



Flowing With the Current

A Little History; A Lot of Vision

Updates by Laddie Elwell

The Vision –

Why did Headwaters Science Center happen to grow in Bemidji? There was never a loud call from the City's population that there was a great need for a science center, and the City "fathers" and the Chamber of Commerce weren't even aware that it was happening, nor did they, like most of the community, seem to care. Really, why should they have?

But that was about twenty years ago, and both City leaders and the Chamber are now supportive, as are a large number of people in the community! And who could have guessed that so many wonderful, and sometimes strange and/or hilarious, things would happen to bring us to the beginning of 2012?

In the early 1990's, there was a group of people in town who were aware that there were quite a few folks with interests in things other than sports and the arts... and that there were kids who had no place to go to enjoy recreational fun involving learning activities. Most of the thirty or so people who attended the first publicized meeting that led to the birth of HSC had grown up in places where they had access to museums, or they were taken to museums as children, and they wanted their kids and grandkids to enjoy museum experiences.

That's how it started. The former J.C. Penney building was just sitting around, being host to a few gigs, but not being fully utilized after the restaurant and hardware store moved out. Rosemary Given Amble helped us gain temporary access to it, and later she and Bud Amble, Bill Baumgartner, and John Baer helped us arrange a reasonable 5-year mortgage to buy the 413 Beltrami Avenue property. Those of us on the original working committee considered the old building to be a perfect startup site for a small science center: and it has been!

But what do we do at HSC—and what's our goal? Our mission states: *The Headwaters Science Center's mission is to provide intellectual stimulation and enjoyment for all children and adults in its northern Minnesota service area with scientific and technological interactive displays, exhibits, and programs otherwise unavailable in the region.* We do this, but it is an unexciting statement of the passion that those of us who work here feel about our real job.

Our real job is to help other people feel the wonder and excitement about how this very remarkable Universe we inhabit really works. Of course, we really don't understand how everything does work, but, between us all at HSC and our scientist friends, we know many of the answers to questions about a lot of things! And we also know that there are lots of things that NOBODY knows so far... and that is exciting. We know that the kids we work with will grow up in a very different

(Continued on page 2)



"I GAVE TEN" is the theme of the HSC fundraiser that began November 1, 2011. We are striving to motivate 4,000 supporters in our service area to donate a minimum of \$10 each to secure a matching donation of \$40,000 from an anonymous donor. This challenge has a December 15 deadline. Our ultimate goal is to raise \$100,000.

HSC receives no direct public funding. We depend on grants, donations, store sales, and fees to support an annual operating budget of \$229,000. Unfortunately, the current economic situation has depleted most grant opportunities and our current Director, Laddie Elwell, is retiring in February. Laddie has never received monetary compensation for her 18 years of dedicated service and we are now faced with finding salary support for a new director. We need your help to overcome these challenging times.

Here's what you can do to help make this a successful fundraising effort:

1. First, make a generous contribution. You can donate by mail, by phone with a credit card, or on-line with a credit card. (There is a link from our website to donate through the secure site at GiveMN.org.)
2. Talk to your friends about contributing; **spread the word on Facebook, Twitter and other media.**
3. Write a letter to the editor in your local paper explaining why HSC is important to you.



Please help us keep HSC functioning as a viable educational resource.

www.hscbemidji.org

Holiday Coupon

Bring this coupon into HSC
before December 31
and receive a 50¢ discount off each \$5
you spend on regularly-priced items
in our gift store!



(Flowing with the Current, continued from page 1)

world, and we want to help them understand how to make decisions by carefully weighing alternatives, the way scientists do in assessing the results of carefully conducted experiments. But we also hope that along the way they will learn to feel a kinship with the Universe, that they will see the magnificence in a butterfly's wing, the precision in the chemical activities of every green leaf, and the true wonder of our Earth and all its inhabitants.

My Vision for HSC –

- Within a few months: a new executive director, passionate and knowledgeable about science and science center roles in rural areas and university towns, and appreciative of diverse cultures.
- Within two to five years: building the new center we need.
- Now and into the future: a soundly functioning, challenging, exciting, and up-to-date science center that will serve northern Minnesota exceptionally well!

Reef News

Our saltwater reef tank is looking better than ever! We now have eight species of fish. Someday we may be able to add a goby for our pistol shrimp. Certain bottom-dwelling gobies share a symbiotic relationship with pistol shrimp in which each partner benefits. Having this fish would pretty well round out our fish population. We have 3 species of gorgonians, 6 mushrooms, a sand sifting starfish, and any number of other gorgeous corals. Our bubble tipped anemone has split again so we are back up to three of those. Our thanks to the people who have donated the stock and to the Reef Club for help in tank maintenance.

We seem to have beaten the aptasia problem with the introduction of the bristle tailed file fish, but we continue to fight the red slime algae. We had introduced a number of red legged hermit crabs to eat the red slime; unfortunately the blue legged hermits already established in the tank did not appreciate them and quickly depleted their numbers. Drama in tank life continues!

Welcome to HSC's New Board Members

HSC's Board members have 4-year terms, which were established not very long ago, and several members have served considerably longer than terms would have allowed. As a result of that, and because jobs and responsibilities change over time, there has been a big change on our Board. Michele Walker, DNR NW Regional Groundwater Specialist, joined the Board during the summer, and Mike Urban, who teaches science education at BSU, joined in September.

We are glad to welcome three new members who were accepted at the November meeting.

- Nate Dorr - Regional Labor Market Analyst with the Dept. of Employment and Economic Development
- John Mathisen - Member of HSC founding committee, Webmaster, Docent, Photographer, volunteer extraordinaire!
- Mel Milender- Retired Planning Administrator with the Joint Planning Board, Retired U.S. Army Intelligence Officer

Many thanks to former Board members Roger Davis, John Hawthorne, Paul Swenson, and Del Olson who left this year. We also still miss Board member Dann Siems, who died in the spring.

Instant Fundraising!

HSC has had the opportunity to do fundraising by staffing concession stands at the Sanford Center during events. It's fun, requires very little skill, and the Event Center supplies all the food, equipment, and management! What could be easier? Join our band of volunteers and help out at an event this winter! Available dates are:

Friday, Dec. 16

Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2012

Saturday, Dec. 17

Friday, Jan. 17, 2012

Call us at 218-444-4472 to volunteer!



Shop Our Gift Store

Why not begin your holiday shopping at HSC this year? It's where you'll find just what you want for kids and adults who have everything.

The store has recently been stocked with a healthy supply of old favorites as well as new items that will interest creative shoppers.

For **Safari Dinosaur** collectors, new to the group are Miragaia and Carnotaurus Dinosaurs. The new **GeoCentral** list is long, including Large Agate Slabe, Amethyst candle holders, and Rock Science Kits.

Be Amazing! - The **New Geyser Rocket Car** travels 200 feet or more (on Mentos!), as do the **Geyser Tubes**. We also have **Lab in a Bag Science Kits**, including Test Tube Wonders, Shaker Slime, The Science Behind Magic, Glow Chemistry, and Gravity Goo, and Blast of Color.

We've stocked up on **Awesome Card Games for the Entire Family**: S.E.T., Quiddler, Xactika, and Five Crowns. And as usual we have **Dowling Magnets, Crystal Growing Kits, Rock Tumblers**, and science kits galore!

You'll find the best **stocking stuffers** in town at HSC. Whether it's little things or big things, trinkets, books, or valuables, the selection is unique and the shopping is fun. **Use the coupon** on page 1 to receive 50¢ off every \$5 you spend if you're not a member, or if you are a member you'll receive a discount in addition to your regular one. It's hard to beat. Stop in soon!

Gifts for you.

Gifts for us.

Wish List

- Small safe
- 3-5" plastic plant pots
- Working musical instruments
- Hanging files folders in good condition
- Hole saw and blade set
- \$200.00 for a new table top laminator
- Square hay bale with no alfalfa
- Glass & steel marbles
- Lego people
- 2x3 ft. magnetic white board



TOTS

TOTS -N- SCIENCE



Every Wednesday from 10-11am young children along with their parents/ grandparents are getting together for some fun hands-on learning. In the fall we made animal tracks (including our own), figured out falling leaves, got up-close with some awesome creepy crawlies and found out what's in a seed. Join us for more explorations! Tots is for kids 3-6 years old accompanied by an adult. The cost is \$4 per child. Come and touch the science!

November

2 - Animals all around
9 - Treasure
16 - Senses
23 - Starlab
30 - Fur, fin, & feathers

January

4 - TBA
11 - Raptors/Birds
18 - Ant homes
25 - Good food & fitness

December

7 - Archaeology
14 - Reptiles
21 - What's cooking?
28 - No tots

February

1 - TBA
8 - Wonderful water
15 - Counting & sorting
22 - Spiders
29 - Who likes cold weather?



The date has changed!

In our October newsletter we named a date for our 2012 dinner fundraiser featuring the art and science of food. We have since moved the date a week earlier to Saturday, February 18, 2012 in order to avoid conflicts with other events in Bemidji.

For the third edition of "e-cubed" (**e³ III**), Headwaters Science Center will take *Dining at the next level* to completely new heights. This year, gourmet cooking will be a live experience! Our food buffets will be transformed into chef showcases, and we have already lined up some experienced area chefs who will prepare foods on site and interact with guests to truly share the art and science of food with all in attendance. Chef Michael Holleman of Indian Harvest is coordinating the food and will be helping us make this into a real culinary exhibition.

Tickets will go on sale at HSC beginning January 13. Be sure to mark your calendars, and if you are a chef or know a good one, give us a call soon so we can include you in our planning and advertising. The atmosphere will be **e**xcellent and the guests will be **e**nthused to try out your latest creation!

Robotics

Robotics at HSC has become very popular and the kids keep on coming. This Autumn we have more builders than ever before, with four First Lego League teams in two divisions from second to eighth grade that are now busily preparing to compete December 10 in Northome at the Northern Regional Robotics Tournament. Our theme this year is food safety and each team will devise a strategy to address this issue. Our obstacle board is comprised of a plethora of food hazards which our robots will deal with by means of pre-programmed artificial intelligence. Wish our young robotic engineers luck, for if they pass through regionals they will earn a bid at the Minnesota State Robotics Tournament with a chance to go to the Nationals!



Fundraising Results

Minnesota's "Give to the Max Day" was November 16, and what a day it was for HSC! To date we have collected \$8120 through GiveMN.

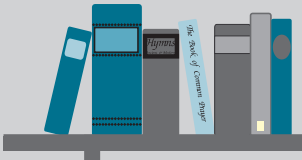
Our "I Gave Ten" campaign has been running since November 1, and as this newsletter goes to press we have brought in \$2500 from donors who gave \$10 or more. This is in addition to the GiveMN results!

The **Ann Mathisen memorial fund** is now at \$1010. Ann was a loyal and valuable volunteer throughout HSC's history. She managed the wildflower exhibit and donated the collection on the history of stamps.

Other donations in the last few weeks have totaled \$4806. This includes \$1100 that HSC won in a contest hosted by KARE 11 on 11/11/11 through a drawing of support letters written for HSC!

That gives us \$16,436 so far toward our \$40,000 matching challenge. We have a good distance to go, but we are feeling energetic and remain confident that strong support is out there.

You can continue to donate online through GiveMN via our website. It's safe and secure, and your credit card dollars will go directly to HSC. Check out our creative window display in front of the Center to track our fundraising progress!



the Book Nook

Winter is upon us! Spend some of those cozy evenings by the fire with a selection from our Klutz activity books. We carry a wide selection of Klutz books. Do you like art and drawing? Learn to make spiral designs, draw super heroes or make personalized, handmade greeting cards. Like games and puzzles? Learn to juggle, make fancy paper airplanes, and play card games. Like science and building? Make some action contraptions, build a bristle bot, or have some fun with battery science. Klutz books are both educational and fun. They make a long evening go quickly and make excellent gifts.

SCIENCE BITES

A bucket full of water contains more atoms than there are bucketfuls of water in the Atlantic Ocean.



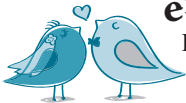


Girl and Boy Scout Activities

Scout leaders, are you interested in bringing your troop to the Science Center for an outing? We have group rates for the exhibit floor and we have programs and activities geared to fulfilling badge requirements. Topics available include but are not limited to: stars and sky, weather, senses, animals and, of course, science!

HSC's First Wedding!

- We are excited to announce that HSC will host its first wedding reception in March, 2012! It's true. We were approached by a member who thought our facility would offer the perfect combination of open space, entertainment, and . . . elegance? Yes—the reception will happen a couple of weeks after e³, so we'll leave the decor in place. If you haven't seen HSC looking elegant, be sure to attend e³ on February 18 and you'll be amazed by the transformation!



Annual Memberships:

Individual - \$40 Family - \$65

Entry Fees for Non-Members:

Children ages 2-11 - \$4.00

Adults and youngsters 12 and over - \$5.00

Children under 10 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian

Please inquire about fees for groups, birthday parties, or other special events that you might require!

Annual Membership benefits include:

*Free unlimited entry to the exhibit floor

*Discount of 50 cents on every \$5 purchase

*Reduction in many program fees

*Admission to 322 other science centers or museums throughout the United States.

To become a member, stop in to pick up your membership cards, or clip and fill out the form on page 4 of this newsletter and we'll be happy to mail them to you!

www.hscbemidji.org

Headwaters Science Center Personnel

Executive Director: Laddie Elwell

Financial Officer: Jim Elwell

Board of Directors:

Wendy Greenberg, President

Nate Dorr

Jack Judkins

Kurt Long-Voelkner

John Mathisen

Mel Milender

Greg Oja

Mike Urban

Michele Walker

Floor Director: Chris Tolman

Store Manager: Peggy Nygaard

RiverWatch: James Owens

Volunteer Coordinator: Kitura Main

Newsletter: Julie Bengtson

Collections: Anita Merritt

Webmaster: John Mathisen

HSC Engineer: Frank Hazard

If you are receiving *The Current* for the first time or are a new member of Headwaters Science Center and you would like more information about the Center, please call us at (218) 444-4472 or stop in at 413 Beltrami Avenue NW, Bemidji, Minnesota.

HOURS

Monday through Saturday • 9:30 - 5:30 Sunday • 1:00 - 5:00
(Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day, & Easter)

Our Mission . . .

The Headwaters Science Center's mission is to provide intellectual stimulation and enjoyment for all children and adults in its northern Minnesota service area with scientific and technological interactive displays, exhibits, and programs otherwise unavailable in the region. The Center will work with regional educational organizations and relevant community entities to assure that exhibits and activities will enhance and supplement educational programs.