

Forget politics: Head to Lansing for fun, learning

BY MARY QUINLEY
CORRESPONDENT

Michigan politics can be fun and entertaining. Forget about the annoying phone calls, television ads and rooms of unsolicited mail that the upcoming election has triggered and head north to Lansing.

"We are the political heart of the state," said Tracy Padot, communications manager for the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau.

For more than 120 years, Lansing has served as the state's capital. And, Padot said, depending on a person's interest, the city offers something for each age group.

Let's take a glimpse at some of the capital's government and non-government hot spots.

STATE CAPITOL BUILDING

If you're pressed for time yet you want to check out the State Capitol Building, head to the first level directly under the dome.

Then, stretch out (or stand) on the floor - a spectacular masterpiece made with 976 pieces of glass - and look up 160 feet to the dome. It's awesome!

"Domes are symbols of their state, sources of inspiration and points of pride," said Kerry Chartkoff, historian and tour guide at the Capitol.

Don't miss the House and Senate Chambers. Modern tech-



An exhibit at the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center in Lansing explains about First Amendment rights.

nology was skillfully introduced into these rooms while maintaining the original decor.

Guided tours provide the best option to explore the building.

One benefit is that visitors will have a chance to view rooms, such as the governor's parlor, that are open only during tours.

HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Kids of all ages rive about the Michigan Historical Museum.

Located in the Michigan Library and Historical Center complex, the museum features a potpourri of exhibits and interactive displays that weave throughout five floors.

The galleries, beginning with a

depiction of prehistoric times, offer a fascinating view of Michigan's heritage through 1975 when Gerald Ford was president.

Wander through the replicated 1800s Upper Peninsula copper mine, gaze at the nose of a B-24 bomber, and then linger at the S&H Green Stamp Redemption Center.

If politics piques your interest, check out the gallery devoted to Michigan's struggle for statehood.

Before departing, be sure to visit the lumber baron's mansion and the one-room schoolhouse.

SUPREME COURT

Do you know how a jury is selected? Have you ever wondered about the legality of a police search?

Discover the answers to these questions and more at the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center.

The center, located on the first floor of the new Michigan Hall of Justice building, opened on Nov. 1.

The facility incorporates multiple learning styles, such as videos, computer programs and hands-on displays. Galleries are packed with information to educate visitors of all ages about the Michigan justice system and how it affects lives.

According to Vicky Kruckeberg, Learning Center coordinator, Michigan is charting new territory in reaching out to the public and to schoolchildren via this center.

"We're breaking ground here with something that hasn't been done before," Kruckeberg said.

SCIENCE CENTER

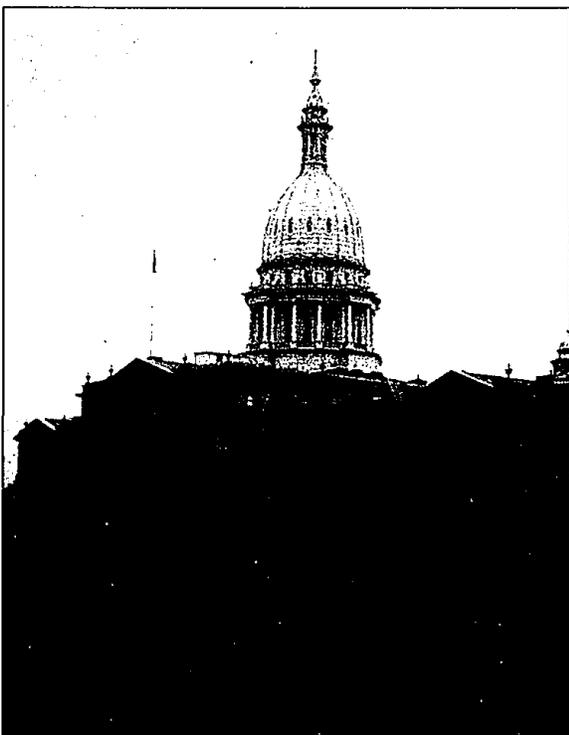
Every kid loves water. So naturally, the water exhibit at the Impression 5 Science Center ranks as a favorite activity.

"There are a variety of things to do with water," said Marion Comptompass, external relations officer.

Youngsters and their grownup pals are encouraged to maneuver the set of locks, create fountains, snag the floating blocks and enjoy! Raincoats are provided.

As visitors meander throughout the century-old building to explore the more than 150 hands-on exhibits, all five senses will be stimulated and challenged.

On Nov. 16, a model train layout will be set up to coincide with the holiday season. And begin-



Michigan's Capitol building offers tours six days a week.

ning Dec. 7, the museum will be home to a traveling shipwreck exhibit.

PLANT TOURS

A brilliant red, 2003 Pontiac Grand Am inched along the final checkpoints at the Lansing Car Assembly Chassis Plant. The car was missing a hood.

Not to worry, said tour guide David Lambright, as he led a group through the assembly plant. The red Grand Am would later be fitted with a special fiberglass hood.

Plant tours provide a fun and interesting approach to learning about automobile production. Did you know that it takes more than 2,600 parts to make up a

car, and, that silver is currently "the" most popular color?

If you're at least 12 years old, consider making a date to tour either the Body Plant or the Chassis Plant in Lansing.

Mary Quinley is a Livonia resident and writes about food and travel for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. You can reach her at MQuinley@aol.com.

IF YOU GO

■ State Capitol Building: At the intersection of Capitol and Michigan avenues, free guided tours offered every half-hour from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday; on Saturdays, tours are available every half-hour from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; (517) 373-2353.

■ Michigan Historical Museum: 717 W. Allegan St., 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday; free admission; (800) 827-7007, (517) 373-3559 or www.sos.state.mi.us/history.

■ Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center: Located on the first floor of the Michigan Hall of Justice at the corner of Allegan Street and Marlin Luther King Boulevard, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday; free admission; (517) 373-5027, (517) 373-3449 or visit: www.courts.michigan.gov.

For information on all Lansing area attractions, contact the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau at (888) 2-LANSING, (517) 487-6800 or visit the Web at: www.lansing.org.

Celebration



An Italian Reunion



an American Anniversary



In *Virtue and Violence*, the Toledo Museum of Art reunites two paintings by Giuseppe Cades for the first time in America. Also, celebrate as the Museum showcases *Tamarind: Forty Years* and the Tamarind Press's contributions to the print world through lithography.

Virtue and Violence: Portrayals of Lucretia and Achilles by Giuseppe Cades (A Focus Exhibition)
October 4, 2002-January 5, 2003

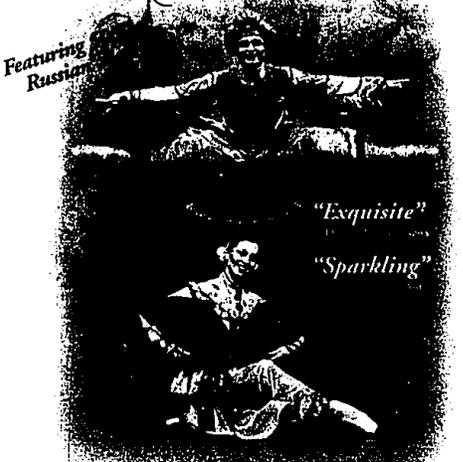
Tamarind: Forty Years
October 11, 2002-January 5, 2003

FREE ADMISSION



2445 Monroe Street
419-255-8000
www.toledomuseum.org

L-SERIES SATURN presents Moscow Ballet's GREAT RUSSIAN Nutcracker



FOX THEATRE
Saturday, November 9 2:00 & 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, November 10 1:00 p.m.

For tickets:
TicketMaster: 248-433-1515 Box Office: Event Info 313-471-6611
TicketMaster.com Nutcracker.com

TicketMaster Outlets: Fox Theatre Box Office, Hockeytown Authentics (Troy),
Joe Louis Box Office, Harmony House, Marshall Fields
Children's Dance Coordinator: Christine Sickle, Sickle's Dance Gallery
and Dori Matkowiak, Dance Dynamics

