



## 2020 Annual Report

It's been quite a year. Though everything turned upside down, MAEOE stayed afloat and accomplished a great many things. Early in 2020 (what I like to call "the great before"), we did what we do best - we sponsored a successful Nature Center Summit, hosted our 2nd Wildlife Weekend and exhibited at Quiet Water Adventures and the MSTA conference. MAEOE continues to have a prominent presence at MSTA, with well attended sessions in the MAEOE room and many enthusiastic visitors at our booth in the exhibit hall. Shortly after this event in March, the board voted to partner with the DNR to fund the MiPINES online map development and committed to hire outside agencies to assist with two other major projects: a new website and a formal strategic plan. And then Covid hit.



In response to the survey we sent our members in April asking how we could provide support, we hosted our first virtual event, Programming in a Pandemic, with 5 panelists

and 80 participants. Thus began our journey into virtual programming. When our conference on Beaver Island was cancelled, we planned a one day version at the RAM and when that was cancelled, we offered 5 virtual programs throughout September, including our annual membership meeting. In addition, we successfully elicited member approval to change a bylaw to allow the first ever online election for new board members. We also enhanced our virtual presence on social media,



establishing new accounts on Twitter and Instagram and increasing our visibility on Facebook.

Throughout all of these shifts, we maintained the work that we always do to support fellow EE/OE educators. We streamlined the grant review process to more effectively select deserving proposals and gave \$3500 towards 7 projects around the state. The EEC now boasts 175 participants in the program and 24 graduates, 5 of which presented their capstone projects online this year. We also granted 30 free MAEOE memberships to Detroit area teachers with plans to follow-up and elicit input for retention and improved member experiences. To fulfill a grant we received from the NAAEE, we successfully co-hosted Guidelines for Excellence professional development workshops and created the MI NAAEE Guidelines Trainers Bureau.



All of this was accomplished alongside normal committee work, the outcomes of which included ideas for more inclusive conference experiences, EEC participant support and membership recruitment, as well as the hiring of a part time bookkeeper. On top of that, ad-hoc committees were established to work with folks from Anti Gravity in the development of our new website and Omni Tech in the creation of our strategic plan. Though our membership numbers and finances took a small hit from not hosting our annual conference, we believe the investment in these two endeavors will increase our visibility throughout the state, enhance member experiences and provide a clear path for moving forward.



MAEOE is ready to grow and we've planted some hardy seeds in 2020. Here's hoping 2021 provides the sunlight and nourishment necessary to make that happen.

