

# The ABCs & 123s of Creating Innovative Local History Exhibits



Bonnie Byrd, Waukesha County Historical Society & Museum



Jarrold Roll, Monroe County Local History Room & Museum

Hannah Scholze, Monroe County Local History Room & Museum

# Who we are



- Bonnie Byrd

- Hannah Scholze



- Jarrod Roll

# Session Goals

- Exhibit Development Process
- Building Low-Tech Interactives
- Creative Design Elements
- Fundraising for an Exhibit
- Benefits & Challenges

# Our ABCs & 123s

History *of*  
Waukesha  
*in* **100 OBJECTS**

**MONROE  
COUNTY**



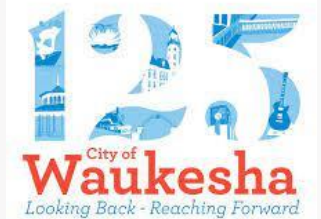
# History of Waukesha in 100 OBJECTS

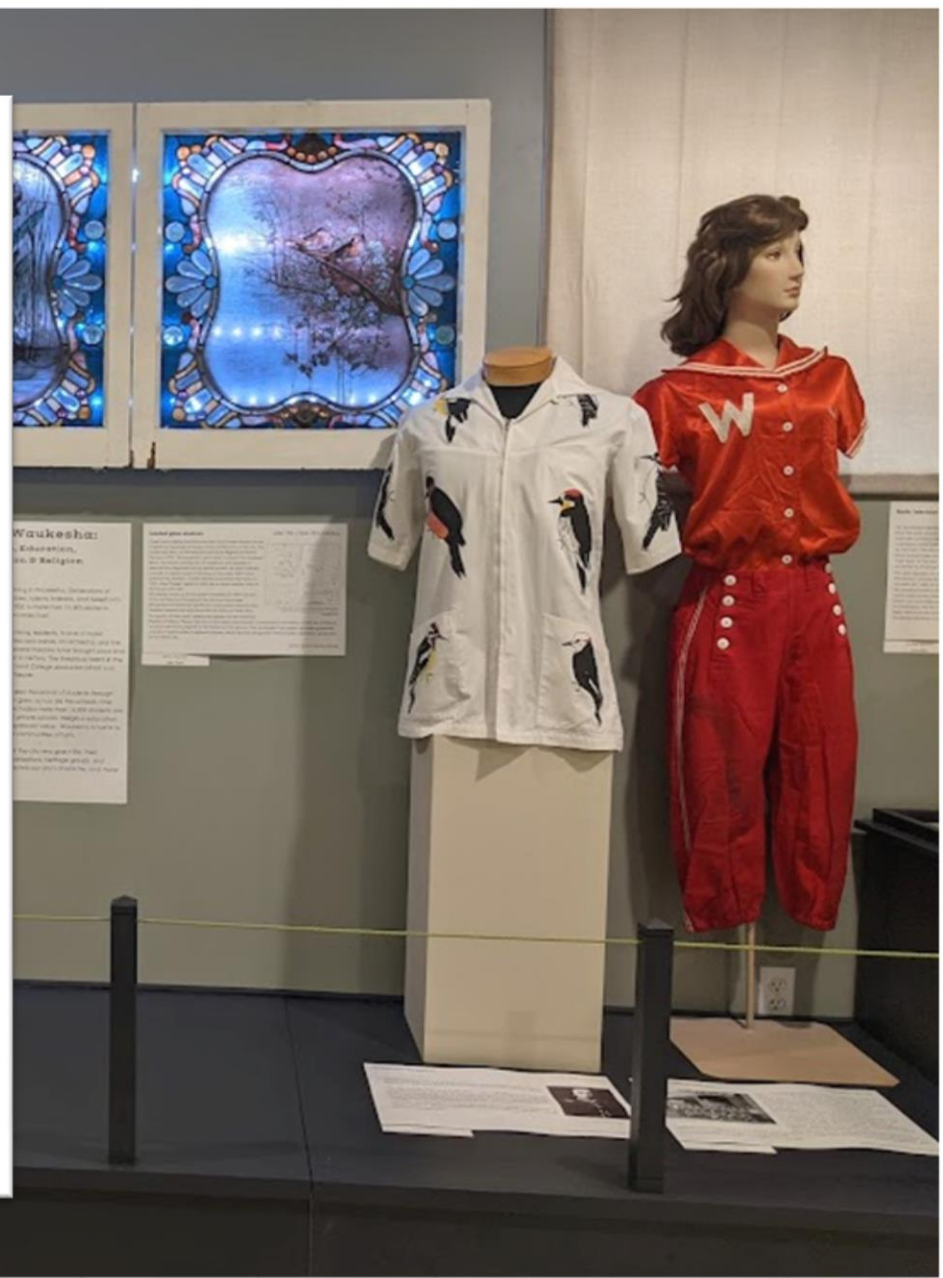
Presented by the A William & Joanne B Huelsman Family Fund

*Additional funding provided by:*



Dan & Cheryl Boehmke  
Sunset Dental





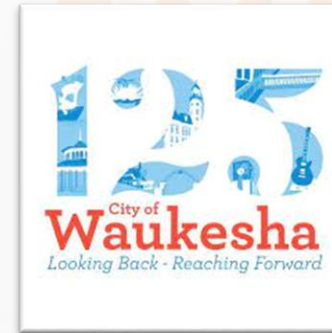
# What was there previously?



# Why build a new exhibit?

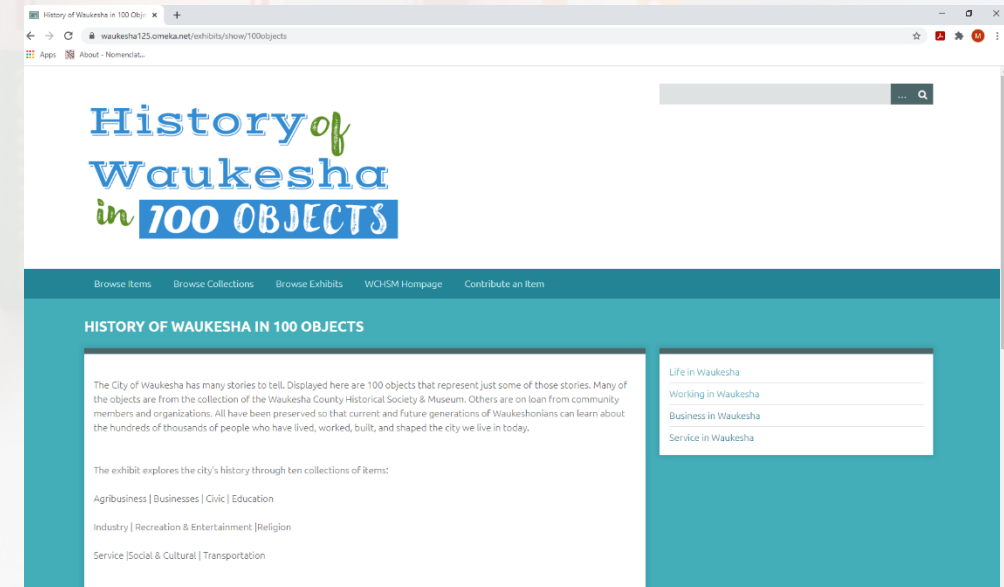


## A. Anniversary | Commemoration



## B. Increase Capacity & Engagement

1. Volunteer & Staff
2. Sponsors & Donors
3. Patron Access: Omeka



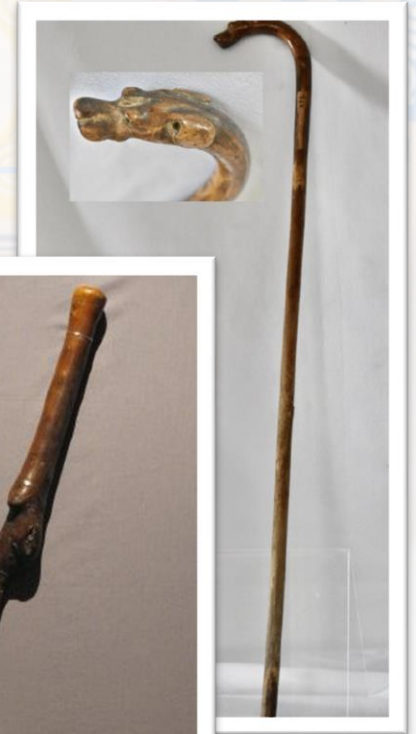
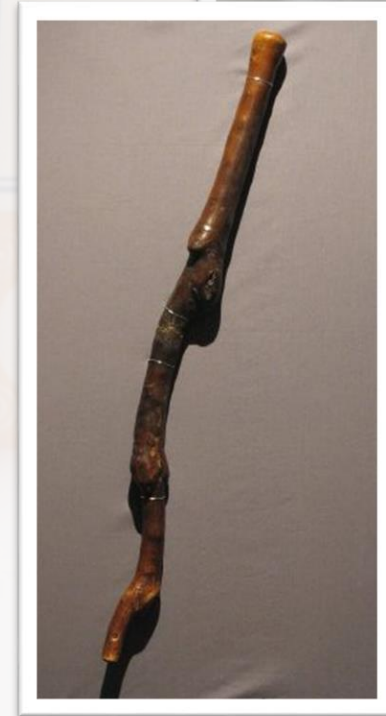


# Continued....

## C. Expand Representation

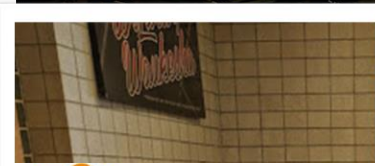
### Goal of each object:

1. Related to the City of Waukesha
2. Contribute a new idea, concept, or perspective
3. Add to the timeline 1896-2021



# Development: How it came together

## 1. Inspiration



Fur  
W

## 2. Collaboration



## 3. Funding

### History of Waukesha in 100 OBJECTS



The Waukesha County Historical Society & Museum is pleased to join other businesses and community organizations in celebrating the City of Waukesha's 125th Anniversary in 2021. A cornerstone feature of the year-long celebration will be the special WCHSM exhibition: *History of Waukesha in 100 Objects*.

The exhibit showcases the history of the City of Waukesha through artifact and archival objects, each selected to represent a piece of the city's history. Particular focus is on the 125 years since the city incorporated in 1896.

The exhibit will open in March 2021, spanning the four rooms of the south galleries in the museum at 101 W Main Street in downtown Waukesha. Accompanying the gallery experience will be an exhibit website featuring each of the 100 objects with additional program and interactive elements for students and patrons to access anytime, anywhere.

#### Sponsorship Opportunities

##### Presenting Sponsor - \$2,500

Private tour of the exhibition OR virtual curator chat (scheduled 2 weeks in advance), and twenty (20) guest passes to the exhibition. Business logo and name will be included on WCHSM's website & the exhibit website. Name acknowledgement in press release and print media. Business logo or name recognition at top of sponsor board in exhibit, and name acknowledgement on five objects labels.

##### Lead Sponsors - \$1,000

Receive twelve (12) guest passes to WCHSM for the exhibition. Business name will be included on WCHSM's website & the exhibit website, press release, and print media. Logo recognition on sponsor board in exhibit, and name acknowledgement on two objects labels.

##### Supporting Sponsors \$500

Receive six (6) guest passes to WCHSM for the exhibition. Business name will be included on WCHSM's main website & exhibit website, press release, and print media. Name recognition on sponsor board in exhibit, and name acknowledgement on one object label.

##### Adopt-an-Artifact \$100

Name recognition on the exhibit and website object label.



# ANITIES



# Benefits & Challenges



**A. Donor & Member Engagement**

**B. Increased Confidence**

**C. Improved Relationships**

**1. Editing Object Lists**

**2. Schedule**

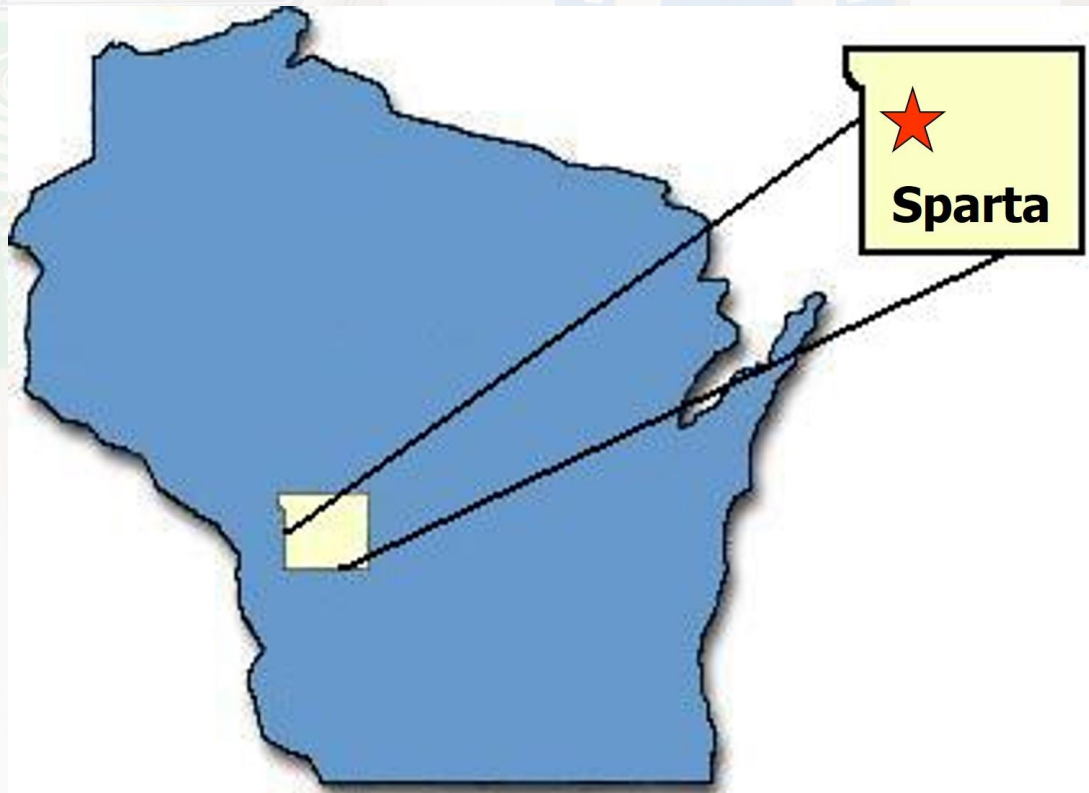
**3. Representation**

*“Why didn’t you include...”*

# MONROE COUNTY



MONROE COUNTY  
**LOCAL HISTORY ROOM**  
AND MUSEUM

The logo features a central illustration of a classical building with columns, topped by a decorative arch. The text is arranged around the building in a serif font.

200 West Main St.  
Sparta, Wisconsin





Display Rack 1

Display Rack 2

Display Rack 2

Explore!

Streets

Coloring Vintage  
D Photography

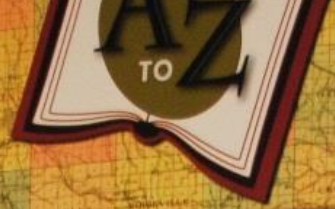
94

90

90

94

# MONROE COUNTY



## A

**Astronaut**  
Monroe County is a gateway to space. Monroe County is home to the world's largest space museum, the Space Shuttle Pavilion, which is a permanent exhibit at the Kennedy Space Center. The pavilion is a state-of-the-art facility that provides a unique and interactive experience for visitors of all ages. It features a variety of exhibits, including a full-scale replica of the Space Shuttle orbiter and external tank, a flight simulator, and a variety of educational programs and activities.



## B

**Bike Trail**  
The Monroe County Bike Trail is a scenic route that winds through the heart of the county. It is a paved trail that is suitable for all types of bicycles, including road bikes, mountain bikes, and family bikes. The trail is approximately 10 miles long and offers a variety of views, including rolling hills, fields, and forests. It is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and get some exercise. The trail is open to the public and is free of charge. For more information, visit the Monroe County website.



## C

**Cranberries**  
Monroe County is a leading producer of cranberries in the United States. The county is home to several large cranberry farms, which produce high-quality fruit that is used in a variety of products, including juice, sauce, and dried fruit. The cranberry industry is an important part of the county's economy and has a long history. For more information, visit the Monroe County website.



## D

**Dairy**  
Monroe County is a leading producer of dairy products in the United States. The county is home to several large dairy farms, which produce high-quality milk and other dairy products. The dairy industry is an important part of the county's economy and has a long history. For more information, visit the Monroe County website.



## H

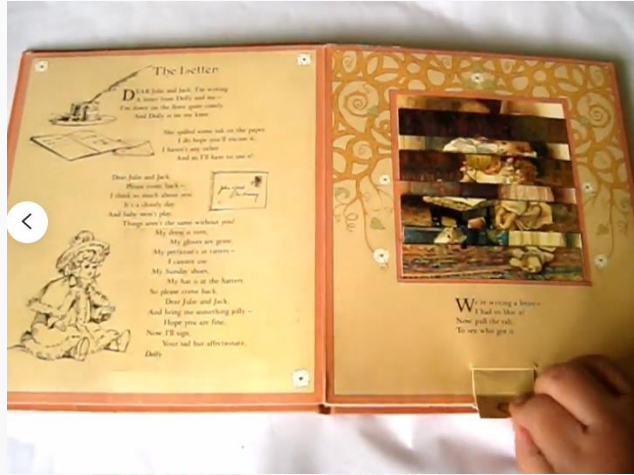


# Core Exhibit Goals

- Interactive (multi-sensory)
- Kid-friendly
- Durable
- Analog
- County-wide representation
- Inclusive
- Compact
- Movable



# Inspiration...





# Process of Creation

- Assigning letters
- Dream up/mock up interactive ideas (variety; interactives which reinforce interpretative ideas)
- Meet with designers to determine feasibility and cost
- Determine photos and artifacts to include (obtaining them when necessary)
- Fundraise
- Research; write label copy: EDIT!

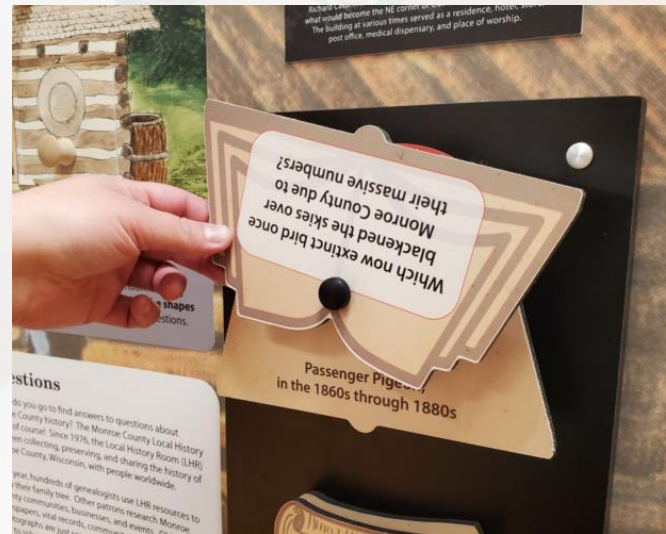
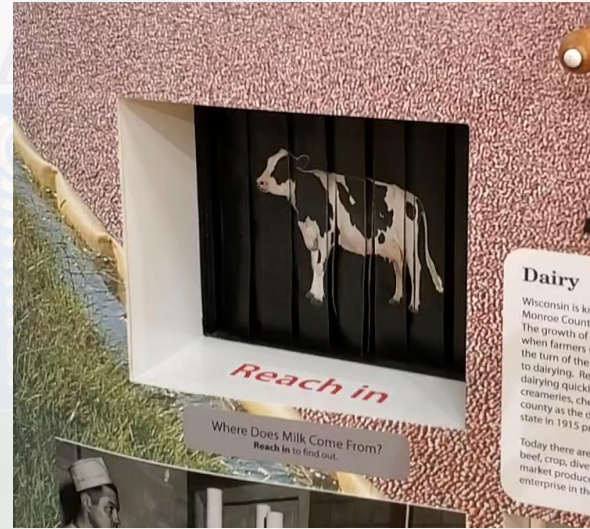


# Process of Creation Continued

- Create the space where it would go (dismantle old exhibit; return artifacts on display)
- Promote
- Install (problem solving; adding lighting)
- Observe audience use and interaction; make modifications (eg. directions, arrows)



# Examples of Interactives



# Benefits of Creating the Core Exhibit

- Strengthening and establishing ties with key stakeholders, businesses, organizations, clubs, artists, and county through their contributions of money, talents, or information.
  - Western Wisconsin Model Railroad Club
  - Veterans Administration Medical Center
  - Civic Group (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.)
  - Monroe County Departments & County Board
  - Deke Slayton Memorial Space & Bicycle Museum
  - Cranberry Companies
  - Local Artists
  - Ho-Chunk Nation
  - Fort McCoy
  - Kohler Foundation

## The following sponsors helped to make this exhibit possible:

Ann & Bill Barney

Ellen Raimer  
In honor of Monroe County's  
Native Peoples

Monroe County Historical Society

Monroe County Farm Proceeds  
Educational Fund



pica grove  
image allies

GUNDERSEN  
HEALTH SYSTEM.

John & Beverly Larson Foundation  
Frank G. Andres Charitable Trust

Kwik Trip



KOHLER  
FOUNDATION  
INC.

SB State Bank  
Financial

- Coveris Flexible Packaging of Tomah
- Coverra Insurance Services, Inc.
- James & Nodji Van Wychen
- Kiwanis Club of Sparta
- Mayo Clinic Health System
- Rev. Luther Larson  
In memory of Jan Larson
- RIA Federal Credit Union
- TRICOR Insurance
- Walmart Community Grants Team  
& Facility #979

# Benefits Continued

- History is more effectively communicated and interpreted
- Overall visitor experience is improved; provides more memorable visit to museum (and community)
- Public views us more as a professional museum
- Public views us a more family-friendly destination
- More repeat visitors
- Exhibit has long shelf life



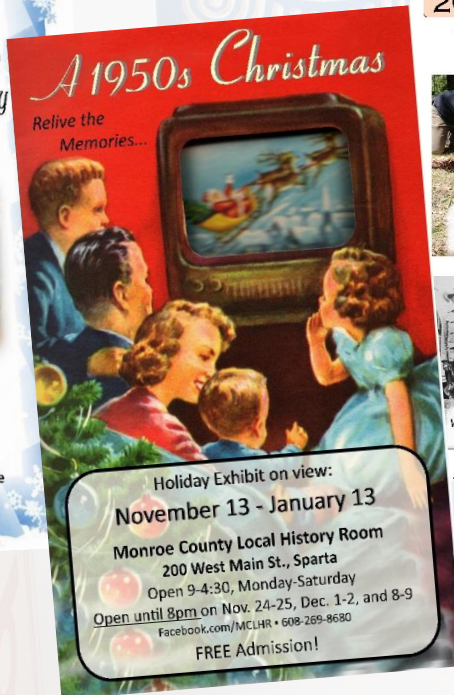
# Challenges of Creating the Core Exhibit

- Developing this exhibit was in addition to normal operations; this severely taxed employees



**Winter Break Craft Day!**  
Create Take-Home Crafts!  
Free Family Fun!  
At The Museums

Thursday, December 28th, 2017  
10am—1pm Come and Go  
Monroe County Local History Room & Dede Slayton Space & Bicycle Museum  
200 West Main St., Sparta; 608-269-8680  
Suggested Ages: 4-10 yrs, but ALL are welcome  
Free program



**A 1950s Christmas**  
Relive the Memories...

Holiday Exhibit on view:  
**November 13 - January 13**  
Monroe County Local History Room  
200 West Main St., Sparta  
Open 9-4:30, Monday-Saturday  
Open until 8pm on Nov. 24-25, Dec. 1-2, and 8-9  
Facebook.com/MCLHR • 608-269-8680  
FREE Admission!



**HISTORY-LIVE!**  
2018 PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES  
Thursdays at the Monroe County Local History Room & Museum

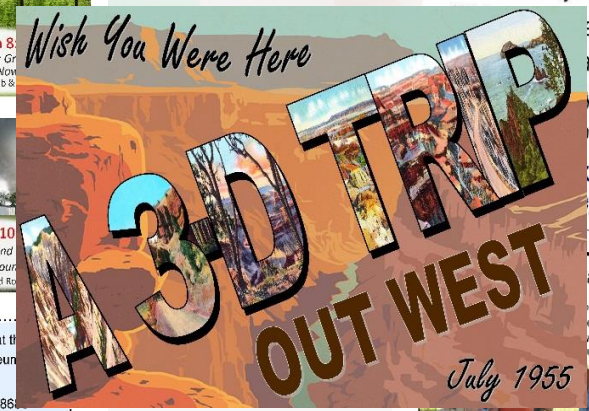
**February 8:**  
Solving Secrets with Science: Archaeology at Fort McCoy, by Dr. Alexander Woods

**March 8:**  
Regional Hops Grow Then & Now, by Craig Saxe and Bob Saxe

**April 5:**  
WWI and Its Long-Term Impact, by Ward Zochke

**May 10:**  
Fires, Floods, and Nature: Monroe County, by Janet R...

\*All Lectures will be held Thursdays at 7pm at the Monroe County Local History Room & Museum 200 West Main St., Sparta, WI  
For more info on these events call: 608-269-8680 Or visit: [www.Facebook.com/MCLHR](http://www.Facebook.com/MCLHR)  
A \$1.00 per person admission donation is greatly appreciated to defray programming costs.



*Wish You Were Here*  
**3D TRIP OUT WEST**  
July 1955



**Art Outdoors**  
At the Wegner Grotto County Park (The "Glass Church") Just 15 minutes north of Sparta

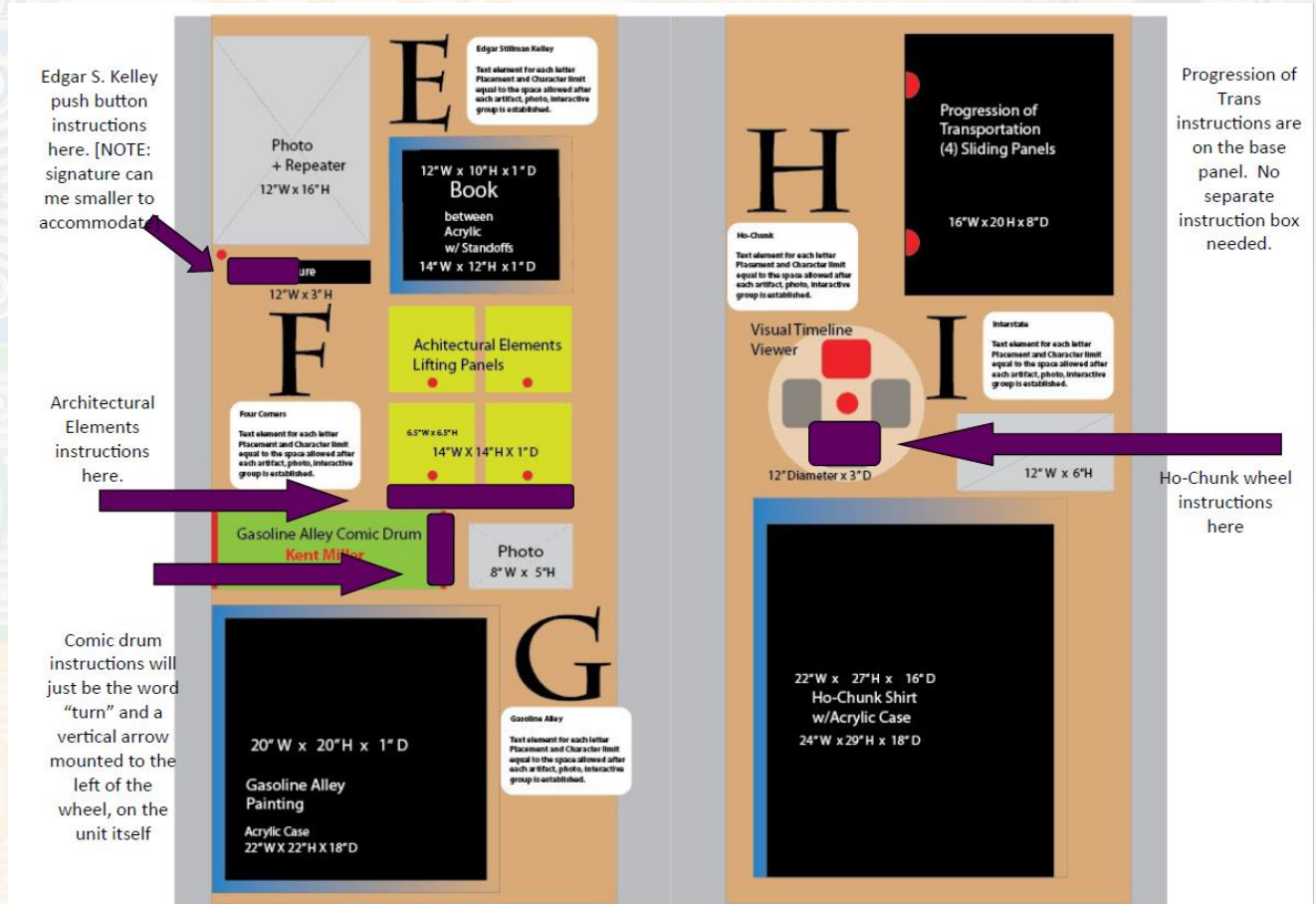
\*Free Family Fun!

July 26th 10am-3pm  
off Hwy 27, of Cataract, Wisconsin

Contact the Local History Room for more info:  
Facebook.com/MCLHR  
269-8680 or  
mclhr@centurytel.net

# Challenges Continued

- A lot to coordinate (multiple people, deadlines, logistics)
- Limited space: more ideas, more text than space allowed
- Technical elements didn't always work as designed (disappointment, adaptation)
- Unexpected delays, tight deadlines



# Challenges Continued

- Once installed, elements break and need repair (which can take time and money)
- Visitors don't use interactives as intended (don't understand, don't read)
- Interactives can distract from educational content
- School groups (too rough, sensory overload)





# Challenges Continued

- Hands-on exhibits during a pandemic



# Final Thoughts

The background of the slide features several stacks of colorful alphabet blocks. The blocks are in various colors including blue, yellow, green, and orange. Some blocks show lowercase letters like 'e', 'p', 'f', 'h', 'd', and 't', while others show numbers like '8', '5', '4', and 'one'. The blocks are arranged in a way that they appear to be part of a larger structure, possibly a tower or a wall, and are slightly out of focus, creating a soft, artistic backdrop for the text.

- Sometimes you reap benefits beyond the obvious/planned outcomes
- Think big, think creatively!
- Visit museums and other attractions to find inspiration which you can adapt to your venue
- Networking
- Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery

# Questions?

The background features several stacks of colorful alphabet blocks. From left to right, the visible blocks include: a stack with 'duckling' and 'd'; a stack with 'e', 'o', and 'i'; a stack with 'f', 'e', and 'i'; a stack with '4' (four) and 'i'; and a stack with 'h', '5' (five), and 'd'.

Contact us:

Bonnie – [bbyrd@wchsm.org](mailto:bbyrd@wchsm.org)

Jarrold – [mclhr@centurytel.net](mailto:mclhr@centurytel.net)

Hannah – [monroecomsa@gmail.com](mailto:monroecomsa@gmail.com)