

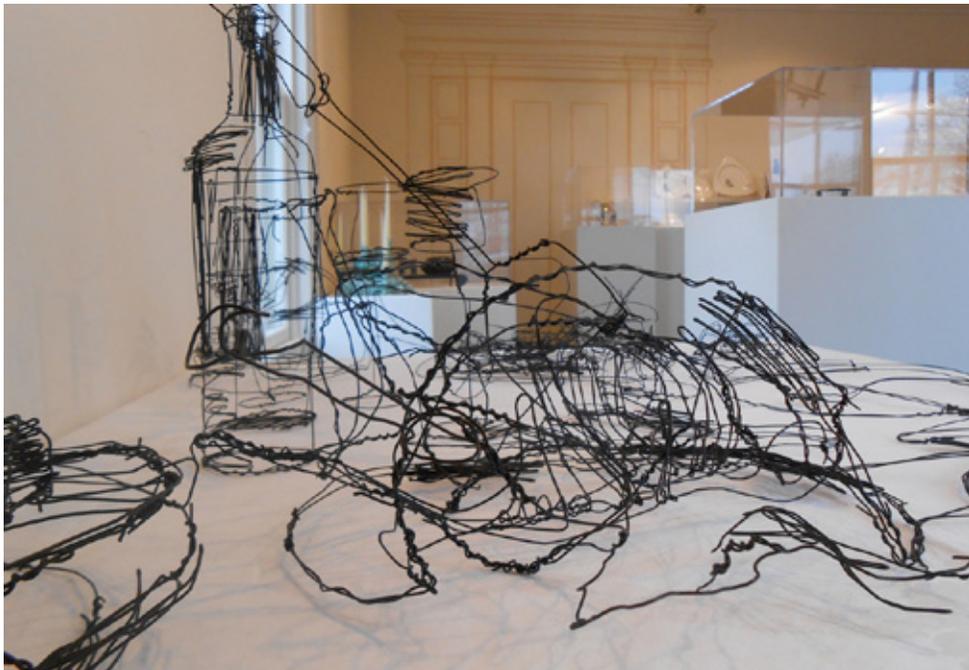


Drawing by Michael Klement

# Impressions

NEWSLETTER WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Three Courses of a Delicious Dinnerware Feast on Main Street



### A View Through David Oliveira's Wire Scribble Sculpture

When the Washtenaw County Historical Society invited the Dinnerware Museum to “pop up” with a special exhibit at the Museum on Main Street, we had no idea it would be this much fun. We have teamed up to present three delectable exhibition courses involving both historic and hot-out-of-the-kiln dinnerware. The exhibit is now open and we invite you to come down to see it.

To some people, the term dinnerware conjures up images of grandma’s old dishes with metal knife marks on the dinner plates. *Three Courses*, reveals a refreshing approach – featuring masterpieces of the tabletop genre created by contemporary artists, as well as notable historic dinnerware by the leading designers for industry, juxtaposed with an uncommon focus on fine art that references dining and a bit of kitsch thrown in for good measure.

*Continued on page 5*

### Save the Date for the WCHS 2014 Educational Programs

Mark your calendars for the Winter/ Spring WCHS Educational Programs: January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20 and May 18. The Annual Meeting is part of the May program. Members will receive a postcard with the topics and locations.

### Will this be YOUR next-to-the-last print issue of Impressions?

The WCHS would like to continue sending everyone on our current mailing list issues of *Impressions*. Especially with the new plan to make it a quarterly publication with more articles, interviews and pictures. However, beginning in Spring 2014, the newsletter will be mailed only to members of the WCHS. We invite you to join or renew and hope that you will. Be confident that your membership supports the work and mission of the Society. If you did not receive your membership renewal envelope call 734-662-9092 and we will be happy to mail one to you.

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Established in 2012 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, The Dinnerware Museum has an international focus collecting industrially designed and manufactured as well as one-of-a-kind dinnerware and accessories created from ceramic, glass, wood, metal, lacquer, paper, and plastic and celebrates a significant aspect of our daily lives from ancient times to the present.

**Our mission is to educate  
and inspire our community  
to engage in the preservation  
and presentation of area history**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our recent exhibit, "The Legacy of Michigan Football," which closed December 1st drew a significant numbers of visitors. In addition to our normal means (signage, postcards, advertising, etc.)



two additional forms of promotion have greatly enhanced the numbers to date. First, Ken Magee, who provided a broad selection of items from his sports collection for the exhibit, arranged an interview with the *Detroit Free Press* and, second, both Ken and I are members of the University Of Michigan Club of Ann Arbor which holds Monday lunches during football season. Nearly everyone in the room wears maize and blue—the perfect crowd to view this exhibit. We put cards on the tables, the master of ceremonies announced and recommended the exhibit weekly and we opened the exhibit Monday's from 1pm to 3pm in addition to normal hours.

This time of year marks our annual membership drive. Our renewal percentage is typically excellent and additional membership levels and categories were added a couple of years ago. We urge you to consider not only renewing your membership, but also, gifting a membership to friends you believe would be interested in the Society and its work throughout Washtenaw County.

*Les Loomans*

### **Thank You from the Museum on Main Street**

Your membership and support made 2013 another wonderful year for our house. We installed a new heating and cooling system, made some roof repairs and offered some well-attended exhibits and interesting historical educational programs. With your continued support, 2014 looks even brighter.

#### **The Museum on Main Street**

500 N. Main Street (at Beakes & E. Kingsley)

Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1027

#### **We are open for visitors**

Saturday & Sunday, 12 Noon – 4:00 PM

Groups are welcome by appointment.

Call 734-662-9092

#### **Washtenaw County Historical Society**

P.O. Box 3336 Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

[wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net)



Photo by Judith Tomer



[www.WashtenawHistory.org](http://www.WashtenawHistory.org)

*Impressions* is published seven times a year September through June by the Washtenaw County Historical Society, a non profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible

**Come see the Current Exhibit! "Three Courses" Open December 6-May 12**

## Students Have the Opportunity for a Hands-on History Lesson

The Museum on Main Street had nineteen visitors in a single day in November when former WCHS board member and Assistant Professor of History at the University of Michigan, Michelle McClellan, brought her History 202 class to explore the exhibit, *The Legacy of Michigan Football*. The class, entitled "Doing History," is a relatively new course required of all U of M history majors that teaches students the methods of historical research, interpretation, and presentation. The visit to the Museum on Main Street encouraged students to think about how history is presented outside the classroom and how historical memory operates in the public realm, coincidentally with a topic very close to the hearts of many U of M students.

This was not your typical visit to the Museum on Main Street. Students were required to think critically about the use of objects, documents, and labels in the presentation of an historical topic. Through close examination of the exhibit, they answered questions on a worksheet prepared by Professor McClellan to be used as a guide for discussion when back in the classroom.

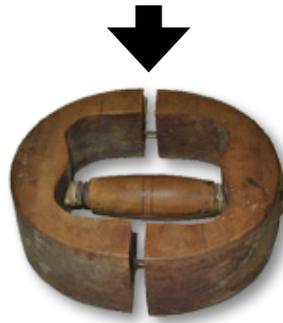
As part of their visit, the students also were welcomed on a special "behind the scenes" tour of the basement storage facilities, in order to give them a sense of the hands-on aspects of "doing history" with objects and to introduce them to the ways in which our local history is preserved for future generations.

## Bring Your Groups or Classroom to the Museum on Main Street!

We at WCHS and the Museum on Main Street are happy to provide such in-depth learning experiences for our local community. To schedule a tour for your group, please contact us at [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net). We will do our best to accommodate your needs.

By Diana Mankowski

## What is It?



**Stop by and see if you can figure it out!** Viewers will have the chance to see objects (from the distant and not-so distant past) and try to guess what they are. The Museum on Main Street will have this exhibit in the lobby of the **Pittsfield Charter Township Administration Building at 6201 W. Michigan Ave, (at Platt Rd.) from December 26-January 30**. Once the exhibit is over, these items will go back in the box of the "What's It?" game and be available for loan to schools, groups and organizations at no cost. Call 734-662-9092 for more information.

## Museum Visitors Loved the UM Football Exhibit

Hundreds of people came through the doors at the Museum on Main Street to see *The Legacy of Michigan Football: Collection of a Super Fan*. They came to experience the tradition and history of Michigan's key coaches, players and games through some the private sports collection of Ken Magee.

Visitors enjoyed the beautiful cover art of the UM football game day programs. Many commented on how the covers seem to reflect the trends and current issues of the time. People also enjoyed guessing the date of the game in the large photo that was over the fireplace and reminiscing about Band Day. The rare and original 1902 program from the first Rose Bowl game was in a locked display case but an exact replica was available for people to read and look through.

This exhibit was co-curated by two University of Michigan Museum Studies Program students, Megan Boczar and Alicia Juillet. They worked with Ken to create an interesting and entertaining exhibit that gave so many people many great memories about some of their favorite teams and games.

In addition to the great exposure we received through the UM Club of Ann Arbor, the exhibit was filmed. WOLV-TV, the student television station at the University, heard about the Legacy of Michigan Football exhibit, and a couple members of their sports staff came by on November 26 to film a short special on it! The Washtenaw County Historical Society embraces opportunities like this to collaborate with the community members and organizations. We thank Ken Magee for sharing his great collection; Megan and Alicia for their research and exhibition curation; Ann Arbor Signs and WOLV-TV. A very special thank you to all of the visitors. You were generous in many ways, from contributions to comments. We truly appreciate your support and participation.



### From the Big House to Our House

Glen "Shemy" Schembechler and his wife Megan stopped by on the eve of the 2013 Michigan-OSU game and loved the exhibit.

# Argus Cameras: A Snapshot of Local Success

Ann Arbor is the home of Argus, an American camera company that produced one of the best selling 35mm cameras ever made. Recently, The Argus Museum partnered with the Ann Arbor District Library to digitize a wide variety of images, documents, articles from the *Ann Arbor News*, publications and videos. This online collection gives a fuller picture of Argus Camera, its products, people, and impact.

In 1929, local inventor Charles A. Verschoor and future Mayor William E. Brown Jr. started a radio manufacturing business with support from local bankers called the International Radio Company. In 1932, they produced the Kadette, the first radio that used tubes instead of a large transformer. Verschoor traveled to Europe researching the idea of producing a camera (like the Leica) which could be made and sold for \$10.

When the first camera rolled off the assembly line in 1936, the name of the company was changed to Argus, after the Greek mythological god of 1,000 eyes. The Model A camera was so popular, that 30,000 units were sold by Montgomery Ward in the first week.

The company's contribution to wartime equipment of both WWII and the Korean Conflict and its manufacturing innovations, particularly in lens grinding and polishing, are also significant. Discover more about this local treasure online or in person.

## Visit the Museum

The Argus Museum is located on the second floor of 525 W. William in Ann Arbor. It tells the stories of the company, the people involved and showcases unique collections connected to Argus. The museum is housed in the Argus I Building, which was one of the facilities where Argus products were manufactured. **734-769-0770**

## Check out the Argus Collectors Group

The ACG is dedicated to the collection and restoration of Argus cameras as well as the study of the Argus company's history. They also sponsor programs that encourage the use and enjoyment of vintage Argus photographic equipment. **www.arguscg.org**



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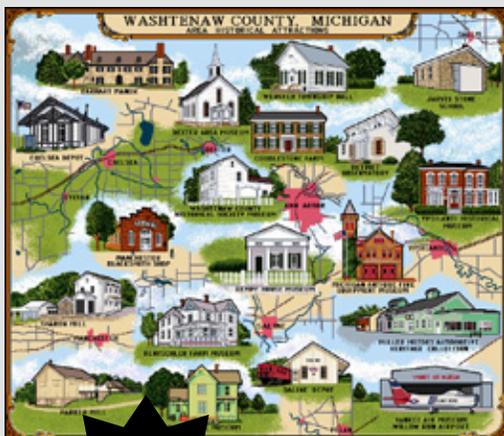
## Argus Day Gallery on Flickr

Wesley of the Argus Collectors Group has created the Argus Day Gallery online at **www.flickr.com/groups/arguscg**

## Argus Camera online at AADL

The Old News staff has gathered decades of news articles, photos and videos that document this important manufacturer in local history. **www.oldnews.aadl.org**

## Wrap Yourself in the History of Washtenaw County this Winter!



**Only \$40!**

+ \$10 shipping and handling.

Stay warm and cozy in the warmth of the rich history of important structures and museums throughout the County. This custom throw is 65" x 50" and 100% cotton. Make the check to Washtenaw County Historical Society. To save postage and handling, call ahead, 734-662-9092, to make arrangements to pick up the throw at the Museum on Main Street.

**Purchase conveniently online**  
**www.WashtenawHistory.Org**

## Would you like to learn more about the historical attractions on this throw?

Over 25 historical organizations and agencies throughout the county form the "Washtenaw County Historical Consortium" to promote local area history. The member organizations represent historic homes, farms, depots, mills, churches, schoolhouses, the Detroit Observatory, museums with historical collections, and two libraries for historical or genealogical research. Some attractions do not have regular visiting hours, but most are available by special appointment for individual or group tours. Many have special events, check out the calendar at **www.wchconsortium.org**

# “Three Courses” is Open Now Through Mother’s Day 2014



**By Margaret Carney, Ph.D.**  
**Director, Dinnerware Museum**

During the first course, titled “Whetting your Appetite,” the Dinnerware Museum of Ann Arbor, the only museum in the world devoted exclusively to dinnerware, presents the perfect balance of eclectic dinnerware to whet the visitor’s appetite. The celebration begins with wire scribble sculpture by Portuguese artist, David Oliveira; a complete 6-piece Roy Lichtenstein Pop Art dinnerware set including a cup, saucer, a bowl, and

3 plates; a Knife Fork Spoon ceramic sculpture set by the late William Parry; Paul Kotula’s sublime Setting for One; Kate Maury’s monumental Epergne, 2012; Lisbon-born artist Joana Carvalho’s prototype plastic Kit Café; Léopold Foulem’s Blue Willow Teapot in Mounts and a few surprises.

The second course, “Setting the Table,” features celebrity dinnerware is in the second room. There will be Fiestaware, Royal Crown Derby porcelain dishes on loan from the Titanic Museum in Bran-

son, Missouri; Liberace’s prized Queen Elizabeth glassware – Moser crystal from Czechoslovakia; historic UM Wedgwood dinnerware from the 1930s and 1940s; historic dinnerware purchased by Washtenaw County drygoods businessman, Philip Bach for his third wife, Anna, in the late 19th century; and more.

The third course, “Getting a Snack,” is in the third room and features historic or vintage snack sets (glass, ceramic, plastic) from the 1940s and 1950s – the type of luncheon/snack trays with a recessed spot for a cup, which rested on a woman’s lap, holding a tasty sandwich

with pimiento cheese spread and hot beverage nearby.

Eleven well-known contemporary ceramic artists, have been invited to create their own version of the luncheon snack set. These snack sets are set on very unique chairs that have stories of their own. The exhibit is open Saturdays and Sundays, 12 Noon-4 PM and closes May 12, 2014. If you would like to bring your club or organization to the Museum during the week, call 734-662-9092 and schedule a time. We welcome your visit.

## Guess Who Invented the Automatic Dishwasher?

Josephine Cochran (Inset picture) was a rich woman and never had to wash any of her own dishes but thought her servants could do the work faster if they had a machine that could wash the dishes without chipping them. Inspired by Joel Houghton’s 1850 machine that simply splashed water on dishes, Cochran decided to invent something more efficient. In 1886, she invented the first practical dishwashing machine. Wire compartments held dishes which were sprayed with hot soapy water. The wheel was turned by using a hand crank on the outside the machine. Cochran got her big break when she exhibited her dishwasher at the World’s Fair Columbian Expo of 1893 in Chicago. Against heavy competition from around the world, her dishwasher received first prize for “best mechanical construction for durability and adaptation to a particular line of work.” Hotels, restaurants, boardinghouses, and hospitals immediately saw the advantages of being able to wash, scald, rinse, and dry dozens of dishes of all shapes and sizes in minutes. It was not until the 1950s, that dishwashers caught on with the general public. Cochran went on to produce dishwashers with her own company, a company that later became KitchenAid – a current manufacturer of premium major and countertop kitchen appliances.



# Ghost Hunting: The Difficulties one Encounters when Researching Nineteenth Century Women

More than 35 people filled the beautiful light-filled sanctuary of Bethel United Church of Christ in Manchester on Sunday, October 20 to hear Susan Nenadic talk about Ghost Hunting: The Hidden Part of History. Following is her presentation.

**In** the classic American novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, two children are fascinated with a neighbor because they have never seen him. They speculate that he might be just a ghost, but their father, Atticus Finch, says, "No, there are other ways to turn people into ghosts." Women have been the ghosts of history. Their presence is assumed, but information about them is difficult to retrieve.

My personal ghost hunt began in 2005 when I came to the Museum on Main Street to volunteer and was asked if I could research for an exhibition about women. I knew virtually nothing about local history or even Michigan history, but I like a challenge, so I narrowed the topic to the working women of Washtenaw County in the nineteenth century. It appealed to me because we hear virtually nothing about it.

Why has this facet of the historical narrative been ignored? One reason is that until recently historians have focused their research on wars and kings and explorers which is called macro history or "the big stuff." But in recent decades the focus has switched to micro-history which concerns average people doing fairly average things. Ordinary people also affect history. The second reason, of course, is the old joke about history being "his-story." He wrote it about himself or other men like him. "Her-story" has been ignored and labeled unimportant. Examples of women's experiences not being included are quite easy to locate. For example, in the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collection, I found a memoir of a pioneer family of nine: the narrator's father and mother and six sisters.



Foster's Station, a Huron River Mill between AA and Dexter (Bentley Historical Library)

After stating who was in the family, the narrator never mentions anything about the women. As a result, those seven females cannot emerge as individuals within the historical narrative. We are aware of their existence, but they are wraithlike phantoms shrouded in mystery. How did women become history's ghosts?

I began my personal ghost hunt by reading both Chapman's History of Washtenaw County and every City Directory concerning the county beginning with the first which was in 1860. The Directories, like modern phone books, have listings of names, addresses etc. but also the "Business Mirror" which is similar to twentieth century yellow pages. The 1860 Business Mirror for Ann Arbor promised its reader that it had included every business MAN in the area.

It said nothing about the two dozen or so women whose businesses also were in the Directory. In much the same way, Chapman's History, for the most part, ignores the female half of the population. Chapman's is a compilation of articles provided by local people, mostly men.

In its discussion of mills and millworkers, it states that so many men worked at a sawmill and so many men worked in a cooperage making barrels.

At first the reader misses how, when speaking of textile mills, it says they employ so many "hands." Writing teachers urge students to vary their word choice; however, in this case, the use of the word "hands" camouflages the fact that women worked in those mills. In this way, women were invisible to most readers.

Oh, we might just let that slide. After all, that was 133 years ago. This is 2013. But the problem of gender bias is alive and well. A recent history of the University of Michigan School of Engineering fails to mention the first woman (Marion Parker Madgwick) to graduate in engineering even though an award established by her family after her untimely death is given each year to students in engineering.

One of the most frequent ways working women were erased from the historical record is that they were working

*Continued on page 7*

in family owned businesses. The now famous Zingerman's Deli at Detroit and Kingsley Streets in Ann Arbor was once a neighborhood grocery owned and operated by Rocco Disderide, an Italian immigrant. When Mr. Disderide turned one hundred in 1957, he was asked to identify the source of his longevity. He replied that he did not work very hard. And who did the dawn to night work at the store? His wife and daughters, of course. Such a story is not even unusual. Literally hundreds of women in Washtenaw County, like Katherine Disderide, worked diligently in their spouses' businesses without any recognition. It was not until the husband/father/ brother died, that it was clear these women had been contributing all along. Mrs. J. H. Parsons of Ypsilanti would not have been able to assume the responsibility for her husband's photographic business had she not been there all along working as a business partner with her spouse.



Mary Parsons (Ypsilanti Historical Society)

We are lucky that Mrs. Parsons provided Mrs. Rayne with her story. Rayne published a book concerning possible employment for women. Thus; Mary Parsons experiences were preserved in detail for future researchers. Unfortunately, the vast majority of women did not leave any personal record of their experiences.

There are, lucky for us, some exceptions, one of which is Mrs. Emily Hollister who turned to nursing in hopes of saving the family farm during the recession that hit in the 1870's. She kept a diary of everywhere she nursed. Each entry begins with "I am come to..." Her journal tells of boarding house owners and well-known people she nursed. If you want to know something as esoteric as the name of Emma Bower's cat, read Mrs. Hollister's book.

Once in a great while, I would stumble upon a veritable treasure trove of artifacts as I did in the case of Eliza Botsford. I located a marriage license, a tombstone, an obituary, and an Ann Arbor school catalogue. All included

information concerning Eliza, but clearly something was not right. According to the school catalogue Mrs. Botsford was teaching in 1857. Unless she were literally a ghost, she couldn't have been. She died a decade earlier in 1847. It took a lot of research before I realized that Mr. Botsford had married two women, both named Eliza. It was the first Eliza Botsford who was buried in the cemetery on Earhart Road. It was the second Eliza Botsford whose name is in the school catalogue.

Often long hours of research would yield nothing except a headache. But then, on other days, just as I would begin to despair, some smidgen of information would open up a whole new line of inquiry. For example, I knew from reading the city directories that a woman named Almira F. Lovell owned several businesses on State Street in the late nineteenth century. In addition to acting as dry cleaning agent, she had a tea room and notions shop. It was Miss Lovell who innovated the sale of University of Michigan souvenirs. She began with calendars and postcards which evolved into pennants and mugs. But who was she?

I cannot claim to be a genealogist and have received wonderful help for those who are so amazingly skilled in genealogy, but eventually I tried my hand at Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest. I was amazed to find no less than eight Almira Lovells in Michigan, but there was only one Almira F. Lovell. I also learned she came from Flint and her father was a probate judge. Why, I wondered, did she not start her business in Flint? I put on my coat and went immediately to the Bentley Historical Library where within

minutes I had confirmed that she (and her two sisters) graduated from the University of Michigan. Her necrology file revealed another startling fact. In truth, Miss Lovell did not have a middle name or initial. She claimed that she just picked the "F" arbitrarily to distinguish herself from her aunt for whom she was named, yet ironically, it was the "F" that had led me to more information about her.

In a perfect world we, historians, would understand every nuance of the past. In reality, however, anyone who sallies forth to research the past must have a willingness to live with a good deal of uncertainty. We can approach understanding, but there are always gaps in the data. Some historical events or people remain a mystery despite our best efforts.

What have I learned in eight years of researching nineteenth century women? I have learned not to give up. I have learned ways to negotiate my way through the bias found in most printed material. Most important, I learned that very little of what we have been told is correct. We have been given only stereotypes. You can find such women, but they do not represent the era. The vast majority of women's activities have been ignored, hidden and distorted until relatively recently when they, like Boo Radley, are emerging from the past as real, three dimensional people. They are so real that when a woman I know was reading my book to her granddaughter, the girl said, "These women lived a long, long time ago, but they are just like us." **By Susan L. Nenadic**



State Street in late 19th Century (Bentley Historical Library)



Drawing by Michael Klement

## The Dinnerware Museum has “Popped Up” at the Museum on Main Street!



# THREE COURSES

The first course **“Whetting your Appetite,”** presents the perfect balance of eclectic dinnerware from a 6-piece Roy Lichtenstein Pop Art dinnerware set to a wire scribble sculpture by Portuguese artist, David Oliveira. The second course **“Setting the Table,”** features celebrity dinnerware including Liberace’s prized Queen Elizabeth glassware and historic dinnerware that Washtenaw County resident, Philip Bach purchased for his third wife, Anna, in the late 19th century. The third course, **“Getting a Snack,”** features historic and vintage snack sets. Eleven well-known contemporary ceramic artists, have also created their own version of the luncheon snack set on chairs, with stories of their own.



**THE MUSEUM IS OPEN ON  
SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS  
12 NOON TO 4PM  
And by appointment**

Groups and tours are welcome  
call 734-662-9092 or  
email [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net)  
The exhibit closes May 12, 2014.