Almost a year ago, a team of community volunteers, Museum staff, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College faculty and administrators gathered for a series of meetings to dream, discuss, and establish a Strategic Plan 2012-2017 for the Museum. The process included a critical review of the Museum’s current operation to better understand our many successes and to identify areas for improvement. As the Strategic Plan evolved, six major initiatives emerged, with each supporting at its core the desire to be more inclusive and to serve broader, more diverse audiences. The Museum, as part of KVCC, for years has recognized the importance of maintaining collections and producing programs that are relevant to the community we serve. The new Strategic Plan, as an institutional “road map,” is more intentional in our desire to be more inclusive.

This fall, two special exhibits will be featured: Good Design: Stories from Herman Miller, September 9, 2012 – January 27, 2013, and Brain Teasers 2, October 6, 2012 – January 6, 2013.

Good Design explores the collaborative problem solving design process employed at the world-renowned furniture company Herman Miller, Inc. The exhibit uses vintage and contemporary product displays, storyboard installations, and audiovisual recorded interviews with modern masters of design. John R. Berry, author and curator of the exhibit, calls design “a noun, a verb, and a problem solving process. It is art with a purpose.” The exhibit features iconic furniture design that most of us will recognize even if we don’t know the designers’ names.

Brain Teasers 2 features 21 challenges for puzzle enthusiasts of all ages. The fun exhibit is designed to sharpen problem solving skills. Brain twisters include unraveling mathematical conundrums, separating and reassembling linked objects, arranging geometric shapes to form new ones, and much more. This brightly-colored exhibit appeals to all ages and encourages families to team up to solve the puzzles.

In addition to the special exhibits, be sure to check out the Museum’s permanent interactive exhibits and wide variety of fall programs. The offerings include Friday Night Highlights, Art Hops, Chemistry Day, Safe Halloween, planetarium shows, Sunday Lecture Series, Hands-On events, and much more. Find details at kalamazoomuseum.org. museON, everyone!

Bill McElhone
To Blog or Not to Blog

In the age of new technologies, no longer are museums limited to exhibits as the main method of sharing information. At this museum, with its website revamped in the fall of 2011, we thought it the perfect opportunity to begin sharing information through blogging! To some of the “older” staff, this was quite a foreign concept, but we have embraced it and are moving forward.

The planetarium blog offers tantalizing tidbits of information about astronomical events and space exploration trivia, as well as comments on the climate and weather. Of course, there we also promote the exciting programs shown in the Digistar 4 planetarium.

For history blogs, we are using letters and diaries from the Museum’s collection. In conjunction with our recent exhibit, Remember Me: Civil War Portraits, we posted the letters of Private Harrison DeWaters of Oshkosh. The letters he wrote home to his family trace his service from late 1861 through the spring of 1865. We added introductory commentary that placed his experiences in historical context.

This summer and fall, we are blogging the letters of Charles F. Cook of Charleston Township. Next year, we will begin posting the letters of Spencer McOmber of Kalamazoo. Throughout the observance of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, we will continue using the stories of men from our region as told in their own words.

For those more interested in daily life, we have added a blog using the diaries of Claire Wight, a talented and ambitious young woman. Claire played mandolin and was a star tennis player at Kalamazoo College in the early 1900s. Her diary entries offer a teenager’s view of Kalamazoo a century ago. (An article about Claire is featured in our Summer 2010 issue of Museography, Vol. 9, Issue 3.)

Start with the earliest letter or diary entry in the blogs so you can follow each story from beginning to end. To access the blogs on kalamazoomuseum.org, go to Quick Links at the bottom of the page, then click Museum Blogs. You’ll arrive at the Planetarium Blog with entry points along the top of the page for Diaries of Claire Wight and Civil War Letters and Diaries.

Happy reading!
The name Herman Miller is well-known as a manufacturer of furniture that revolutionized American business offices in the mid-20th century. Yet Herman Miller himself was not a designer. The company that bears his name, however, is legendary for its innovative approach to furniture design.

In 1923, Dirk Jan De Pree, President of the Michigan Star Furniture Company of Zeeland, persuaded his father-in-law to purchase a majority share of the company’s stock. As an inducement, he promised to rename the firm the Herman Miller Furniture Company. As had Michigan Star, the company initially designed and manufactured traditional household furniture.

When the company struggled during the Great Depression, Gilbert Rhode of New York approached De Pree with a radical proposal—abandon traditional furniture in favor of more modern designs. De Pree’s decision to do so not only saved the company, but Rhode’s Executive Office Group line introduced a systems approach to office furniture. Interchangeable components could be configured to meet individual needs.

On September 9, the Kalamazoo Valley Museum will open an exhibit that celebrates the history of the Herman Miller Furniture Company and the impact its creative designers have had on American furniture. Good Design: Stories from Herman Miller spotlights the contributions of the company’s designers.

George Nelson created the Marshmallow Sofa in 1956.

The LCW (Low Chair Wood) was designed by Charles and Ray Eames. Herman Miller has produced the chair since 1946.
Explore the process of creating new ideas. These stories are intended to provide inspiration to us as individuals and as organizations to find new ways to re-generate, adapt, and grow in these times of economic and environmental change.

JOHN BERRY, GUEST CURATOR

Designed by Bill Stumpf and Don Chadwick, the Aeron Chair is still the most popular chair for the work environment.

HERMAN MILLER EXTRAS
Hop down to the KVM on October 5 during Art Hop for an exhibit walk-through with Museum staff.

Join us at the KIA and in this exhibit for a program on Eames design, December 12.

Details available at kalamazoomuseum.org
In 1832, two Kalamazoo County pioneers, E. Laiken Brown and Cyrus Lovell, decided one summer afternoon to excavate the Native American mound located in what is now Bronson Park. Forty years later, Brown wrote, “We discovered nothing whatsoever – no bones, no pottery, no implements or relics of any kind.”

While the Bronson Park mound may be the best-known example in the region, there were many others throughout Kalamazoo County. The 19th and early 20th century histories of the County record mounds in Richland, Cooper, and Comstock Townships, including one on an island in the Kalamazoo River now submerged in Morrow Lake. In Climax Township, one mound, known as the “Old Fort,” was surrounded by a dry moat.

Other evidence of earlier human life in the County included large earthworks that the settlers called “garden beds” because their geometric patterns reminded them of formal gardens. These could also be found throughout the county and, in the reports of Henry Little, another early pioneer, covered as much as ten acres south of Bronson Park.

Nineteenth century writers who described the mounds and the garden beds were uncertain of their purpose. They were dismissive of the notion that the then-current native of Southwest Michigan had created them and ascribed them to some bygone “superior” race. They further said that the Anishnabek (the Odawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi of the Great Lakes region) claimed that they had neither built them nor knew who had done so or for what reason.

Uncovering INDIAN ARCHEOLOGY
Over the course of the first 50 – 75 years after American settlers arrived, virtually all of these archaeological features were destroyed, usually by farmers expanding their fields. Line drawings and written accounts are all that remain. Even the mound in Bronson Park has been excavated and reconstructed so frequently—for a time, it was excavated and used as a root cellar to store vegetables for the County Jail—that it cannot be considered a genuine Native American structure.

In the 19th century, little thought was given to the preservation or proper archaeological exploration of the mounds and garden beds. The American settlers were anxious to develop farms and cities and were not troubled by the destruction of what might have proven valuable evidence of how earlier peoples had lived. When they found artifacts or even human remains, they reused the implements and discarded bones.

The 1869 Kalamazoo County Directory described the construction of the River House in 1834. “In excavating for the cellar for this hotel, a great number of Indian skeletons and loose bones were met with, which were thrown into the river.” Brass kettles and other domestic artifacts were also found and, according to the Directory, “some of the kettles … were again pressed into kitchen service.”

This location, near where the Michigan Avenue bridge crosses the Kalamazoo River today, was one of at least three Native American burial grounds in the downtown area. Another was located on the northwest corner of Park Street and Kalamazoo Avenue, while a third was found on the northwest corner of Rose Street and Michigan Avenue. Beyond the disrespect shown for these cemeteries, the early residents destroyed potentially valuable archaeological evidence.

Modern methods and techniques, as well as a recognition of the importance of the precise location in which artifacts are found at an archaeological site, would not have been widely known in the early 19th century. Today, however, when these sites are encountered, scholars and researchers work with native cultural groups to ensure respectful and careful exploration.

Not surprisingly, professional archaeologists are dismayed when popular television shows and hobbies like metal detecting often encourage the careless search for historical and even pre-historic materials. Our knowledge of the past might have been significantly richer had 19th century settlers known how, and taken care, to protect the archaeological evidence that was so visible in and on the land after the native peoples had been displaced.
Motorists driving in parts of Michigan might be surprised to encounter wind turbines slowly turning in the breeze. These giant machines generate electricity without relying on fossil fuels. Their importance has increased so significantly that Kalamazoo Valley Community College offers a Wind Turbine Technician Academy to train workers to service turbines.

Casual observers often refer to turbines as windmills. Residents of Kalamazoo could easily be forgiven for using that terminology because in the 19th century, the city was one of the three leading centers for windmill manufacturing in the United States. Chicago and Batavia, Illinois were Kalamazoo’s rivals, and in 1903, the Kalamazoo Gazette was calling Kalamazoo “The Windmill City of Michigan.”

Today’s turbines harness the wind to generate electrical power. Nineteenth century windmills also used the wind to generate power, just not electrical power. In a time before electric motors or internal combustion engines, windmills provided power for many chores on a farm.

In 1860, William H. Pendleton was a Kalamazoo manufacturer of pumps. Pumps were essential farm equipment, needed to provide water not only for household use but to feed livestock and to irrigate crops. Since windmills provided power for the pumps, it is not surprising that a pump dealer would get into the business of manufacturing windmills.

Pendleton, together with Bradley S. Williams, Kirk A. Smith, and Charles M. Hobbs, organized Pendleton, Williams, & Company in 1867 to sell and install windmills, pumps, and other agricultural equipment. In 1873, Pendleton and Hobbs sold their interest in the business, and it became known as Williams & Smith. It would eventually be called B. S. Williams & Company when Kirk Smith left to form his own company, known first as Smith & Woodward and later as Smith & Pomeroy.

In 1875, Horace Phelps and Melville J. Bigelow started the firm of Phelps & Bigelow, which manufactured the I-X-L windmill. Named for the company president, Homer Manvel, B. S. Williams Company’s best-known model may have been the Manvel, while Kirk Smith’s firm made the Eureka.

While these were the “Big Three” of local windmill manufacturers, they were not alone. Leroy Cahill incorporated the Bird Windmill Company in 1883. Samuel Barlow, George P. Youmans, and Ransom E. Strait organized Barlow & Youmans, later known as the Galesburg Wind Mill Company, in 1880.

By the early 20th century, the windmill industry was in decline. Pumps increasingly were powered by small engines. Of Kalamazoo’s windmill manufacturers, only one would survive. To do so, it changed its product line.

In 1904, B. S. Williams Company, together with Phelps & Bigelow and Smith & Pomeroy, organized Riverside Foundry to produce the steel needed for the windmill blades as well as the tanks and silos the companies produced. In 1913, B.S. Williams Company bought out the other two partners and reorganized as Kalamazoo Tank and Silo Company. Over the following decades, the company’s product line evolved from silos to clay tile tanks (used by the paper industry) and finally to band saws. In 1994, KTS Industries closed its doors nearly 125 years after the first windmills were manufactured in Kalamazoo.

**SCIENCE OF WIND ENERGY**

Windmills operate with wind energy. But what makes wind?

Land and sea absorb different amounts of solar energy. Depending on the material and energy absorbed, these surfaces unevenly heat the air. Uneven heating causes winds, which balance the energy.

Tropical air rises while polar air descends, establishing a surface flow from the poles to the equator and a high altitude flow from the equator to the poles. Earth’s rotation twists winds to flow from the east in tropical and polar regions and from the west at mid-latitudes. Large bodies of water hold heat better than land, making offshore sea breezes in the morning and onshore breezes in the evening. Terrain features alter winds on smaller scales.

Moving air has momentum – stored energy. That energy can do work. Sails move boats, and windmills turn wheels to grind grain, pump water, or power machinery. Today, wind turbines turn generators to create electricity.
KALAMAZOO’S FUTURE IN WIND

The city’s wind energy legacy was rekindled with the addition of wind energy technology classes at Kalamazoo Valley’s Texas Township Campus and the opening of the Wind Turbine Technician Academy at the Groves Campus in 2009. The college was the first educational institution in the nation to establish a training center for technicians who work on utility-sized turbines clustered on wind farms.

Kalamazoo Valley remains a leader in the industry and the Academy is certified by Bildungszentrum fur Erneuerbare Energien (BZEE), which translates to “Renewable Energy Education Center.” BZEE is the leading trainer for wind-turbine technicians across Europe.

Twice a year, the WTTA offers a 26-week-long training academy. Graduates of the program gain skills needed for employment in the wind energy industry. Most technicians receive job offers before their classes end.

KVCC has a functioning wind turbine on the Texas Township campus to train students in their Wind Turbine Technician Academy.

Watch the WTTA video!
Political
MEMORABILIA

With another presidential election upon us, let’s look at some of the political memorabilia added to the Museum’s collection since 2007.

KENNEDY PHOTO

John F. Kennedy’s brief campaign stop in Kalamazoo on October 14, 1960, included a speech in front of City Hall. Kalamazoo photographer Lance Ferraro captured this photo.

COMMEMORATIVE PLATE

Jim Gilmore, Jr. was a staunch Republican and collector of memorabilia related to events he attended and friendships he cultivated. Among his collection of political souvenirs is this gold-trimmed porcelain plate commemorating the inauguration of George H. W. Bush on January 20, 1989.
ROOSEVELT PIN
This button dates to Franklin D. Roosevelt’s second presidential campaign in 1936. He was ultimately elected to a record 4 terms, leading the country through the Great Depression and World War II.

MCCARTHY DRESS
Campaign worker Sally Getman made this dress and wore it while passing out materials at the New Vic Theater in Kalamazoo during the 1968 presidential campaign of Democrat Eugene McCarthy.

WENDELL WILLKIE PHOTO
In a 5-week campaign tour of the Midwest and East Coast, Republican candidate Wendell Willkie made a 10 minute stop in Kalamazoo on Monday September 30th, 1940. Among his messages was “The time has come for the people to give to the government.”

LAFOLETTE PIN
Progressive Party candidates Robert M. LaFollette, of Wisconsin and Burton K. Wheeler, of Montana ran on a platform of outlawing child labor, stronger laws to help labor unions, and more protection of civil liberties. They came in third behind Democrat John Davis and incumbent President Calvin Coolidge in the 1924 election.
For most Kalamazoo County residents, Labor Day marks the end of summer. As the kids get ready for the new school year and parents put summer leisure equipment away, few stop to think about the origins of the holiday. Fewer still reflect on how Kalamazoo celebrated the first Labor Day.

Congress established Labor Day as a national holiday in 1894. The origin of the holiday was a decade earlier, when New York City’s Central Labor Union encouraged local workers not to work on the first Monday of September in 1882. Some 30,000 laborers heeded the call and participated in a parade through the city’s streets to showcase the importance of labor in America’s booming economy. The practice quickly spread to other cities.

Kalamazoo workers were not as quick to organize the holiday. In 1887, the Kalamazoo Gazette reported that “the labor people of Kalamazoo were too busy attending to their own business to spend their time parading the streets on the labor day. And their heads were exactly level.” Two years later, both the Gazette and the Kalamazoo Daily Telegraph were praising the holiday and the contributions of workers to American prosperity.

By August 1889, the newspapers offered daily reports on the efforts of Kalamazoo’s Central Labor Union to organize a parade and festivities to mark the informal holiday. “The celebration of Labor Day in this city will not be one of the usual cheap affairs,” the Gazette assured its local readers.

Organizers planned a large parade for the morning with a full afternoon of activities at the old National Fair Grounds at Portage Street near today’s Stockbridge Avenue. The highlights of the celebration included a baseball game between Kalamazoo and Saginaw of the Michigan State League and a hot air balloon launch and parachute jump.

This first celebration was not exclusively for Kalamazoo’s union members. All workers were welcome to participate, regardless of union affiliation, and all employers of labor were invited to enter floats in the parade and to exhibit their wares at the fairgrounds. The Kalamazoo Light Guard, Fire Department, and local bands also participated.


Labor Day
A GRAND CELEBRATION

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Unions and workers from the surrounding area also joined in. The railroads added cars to their service for the day and offered a special fare. Kalamazoo’s first Labor Day celebration included representatives from Battle Creek, Dowagiac, Niles, St. Joseph, and other localities.

Monday, September 2, 1889 arrived, and, with the exception of a brief shower around noon, the festivities proved all that the organizers hoped for. At 10 o’clock, the parade assembled near the Grand Rapids and Indiana depot at Pitcher and Main Streets. The bands, floats, and workers marched through the city streets to Bronson Park, where the ceremonies began. The marchers and spectators heard speeches by Charles Holt, President of the Cigar Makers Union, and Fred Cellem, President of the City Council.

Following the ceremonies, more than 2500 people headed for the fairgrounds, where, at 2:30, a variety of contests were scheduled. After these preliminaries, the Kalamazoo Kazoos baseball team took on the Saginaw team. The Kazoos lost 2-1 although they allowed only 2 hits, one a homerun that landed on the roof of a carriage. It was the last game the Kazoos played, as a dispute over splitting the ticket revenues led the team to abandon Kalamazoo and move to Flint.

After the game, Professor W. W. McEwan, a well-known aeronaut, inflated his hot air balloon and ascended to a height sufficient to allow for a parachute jump. He did so successfully, landing in a cornfield on Lake Street north of the fairgrounds. The day concluded with a formal ball at the German Turnverein Hall.

Over the next two decades, local unions continued to organize parades and celebrations. In the mid-1890s, residential development closed the old fairgrounds, and the activities were moved to Long Lake. In the 1900s, Oakwood Park hosted the festivities.

By the mid-1910s, the annual celebration rated little more than a notice in the local papers. Instead, it was not uncommon to read that local residents spent the holiday taking train excursions to Lake Michigan. A quarter-century after the first observance in Kalamazoo, the pattern of Labor Day as a last summer weekend of relaxation, rather than a celebration of workers, had become widely accepted.
For the past several years, the KVM has been conducting oral history interviews in Southwest Michigan. In the near future, those interviews will be available for researchers or anyone interested in hearing stories from diverse voices in our region. But what are oral histories and how do they fit in our understanding of the region’s history?

We are all familiar with news accounts of major events, like that of the 1980 tornado that swept through downtown Kalamazoo or President Obama’s commencement address to Kalamazoo Central students in 2010. But an oral history is much more than an account of an event; it is the story of one person’s experience of an event or their broader life circumstance.

Why do we care about one person’s experience? We are drawn to them because most of us love a good story and because they can resonate with our own life experiences. When Bangor High School students interviewed former migrant worker Baudelia Aleman, it allowed the rest of us to listen to her story of struggle and triumph. The specifics of her story might be vastly different from our own, but the tale of hardships, hard work, and success resonate with all who’ve experienced or witnessed it.

Similarly, Sydney Martin speaks with pride of her Potawatomi heritage and the long road she and other Native Americans have traversed to recover native traditions and language. Her story offers an opportunity for many to connect with their own cultural heritages. Or, as you listen to members of the Congregation of Moses speak about their mothers’ work to send care packages to soldiers who were fighting Hitler’s armies in Europe, you may find yourself thinking differently about that war and what it meant to those directly affected by it.

Oral histories add depth, personality, and local connections to a story. Oral histories have been used in several exhibits at the KVM such as “Kalamazoo Direct to You,” “Meet the Velvelettes,” “Tesoros,” and “Uneasy Years: Michigan Jewry During Depression and War.” In each case, they provide a human perspective that makes history relevant.

Museum staff hope to continue gathering oral histories for many years to come. As the interviews are transcribed into written documents, they will be available on our website, along with video clips and photographs of the subjects.

Randal Wall, interviewed in the old Gibson factory building, discusses his days working at the Gibson and Heritage guitar companies.

Watch Ren Wall’s Oral History video!

voices of history capturinG the
WHAT IS IT?

Here is a clue—these are all "guy things." What are they?
(Answers below)

1. A shoeshine foot rest. This Griffin Self Shine Foot Rest was probably used by a shoe shiner who moved from one location to another rather than being stationed in a single location like a hotel lobby or barber shop. This particular foot rest, patented in 1923, probably came with a carrying box fitted with compartments for bottles of polish and brushes.

2. A razor strop. It was used to keep straight razors smooth and polished. After sharpening the razor on a hone—stone used for sharpening blades—the razor is quickly stroked back and forth over a leather strop to give it a very sharp edge. On this strop from the Bay State Strop Company of Worcester, Mass., the leather surrounds the wooden block at the center. The shape of this strop is typical of those made by the Bay State Strop Company of Worcester, Mass., the leader in strop manufacture in the late 19th century.

3. A visiting card case. Visiting cards were used by the upper classes of Europe and the United States and were very popular in the 19th century. A person hoping to visit another in their home was first expected to leave a visiting card. If a visit was welcomed, the recipient would return his/her visiting card to the other's home.

It helped keep something sharp. What is it?

The shape might give this one away. It's a portable item. What is it?

It carried something small and narrow. What is it?
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

GOOD DESIGN STORIES FROM HERMAN MILLER

September 9–January 27
Explore the design process used by the famed West Michigan-based furniture company. See both vintage and contemporary furnishings created through the company’s collaborative problem-solving work environment.

This exhibit was organized by the Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan, in collaboration with The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan, through the support of Herman Miller, Inc.

HANDS-ON HAPPENINGS

Brain Teasers 2

October 6–January 6
Visitors of all ages will have fun with 21 hands-on puzzles designed to develop problem-solving skills.

This exhibit is from the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

from Here to Timbuktu: A Journey Through West Africa

Adventure through West Africa’s spectacular and diverse geographic regions.

This exhibit is organized by EdVenture Children’s Museum and made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museums and Library Services.

ALL HANDS-ON PROGRAMS ARE FREE! Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for details on all programs.

PLANETARIUM

All shows listed begin June 16
$3 per person for all shows

FEATURE SHOWS

Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun at 3 pm

Wonderful Worlds (Sept 22–Nov 21)
Explore the Wonderful Worlds of our Solar System using the interactive keypads at every seat. Each planet is revealed as it appears from your backyard, from orbit, and from its surface.

Mystery of the Christmas Star (Nov 23–Jan 6)
Journey back 2000 years to Bethlehem as we seek to discover a scientific explanation for the star the wise men followed to find the baby Jesus.

FAMILY SHOWS

Mon–Fri at 11 am, Sat at 1 pm, Sun at 2 pm

The Little Star That Could (Sep 22 – Nov 21)
A sweet animated story about a little star that is born and searches for place in space to call home, as well as a name and some planets to keep him company along the way.

Season of Light (Nov 23 – Jan 6)
Explore how fires, candles, Christmas trees and even Santa Claus became a part of our holiday season. Learn about astronomical events that may account for the Star of Bethlehem.

SEASONAL STARGAZING SHOW

Saturdays at 2 pm

Starry Messenger (Sep 22 – Dec 21)
Orion Nights (Dec 22 – Mar 22)

LASER LIGHT SHOWS IN THE PLANETARIUM:

Every Friday night at 8:30 pm

Led Zeppelin (Oct 5 – Dec 28)
Experience many of Led Zeppelin’s classics in 5.1 surround sound set to immersive and surrealistic computer-generated effects.
SUNDAY SERIES
Mary Jane Stryker Theater

All programs begin at 1:30 pm and are FREE! Seating is limited.

September 9 Labor Day Celebrations in Kalamazoo – The Early Years
This program explores the history of Labor Day in Kalamazoo at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

September 23 The Things of History
We will take a look at some of the hidden treasures and oddities in the Museum’s collection that are not on display.

September 30 Gather at the Table
Film and discussion: Traces of the Trade. This film follows nine members of a New England family on a remarkable journey which brings them face to face with the history and legacy of their family’s hidden slavery enterprise.

October 21 Early Football in Kalamazoo
In this program, we will look at the early history of football in Kalamazoo from the late 19th century to the 1920s.

October 28 Kalamazoo Celebrates Halloween
Explore how residents of Kalamazoo celebrated Halloween in the 19th century, and learn about some noted ghost legends of the past.

November 11 Socialism in One City: The 1912 Kalamazoo Municipal Elections
Tom Dietz, Curator of Research, will discuss the history of the local Socialist Party and, in particular, the role of Guy Lockwood in these elections.

December 9 The Holiday Season in 19th Century Kalamazoo
Look back at 19th century observances of Christmas and New Year’s Day and compare to the customs and traditions of today.

CHALLENGER LEARNING CENTER
In memory of Alvin H. and Emily T. Little

The CLC is a space-flight simulation experience for all ages. Go to our website for details on public program dates and times and to make reservations for groups.

The Challenger Experience
$3 per person
Young children and their grown-ups lift off from Earth, dock with a space station, and return to Earth – all in 20 minutes! Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Mini-Missions
$3 per person
This 45-minute session in the spacecraft simulator will fly you to Mars and back. For ages 8 and up; each child aged 8 to 11 must be accompanied by a partner aged 12 or older.

The following missions are available by reservation only; call or go online for details

Junior Missions
$5 per person
90-minute missions designed for small groups of up to 14 participants, ages 8 and up.

Full Crew Missions
$25 per person
This 3-hour program is designed to build teamwork and leadership skills for adults or students in grades 5 and up.

MUSIC, MOVIES AND MORE
Mary Jane Stryker Theater

First Sunday Jam with Kalamazoo Folklife Organization, 1:30-4:30 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT HIGHLIGHTS
Movies, concerts, Art Hops, special events, and laser light shows every Friday night! Check kalamazoomuseum.org for details on all offerings.

Live music and movies begin at 7 pm, $5 Art Hop events begin at 5:30 pm, FREE

October 5 Art Hop Branden Mann and The Reprimand (Folk, Rock, Blues, Jam, Alt-Country, Hip-Hop)

October 12 Billy Bynum & Co. (Americana, Bluegrass, Country)

October 19 Faces of America (Movie)

October 26 Venice Gas House Trolley (Cerebral Groovalicious Existential Sacred Fusion Rock)

November 2 Art Hop Matt Gabriel Trio (Folk, Blues, Rock and Roll)

November 9 Just the Facts: U.S. History: Native Americans (Movie)

November 16 The Turnips (Roots, Rock, Folk, Blues, Americana, Jazz)

November 23 Lidia Celebrates America: Holiday Tables and Traditions (Movie)

November 30 StikyFüt (Alternative/Blues/Rock/Funk)

December 7 Art Hop Kalamazoo Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra

December 14 The Mushmen (Ska-Core)

December 28 America Revealed (Movie)
The Kalamazoo region is home to many well-known products – taxi cabs, guitars, medicine, hospital beds, and bedding plants, just to name a few. One product that spread the city’s fame across the country was a pump organ. The Blakeman & Gibbs Company began production in 1855. By 1869, Delos Phillips took ownership as the Star Organ Company.

The Museum received its first Star organ in 1975, another in 1999, and this year our third, donated by Dr. Verna Porter Buxton and Dr. Lawrence Vredevoe, both of California.

The DeVries Family of Drenthe, Michigan, circa 1910. Anna (top row 2nd from the right) purchased the organ from her uncle’s wife around 1900 and brought it to the family home.

A Real “Star”

The Kalamazoo region is home to many well-known products – taxi cabs, guitars, medicine, hospital beds, and bedding plants, just to name a few. One product that spread the city’s fame across the country was a pump organ. The Blakeman & Gibbs Company began production in 1855. By 1869, Delos Phillips took ownership as the Star Organ Company.

The Museum received its first Star organ in 1975, another in 1999, and this year our third, donated by Dr. Verna Porter Buxton and Dr. Lawrence Vredevoe, both of California.

While our other organs are equally nice, this one is special because it was owned by one family for the last 140 years. According to family stories, Buxton and Vredevoe’s ancestors, Henry and Kate Riemersma of Kalamazoo, purchased the organ around 1870 for $200 (about $3,500 in today’s dollar). When Henry died in 1895, Kate sold it to her husband’s great-niece, Anna DeVries. The DeVries family used it in their home in Drenthe, Michigan – a small community in Ottawa County. In 1976, family members moved it to California, where it stayed until it came to the Museum this year.

According to Vredevoe, “Jane De Vries and most of her eight children learned to play the organ, and my mother told me how they would sit in the parlor of the Drenthe house on Sundays after church and play hymns.”

Though the organ is no longer playable, it is a fine example of an early Kalamazoo-made product, with a little family history to boot!
**Holiday Hands-On Happenings**

December 31–January 4
Daily 1–4 pm **FREE**

This Belongs in a Museum!
Create a variety of objects that show change over time.

**December 31**
**Does Anyone Know What Time It Is?**
Create watches, clocks, and other items used to measure time.

**January 1**
**I’d Wear That!**
Check out old-fashioned clothing, hats, and jewelry that you might wear today.

**January 2**
**What Does That Do?**
Technology is constantly changing. Some gadgets will have you wondering what they were used for!

**January 3**
**Look What I Found!**
Treasures can be found in all kinds of places, like attics, barns—and museums.

**January 4**
**Secret Messages**
Decorate a diary and create pictures, postcards, letters, and more!

*Additional programs: check our website for additional Planetarium shows and Challenger Experience offerings.*
DISCOVER DOWNTOWN’S CHEAPEST DATE.

Friday Night Highlights are filled with movies, concerts, Art Hops, special events, and laser light shows every Friday night—for next to nothing.

Your Fridays just got more exciting!

Check kalamazoomuseum.org for details on all offerings.

FREE GENERAL ADMISSION

Mon-Sat 9 am–5 pm
Fri (Oct-May) 9 am–9 pm
Sun + Holidays 1 pm–5 pm
Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Easter

Handicapped accessible. Sign language interpreters may be scheduled with a minimum of two weeks notice. Assisted listening devices are available in the Planetarium. Our TDD number is 269.373.7982

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.