

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Alumni



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2013

DAVID WRENCH '12
Associate of Arts

© Mark Bugnaski / mLive / Kalamazoo Gazette



Director's Welcome



Greetings and welcome to the fourth edition of Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Alumni + Newsletter. The Alumni + program has made excellent strides since its inception in October of 2010. We have gleaned information through alumni surveys, paired mentors, hosted alumni reunions and more.

This program continues to grow, thanks to you.

We hope that you have had the opportunity to participate in recent college and Alumni+ events and that you will continue to do so. From reunions to Alumni Art Shows, Artist Forum concerts to annual fund campaigns and the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Foundation's hallmark event, the Opportunities for Education Dinner -- we want you with us.

It is our hope that the growth is obvious. The intent of this newsletter is to provide an enjoyable reading experience. We've included exciting Kalamazoo Valley news and updates on former classmates and faculty. Please continue to send us your inspiring success stories. They serve as the anchor of our newsletter.

Kalamazoo Valley is still about you. In this issue, you will read about Career Central Network, a new job search website that's available to you as alumni of Kalamazoo Valley. Also, we are very excited to announce upcoming concerts offered through the college's renowned Artists' Forum series. Suzanne Vega will perform in Dale B. Lake Auditorium on Feb. 20 and Denise Donatelli takes the stage on April 26.

Alumni+ Calendar of Events

Friday, March 1, 2013, 5:30 pm

JURIED ALUMNI+ ART SHOW

Center for New Media, Arcadia Commons Campus

Sunday, April 28, 2013, 4 pm

SPRING 2013 COMMENCEMENT

The Fieldhouse, Western Michigan University

Friday, May 3, 2013 Time

DENTAL HYGIENE REUNION

Texas Township Campus

Thursday, May 16, 2013, 5:30 pm

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION DINNER

Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites, Downtown Kalamazoo

Buy tickets at kvcc.edu/foundation or by calling

269.488.4442



December 2012 graduates celebrate their alumni status.

Thank you for helping us grow and for your continued loyalty to Kalamazoo Valley.

Send your stories, comments and questions to Karen Visser at kvisser@kvcc.edu or alumni@kvcc.edu

Steve Doherty
Director of Development

ALUMNI+ Newsletter

Editor

Karen Visser

Managing Editor

Dawn Kemp

Design + Photography

Thomas Wrench

Board of Trustees

Darl D. Oberlin **Chairman**

Mary T. Gustas **Vice Chairman**

Anna Whitten **Secretary**

A. Christian Schauer **Treasurer**

Susan L. Miller **Trustee**

Jeffrey E. Patton **Trustee**

T. Kenneth Young **Trustee**

Marilyn Schlack **President**

Alumni+ Newsletter is published three times each year: fall, winter and spring.

Questions about Kalamazoo Valley Alumni+ or this publication may be directed to the Alumni Relations Coordinator at: **269.488.4314** or at alumni@kvcc.edu

Kalamazoo Valley Community College
6767 West O Avenue
PO Box 4070
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-4070



Tell your story and listen to others.
facebook.com/KVCCAlumni

College Updates

More updates available at
www.kvcc.edu/news and at
[f /KVCCAlumni](https://www.facebook.com/KVCCAlumni)

MECHATRONIC TECHNICIANS ACADEMY

The 20-week, accelerated Mechatronic Systems Technician Academy provides the opportunity for students to gain skills needed to work on industrial robots, automated equipment found in retail, manufacturing and entertainment sectors and other technologically advanced systems.

"The skill sets employers demand transcends a traditional approach to technical education. A mechanical specialist or an electrician is seldom able to solve the problems which arise on automated equipment without crossing over into areas we used to consider separate occupations. We call the technicians with the combined skills and capabilities Mechatronic Systems Technicians," said Cindy Buckley, Executive Director of Training for Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Applicants seeking more information or to apply should call 269.353.1286, email careeracademies@kvcc.edu

KVM WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum has again achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition for a museum. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public. The Kalamazoo Valley Museum was first accredited in 1991. All museums must undergo a reaccreditation review at least every 10 years to maintain accredited status.

www.kalamazoomuseum.org.



EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR ALUM

Kalamazoo Valley's Career & Student Employment Services has two exciting new ways to assist job applicants. The college is using College Central Network (CCN), an online career management system that provides job postings to students, alumni, employers, and community members. In addition, the college is hosting the second annual Kalamazoo Career Fair from 2 to 7 p.m. on March 20 at the Texas Township Campus.

The Kalamazoo Career Fair gives student, alumni and community job seekers the opportunity to meet face-to-face with area employers. Nearly 90 employers with current job openings are expected to attend.

Breakout sessions with information about careers in the manufacturing and health care fields, job readiness, and other topics are being planned. Diane Finch, Director of Career and Student Employment Services at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, said those who attend the Career Fair should bring copies of their resumes, dress for success and be prepared to meet with potential employers.

Finch also said she thinks the CCN website will be a huge asset to the community's job seekers including alumni. "The college still maintains a separate website at jobs.kvcc.edu for positions that are offered here at the college," she pointed out.

CCN includes local company job postings as well as a national job board that offers more than a half a million job postings. The new website also includes a resume search function for employers, a resume builder, career advice articles, podcasts and videos, and a career document library. From accounting, biology, and business, to the arts, dance, and healthcare, CCN has tools and templates that make it easy to build industry specific resumes and portfolios.

Using the new site is simple, according to Finch. All users need to do is login, update their profiles, and begin exploring the services available. "All students and alumni will benefit from maintaining an up-to-date account," said Finch. "Employers will be posting their available jobs on CCN and also searching for suitable job applicants."

To access the site, go to www.collegecentral.com/kvcc. All users must create an account. Use of the CCN website and attendance at the Kalamazoo Career Fair are both free of charge.



VETERAN ALUMNI ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

David Wrench knew before he graduated from high school that he wanted to join the Marines. He was so motivated that he enlisted in the Delayed Entry Program and graduated from Plainwell High School six months ahead of his classmates. "I was just ready to move on," Wrench said. Shortly after his 18th birthday in June 2006, he became a United States Marine. Wrench was stationed in Twenty Nine Palms,

California and was later deployed to Iraq. He completed Non-Commissioned Officer training at the end of 2009 and was discharged after being injured by an improvised explosive device. He was flown to Qatar for surgery and spent one month at the Al Udeid Air Base.

Wrench started general education studies at Kalamazoo Valley in January 2011 and transferred in September 2012 to National University in San Diego, California. He plans to earn a bachelor's degree in business management with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. Wrench also joined the Air Force National Guard to keep a connection with the military while he's still in college. He spends one weekend a month on active duty drills in Riverside, California.

Wrench also said he had heard horror stories from other veterans who returned to school after getting out of the military, but his experiences have been positive. "I had a buddy from an old platoon who said it was great at Kalamazoo Valley," Wrench said. While he was a student at the college, he became active with Student Veterans of America, a campus chapter of a national student veteran organization. "Vets just seem to attract vets," Wrench said, explaining that vets are often looking for others who have gone through similar experiences. Before he was injured, Wrench served in the mounted infantry, patrolling from Fallujah to Ramadi and around Baghdad, searching villages in the Al Jazeera Desert.

Kalamazoo Valley was the beginning of my academic career.

When Wrench recovered from his injuries, he was ready to get out. "I didn't want to stay in the job I was in," he said. "My body was broken and beaten. I wanted a transferrable skill, something I could get a job in, something I could make a career of."

Wrench now lives with his former corpsman in San Diego. "It's a lot different than I remember it," he says of the city. He's happy to be back with his peers and is enthusiastic about his studies. He is weighing his options for the future. "I've got a year left to see what falls into place," he said. "I've got a whole year to make up my mind, so that's not a bad deal." He advises other veterans to consider returning to college when they get out of the service. "You've taken so many chances and done so many things already, you might as well take the next step and get a degree," he advises fellow veterans. "Learn as much as you can while going through college, especially if you're doing it for the first time."

Wrench said it's important to become aware of all of the available resources. He said peer-to-peer veteran outreach programs like Buddy to Buddy can be extremely helpful. "Participating in those vet oriented programs makes the transition easier," Wrench said. He also said Kalamazoo Valley staff members Colleen Olsen and Stacy Hoffman were instrumental in helping him with academic and financial counseling.

Elizabeth Lyons serves as the Director of Veteran Services and advisor of the college's Student Veterans of America. "Kalamazoo Valley is committed to supporting and encouraging veterans' success, whether they are discharged veterans, still serving on active duty, or in the Reserves or the Guard," Lyons said. "The Veteran Services Office can assist veterans with access to resources at the college and in the community. I am here to help make the transition back to school successful. There is a strong initiative going



Wrench, with his mother Jonna Jameson at her Spring 2012 graduation from Kalamazoo Valley.

on here to be vet-friendly. We are expanding our services for veterans, including a new student vet-to-vet mentorship program and a specialized orientation for incoming student veterans." Lyons said last semester about 280 veterans, and/or dependents of veterans, utilized GI educational benefits at KVCC. Many more are attending classes, but are not using their benefits.

Plans are in the works to construct a Veterans Tribute Garden on Campus. Lyons said so far, \$5,700 has been donated for the purchase of commemorative bricks. Wrench's family has already purchased bricks inscribed with his name and an uncle's. "I think it's a great way to honor those who have served," Wrench said.

In addition to Lyons, veteran Brent Haddow works to assist student veterans on campus. He runs the VetSuccess on Campus office at Kalamazoo Valley. Haddow divides his time between Kalamazoo Valley, Western Michigan University and Kellogg Community College. He can assist veterans with vocational rehabilitation and questions related to military benefits. Student advocates, financial aid assistants, counselors, career and employment advisors and other staff members have also been pulled together to make up the college's Veterans Success Team and the college has been named a Military and Veteran Friendly Campus by G.I. Jobs.

Wrench said he was initially concerned about enrolling in college, but his fears were unfounded. "I thought there was a stigma on veterans, but it was all in my head," he said.

He's confident about the path he's on now. Wrench said he hopes to find work doing "something that I'd love to do every day. I want to be a first-mover in a niche market," he said. "I'd rather love what I do and get by than be rich and hate what I do."

Profile in Excellence



CATCHING UP WITH MICHAEL KELLER

"The reality," said Michael Keller, English instructor and Honors Program faculty, "is that many high school grads, like Matthew Kelly (See related story.) - those who are undecided and restless - benefit greatly from experience in the workforce, military and elsewhere, where and when the light comes on. Later, they often become the best students."

Take Keller himself, who, although going straight to college after high school, declared himself a chemistry major until his junior year. What he really learned was that he loved to write. Armed with his knowledge of the sciences, Michael listened to his calling and took a different path. His passion became his profession, first in journalism, then in the business world of marketing, advertising and public relations, which ultimately fueled his interest in teaching.

Keller's point: Take your skills, find a way to make a living and love it.

Michael understands the uncertainties of youth. When young, he questioned where he would fit in. Always an ardent student, Albion College led him to U of M, followed by a time in South America and then on to Western Michigan University, always searching, finding himself, building his knowledge and skills, always learning, and leading him to the classroom where he encourages his students. "Curiosity," Keller advises, "with it all else will fall into place."



Matthew Kelly's story illustrates that the road to success is never too late or too long.

Kelly was not a stellar high school student. He cut classes, missed assignments and searched for his path. He said, "I struggled a lot in high school, barely passing enough classes to graduate. I didn't like school. I felt I wasn't good at it." Joining the Navy after high school helped, as did the discipline and rigor of the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Honors Program which followed. His extensive research on the relocation of wolves drew the attention and respect of Michael Keller, English faculty, who cites Kelly as one of his top students ever.

After his 2007 Kalamazoo Valley graduation, Kelly transferred to the University of Michigan to study biology. His advanced science classes required diligence, but he was confident. "During my years at U of M," Kelly said, "I don't remember receiving a score below 95% on a writing assignment." All writing assignments yielded easy points. In addition to Keller, Kelly credits his confidence, analytical eye, writing and research skills to Stephen Louisell, also honors faculty. Both men cared deeply.

Kelly graduated with a BS from U of M, followed by an MS from Georgia State University. He is enrolled in medical school at Michigan State University's College of Human Medicine. "None of my academic success would have been possible without the support and preparation I received at Kalamazoo Valley," he said. "The guidance and mentorship helped me grow personally and academically beyond what I imagined."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dental Hygiene CE's offered to alumni



May 3 will be filled with energy and excitement as Dental Hygiene Alumni revisit Texas Township Campus for a meaningful morning of learning and fun.

Dr. Kathleen Eisin, DDS, MS, PLLC, will present relevant information on current topics including diagnostics and surgical techniques. Attending hygiene alumni will receive 2.5 CE's toward their continued certification.

Over 850 DHY alumni are invited to attend, spanning nearly 40 years that the program has been in existence. "We are so excited to be offering this opportunity," said Wanda Scott, dental hygiene director, "It has been a dream of mine for years."

Scott, a veteran faculty member at Kalamazoo Valley, and herself an alum of the program, has wanted to offer something that would bring the dental hygienists back

as an active group. "When I go to workshops and training, I notice that the alumni know me but do not know one another. I would like to change that and see our hygienists become a cohesive and active group." Brunch, memories and networking will be built into the morning's activities.

Registration deadline: April 15, 2013 is required at : www.kvcc.edu/academics/dental/continuinged.htm

Distinguished Alumni Award

Under the leadership of the Alumni+ Advisory Committee, Kalamazoo Valley Community College is creating a Distinguished Alumni Award to recognize alumni for using their education toward personal achievement and the betterment of community. The award will be given annually.

Planning is underway to present the award at Kalamazoo Valley's April 2013 Commencement ceremony. The recipient will have demonstrated career distinction through continued education, certifications, professional development or recognition for outstanding contributions in his or her field. A demonstration of community service and personal transformation will be considered as well.



Diana Nyad Keynoting 2013 Opportunities For Education Dinner

Long-distance swimmer and former sports broadcaster Diana Nyad will share her inspirational story on May 16 during the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Foundation's annual Opportunities For Education Dinner. The event, which is the main scholarship fund-raising effort for the Foundation, begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Radisson Plaza Hotel and Suites in downtown Kalamazoo.

Nyad has been breaking world records in swimming since the 1970's. Her swimming achievements, such as circling Manhattan and crossing the 102.5 miles between the Bahamas and Florida, have led to inductions into many halls of fame, such as the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame.

Nyad has a reputation as a uniquely passionate and entertaining public speaker. Her story of courage and unwavering commitment continues to inspire.

Purchase individual or table tickets at www.kvcc.edu/foundation

Alumni+ Program

6767 West O Avenue, PO Box 4070
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-4070

Special Announcements



Free Denise Donatelli Concert Tickets for Alumni: A limited number of free tickets are available on a first-come, first-serve basis to Kalamazoo Valley graduates and guest, by emailing alumni@kvcc.edu. Be sure to include your current contact information: name, address, telephone number and year of graduation from Kalamazoo Valley.

Volunteer Tutors Needed! Kalamazoo Valley Community College and the Kalamazoo Adult Literacy program have joined hands to offer Kalamazoo Valley students tutoring assistance in reading and writing. Tutor training will be provided. This is an excellent way to give back to others, to build your skills and add another significant attribute to your own resume. Interested alumni should email alumni@kvcc.edu.

Kalamazoo**VALLEY**TM
ALUMNI+

ART SHOW

MARCH 1, 2013
5:30–8:30 PM

Award Presentation at 7:00 pm
Show runs throughout the month of March

Center For New Media
participating in Art Hop
Downtown Kalamazoo

DENTAL HYGIENE REUNION

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2013, MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Special speaker: Kathleen Eisen, DDS, MS, PLLC
Opportunity for 2.5 CE's:

College memories revisited and a beautiful brunch
895 invited guests, all DHY alumni, your classmates!

Registration deadline: April 15, 2013 at :
www.kvcc.edu/academics/dental/continuinged.htm

