



Where
the past
is present

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Annual Report 2011 - 2012

2011–2012 OFFICERS

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Society President Thomas C. Buhl kicks off the program at the 2011 Detroit Historical Society Ball.

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DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS:

This past year at the Detroit Historical Society has been pivotal as the focus of our *Past>Forward* Campaign expanded beyond fundraising, research and planning to include the implementation of some of the early aspects of our transformational plan to reinvent ourselves.

The year began with the public launch of the campaign, with a media event that also announced the concept of the Detroit Historical Museum's upcoming outdoor attraction — *Legends Plaza*. Five outstanding Detroit legends — Dave Bing, Carmen Harlan, Al Kaline, Elmore Leonard and Dick Purtan — cast their hands and signatures in cement, kicking off a year that saw an impressive roster of our city's luminaries from sports, entertainment and media do the same.

The year continued with a “business as usual” look to the outside world with the exhibit openings, programs, tours and special events that our members, friends and school children know and appreciate, while a flurry of additional activity linked to our collective future bubbled just beneath the surface.

The year ended with the Detroit Historical Museum temporarily closing to the public and beginning its dramatic transformation. With its own renovation imminent, plans for the Dossin Great Lakes Museum began taking shape and the digitization of thousands of important artifacts from our vast collection moved forward and became a popular addition to our newly enhanced and redesigned website.

The new website and publications like this report have also been revitalized by the new Society branding that was created by Southfield-based Doner. As is evident on the cover, the new Detroit Historical Society wordmark is accompanied by a new tagline that we think truly reflects our mission and where we are as an organization — “Where the Past is Present.” We believe that this new Society brand gives us a clean, updated look as we upgrade our offerings to reflect the realities of the 21st century, while maintaining our commitment to our mission as the region's storyteller.

Your generosity has helped us reach past the two-thirds mark of our \$20.1 million *Past>Forward* Campaign goal, and for that we express our deepest thanks. We also express our appreciation to our three Campaign Co-chairs — Kevin Broderick, Ann Greenstone and David Nicholson — for their continued leadership and commitment to its success.

Thank you for supporting the Detroit Historical Society at this pivotal and important time, when the promises of our campaign are quickly becoming realities. Enjoy reading the details of our accomplishments in the past year and join us in looking forward to a truly amazing year ahead.

Sincerely,



Thomas C. Buhl
President
Detroit Historical Society



Robert A. Bury
Executive Director and CEO
Detroit Historical Society

MAKING GREAT STRIDES IN EDUCATION!

The Detroit Historical Society's educational initiatives achieved great progress on a variety of levels in the past year.

Three new workshops were added to the mix to enhance students' hands-on learning opportunities at the Detroit Historical Museum and the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. History Detectives, geared toward grades 6–12, and Trading Posts and Animal Pelts, designed for grades 3–5, were created to be stand-alone 90-minute experiences that present some key themes in greater depth at the Detroit Historical Museum. At the Dossin Museum, a workshop called Great Lakes Transportation is geared toward students in grades 3–5.

More than 10,000 students participated in docent-guided tours over the past year, an impressive figure considering the continuing financial challenges facing schools throughout the area.

Finally, the new *Building Detroit* online game, designed for students primarily in grades 3 through 5, launched in

October. An economics-based role playing activity that takes students through the first 200 years of Detroit's history, the game was made possible through a grant from the Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan. The project has been recognized with two national awards — a Silver Award in the Games and Augmented Reality category at the American Association of Museums' 2012 MUSE Awards and an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).



PROGRAMS KEEP PUBLIC COMING IN



Family-oriented programs the Society does each year, such as African American History Day, Treats in the Streets, Noel Night and others, always provide a unique and fun environment for visitors to learn about Detroit's history. In the past year, these programs welcomed more than 10,000 attendees.

Our ongoing Curator Chats, Scholar Series and Film Series programs continue to draw new visitors to our two venues, while outside the museum walls, the Society's popular Behind the Scenes tours featured 33 sold out events.

Storyteller Ivory D. Williams is a perennial favorite at African American History Day held each February at the Detroit Historical Museum.

ANNUAL EVENTS GENERATE RECORD ATTENDANCE AND DOLLARS!

Over the past year, the Society continued its annual tradition of hosting two fundraising events to benefit its mission and support its two museums.

More than 500 people were part of a record crowd at the 2011 Detroit Historical Society Ball in December at Eastern Market's Shed 3. The event also netted its largest amount ever — \$225,000. For the fourth year in a row, the Ball featured famous Detroiters and business leaders in a “Dancing with Detroit's Stars” competition, which alone raised over \$49,000. The overall winner, who raised the most dollars for the Society, was Detroit businesswoman Nedda Shayota, Vice President of Sigma Associates. The dancer winning the “Best Performance” trophy, awarded by a panel of celebrity judges including ABC's “Dancing with the Stars” professionals Jonathan

Roberts & Anna Trebunskaya, was Detroitier Sharon Madison of Madison Madison International. The co-chairs for the 2011 Ball were Suzanne Germack Frederickson of Grosse Pointe Park, Karla Hall of Detroit and Lauren Rakolta of Birmingham.

In June, the annual Dossin Great Lakes Museum Gala, co-presented with the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, drew a diverse group of party goers who enjoyed a speakeasy theme, strolling dinner, music, and a silent auction. Proceeds from the Gala, over \$18,000, provide much needed funds to support the Dossin Great Lakes Museum so that the Society can continue to provide educational programs and exhibits that celebrate the maritime history of our region.

EXHIBITS TEAM FOCUSES ON PRESENT AND FUTURE

The final temporary exhibitions installed at the Detroit Historical Museum in September included *Detroit Toy Stories*, which featured a variety of toys from multiple generations of metro Detroit children; *Fabulous 5: Detroit's Destinations*, including Belle Isle, Campus Martius Park, Eastern Market, Franklin Cider Mill, and The Heidelberg Project; a 1914 Anderson Detroit Electric Car in the *Automotive Showplace*; and a display dedicated to the life and work of William Bushnell Stout, an inventor whose technical imagination was years ahead of his time. Three exhibits from the Lorenzo Cultural Center, the Great Lakes Council of the Boy Scouts of America and the Detroit Artists Market also opened in the Detroit Historical Museum's Community Gallery during the past year.

In addition to these installations, the main focus of the exhibits team during the past year was making all the upcoming new and revised exhibits a reality for both the Detroit Historical Museum and Dossin Great Lakes Museum. Key decisions were made related to all the elements that make these exhibits important to a phenomenal new museum experience awaiting our visitors: key themes; design; layout; interactives; artifact selection; story selections; copy and much more.

Finally, a cross-functional Society team worked with the iconic Southfield ad agency Doner to develop logos for each of the new or enhanced exhibits, which will be central to the Society's ongoing branding efforts.



WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT OUR VOLUNTEERS!

The Society's volunteer force continues to grow, working side-by-side with our staff to help us accomplish amazing things!

In the past year, our volunteers donated more than 11,000 hours of their time, another substantial number. In addition, the Society recruited and trained 16 new docents, 14 interns and 29 other volunteers — the largest group we've brought in more than five years.

AUXILIARY GROUPS HELP US REACH NEW, DIVERSE AUDIENCES

The Black Historic Sites Committee celebrated its 40th anniversary with a special event honoring African American trailblazers in August at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. The group also sponsored an appearance by civil rights activist and author Grace Lee Boggs in February and organized a three-part panel series on "Detroit's Civil Rights Struggle: Reconstruction through an Insurrection." Two of these programs were taped for national broadcast by C-SPAN.

The Detroit Historical Society Guild organized a sold-out Victorian Christmas Tea in November and collaborated with the Historic Fort Wayne Coalition to reintroduce its annual Spring Flea Market.

The Glancy Train volunteers had another successful Glancy Trains Show event and fundraiser on December 18th. The Glancy Trains Modular Railroad Club promoted the Detroit Historical Museum and our famous model train exhibit at events year-round, including the annual Festival of Trees, the "Day Out with Thomas" weekends at Greenfield Village and train shows throughout Michigan.

The Dossin Maritime Group organized the following successful events: the Fair Winds Fall Dinner with guest speaker Art Woodford in October; the annual Lost

ADMISSIONS REMAIN STRONG AT BOTH MUSEUMS

Before its May closure for renovations, overall attendance at the Detroit Historical Museum was up by nearly three percent versus the same period a year ago.

At the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, attendance numbers since January have increased nearly 30 percent over the same period one year ago.

Mariners Remembrance in November; and the annual Marine Mart, which transitioned to an earlier date in November. In April, the group hosted its fifth annual Spring Rowing Regatta.



Black Historic Sites Committee chair Kimberly Simmons (left) with legendary TV newsman Bill Bonds and WXYZ-TV anchor Diana Lewis at the group's 40th Anniversary celebration.

THE COLLECTION GETS MORE VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE

A key project funded by the Detroit Historical Society's *Past>Forward* Campaign is the massive effort to digitize the city's collection of more than 250,000 artifacts. While only a small percentage of these items are on display at our museums, it is our aim to digitize the collection and make it accessible as an online tool for researchers.

As part of the launch of the Society's new website in June, we also unveiled our new online digital collection. With this new tool available, visitors to our site will be able to access more than 10,000 items, including historic photographs, archival material and more objects than could ever be displayed in our museums at one time.

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Combined Revenue and Expense Statement for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2012

REVENUE:	
Philanthropy	\$ 4,040,636
Earned Income	395,750
City and State Funding	2,460,740
Investment Income	333,906
Total Revenue	\$ 7,231,032
EXPENSES:	
Program Services	\$ 3,672,496
Supporting Services	1,055,127
Total Expenses	4,727,623
Net Change to Assets Before Investment Gains	2,503,409
Net Realized and Unrealized Gains on Investments	(484,975)
Surplus	\$ 2,018,434
Detroit Historical Society	
BALANCE SHEET • JUNE 30, 2012	
Cash and Investments*	\$ 5,969,972
Contributions and Accounts Receivable	3,466,436
Other Assets	874,454
	\$ 10,310,862
Liabilities	\$ 144,789
Net Assets — Unrestricted	7,983,443
Net Assets — Restricted	2,182,630
	\$ 10,310,862

*The assets do not reflect a Detroit Historical Society Endowment held by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. The fund was valued at \$1,437,981 as of June 30, 2012.

Audited Detroit Historical Society financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012 are available at the Society offices, 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI 48202, or by calling (313) 833-7935.

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Members attending the Detroit Historical Museum's closure party in May had the opportunity to sign a 2 x 4 which has subsequently been placed into the infrastructure of the upcoming Gallery of Innovation exhibit on the second floor.

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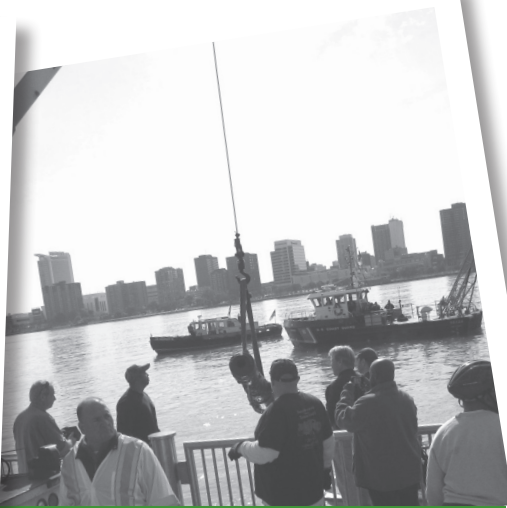
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An 18th century British cannon discovered last summer was retrieved out of the Detroit River in October. It is now part of the Detroit Historical Society's collection. The news of this "find" hit both the Associated Press and Reuters wire services, which led to an amazing amount of national and worldwide exposure for the Society.

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The Dodworth Saxhorn Band provided a taste of Americana with their spirited music in the Streets of Old Detroit during Seven Days Seven Stories, the Society's weeklong celebration of Detroit's 310th birthday.

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The Society hosted a classic car show in July as part of the celebration of Detroit's 310th birthday.

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This young lady dressed as a giraffe enjoyed the Glancy Trains exhibit during the Society's annual Treats in the Streets Halloween-themed event at the Detroit Historical Museum.

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The Detroit Historical Society continues to leverage social media in its marketing efforts. We ended the year with 2,700 "likes" on Facebook. In addition, the Society's number of Twitter followers more than doubled from last year to over 1,100. We also continue to add videos to our Society YouTube channel, which has seen over 1,500 views since it launched 14 months ago.

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Starting in July with the public launch of Society's Past>Forward Campaign, more than 20 local luminaries from the fields of sports, entertainment and media (including, clockwise from left, actress Lily Tomlin, singer Martha Reeves and hockey hall of famer Gordie Howe) have cast their handprints and signatures in cement to be preserved in the Society's Legends Plaza, a new attraction opening outside the Detroit Historical Museum in Fall 2012 prior to our grand re-opening.



CAMPAIGN PLEDGES (as of 7/31/12)

Thanks to the individuals and organizations featured on this page, the third year of the Society's five-year comprehensive Past>Forward Campaign enabled us to pass the two-thirds mark toward our \$20.1 million goal with a total of \$14 million in pledges. A total of 55 new donors were added this year, bringing our overall total campaign donors to 116.

For that, we thank you.

If you have not yet made a personal gift, please join us at this critical time.

Contact our Campaign Director, Michelle Wooddell, at (313) 833-1627 to learn more.

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John A. and Marlene L. Boll (left) and Earl Stilson (right) have both given significant gifts to the Past>Forward Campaign in support of the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. The Boll's \$500,000 contribution via their foundation will support the complete redesign of the main gallery and installation of the new Built By the River permanent exhibition. Stilson's gift will enable the Society to enhance the pavilion housing the Miss Pepsi championship hydroplane and add a boat simulator experience at the Belle Isle attraction.



MISSION

The Detroit Historical Society educates and inspires our community and visitors by preserving and portraying our region's shared history through dynamic exhibits and experiences.

VISION

To create a shared sense of community and pride by celebrating the history and the unique culture of our region.



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(313) 833-1805



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