffer, City of Eau Claire  
Kent Martinson, Charter Bank Investment Services  
Julie Thoney, Xcel Energy, President  
Debbie Gough, retired, UW-Eau Claire  
Shelly Rihn, Great Northern Corporation  
Hannah Walsh, CliftonLarsonAllen Wealth Advisors LLC





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54702

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Hours**

Tuesdays 5-8 p.m.  
Wed. - Fri. 12-5 p.m.  
Saturday 12-5 p.m.  
Subject to Change  
Check Website

**Regular Admission**

Museum Members: Free  
Non-Members: Adults \$7  
Students with ID \$4  
Ages 5-17 \$4 • Under Age 5 Free  
FREE Tuesday evenings

**Contact Us**

1204 E. Half Moon Dr.  
PO Box 1204  
Eau Claire, WI 54702  
info@cvmuseum.com  
(715) 834-7871  
[www.cvmuseum.com](http://www.cvmuseum.com)

**LOOKING AHEAD**

**December 5<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup>**

*Gingerbread House Contest In-Museum & Online Display*

**December 15<sup>th</sup>**

*Collecting the Valley: The Evolution of Barbie Virtual Presentation*

**January 19<sup>th</sup>**

*Collecting the Valley: Midwest Pottery Virtual Presentation*

**January 19<sup>th</sup> - March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*Mettle & Mirth Art Show with Artisan Forge Studios*

**February 20<sup>th</sup> - March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*Folk Arts Festival, Hybrid Event*

**April 10<sup>th</sup>**

*Listen Up: Folk Music in the Valley Exhibit Opens*



Stay in the loop at [cvmuseum.com](http://cvmuseum.com)