



Kalamazoo Valley Community College Alumni

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2014



BOB BADRA Faculty

Coordinator's Welcome



Greetings fellow alumni and welcome to the seventh edition of the Alumni+ Newsletter. My name is Denise Thomas '01. I recently became part of the Kalamazoo Valley family as Coordinator of Alumni Affairs. I am excited to continue Karen Visser's work with the Alumni+ program. This newsletter will continue to focus on both alumni and friends, keeping you informed and entertained with news of fellow Kalamazoo Valley alumni, faculty, and events. December 15, 2013 was a day to celebrate. Kalamazoo Valley held its 72nd commencement graduating 589. Congratulations graduates, well done!

This year promises to bring continued growth and opportunities for the Alumni+ program. The Third Annual Alumni+ Juried Art Show is April 4, 2014 and coincides with Art Hop in downtown Kalamazoo. Kalamazoo Valley will host its 73rd commencement on April 27, 2014.

Finally, I would ask that you try to stay in contact. As an alumna myself, I look forward to hearing your stories and keeping you connected with your alma mater, Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Your education and experience are valuable commodities not just to yourselves, but to your community, and to our current students. Please stay in touch with Alumni+ at alumni@kvcc.edu and let us know what you are up to. Let's keep the conversation going!

ALUMNI+ Newsletter

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Wasserman Speaks at OFE

Food sustainability expert Arlin Wasserman will speak for the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Foundation's 10th Annual Opportunities For Education Dinner. The event is the main student scholarship fundraiser for the Foundation and begins at 5:30 p.m. on May 1 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel and Suites in downtown Kalamazoo.



"We thought that because of the timing of the new downtown campus it would be appropriate to have someone who can speak to the issue of wellness, sustainability, and social engagement," Steve Doherty, Director of Development said. "Arlin Wasserman is certainly an expert."

Wasserman is the Founder and Principal of Changing Tastes, a consultancy that works with food and agriculture companies, private foundations and government agencies to combine the key elements of sustainability, public health and demographics and how it applies to preservation of life and environment. He has advised Fortune 100 and growth stage food companies, and other agencies globally. Recently, Wasserman collaborated with colleagues at Harvard University and other relevant sources on the state of food production and consumption in a report card to the community called Menus of Change. This document describes and rates key areas of sustainability in the American diet, and suggests overall ways to improve health and how we produce food.

The OFE dinner benefits Kalamazoo Valley students with financial needs. The number of financial aid applications continues to increase each year and the Foundation's scholarship fund is one way the college works to meet student needs. Reservations for the event are available through the Foundation's website at www.kvcc.edu/foundation.

Alumni+ Newsletter is published three times each year: fall, winter and summer.

Questions about Kalamazoo Valley Alumni+ or this publication may be directed to the Alumni Relations Coordinator at: **269.488.4314** or at alumni@kvcc.edu

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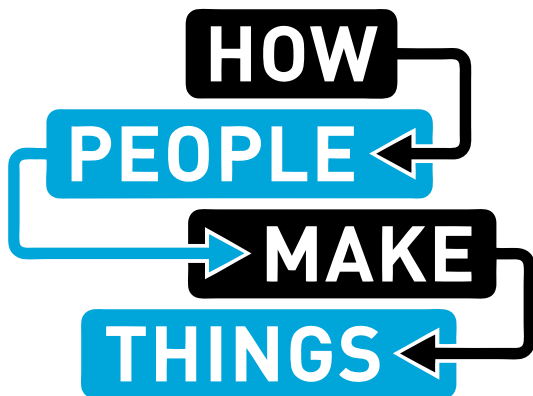
“How People Make Things” Exhibit Inspired by Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood Series

Every object in our world has a story that explains how it was made. The “How People Make Things” exhibit, on display at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum through May 26, tells those stories by linking familiar childhood objects to manufacturing processes that combine people, ideas, and technology.

“How People Make Things” was inspired by the factory tour segments from the Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood television series. It offers hands-on activities using real factory tools and machines to create objects with four manufacturing processes - molding, cutting, deforming, and assembly. Many commonly manufactured products are used to help illustrate how people, ideas, and technology transform raw materials into finished products.

Admission to the Museum is free.

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



Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for a complete schedule.



ALUMNI+ ART SHOW APRIL 4 DURING ART HOP

The Third Annual Alumni+ Art Show will open with a reception at 5:30 p.m. on April 4 in the Center for New Media, Arcadia Commons Campus in downtown Kalamazoo, as part of the City’s monthly Art Hop event. Art selected for the show will remain on exhibit in the Center for New Media until the end of April.

This year’s awards include a \$500 Best of Show Award, \$300 Director’s Award, three \$100 Honorable Mentions, and a People’s Choice Award.

“Given the overwhelming success of the last two Alumni+ Art Shows, we are anticipating this year’s entries to be even greater in number,” said Steve Doherty, Director of Development for Kalamazoo Valley. “We’re looking forward to seeing what our creative and talented alumni artists will enter for competition.”

The art show is sponsored by Kalamazoo Valley’s Alumni+ program, which was launched in April 2010 as a way for graduates, former students, and supporters of Kalamazoo Valley to stay connected to the college and each other. Denise Thomas, a Kalamazoo Valley alum, was recently hired to coordinate the Alumni+ program.

Tom Hamann, Adjunct Director of the Center for New Media said he thinks the exhibit is a great way to link current students, former students and the community. “The arts are alive and well at Kalamazoo Valley,” Hamann said. “We are blessed with talented faculty who are inspiring the next generation of artists. I can’t wait to see this year’s submissions.”

Gary Sisters' Legacy Benefits Kalamazoo Valley

THE FOUNDATION



Sisters Lorena and Edna Gary and Vera Gary LeBlanc were born on a farm in Homer, Michigan, and pursued educations in the early to mid-1900s. All three became teachers.

During their lives, they were self-reliant and pursued their own interests, yet they took care of their parents and each other. They were financially independent, yet they lived humbly.

As they aged, the three sisters, who were the only children of Frank and Lula Gary of Homer, came together to live as a family in downtown Kalamazoo. Lorena, the oldest, was born Sept. 7, 1893, and lived nearly 100 years, the longest of the three sisters. None of them had children.

So, on March 6, 1992, when Lorena died in Portage, the Gary family was gone. But their story doesn't end there.

The sisters left a legacy to help charitable organizations in Kalamazoo County, including students who attend Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

William Tedrow "Ted" Little, a local entrepreneur, serves as Chairman of the Board of the Gary Sisters Foundation. He met the Gary sisters in 1980 when he purchased the Marlborough building at 471 West South Street. He recalls that the sisters were living very frugally in a small apartment in that building, where they had lived for many years.

The Gary sisters had become something of a fixture at the Marlborough, he said. "I didn't want to lose them as tenants because they had been there so long. I proposed to

build them an efficiency at cost and they finally conceded, although, I must say, it was a very difficult decision for them."

Edna and her sister Vera moved into the new unit upon its completion, but, by that time, Lorena had developed dementia and went to live in the Tendercare facility in Portage.

Then, in 1990, Edna suffered a massive stroke and died on Sept. 21 that year, leaving Vera on her own.

"Vera was beside herself," Little said, "because Edna did all the recordkeeping and bill paying and so forth."

One day, Vera called him. "She was saying hysterically, 'They took everything! I can't even go to the grocery store!'"

Little said he jumped in his car and drove to the Marlborough where he found out what had happened, comforted Vera and reassured her that everything would be OK. He then reached out to longtime friends Mary Delahanty and George Schumacher, both attorneys in Kalamazoo. They learned that the property removal had been conducted by Adult Protective Services, which was prompted by a call from someone who had observed Vera carrying cash, financial papers and personal information around town.

After obtaining powers of attorney from the sisters, Delahanty and Schumacher were able to obtain the return of the property to Vera. They also crafted trust agreements that directed, when each sister died, her share of the assets would pass on to the surviving sisters. When the last sister died, the

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charitable provisions of the trusts took effect, Schumacher explained.

And that was the beginning of the Gary Sisters Foundation, Little said, “the purpose of which was to provide assistance to less fortunate individuals in Kalamazoo County, with a bent toward youth and with an emphasis on education because they were all ex-teachers.”

From Vera’s death in 1990 until 1992 when Lorena died, Little said they started gathering the remaining assets: There was an old family homestead in Homer, and a condominium overlooking the river in Marine City, Michigan, as well as the unit at the Marlborough.

“Their assets totaled approximately \$800,000, which was a shock to me,” Little said. “I never thought they had a dime. They were very frugal.”

Then Little and fellow board members of the Gary Sisters Foundation began methodically building the account.

They created the Gary Sisters Foundation, a small 501(c)3, and grew the fund from about \$800,000 in 1992 to approximately \$1.2 million today. They have paid out nearly \$1 million in grants to charities in Kalamazoo County and 287 scholarships to qualifying students in need at KVCC during that time.

“George Schumacher always said you could get more bang for your buck at KVCC and that’s why we got started issuing those scholarships,” he added.

Schumacher chuckled at Little’s recollection. “I probably did say that,” he said, adding that, given the cost of college tuition, “you can’t get the same value at other places.”

“Consider how much we would have to fund as a small foundation for a single scholarship,” Schumacher said. “We’ve consistently given tuition-type scholarships -- as many as 40 in a single year -- and, obviously, this would not have been possible at some other institutions.”

Today, Ted Little is chairman of the foundation; board members include his wife, Fran Little; George Schumacher and Mary Delahanty.

“We all serve pro bono,” Little said, “and every time we get together to distribute funds to various charities or to KVCC, we marvel at the fact that these three sisters created a legacy, a legacy for youth, a legacy for education.

“And very few people know the history -- let alone know the three gals. They were just wonderful, wonderful women.”

So the story of the Gary Sisters continues.

The foundation they made possible is alive and well, its chairman said, and will continue to help college students pursue the education they need to better their lives.

“Maybe, if this is presented to young people,” Little said, “they will get a sense of what can be accomplished. It doesn’t always take a lot of money.

“We marvel at how this little foundation has been able to benefit our community.”

The Gary Sisters Foundation scholarship information can be found at: www.kvcc.edu/admissions/financial/forms/garysisters2014.html

Courtesy of Dr. Sharon Carlson, Western Michigan University Archives & Regional History Collections

Photo courtesy of Linda H. Wilbur, Homer Historical Society



Profile in Excellence

CATCHING UP WITH BOB BADRA



Kalamazoo Valley humanities instructor Bob Badra says he's been at Valley "since there was nothing here but a cornfield." He has logged 45 years as a faculty member and while he knows that someday he will have to think of retirement, so far, he hasn't. "Teaching is such a pleasure! I don't want to stop what I am doing. Yet."

Bob says he has tremendous respect for his colleagues. "It's been such a privilege to develop close friendships with my colleagues not only in the humanities but also in the sciences and technology. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else but here," he said. Bob has warm memories of the National Endowment for the Humanities grant that he wrote and that the college received in the 1990s. Twenty five faculty from the humanities, sciences and technology experienced three years of collaboration focused on making connections across the disciplines in their teaching.

Bob's sense of joy and wonder continues to attract students to his classes. He has traveled widely over the years and he reads incessantly, not limiting his reading to his discipline. His life experiences have lead him to teach and create courses in connection making, the history and culture of China, and as a former Catholic priest he is fascinated by the world's religions and his comparative religions course gives him an outlet for his knowledge. "I've always been given opportunities to stretch and grow and I've taken those opportunities.

I've had a gifted life." Bob has two daughters of whom he is extremely proud. His 28-year-old daughter Rachal died of a heart condition in 2012. She was using her Masters in Museum Science degree earned at Duquesne University by working at the Phillips Collection in DC. Bob was back in the classroom three days after her death. "My daughter's death stands as the best teacher I have ever had. In an instant, I learned everything that is worth knowing." Danielle, Bob's younger daughter, fills his life to the brim. She is a talented poet and professional dog walker in DC who hopes to earn her Masters soon. Danielle, Bob says, "has a habit of constantly changing my life, and most of the time I am grateful!"

"I respect my students," Bob says. "I try to be thoughtful, perceptive, and alert to new ways of reaching my students. They reward me by being thoughtful, perceptive, and alert to new ways of reaching me. I grow, and they grow, in a kind of all-at-once-ness. We are in this together. I come to them as the latest person that I am. And I receive them as the latest persons that they are. And sometimes they come back for more!"

Bob has a hunger for learning. He hopes that his hunger for learning is contagious. Teaching for Bob is fun, intellectual fun, but that counts, he says. Bob hopes his students become hooked on intellectual fun. "If it's not fun, it's not worth doing." "If you are enjoying yourself, it doesn't feel like work."



MATT MOERSCH '02 TALKS ABOUT ROUND BARN SUCCESS

When spring arrives at the Round Barn Winery, growth is everywhere. It is evident in the crop that produces the grapes that make the wine and spirits. Even when it isn't spring, the Round Barn Winery, Distillery, and Brewery in Baroda and Union Pier is a growing business. Substantial growth has occurred since Matt Moersch '02 graduated from KVCC and began a career as a winemaker and distiller.

"Education is extremely important in business," says Matt. "You have to always be willing to learn. My time at KVCC gave me a well 'rounded' education in which I studied multiple areas." Matt can clearly identify the areas of study that have helped him the most. "Studies in business have helped for obvious reasons, biology and chemistry for the vineyard and cellar, Spanish for working with diverse employees and clients, and the list goes on."

The Round Barn Winery is a family affair. Matt and his brother Christian have picked grapes and been involved in the business since childhood. The boys' father, Richard Moersch, founded the winery in 1992. He has been well-known for 30+ years in the wine-making business in southwest Michigan.

Since returning to work at the winery, Matt has helped his family grow the business. They started with eight acres of grapes producing 3,000 cases a year of wine, and now have 32 acres of grapes which produce 15,000 cases of wine and 1,500 cases of spirits. They also distribute about 7,000 cases of beer made at the distillery. They have branched out in other ways as well.

"My brother and I started Free Run Cellars, the sister winery to the round barn," says Matt. "I recently started another business called Grape and Grain Tours, which takes people to local wineries, breweries, and distilleries."

The crown jewel of the Round Barn Winery is the round barn itself. It was originally built in 1911 in Rochester, Indiana, and was known as the Brucker Barn. The Moersch family purchased and moved it in 1997. Putting it back together was a memorable experience. The rest is ongoing wine-making history for the barn's curved walls.



Matt learned a lot from his father, which he supplemented with travels to France and other parts of Europe. Spirits made from grapes have been very popular in the last few years, including vodkas and specialty items like Black Walnut Cream Wine. Brewing specialty beers is also a favorite on the docket.

And the new ideas keep growing. "We recently opened our Round Barn Brewery and Public House in the Village of Baroda which features our wines, spirits and beers," says Matt. "We have a full kitchen there for making specialty pizzas and sandwiches. As far as anything new we are going to keep making new wines and spirits yet to be determined but we love new things and being creative. Who knows for sure what will be next?"

Special Announcements



Kalamazoo Valley Online Job Board

View and apply for jobs on the nation's largest entry-level job board, create your resume with a resume builder, build, update and forward your online career portfolios to potential employers, view career events, get employment advice and job search tips, and view videos and more at www.collegecentral.com/kvcc

Animal Technician Academy established at The Groves

The in-depth training of technicians for the care and maintenance of animals has been added to the lineup of Kalamazoo Valley Community College's career academies. The academy is a pre-employment training program that prepares students with the basic knowledge and skills to provide humane handling and overall care for animals.

For details about applications, deadlines and other information, call (269) 353-1253, e-mail careeracademies@kvcc.edu or go to: www.kvcc.edu/training.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College
FOUNDATION  **MAY 1**

2014 Opportunities for Education Dinner

SUSTAINABILITY
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SCHOLARSHIPS

Creating sustainable scholarships.

On May 1, the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Foundation will present the 10th annual Opportunities for Education Scholarship Fundraising Dinner to benefit students with financial needs.

Special guest Arlin Wasserman will present *Changing Tastes: Health, Sustainability, Food and the Future of the Culinary Profession*.

For additional information, please call the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Foundation Office at 269.488.4442 or visit us at www.kvcc.edu/foundation

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KALAMAZOO LITERACY COUNCIL NEEDS ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS

A staggering 13% of Kalamazoo's adult population—31,000 adults—are functionally illiterate. Join the project, become a tutor and change someone's life, and yours, for the better.

Every time someone becomes a tutor for the KLC, Kalamazoo County gets closer to becoming 100 percent literate.

So, let's get started. Take a look at the Tutor Orientation schedule and find a time that's convenient for you. It's the first and most important step in your commitment to making Kalamazoo a better place, now and in the future.

Located at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

For details go to kalamazooliteracy.org
or email alumni@kvcc.edu.

