

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Six West Michigan Attractions Offer FREE Admission in October to Members

September 15, 2020: The Southwest Michigan Cultural Membership Exchange has moved from spring to fall this year. The exchange will offer free admission to members of six cultural attractions during the entire month of October. Current members of The Air Zoo, Binder Park Zoo, Gilmore Car Museum, Kalamazoo Nature Center, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, and the Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) Bird Sanctuary and Manor House can visit each destination free of admission charge when they present a valid membership card and photo ID.

For the seventh year in a row, the exchange offers visitors the chance to explore some of the area's most engaging and exciting destinations to discover art, history, nature, science and wildlife. At the same time, it highlights the value and benefits of being a member of these organizations. Postponed from May due to the pandemic, the exchange partners believe that visitors and especially families will appreciate the special fall opportunity. "The slower pace, fall colors and the bonus of an educational component should be very attractive, especially for those engaged in virtual learning. Each organization has put important safety protocols in place and visitors are strongly encouraged to review those details on our websites in advance for the best experience possible. Additionally, the punch card passports used in previous years to track visits will not be available this year due to safety precautions."

Highlights include:

The Air Zoo is a Smithsonian-affiliated aerospace & science experience with over 100 rare aircraft and space artifacts, immersive and interactive hands-on exhibits, science-based virtual education programs and more! New to the exhibit floor – *Alien Worlds & Androids* dives into space exploration and the possibility of life on other planets; *Amelia: Adventurous Aviatrrix* will set your imagination soaring as you learn about the life, passions and successes of one of history's most beloved female aviators. Guests will also have the opportunity to explore two temporary exhibits, *Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence*, a sampling of the exhibit from the National Portrait Gallery's exhibit, and *Flight & Flak: The Art of Paul Wentzel, Sr.* which features paintings of military aviation history on loan from the Selfridge Military Air Museum.

Binder Park Zoo is where you can see Mexican gray wolves, kangaroos, lemurs, bears, snow leopard and red panda in October. Travel by tram to *Wild Africa* for a view of the spectacular savanna exhibit and maybe hand feed a giraffe! Marvel at the lions, cheetahs, painted dogs and a giant tortoise named "Al". No 2 visits are the same. The zoo is open daily 10am-4pm through Oct. 31. Plan your visit at www.binderparkzoo.org.

Gilmore Car Museum is North America's largest auto museum featuring more than 400 vehicles displayed in dozens of historic barns and replica auto dealerships on a 90-acre historic campus. Current special exhibits include *Legendary Packard: From Light Bulbs to Luxury Automobiles*, *American Graffiti* - featuring the original vehicle used in the movie, and *Born to Perform: The Era of the Muscle Car* displaying two dozen of everyone's favorite high performance muscle machines from the 1960s and '70s. The museum is open seven days a week year-round. Learn more at gilmorecarmuseum.org.

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts is excited to welcome everyone back! Visitors are encouraged to stop in and enjoy our current exhibitions open until October 11th: *Nature-Inside/Out*, *Selections from the Permanent Collection* and the *Kirk Newman Art School Residents Show*. The *Cultural Encounters* exhibition will open at the end of October. Gallery hours are Friday and Saturday 11am-5pm with reservations. Learn more at kiarts.org or call 269-349-7775 for more information. The Gallery Shop and Kirk Newman Art School are open!

Kalamazoo Nature Center is celebrating 60 years this October. Visitors will be treated to beautiful fall colors as they explore 1,100+ acres of varied habitat with 16 nature trails to choose from. Featured artists in October/November are printmaker Alynn Guerra and Things of Steel artists Michelle Zorich and Katherine Martin. The Visitor Center is open Wednesday – Sunday. For the October calendar of programs, and Covid-19 protocols please visit naturecenter.org.

KBS Bird Sanctuary is open Wednesday through Sunday offering over 3 miles of trails, including a lakeside trail to see waterfowl, raptors, and game birds up close. October is the start of peak migration! Over 100 birds can be seen on their journey south before the winter months. Visit our Pollinator Garden and Rain Garden to get inspiration for next spring. Join us for our on-line programs including *Birds & Coffee Walks* and *Birds of Prey Live!* For visitor information and COVID-19 protocols please visit birdsanctuary.kbs.msu.edu/visit. The historic **KBS Manor House** is open for self-guided tours by appointment Monday through Wednesday. Built on the highest point overlooking Gull Lake, visit the Manor House to learn the local history of W.K. Kellogg and his commitment to conservation and education, within awe-inspiring views and lush gardens. Contact the Manor House at conference@kbs.msu.edu to schedule a time.

Six cultural gems; The Air Zoo, Binder Park Zoo, Gilmore Car Museum, Kalamazoo Nature Center, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, and the Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) Bird Sanctuary and Manor House are located in southwest Michigan, and each destination is committed to providing an exceptional experience for visitors. Guests who aren't yet members can purchase a membership of their choice at the websites listed above. Memberships make great gifts, too. The value of admission for a family of four to visit all six organizations is over \$200.

For more information, visit swmimemberexchange.com or any of the websites listed above.

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