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**HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM'S "WATER" EXHIBIT  
ADDS "CRAYFISH CORNER" FOR YOUNG VISITORS**

JULY 3, 2015 -- A "kid's activity corner" adds a new attraction to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum, featuring "Cletus the Crawdad" as an entertaining live enhancement to this year's all-new exhibition "*Water...A River, A Lake, A Place Called Saugatuck-Douglas*".

Crayfish Corner, located in the Museum's south gallery (Supermap Room), displays Cletus in a tabletop aquarium habitat where visitors can watch him searching the gravel for bits of food, rearranging his flowerpot house and doing whatever else crayfish do. He represents one of eight kinds of crayfish found in Michigan's ponds, streams, swamps and ditches -- and some 330 kinds across North America -- also called crawfish, crawdads, mudbugs or freshwater lobsters.

In addition to Cletus-watching, kids can learn "Fun Facts about Crayfish", try their hands at coloring sheets that introduce them to native fish species, puzzle over a river maze and fill in critter-search activity pages. They can post their efforts on the Corner's display board or take them home.

Says exhibit curator-writer Jim Schmiechen, "our water exhibition is packed with information to satisfy the serious history buff, but that can be a bit overwhelming for younger visitors, so the new Crayfish Corner gives parents a way to interest and occupy their youngsters in a nearby setting. Past exhibits have offered a variety of interactive projects for kids," he notes, "but Cletus is our first live one." He credits creation of the new attraction to Museum volunteers Sally Winthers, Jackie Lencioni and Sarah Goy.

The south gallery also features the Society's popular "SuperMap" -- a 6-foot high, 12-foot wide illustrated color wall map of the Saugatuck-Douglas area with an interactive computer display to provide a virtual tour through these historic villages, highlighting significant people, places and events of both past and present. As many as 70 map-highlighted references are keyed by number to let visitors select and learn about sites of interest by calling up information, narratives and images using several video/interactive touch-screen terminals near the map.

In addition, the terminals offer topical "interactive programs" such as *History of Hotels/Boarding Houses*; *History of Boatbuilding and Boat Builders*; *Buildings and Architecture*; *Artists and Painting*; *Local Biographies*; *History of Saugatuck-Douglas Schools*; *13 Tales of the Villages* and *A Video History of Saugatuck and Douglas*. They also allow public access to the Historical Society's digitized archives of historical photos, pages of *The Commercial Record* dating back to 1868, and more.

--- Imaginary Historical Waterway Trips ---

The water exhibition presents multiple stories of how the Kalamazoo River and Lake Michigan have shaped and reshaped our area's way of living, working, relaxing and thinking since the mid-1800s. It engages visitors' imaginations to accompany five travelers, each at different points in time, sharing the experience, discovery and sometimes danger of their adventures along our waterways. Their trips unfold in maps, pictures, narratives and artifacts, plus "side stories" that add interesting cultural perspectives, all set before a vast composite mural of more than 200 historical archive photos that help visualize those earlier times.

After the final trip station, a "sticky-note feedback wall" presents a series of questions related to contemporary concerns about water, and invites personal responses posted by sticky-notes. Nearby, three display stations feature a review of water quality comparing lake, river, rain and tap water; a collection of rare antique fishing lures; and for visitors of all ages, a fish-identification game.

Floating above it all is a fanciful "school" of fish, created by local artists Ted Reyda and Sally Winthers, representing the species currently inhabiting our area's lakes and rivers.

Continuing the Society's tradition of offering books created to accompany exhibits past and present, the Museum's south gallery gift shop again highlights *Storm, Fire, and Ice. Shipwrecks of the Saugatuck Area*. Written by Historical Society members Jack Sheridan and Kit Lane, this popular book tells the tales of local ship disasters from the 19th century to the present, including the mysterious wreck of the "Chicora." Designed by Society member Ken Carls, with 68 illustrations, this 72-page soft-cover book won a Michigan Museums Association Design Excellence Award.

The Museum, open daily through Labor Day, Noon to 4 p.m., occupies the historic Saugatuck Pumphouse at 735 Park Street, in a scenic garden setting along the west shore of the Kalamazoo River at Mt. Baldhead Park, a short walk north from the Saugatuck Chain Ferry's west-bank landing. Admission and nearby parking are free. After Labor Day, Museum open-hours will apply Saturdays/Sundays only, through September and October.

To contact Museum staff, call (269) 857-7900. For online information about the Historical Society, its History Museum in Saugatuck and its Old School House History Center in Douglas, visit [www.sdhistoricalociety.org](http://www.sdhistoricalociety.org).

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"Cletus the Crawdad" starts to venture out of his flowerpot house at Museum's new "Crayfish Corner"