Get an up-close look at one of the things that makes the world go ‘round in the new special exhibition… **Moneyville**
Don’t fret—festival to again feature a lot of pickin’ & singin’

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s second annual Fretboard Festival on Saturday, March 24, offers: a flashback to Kalamazoo’s legacy of stringed-instrument design and production; a chance to interact with the community’s current resource of luthiers and learn about their trade; and an opportunity to take part in workshops to improve one’s playing ability at all skill levels.

“It would have probably been appropriate to call the event a ‘fretboard festival,’” said Jay Gavan, special events coordinator for the Museum.

“A fingerboard,” he explained, “is a piece of wood attached to the neck of a stringed instrument across which steel, nylon, or perhaps gut strings are tautly suspended. A ‘fret’ consists of two pieces of metal inserted in the fingerboard that serves as a marker so that the player can be assured of the pitch at a given spot on the board.”

Fretboards are found on most guitars, mandolins, and banjos, he said. “However, luthiers tend to use the term ‘fretboard’ rather generically to refer to all fingerboards, and thus our wide-ranging Fretboard Festival.” Booked for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the festival goes far beyond being a salute to the guitar and to making music with this type of instrument.

“Around the world, thousands of guitar enthusiasts think of Kalamazoo as a ‘Mecca’ of sorts for acoustic and electric guitars, thanks to the Gibson Guitar Co.’s century-long presence here,” Gavan said. Innovations such as the “humbucking” pickup and the solid-body electric guitar are known internationally. “Museum visitors have told us of encounters with Hungarians and Indonesians who know of Kalamazoo because that’s where their Les Paul (guitar) was built,” he said.

Mandolins, violins, banjos, basses, dulcimers, dobros, and pedal steels are just a few of the instruments that have been made in Kalamazoo over the years. Gibson alone made a great variety of stringed instruments, and actually began its life as the Gibson Mandolin Co.

Talented musicians who use these instruments, craftspeople who make them, and people who want to know more about playing them will be part of the six-hour celebration. The first festival last May attracted luthiers from Heritage Guitar, Kingslight Guitars, and Robinson Guitars, as well as local independent instrument makers and players. More than 800 people attended the inaugural event that paid tribute to the community’s stringed-instrument legacy.

Gavan says that some new additions to the 2007 festival are a wider variety of workshops, more performances, some gypsy jazz, and a stronger presence from the violin family. 

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SUNDAY HISTORY SERIES

Tom Dietz, KVM curator of research, continues his discussions of local history. All programs are FREE and held from 1:30–2:30 p.m. in the Mary Jane Stryker Theater. For program descriptions, visit www.kalamazoomuseum.org

February 11
The Things of History II

February 25
Friends of Poetry: Poetry Artifactory IV

March 18
Economic Development in 19th Century Kalamazoo

April 1
Play Ball!
Baseball in Kalamazoo

April 22
The Kalamazoo River and Settlement of Kalamazoo

May 6
Horse Racing and Race Horses in Kalamazoo
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ON THE COVER: Explore the history, science, math, and economics behind money in the KVM’s new interactive exhibition Moneyville; learn more beginning on page 5 of this issue.

Look for the icon at right throughout this magazine. It indicates objects you can view in the special Museography display case, located next to the reception desk on the main floor of the Museum, or in other exhibit areas throughout the KVM.
**Ask the Curators**

Got questions? We might have some answers!

Send us your questions about local history, science and astronomy, collectibles or family heirlooms. We’ll print some of them here and include the answers too.

**How many mummies does the KVM have?**

**Paula Metzner, KVM curator of collections, answers:** The KVM not only has a 2,300-year-old mummy of a woman, but also has mummies of a cat, crocodile, and lizard. One of our more unusual mummies (shown at left) is not a mummy at all. It is a fake ibis, a stork-like bird that was sacred to the ancient Egyptians. Some ancient tombs have been found with hundreds of imitation animal mummies given as offerings. There are a number of explanations why these fake mummies were created. One may have been because the animal was uncommon or hard to catch. Another was because it was more cost-effective to produce fakes than the real thing. Or it was very likely that “real” animal mummies were not available in time for burial or subsequent offerings.

Our cat and imitation-ibis mummies are on permanent display in the third-floor exhibit, “Mystery of Mummy.”

**What is an eclipse, and when is the next time that I can see one in Kalamazoo?**

**Eric Schreur, KVM planetarium coordinator, answers:** An eclipse is when one world’s shadow falls on another world. In any given year, there are two lunar (moon) eclipses and up to five solar (sun) eclipses. The next eclipse we will see in Southwest Michigan will be on the evening of March 3. It will be a total eclipse of the moon. That night the rising moon will be completely hidden inside Earth’s shadow. It will start moving out of Earth’s shadow at 8:58 p.m. EDT. The moon will be out of the shadow at 10:11 p.m. For the next total solar eclipse visible from southwest Michigan, you will have to wait until Sept. 14, 2099.

Send your questions to museumstaff@kvcc.edu. (Include “Ask the Curator” in the subject line.) You can also mail to Ask the Curator, Kalamazoo Valley Museum, P.O. Box 4070, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-4070. Please include an email address or telephone number where you can be contacted. The answer to your question may be featured in an upcoming issue of Museography.

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Dear the whole crew of the Challenger including Mr. and Mrs. Tyler…

I love the Challenger and what it represents… I think it’s great we have people like the Tylers (CLC donors)… and people like Kathy and Bay (staff) to work with the children. I hope to go back to the Challenger some time. I learned a lot from it and it felt like I was really in space! I hope a lot of children/students get to enjoy the Challenger as much as I did.

—Brianna Huffman

I always enjoy reading the Museography, published by the museum.

The picture of the mummy in the last issue reminded me of my taking our two daughters to the museum when they were still very young. This was years ago when the museum was in the Public Library building. The first thing they would want to see was the mummy. On one occasion, the older one asked what the mummy was, a man or a woman. The younger one, about six years old at the time, piped up “Of course it’s a lady. If it was a man, it would be a ‘duddy.’”

—Ernie Voss

It was nice to see the People’s Church pulpit chair featured in Museography’s Fall 2006 issue. When I first came to People’s Church in 1946, all three of the pulpit chairs were on the platform at the front of the church. I was somewhat puzzled by their presence since they looked to me like a representation of [the Trinity] that would be particularly inappropriate in a Unitarian church. Of course, no one ever said that they did have such a significance… I suppose their style was in vogue in 1863 when the first church was constructed.

I really enjoy Museography and have been learning a lot from the township articles and “Removal of the Potawatomi” (also Fall 2006) was especially informative.

—Marjory Spradling

We also thank Ms. Spradling for her correction of the first name of the Rev. S.B. Flagg. The pulpit chair article referred to him as Silas but he was noted in the American Unitarian Association Year Book of 1894 as Samuel.

Send your questions to museumstaff@kvcc.edu. (Include “Ask the Curator” in the subject line.) You can also mail to Ask the Curator, Kalamazoo Valley Museum, P.O. Box 4070, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-4070. Please include an email address or telephone number where you can be contacted. The answer to your question may be featured in an upcoming issue of Museography.
Fifty years ago, Will Burtin, a New York graphic designer of international reputation, was approached by the U. S. Information Service to design a traveling exhibition about life in America.

As the U. S. Department of State’s propaganda arm, the agency’s mission was to portray and explain America to audiences in Great Britain. At the time, the Cold War and the global competition with the Soviet Union dominated U. S. foreign policy.

After its run in England, the exhibition was enlarged and taken to Berlin and other German cities as a weapon in the struggle for hearts and minds.

Having done design work for The Upjohn Co., Burtin was familiar with Kalamazoo and nominated the community as the case study for a depiction of life and work in the contemporary United States. It was an inspired choice.

“Life was good in Kalamazoo,” as the City Commission’s brochure proclaimed. During the 1950s, Kalamazoo County was enjoying the benefits of a strong manufacturing base.

Over the decade, population increased by 29 percent from 126,000 to 170,000, and employment rose by 65 percent. For years, Kalamazoo had been a place of innovation and invention, and it was reaping the benefits.

In 1956 Kalamazoo’s manufacturing employment was at its historic peak. Wages in manufacturing were also at an all-time high: $2.09 per hour and $87.65 a week.


The city of Kalamazoo had 80,000 residents in 1956, and 34,000 registered voters. That year 78,809 doses of the new Salk polio vaccine were given in the city. Western Michigan University had just achieved university status with its 7,000 students and 400 faculty members.

Burtin titled the original 3,600-square-foot exhibition *Window on America*. Its theme was “how Americans live, work, worship, study, and enjoy themselves.”

Promotional booklet from the Kalamazoo Chamber of Commerce, 1952.
He worked on it during 1956 and it toured England’s principal cities from November 1957 to June 1958.

A young Kalamazoo Gazette reporter named Dan Ryan, destined to be the daily’s editor and publisher, served as journalist in residence, documenting the exhibition on 8mm movie film and reporting its progress to folks back home.

In September 1958, an expanded, 20,000 sq. ft. version traveled to the Berlin Industrial Fair and from there, parts went on to other West Germany cities. The exhibition included a full range of Kalamazoo products and a photo narrative documenting the German version was entitled Eine Mittelstadt im Mittelwesten—Leben und Arbeit in Kalamazoo U.S.A. (A Middle Town in the Middle West—Life and Work in Kalamazoo, U.S.A).

The exhibition included pictorial presentations of 25 Kalamazoo families on the job, at home, and at play; products, models, and photographs from 50 Kalamazoo businesses and industries, with the Sutherland Paper and Gibson companies as featured firms; a special section on labor and management relations sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor; and, according to the prospectus, “pictorial and model presentation of cultural, educational, governmental, religious, recreational, and residential phases of life in Kalamazoo.”

During its run at the Berlin Fair, “Leben und Arbeit” was visited by 250,000 Berliners—East and West.

All that survives today from the slice of our community’s past are Ryan’s photographs and 8mm film, several artifacts seen on exhibit, souvenir copies of the Gazette’s special edition, and scattered bits of research information on Burtin and his career.

Life was good in Kalamazoo 50 years ago. Thanks to the U. S. Information Service, British and German citizens were given a glimpse of America through the window that was Kalamazoo.
Where can you play the stock market, run a lemonade stand, and put your face on a $1-million bill? “Moneyville,” that’s where, and it’s the current nationally touring exhibition at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum that presents the concept of money in a whole new way.

Kalamazoo, home of The Kalamazoo Promise that set an unprecedented example of money’s beneficial use, became the imaginary city of “Moneyville” when the 2,000-square-foot, highly interactive, five-section showcase of cash and currency opened at the downtown museum on Saturday, Jan. 27.

Created by the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and sponsored by the National Science Foundation, “Moneyville” will be spending time with Southwest Michigan visitors through June 10.

Fun Facts about MONEY

$ The Federal Reserve estimates that a $1 bill has a life span of about 22 months, while a $20 bill can be in circulation for four years. Coins usually survive for about 30 years.

$ If you have three quarters, four dimes and four pennies, you have $1.19. You also have the largest amount of money in coins that won’t allow you to make change for one dollar.

$ The pyramid you see on the back of U.S. currency is actually the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States. The pyramid represents strength and permanence, and has been left unfinished to signify the future growth of the country.

$ If one million $1 bills were stretched end to end, it would take 31 hours to walk to the end of the line.

Americans think they know money from Lincoln pennies, Roosevelt dimes, Kennedy 50-centers, dollar bills, sawbucks, portraits of Alexander Hamilton on 10s and a glaring Andrew Jackson on 20s. But in reality, those are really round chunks of metal and rectangular pieces of paper, albeit special paper. What they represent is a trust. People trust that those trinkets have value that is backed up, much like the ancient Aztecs used chocolate as the coin of their realm while Yap Islanders put their fiduciary faith in 500-pound stones.

“Moneyville,” through its five major thematic areas—“The Money Factory,” “The Bank,” “To Market, To Market,” “Dollars and Sense,” and “Global Trade”—explores how the concept evolved from a bartering heritage and how it works in an industrialized society, delivering lessons in history, science, math, social studies, and economics literacy in the process.

www.kalamazoomuseum.org
Through multiple hands-on activities, games and simulations, visitors work their way through a mint, a lab that uncovers counterfeiters, a bank, a shopping center, a stock market, and an international shipping dock.

For example:

$ After exploring the science and technology of making metal and paper money, you can mint your own, complete with putting your portrait on a $1-million bill.

$ Using high-tech tools, you can learn to distinguish the real McCoy from the brands of bogus bucks that counterfeiters create to cheat people, businesses and the federal government.

$ Scenarios are offered in strategies that can lead to making sound economic decisions in daily life.

$ An air-powered graph gets the message across in a highly vivid way about the hidden and real costs of credit cards. On the other side of the coin, you can learn how compound interest can really add up.

$ A computer game teaches money-management skills in calculating a person’s spendable income while stacked against such fixed costs as housing, transportation, food and leisure time.

$ Using the tried-and-true neighborhood enterprise of a lemonade stand, you can grasp an understanding of markets, prices, supply and demand.

$ With a portfolio of holdings, you can “play” the stock market to either “make it big” or go broke.

$ Younger visitors can sort, count, and make change while using “play money” and being customers and checkout clerks at a grocery store.

$ A “see-through” safe offers a glimpse of what $1 million in cash looks like.

$ Photos of families and their possessions around the world show how wealth is distributed and what the role of trade is in various cultures. Shipping crates can be X-rayed to reveal “mystery” imports.

In today’s economy, everyone gains by learning how to be more money-savvy. “Moneyville” helps children and parents understand where money comes from, how it is made, lost, spent and saved, and how it connects people around the world.

Through engaging activities, “residents” of “Moneyville” learn critical math and problem-solving skills that can help them make real-life economic choices.

"Moneyville" was created and is circulated by the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland, Ore. The exhibit was made possible with funds provided by the National Science Foundation. “Moneyopolis” is a registered trademark of Ernst & Young. The “Moneyville” trademark is used under license.
Most people today would find it difficult to take care of routine money matters without banks. From checking and savings accounts to mortgages and business loans, banking is an essential element of modern life.

Settlers in Kalamazoo County in the 19th century not only had little access to banks but, for many years, they could not have confidence in those banks that did exist.

The first bank in Kalamazoo, a branch of the official Michigan Bank, opened in 1834. Three years later, in 1837, the state legislature enacted a banking law that made it relatively easy to open a bank with little effective regulation.

The late 1830s and early 1840s saw a proliferation of banks issuing paper money backed by real estate bonds. They also had to maintain a reserve of gold or silver, known as species. Not all did.

When an inspector came to examine a bank for sufficient reserves, the owner might borrow gold from a wealthy person in town long enough to pass inspection. At other times, several banks would pool their resources and shift the same trunk of gold and silver from one to another, staying one step ahead of the inspectors.

The paper money issued by these banks was good only so long as someone was willing to accept it for payment. Since it was, in theory, based on land value, these so-called wildcat banks flourished during the years that land values soared. When they fell, the money lost value.

Within a few years, most of these state-chartered banks went bankrupt as merchants and settlers realized their currency was merely paper. Even the State of Michigan Bank would fail in 1844.

In the absence of sound banks and currency, the early settlers relied on a system that they called “dicker” or bartering. Goods and services were priced in terms of commodities. A bushel of wheat might purchase an ox yoke; a day’s labor might buy a saddle.

To fill the financial gap, wealthy individuals set up private banks. They served a generally well-to-do constituency, providing loans for investment in land and business, but did not issue paper money.

Locally, Theodore P. Sheldon, who had been cashier of the state-sponsored bank, organized T. P. Sheldon and Co. in 1844. Industrialist Jeremiah P. Woodbury with his partners Allen Potter and William A. Wood organized another private bank in Kalamazoo in 1856.

The United States lacked a national banking system for nearly 30 years following President Andrew Jackson’s “Bank War” of the mid-1830s. Jackson and his supporters believed the Bank of the United States, which regulated the nation’s banks and currency, favored the rich over the common citizen. So the president vetoed congressional efforts to extend its charter in 1832. Only during the Civil War would the United States again create a national banking system.

“Every settler was a banker, and all his movable property (large and small) was his bank stock.”
— A. D. P. Van Buren
With the country facing a critical need to finance the war effort, President Abraham Lincoln and the Republican-controlled Congress enacted the National Bank Act of 1863. Banks that purchased federal bonds (which were backed by gold) could use the bonds as collateral for paper money. In short, the U. S. government was backing the money issued by these nationally chartered banks.

The first bank in Michigan to take advantage of the new system was the First National Bank of Kalamazoo, organized in December 1863. The first president was Latham Hull.

The private bank of Woodbury, Potter, and Wood re-organized as the Michigan National Bank in June 1865. In 1912, it was taken over by First National Bank of Kalamazoo. In later years, the merged banks became First of America Bank which, in 1998, was acquired by National City Bank.

Additional banks opened as the 19th century progressed. Frederick Curtenius, Horace M. Peck and Charles S. Dayton founded the Kalamazoo City Bank in 1870. Melville J. Bigelow and Edwin Phelps started the Kalamazoo National Bank in 1882. Sheldon's company evolved into the Kalamazoo Savings Bank in 1884.

These three banks eventually merged in 1928 to become the Bank of Kalamazoo. During the national bank crisis of 1933, at the peak of the Great Depression, the Bank of Kalamazoo failed and re-organized as the American National Bank, now part of Fifth Third Bank.

Kalamazoo's experiences were mirrored elsewhere in the county. The Farmers Bank of Prairie Ronde in Schoolcraft, organized in 1837 during the heyday of the wildcat banks, never opened, sparing local settlers financial loss.

In 1867, Evert Dyckman, Moses R. Cobb, and others established the private bank of M. R. Cobb and Co. that became the First National Bank of Schoolcraft in 1870. That institution later went private and in time would re-emerge as the Kalamazoo County Bank.

Sidney Dunn and Thaddeus S. Clapp organized the private bank of Dunn & Clapp in Galesburg in 1894 while George Roof owned the Exchange Bank of Climax, established in 1901.

Late in the 19th century, building and loan associations came to Kalamazoo. William W. Peck and his partners started the Kalamazoo Building and Savings Association in 1886. The Kalamazoo County Building Association, later to be known as First Federal Savings and Loan, was incorporated in 1893. The Fidelity Building and Loan Association, which became Fidelity Federal Savings and Loan, opened in 1897.

By the early 20th century then, Kalamazoo’s banking industry was on firm footing after a shaky start. The city boasted eight banks and three savings-and-loans associations. Difficult times still were ahead but the days of wildcat banks, worthless paper
#1

This kitchen tool made eating a little fancier.

#2

This was worn for a little extra comfort on a hot summer day.

#3

Every municipality is equipped with at least one of these.

Have a question about a person, object, or artifact that relates to the history of Southwest Michigan?

Send your question to Tom Dietz, curator of research, tdietz@kvcc.edu or (269)373-7984 and you may see it answered in a future issue of Museography.
In honor of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum’s 125th year as a collecting institution, it asked Southwest Michigan residents to tell what they collect and why. A dozen collectors were chosen to be featured in a special-invitational exhibition. “Show & Tell: Community Collections” opened last Nov. 18 in the first-floor gallery and runs through April 15.

Six of the collectors are profiled here. The other six—Andy Campbell, Jodi Milne, Tom Minné, Leslie Decker, Eric Kemperman, and Tom Vander Horst—were profiled in the previous issue of Museography.

Jan Feldmann—Saudi Arabian Crafts


“I was immediately immersed into a fascinating culture—unusual sights, incredible smells, intriguing customs and traditions,” she recounts. “Because of my love for all kinds of arts and crafts, it didn’t take me long to find shops and markets filled with local handicrafts.”

She was especially fascinated by jewelry and metalwork crafted by desert-dwelling Bedouins. “The women still wear their wealth on their wrists and around their necks, just as they have for centuries,” she reports. “My appreciation level rapidly increased with the realization that many of the beautifully decorated pieces were created with extremely primitive tools.”

She was drawn to the fine detail, symmetrical designs, complex patterns, decorative filigree, and symbols in the works.

Jan obtained her collection of hand-crafted items through barter, gifts, antique shops, and bargaining at the local suk or market. “Bartering and haggling over prices is an art and way of life one must learn early and well in this country,” she explains. “The social aspect of it can’t be underestimated. Where else does a shop owner greet you with a chair and a tray of coffee and cookies?”

Older craftsmen often expressed concern that their trades were disappearing because no one in their families showed an interest in learning their skills. Jan, however, was inspired to create her own intricate ceramic tiles and metalwork.

Since returning home to Kalamazoo in 2002, Jan has worked at the Beacon Club. “They conjure up so many fabulous memories,” she says of the items in her collection, “as well as the captivating intrigue of this far-off and often misunderstood land.”
**Pat Thompson—Flip Side Toasters**

“*Neither one of us is particularly fond of toast,*” admits Pat Thompson, a nurse with the Battle Creek Health System. She and her husband were given a flip side toaster by an elderly friend for a wedding gift in 1963. “He knew we didn’t have a toaster and gave us one that belonged to him. After that I started looking for them.”

Pat is drawn to the different design styles that mirror their times. “They remind me of old-car styles,” she said. “One looks like a Model T, and one looks a little like a 1954 Chevy.”

Although she uses a modern toaster, most of the 26 flip side or “turnover” toasters in Pat’s collection work. The individual mechanisms vary, but when the door is pulled down manually, the bread slides down and is flipped over automatically. One model toasts both sides of the bread at once.

In all cases, Pat says, “It doesn’t tell you when it’s done. There are no controls, and it cooks fast, so you need to watch it. You don’t put your toast in and go do your hair, that’s for sure.”

Pat says she never pays more than $5 for a toaster, and sometimes only 50 cents. “I just think they’re neat. They’re shiny.”

*Pat Thompson doesn’t use her toasters, though most still work. She displays the collection in a vintage cabinet in her home.*

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**Wendy Rineveld—Pez Dispensers**

“They’re cheap, colorful and fun, and new ones come out all the time,” says Wendy Rineveld with enthusiasm.

It started four years ago when she picked up Yoda and Ewok PEZ dispensers because she thought they were cute. “Then I went to Disney World and saw a Mickey Mouse, and thought ‘I guess I’ll collect these’.”

She is not alone. People all over the world collect the dispensers, which debuted in 1952. The candy got its start in Vienna in 1927 as the world’s first breath mint. The name was derived from the first, middle, and last letters of the German word for peppermint, “pfefferminz.”

Rare dispensers can be worth up to $3,000. “My most valuable is worth $15,” concedes Wendy. “Some people keep them in the packages, but I take them out because I do it for fun and I’m just going to keep them.”

Wendy’s collection now numbers 300. She tries to locate new ones when they come on the market, while friends and family also pick them up for her.

One special gift is a Papa Smurf dispenser, which reminds her of her favorite childhood television show. Another is a “bobblehead” of a nurse with red hair like her own. A home health aide for Borgess Visiting Nurses and a child-care provider, Wendy plans to become a pediatric nurse. Future patients will be pleased to discover that Wendy isn’t fond of the PEZ candy and gives it away.

*Some PEZ dispensers glow in the dark, some are fuzzy, some have decorations on the stems,*” Wendy Rineveld points out.
Carolyn Martin—Metal Horses

“When I was young, I saw carnival horses at the county fair,” remembers retired teacher Carolyn Martin. “They are hollow, cheaper metal horses used for prizes. I always wanted to win one, but never did.”

Maybe that’s one reason she has collected more than 1,200 metal horses. The main reason, however, is her love of the real animals.

Carolyn bought her first horse 35 years ago when she, her husband, and two young daughters moved to a 25-acre home near Galesburg. “I’ve had anywhere from one to four horses ever since,” she says. Both children grew up with ponies.

Having horses in their lives led to collecting horse figures. “My daughters collected plastic Breyer horses, but they didn’t interest me,” relates Carolyn. “When I found my first little black metal horse at a flea market, I thought, ‘This is what I want. I wonder how many metal horses are out there.’”

She is trying to find out. Carolyn has researched, written, and published two books on metal horses because, she says, “I looked and looked for a book on the subject and there wasn’t one.” The books cover many types of metal horses, including art, carnival, and toy. Some were sold in souvenir or tack shops, marketed in horsemanship magazines, or used as trophies.

“This has led to so many interesting experiences meeting people,” Carolyn says about her research and collecting activities. “I’ve made so many friends on line.” Her advice: “One thing I’d say to people getting ready to retire: make sure you have a hobby.”

Gilda Christine Baylis—Black Collectibles

A weekend program at the museum two years ago “jump-started” Christine Baylis’s passion for collecting when a panelist encouraged her to consider black collectibles.

“I deliberately stayed away from black history,” she remembers. “I imagined, ‘Who wants to read about slavery?’ It wasn’t the story I thought. I’m glad I opened the door and looked. We as a people had our identity and pride taken away, but we rose above that.”

Christine, a city of Kalamazoo employee, soon assembled more than 2,000 objects reflecting the history of African-Americans and depictions of them over time. “I went crazy; I admit it,” she says. “I got most of it in three months and then had to stop because it can consume you.”

The books are especially meaningful to Christine. When she saw a book about 1920s celebrity Josephine Baker at a friend’s house, she wanted one herself. “Three hundred books later, I have a collection,” she says. “There is some profound information in those books, and it was there at my fingertips my whole life. Now I’m making up for lost time.”

In addition to books, Christine’s collection contains records, sheet music, comics, dolls, commemorative coins, figurines, signs, prints, postcards, and more. She has not shied away from collecting disturbing items such as caricatures and a Ku Klux Klan bell.

“It’s like reading a book but not getting the complete story,” she explains. “Everything that happened, whether good, bad, or ugly, made us what we are now—it’s all history.”
"My interest in accordions began as I watched Myron Floren play on the Lawrence Welk television show," recalls Stella Gosa, who took lessons as a child for two years at the Kalamazoo Conservatory of Music. "I had four brothers who didn’t like to hear me practice, so I practiced in the breezeway."

Practice led to accomplishment. Soon she was playing gospel music for local churches, Bible clubs, and the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission. While traveling on family vacations, her father informed pastors at local churches that his daughter was an accordionist, and she was asked to play at services. She became known as “the little girl with the big accordion.”

A figurine playing the accordion caught Stella’s eye at that time and she purchased it at a local drugstore. Since then she has assembled more than 70 from yard sales, travels, and gifts. Some of the figurines in her unique collection contain music boxes.

Developed in the 1820s as a portable organ, the accordion evolved into its present form in the early part of the 20th century. The full, dynamic sound is produced by a combination of vibrating reeds, bellows, and a keyboard. These also make the instrument heavy and cumbersome.

Stella sustained back and shoulder injuries in a serious auto accident in 1989. “It took my accordion days away from me,” she said. However, she is grateful she can still play her favorite music for short periods. “The gospel songs are those that I have always loved to play, and still do.”

Stella’s accordion orchestra features animals, elves, snowmen, dolls, and angels, as well as humans.
Jay B. Rhodes was born March 2, 1865, on the west side of Oshtemo Township. In 1878, he left the family farm to pursue a mechanical career that would see him become one of Kalamazoo's most prolific inventors.

Rhodes received more than 200 patents for his ideas. His inventions aided in the construction of the Panama Canal and anticipated computerized navigators in automobiles. Yet he is relatively unknown today.

Automotive enthusiasts know that Rhodes built and drove the first self-propelled vehicle in Kalamazoo. He later confessed that he feared the steam-powered wagon might explode because he used a gas burner to power the steam engine.

He was only 26 years old when he demonstrated his contraption on Rose Street in 1891. His youthful recklessness overcame sober consideration of the risks he was taking.

Rhodes never perfected this vehicle that he hoped would carry passengers between Kalamazoo and Gull Lake. He later sold it for $150 even though he had invested more than $3,500 in its development.

After this initial setback, Rhodes moved to Chicago and took a job with the Austin Manufacturing Co. as a mechanical engineer. While working for Austin, he developed perhaps his most important invention—a pneumatic dumping device for railroad cars carrying gravel, dirt, and other bulk material.

Cars equipped with the device greatly simplified the building of the Panama Canal and were also widely used on the frontlines during World War I. Rhodes also developed a machine for building roads in the 1910s, a decade that saw growing political pressure for better streets.

Rhodes returned to Kalamazoo in 1903 but remained on Austin's payroll until 1920. He also began working on his own projects. He started the Kalamazoo Fishing Tackle Co., for which he invented a mechanical swimming frog and a wooden minnow. He sold the enterprise to William Shakespeare Jr. in 1905.

In 1921, he created his most profitable invention, inspired by an old fruit-canning jar. Tinkering in a workshop behind his home on Douglas Avenue, Rhodes fitted a cap with a vented spout onto a canning jar and marketed it as a device for dispensing oil into a car engine. With automobile sales booming in the 1920s, Rhodes sold the oil bottles by the carload throughout the United States and around the world.
As the profits rolled in, Rhodes became wealthy. He sold the rights to the oil bottle and with the income was able to devote all his time to inventing. In the late 1920s, he applied for a patent on a razor that he claimed would provide a closer and smoother shave than any other blade.

Another invention he pursued was a navigation device for cars. A driver embarking on a trip would enter the mileage between turns on his itinerary as well as the direction of each turn. For example, the driver might program the device to go three miles and then indicate a left turn, and then enter the mileage to the next turn and so on until reaching his final destination.

Then he would set out on the journey. Once he had driven the first three miles, the device would sound an alarm and a light would flash “L” for the turn. The driver would make the turn and the device would then track the distance to the next programmed turn until the trip was complete.

Although Rhodes claimed to have spent $25,000 developing the device, it never caught on. First, the user had to know the precise mileage between turns in advance. In addition, by the time Rhodes perfected it, improved road and highway signage made it less likely a driver would get lost.

But Rhodes was ahead of his time. It took another 70 years before this concept became a reality in today’s GPS tracking systems for automobiles.

The inveterate tinkerer continued to work in his backyard shop. He also bought a summer home on Gun Lake and additional property in his neighborhood. He built a small production facility on North Street, just east of Douglas Avenue, in the historic Stuart neighborhood. His name still graces the front of the building.

On Oct. 12, 1931, Jay B. Rhodes died in his home on Douglas Avenue. The boy who had invented a device for equalizing the load for a team of horses when he was just 13 left behind a legacy of inventiveness created during his 66 years.
The tradition of the giving of valentines is rooted in 3rd-Century Rome.

When the Emperor Claudius banned young men from marrying so they would be available to serve in the Roman military, Valentine, a Christian priest, went against the law and married young men and maidens in secret.

The emperor was enraged and ordered his death. While imprisoned, Valentine fell in love with the jailer’s daughter. On the day of his execution, he sent her a note and signed it “From your Valentine.” That simple phrase has remained a popular valentine greeting to this day.

But how did the celebration of Valentine’s Day begin? A popular explanation is that it evolved from Rome’s pagan festival called “Lupercalia” that celebrated the coming of spring each February.

It was a fertility festival characterized by the sacrifice of goats and the pairing of unmarried men and women. This pagan ritual was so disliked by the Christian church that Pope Gelasius attempted to suppress it in 498 C.E. by naming it after St. Valentine, the patron saint of love. That, however, did little to change how the Romans celebrated the day.

In time, St. Valentine’s Day evolved and shed both its pagan and Christian
rituals. It became a day for romance. Its symbols include the red heart and Cupid, the Roman god of love.

To ancient Romans, Cupid was a mischievous little boy who carried a bow and arrow. If struck by one of those arrows, one was destined to fall in love on the spot.

As for the heart, its origins are uncertain.

Coins dating from the 7th century B.C.E. in the ancient north African city of Cyrene have been found with the heart symbol. Some scholars believe it derives from the seed pod of the extinct plant silphium that the Cyrenes used as an herbal contraceptive.

A more common explanation is its attribution to St. Margaret Marie Alacoque who, in the 17th century, saw the heart of Jesus surrounded by a crown of thorns in a vision.

About that same time, the giving of valentines became popular in Great Britain and France. These were simple hand-written notes, often with just the sender’s name on a piece of paper.

By the mid-19th century, valentines were mass-produced. No longer was the giving of valentines reserved for lovers. Children and adults, friends and lovers, all began exchanging the cards.

Even though the ancient origins of Valentine’s Day are often forgotten, Cupid and the heart remain our most recognized symbols of love. Today, the simple act of giving a valentine keeps the ancient holiday part of all of our lives.

* common era  ** before the common era

Left: The mischievous side of Cupid is represented on this Valentine from the early 1900s. At right: Cupid hides behind the lacy “LOVE TOKEN” on this heart-shaped Valentine, ca. 1890.

In the 17th-century Basilica di San Valentino, the union of a Roman couple blessed by St. Valentine is shown in stained glass. The flower they hold represents the fullness of life. Photo Credit: Basilica di San Valentino.
Portage Township

Township 3 South, Range 11 West, lying due south of both the city and township of Kalamazoo, is better known today as the city of Portage.

The first settlers arrived in Portage in 1830. They were initially attracted to “Dry Prairie” in the northwest section as well as an area known as “Indian Fields” in the northeast corner—now the site of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. The name was derived from land the Potawatomi cleared for farming and early accounts describe Indian Fields as the largest Potawatomi village in the county.

Their actual settlement was somewhat more secluded east of Portage Road, which itself was an old foot trail. Some American soldiers captured in the War of 1812 were held at Indian Fields by the Potawatomi who were British allies.

The first Portage Township meeting was gavelled opened on April 2, 1838, in the home of Elijah Root but quickly adjourned and moved to Ebenezer Stone’s tavern. Those attending felt it prudent to meet where they might have a little whiskey to reduce the risk of springtime ague (fever). They chose Root as the first supervisor and Caleb Sweetland as clerk.

Early Portage was primarily agricultural but several smaller settlements did develop. McKee’s Corners, named for David McKee who owned land there at what would become the intersection of Portage and Milham roads, featured a tavern as well as carpenter and blacksmith shops. A similar grouping named Carpenter’s Corners developed around Ezra Carpenter’s blacksmith shop at today’s Westnedge and Milham intersection.

Located at the geographical core of the township, Portage Center became the most important settlement as a stop on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad. By the early 1900s, two general stores, a wagon shop, a blacksmith, a hotel, the District 5 School, and the Portage Post Office were located there. Today, it’s the hub of Portage city government at the intersection of Westnedge Avenue and Centre Street.

The township’s plentiful muckland attracted Dutch settlers and, after the swamps were drained, provided fertile soil for celery farming. These farms have disappeared, some replaced by nurseries, but the legacy of those growers remains in such street names as Romence, Osterhout, and Schuring.

Portage’s rich 20th-century history cannot be summarized in these few paragraphs. From a quiet agricultural township in the early 1900s, Portage has become a major retail, commercial, industrial, and residential center.

Among the key developments that mark this transition were the 1940s decision of The Upjohn Co. to move its headquarters and production facilities to Portage, the opening of Southland Mall, the construction of both I-94 and US-131 freeways, and the lure of suburban living in the 1950s and 1960s.

Reflecting that growth and anticipating future development, township officials arranged for a special election in which residents voted to incorporate as a city. Portage voters approved a municipal charter and on Dec. 31, 1963, the city of Portage came into being. Bernard Mein, grandson of an early celery farmer, was the first mayor.

Portage continues to thrive and grow. Austin Lake and West Lake offer recreational opportunities and the Portage District Library and Celery Flats Interpretive Center provide cultural amenities. Together, the cities of Portage and Kalamazoo are the core of Kalamazoo County.
Prairie Ronde Township

One of Kalamazoo County’s most impressive features was the largest open prairie in the Michigan Territory was in Kalamazoo County.

Its distinctive shape had led the French fur traders and explorers to call it Prairie Ronde or the “Round Prairie.” It was so large that when the Michigan land survey was completed, it covered sections of two townships—Prairie Ronde and Schoolcraft. Prairie Ronde Township was designated by the surveyors as Town 4 South, Range 12 West.

It was this prairie that attracted the first permanent white settlers to Kalamazoo County. In November 1828, a party of more than 20 led by family patriarch Bazel Harrison made its way from Ohio through Indiana to Southwest Michigan.

Arriving on the southern edge of the prairie, they encountered Saq-a-maw, a Potawatomi chief, who directed them to a lake in the far northeastern corner of the township. There, on what became known as Harrison Lake, they hurried to build shelter for the approaching winter.

A little more than one mile west of the Harrison settlement was a village that was home to some 250 Potawatomi. While the Potawatomi had been forced to accept treaty terms that were intended to consolidate all of their villages into one large reservation—Nottawasepe— not all the natives had done so. That reservation included not only all of Brady Township and the eastern third of Schoolcraft Township but extended south into St. Joseph County. Still the Potawatomi felt the proper boundary for the reserve should have been further west to include all of Prairie Ronde. That’s why so many remained in their village.

The Harrisons were not alone on the prairie for long. The spring of 1829 saw a flurry of settlement activity. Abram Shaver, one of the more colorful settlers, and his wife, Sarah, arrived by early 1829. They claimed, although their neighbors disputed it, that their daughter, Calista Shaver Hicks, was the first white child born in the county.

Colonel Abiel Fellows, who had fought in the American Revolution at the Battle of Saratoga, arrived in 1829 and was appointed the first postmaster in 1830. William Duncan also settled on the prairie in 1829 and was elected township clerk the following year. His son, Della-more, was the sheriff. Another early arrival, John Vickers, built a sawmill on Rocky Creek in 1830.

The creek in the southeast corner of the township was the principal stream in Prairie Ronde. Several of the early arrivals platted a village along the creek, near today’s 11th Street and XY Avenue. Shirland, as they intended to call it, featured 39 lots and a public square but it never took root.

The political evolution of Prairie Ronde Township is complicated. It did not become self-governing until 1836. Until then it was politically part of Brady Township that included most of southern Kalamazoo County.

The early settlers, however, were very active in local government. The first meeting of the original Brady Township, including Prairie Ronde, was held in Abram Shaver’s home in April 1830. In addition to being supervisor, Duncan served as the first justice of the peace. Harrison was the first highway commissioner as well as associate judge for Kalamazoo County.

Prairie Ronde’s own history as a self-governing township began with yet another meeting in Shaver’s home on March 23, 1836. Duncan was now elected as Prairie Ronde’s first supervisor and Preston McCreary as township clerk.

School was important to the first settlers. John Wild taught one session in his home in 1830 as did Stephen Vickery in 1831. School commissioners, later known as school inspectors, were chosen in 1837. The first church, a Methodist Episcopal congregation, was built in 1837.

George Munger was Prairie Ronde’s most famous military hero of the 19th century. He played a key role in the capture of Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederation States of America, in May 1865.

Today, Prairie Ronde retains the rural, agricultural character that has marked its history.

Abram and Sarah Shaver, ca. 1845.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert J. Abernathy</td>
<td>box of KVP shelf paper</td>
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<td>John W. Allen</td>
<td>video camera and accessories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Ku Klux Klan uniform, photos, documents</td>
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<td>Archives &amp; Regional History Collection (WMU)</td>
<td>Disney hand puppets, fraternal ribbons</td>
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<td>Nancy Campbell</td>
<td>Upjohn salesman’s bag and accessories</td>
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<td>Edward L. Cherkoian</td>
<td>Soap Box Derby trophies, hats, photos &amp; documents</td>
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<td>David Curl</td>
<td>U.S.S. Kalamazoo memorabilia</td>
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<td>David Delemme</td>
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<td>Scott Eberstein</td>
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<td>Richard Estes</td>
<td>Michigan Asylum police badge</td>
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<td>Kate Ferraro</td>
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<td>Sharon Ferraro</td>
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<td>Pamela Fox</td>
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<td>Marilyn Fuller</td>
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<td>Rita Giesing</td>
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<td>Nelda Hayes</td>
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<td>Kalamazoo Nature Center</td>
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<td>Julia Kellman</td>
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<td>George Livingston</td>
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<td>Jan Marcussee</td>
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<td>Winifred K. O’Brien</td>
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<td>Gibson guitar, songbooks</td>
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<td>Edwin J. Rodas</td>
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<td>Leann Rounds</td>
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<td>Pamela Rups</td>
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<td>Douglas Russell and Elizabeth Russell</td>
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<td>Nancy Salin</td>
<td>KVP products, family photographs</td>
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<td>James G. Sanford</td>
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<td>Bob Schellenberg</td>
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<td>Joyce L. Standish</td>
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<td>Pat Sweeney</td>
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<td>Mary K. Tarkir</td>
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<td>Susan Thompson</td>
<td>Kalamazoo Sled Co. “Flying Disc”</td>
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<td>Sally Whelan</td>
<td>garden cultivator</td>
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<td>Polly Widman</td>
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<td>Marci Wieleba</td>
<td>Fanny Farmer cookbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marian Woodin</td>
<td>jigsaw puzzles</td>
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SPECIAL EXHIBITION

Moneyville

Jan. 27—June 10, 2007
Build your math skills and improve your economic literacy in this “dollars and sense” exhibition. Divided into 5 thematic areas—Mint, Store, Bank, World Trade Center, and Stock Market—Moneyville’s interactives are designed to maximize fun while teaching the complexities of our market system. Contains area for younger visitors. FREE

Exhibit developed by OMSI with support from the National Science Foundation, the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, and The NASDAQ Stock Market Educational Foundation, Inc.

SHOW & TELL: COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS

Show & Tell Community Collections

Nov. 18, 2006—April 15, 2007
It’s estimated that one in three Americans collects something. From baseball cards to beanie babies, fans to fishing lures... there’s no limit to the number and variety of objects sought by collectors. One person’s discards are another’s prized possessions. This exhibit showcases private collections from around the community. More on pages 10-13 in this issue. FREE

UPCOMING EXHIBITION

RETURN OF THE DINOSAURS
June 30 – Sept. 23

They’re back! Moving robotic dinosaurs, dig pit, and interactive stations make for “uproarious” educational family fun—and it’s free!

K’ZOO FOLKLIFE JAM SESSION
Sundays: Feb. 4, March 4, April 1, May 6 2–5 p.m.
Members and guests perform and improvise traditional acoustic music on the first Sunday of every month.

SUNDAY HISTORY SERIES
Tom Dietz, KVM curator of research, continues his discussions of local history with FREE programs held from 1:30–2:30 p.m. in the Mary Jane Stryker Theater. See inside front cover for a listing of dates and topics.

FEATURED PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Drop in anytime during the hours indicated for our FREE family programs. The (B) indicates programs of interest to Brownie scouts.

ART FROM THE HEART
Feb. 10, 1–4 p.m.
Get ready for Valentines with crafts that touch the heart. Valentines from the Museum’s collection will be on display.

WHAT’S YOUR TALENT?—CAREERS (B)
Feb. 24, 1–4 p.m.
Explore a variety of activities that will help you discover what your talents are. Meet professionals from a variety of careers to learn what they like about their jobs. Brownies can earn their Careers Try-it.

FESTIVAL OF HEALTH—HEALTHY HABITS (B)
March 17, 12–4 p.m.
Relax with a massage, learn how to eat healthier and tour an ambulance as part of this seventh annual Festival of Health. Brownies can earn their Healthy-Habits Try-it.

READ ME A STORY—SPRING BREAK PROGRAMS
April 2–6, 1–4 p.m.
Free hands-on programs each day—see back cover for more information.
KALAMAZOO FRETBOARD FESTIVAL
March 24, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. • FREE
Re-discover Kalamazoo’s legacy of stringed instrument design and production; meet current Kalamazoo luthiers and learn about their trade; and improve your abilities by attending player workshops for all skill levels. Story on inside front cover of this issue.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES
The Museum is barrier-free. Sign-language interpreters may be scheduled for programs with a minimum of two weeks’ notice. Assisted-listening devices are also available in the planetarium. Our TDD number is (269)373-7982.

GROUP ACTIVITIES
The KVM is a great destination for parties and group activities. Attend concerts, planetarium shows, Challenger Learning Center missions, movies, special classes or hands-on programs! Call the reservation coordinator at (269)373-7965 for more information on programs available to groups of all ages.

VOLUNTEER ALERT!
Call (269)373-7987 to learn more about volunteering at the KVM.

PLANETARIUM
Experience a journey into space like never before. Spectacular sights and sounds guide your imagination to locations and events throughout our amazing universe. $3/person.

IN MY BACKYARD
Through March 31 • Saturdays, 11 a.m. & Sundays, 1:30 p.m.
With songs and stories, Fred Penner leads an exploration of the universe from the backyard. All Ages; 30 minutes

ORION NIGHTS
Through March 31 • Wednesdays, 3 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 p.m.
An examination of the winter sky with its colorful stars and constellations. This show mixes stargazing, mythology and science. Upper Elementary–Adult; 40 minutes

SECRETS IN THE SKY
Through March 31 • Saturdays, 3 p.m.; Sundays, 3 p.m.
Navigating by the stars, slaves find their way to freedom. (Story adapted from the play Seven Stops to Freedom by Von Washington, Washington Productions. Funded with support from MCACA.) Upper Elementary–Adult; 40 minutes

MYSTERY OF THE MISSING SEASONS
April 1 – May 27 • Saturdays, 11 a.m. & Sundays, 1:30 p.m.
Observing spring constellations from his backyard, Angelo is visited by aliens from a planet without seasons and learns why Earth has seasons and constellations. Lower Elementary & Family: 40 minutes

ASI–COSMOS
April 1 – May 30 • Wednesdays, 3 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 p.m.
The Astronomical Scene Investigation unit explores why a Type 1a supernova in a distant galaxy appears dimmer than expected. Middle School & up; 40 minutes

EXPLORERS OF MAUNA KEA
April 1 – May 27
Saturdays, 3 p.m.; Sundays, 3 p.m.
Hawaii’s Mauna Kea observatories have some of the world’s best viewing conditions. Astronomers describe their discoveries using advanced telescopes. Middle School & up; 40 minutes

BURTON HENRY UPJOHN
CHILDREN’S LANDSCAPE
Designed to introduce preschoolers and their parents to an interactive museum setting, Children’s Landscape offers hands-on activities, exhibits, and programs designed for children 5 and under. Children older than 5 may participate only if accompanying a preschool buddy, and their play must be appropriate to preschool surroundings. Free

HOURS
Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m. • Sunday: 1–5 p.m.
Open until 5 p.m. Spring Break, April 2–6

FEB./MARCH—3, 2, 1, BLAST OFF!
Pretend to be an astronaut, count stars, and “visit” planets as we explore space.

APRIL/MAY—2ND TIME AROUND
Box houses, rag dolls, and sorting plastic bottles are just a few fun ways to learn about recycling.

CIRCLE TIME PROGRAMS
Stories, musical activities, games, and art projects, appropriate for ages 3 to 5, are offered each week free of charge to families and preschool groups. Programs are held at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Monday–Friday, at 11 a.m. on Saturday, and are approximately 20 minutes long.

Monday: Preschool Math
Tuesday: Preschool Science
Wednesday: Preschool Stories
Thursday: Preschool Music
Friday: Preschool Art
Saturday: Preschool Stories
FREE DOCUMENTARIES

HBO’s BAND OF BROTHERS — Sundays, 1:30 p.m.
This remarkably vivid film follows the U.S. Army Airborne Paratrooper Division’s E (Easy) Company from boot camp to Normandy, Holland, Belgium, and into Germany in the waning days of World War II in Europe. (Contains graphic violence and language.)

Jan. 21: Part 1—Currahee
Feb. 4: Part 2—Day of Days
Feb. 18: Part 3—Carentan
March 4: Part 4—Replacements
March 11: Part 5—Crossroads
April 15: Part 6—Bastogne
April 29: Part 7—The Breaking Point
May 13: Part 8—The Last Patrol
May 27: Part 9—Why We Fight
May 28 (Memorial Day): Part 10—Points

PBS’ NEW YORK: A DOCUMENTARY FILM
Saturdays, 4 p.m.
A portrait of one of the most complex cities in the world, these eight episodes provide a striking look at the history of New York City. Screened in conjunction with our special exhibit Moneyville.

Jan. 20: The Country and the City: Episode One (1609–1825)
Feb. 10: Order and Disorder: Episode Two (1825–1865)
Feb. 24: Sunshine and Shadow: Episode Three (1865–1898)
March 3: The Power and the People: Episode Four (1898–1918)
March 31: Cosmopolis: Episode Five (1919–1931)
April 28: City of Tomorrow: Episode Six (1929–1941)
May 5: The City and the World: Episode Seven (1945–2001)

GROUP JUNIOR MISSIONS
A specially designed 90-minute mission for children ages 8 and up, pre-flight hands-on activities prepare junior astronauts for an exciting flight in the CLC’s spacecraft simulator. Successful crews receive certificates and mission memorabilia. An excellent program for scouts and other clubs. Ages 8 & up; minimum of 8, maximum of 14 participants. Registration and $80 deposit required at least two weeks prior to mission date; $10/person.

CHALLENGER LEARNING CENTER

IN MEMORY OF ALVIN H. & EMILY T. LITTLE
The CLC is an innovative educational facility complete with a Space Station and Mission Control. For more information, visit www.kalamazoomuseum.org or call (269)373-7965.

SPECIAL EVENT
BLUE DAHLIA presents Buster Keaton’s The Navigator
April 7 – 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.
Blue Dahlia performs its original score to this 1924 silent classic where Buster Keaton perilously—and hilariously—crosses oceans for love.

PRESCHOOL PERFORMANCES
First come, first served! This FREE series of performances for preschoolers is offered the first Saturday of every month at 10 a.m. in the Mary Jane Stryker Theater. A maximum of four tickets per household or group may be reserved the day before each performance by calling (269)373-7990 or (800)772-3370. Seats not occupied 10 minutes before show time will be released to other guests.

Feb. 3: Greg Lester’s Puppet Adventures presents King Arthur: A Sword in Stone
March 3: John Dudley: The Magic Guy
April 7: Caroline Koebel—Finding the Drummer in You

FAMILY PERFORMANCES
Enjoy these programs on Saturdays at 1 p.m. $3 per person.

Feb. 3: Greg Lester’s Puppet Adventures presents King Arthur: A Sword in Stone
March 3: John Dudley: The Magic Guy
April 7: Blue Dahlia performs live with the Buster Keaton silent film classic, The Navigator (see upper right)
Rocking Horse triggers 60 years of memories

On Christmas Day 1948, 2-year-old Winnie Petto found this rocking horse under the tree.

Today little Winnie is Winifred O’Brien who happily proclaims, “I loved that horse. I thought it should be preserved so I asked the Museum if it would be interested in having it.” You bet we were!

Children have ridden toy horses as far back as the ancient Greeks. The simplest form is the hobby horse, typically made from a broomstick with a horse’s head fashioned at one end.

The barrel horse was created from a barrel or log with a fake horse head and four legs. Its shape and rolling action made it more realistic to ride than sitting on a broomstick.

Wooden rocking horses emerged in England in the 1600s. They became common among the wealthy to help children develop their balance for riding real horses.

In the late 1800s, with industrialization resulting in lower costs through mass production, the rocking horse rose in popularity in America. Hundreds of varieties were developed. American inventors patented safety stands and swing mechanisms.

Following World War II, Kalamazoo brothers and businessmen Benjamin and Sherman Rose developed a cast-aluminum rocking horse called the “Pony Boy.” It was a sideline to running the Ben Rose Tire Co. that was started by their father. The venture into the realm of childhood toys lasted only a year. There are no records of how many were produced. Finding one today is a real treat.

Winifred O’Brien’s “Pony Boy” saw almost 60 years of continued use. “Everyone played on it,” she said. Between herself and her five younger siblings, her own three children, and all the other little ones who came face-to-face with it, it has given the family decades of joy.

Today, as Winifred hoped, it is preserved for the enjoyment of the community.

The Museum Collects...

We collect objects that help tell the stories of people, businesses and events of Southwest Michigan. If you think you have something that belongs in a museum, please contact Tom Dietz at (269)373-7984 or tdietz@kvcc.edu. Wish list: 1960s memorabilia (rock-n-roll, civil rights, politics, peace/anti-war movement, clothing, etc.); modern electronic equipment such as a cell phone, laptop computer, portable CD player with headset, iPod (they don’t have to work but must be in good shape for exhibition.)
Kalamazoo Valley Museum's
Mary Jane Stryker Theater Winter '07 Events

Experience great films and concerts in the state-of-the-art Mary Jane Stryker Theater. Intimate atmosphere, terrific prices, and excellent programming will bring you back for more. All films screened Saturdays, 7 p.m. & Sundays, 3 p.m. (unless otherwise specified) All Films: $3 Admission • Films marked * include a Family Matinee • Music at the Museum concerts are Thursday evenings at 7:30 • $5 admission. For more information, visit www.kalamazoomuseum.org.

FEBRUARY
8   Mark Duval & Traci Seuss • 7:30 p.m.
   Echoes of Tom Waits and Gillian Welch reverberate through this Kalamazoo duo's harmonies and eclectic songwriting.
10/11 The Jazz Singer (1927)
The silent film era ended 80 years ago when Al Jolson quipped 'You ain't seen nothing yet!' in a film that remains controversial.
17/18 West Side Story (1961) *
   Love and music break out between the feuding Sharks and Jets in this Best Picture winner. And the KSO presents Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet on Feb. 23. Find out more information at www.kalamazoosymphony.org.
24/25 Who’s Camus Anyway? (Japan, 2005)
   Mitsuo Yanagimachi's film about young film actors.

MARCH
3/4 Blazing Saddles (1974—rated R)
   Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder in the ultimate western spoof.
10/11 Safety Last! (Silent, 1925) *
   Harold Lloyd is at his funniest and most daring in the silent film classic that features the famous hanging-clock sequence.
15 Steppin’ In It • 7:30 p.m.
   One of Michigan’s most sought-after groups arrives with vintage instruments and a haunting sound reminiscent of old-time radio.
18 Special Screening • 3 p.m
   Kalamazoo Reading Together presents a FREE film on the subject of autism. Find out more at www.kpl.org.
24 Kalamazoo Fretboard Festival
   2nd Annual Event • 10 a.m.—4 p.m. • FREE
   Story on inside front cover.

31/1 Monster Thursday (Norway, 2004)
   Director Arild Ommundsen’s Norwegian seaside romantic drama.

APRIL
7 Blue Dahlia presents...
   Buster Keaton’s The Navigator • 1 p.m. & 4 p.m.
   Blue Dahlia performs its original score live with Buster Keaton's classic silent comedy taking viewers on a perilous—and hilarious—journey crossing oceans for love.
12 Rachael Davis • 7:30 p.m.
   Rachel Davis explores the territory of her primary instrument—her voice—and the stories that come through it.
14/15 Faust (Germany, Silent, 1926)
   F.W. Murnau’s silent-screen adaptation of Goethe’s classic fable. And the KSO presents Guonod’s Faust on May 5. Find out more information at www.kalamazoosymphony.org.
21/22 A Hard Day’s Night (1964) *
   The Beatles are chased from train to hotel to television studio, trying to avoid trouble but almost always finding more.

MAY
5/6 The Graduate (1967)
   One word sums up Mike Nichols’ brilliant film on its 40th anniversary. Watch as Dustin Hoffman finds out what it is!
17-20 KAFI—Kalamazoo Animation Festival International
   Visit kafi.kvcc.edu for more information.
26/27 Something Like Happiness (Czech, 2006)
   Director Bohdan Slama of The Czech Republic presents this tale of three childhood friends who are struggling as adults.
FREE Spring Break Hands-on Programs

ONCE UPON A STORY

April 2–6; 1 to 4 p.m.
Celebrate the wonder of stories by creating art inspired by a different book each day. Hear the book read out loud during the program.

- Monday, April 2: Dream Weaver
- Tuesday, April 3: The Blue Faience Hippopotamus
- Wednesday, April 4: The Money Tree
- Thursday, April 5: Paper John
- Friday, April 6: The Dream Stealer

Kalamazoo Valley Museum
230 N. Rose Street
Downtown Kalamazoo
FREE General Admission—Open Daily
HOURS: Mon.–Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
(First floor re-opens at 6:30 p.m. for Thursday and Saturday evening events in the Mary Jane Stryker Theater)
Sun. & Holidays 1 to 5 p.m. (Closed Easter, April 8)
(269)373-7990 • (800)772-3370
www.kalamazoomuseum.org