Welcome Packet

History Graduate Student Organization

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**A Welcome Message**

A Message from Claire Herhold, HGSO President

Congratulations on your acceptance to Western Michigan! The information contained in this packet is compiled in an effort to familiarize you with Kalamazoo and the surrounding areas. Much of it has been sampled from both current and former WMU grad students, so we want to give you an insider’s look into southwest Michigan. As an organization, we seek to provide HGSO members with a collective that assists them professionally, academically, and socially. I very much look forward to meeting all of you and seeing you at HGSO meetings and events in the upcoming year! If you have any questions, comments, or have interest in simply making contact before you arrive at WMU, please feel free to contact me at claire.e.herold@wmich.edu.
Contact Information and People to Know

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History Department Steward: Claire Herhold (claire.e.herhold@wmich.edu)
Where to Live

● **Williams Management**
The apartments are not new, but they are cheap and the landlord was fairly attentive to issues when I rented from them. (Jamie McCandless)

● **Vine Rentals**
See Jackie Niewenhuys if she is still around. They are clean places but low-end for the financially impaired. (Jack Goodman)

The Vine neighborhood is tops for living experience – sense of community, access to campus, local businesses, and inexpensive rentals. Can get a bit noisy on weekends though. (Skylar Bre’z)

● **Pines West Apartments** in Portage
Nice complex with pool, tennis courts, quiet and far from most student rentals. Also a significant drive to campus (20 minutes).

● **Dover Hills Apartments**
Internet, garbage, snow plowing, etc., included. Gas and electricity not included. Pool, gym, lounge, Frisbee golf, free lunch on Fridays. (Peter Dobek)

● **Spindler Hall** on Campus
If you are short on cash, Spindler Hall on the east campus is only $315 a month with all utilities paid for. There are two community kitchens and two community bathrooms per floor. The rooms are basically the size of an ordinary college dorm. If you are strapped for cash, this is a good option, but the lack of a personal kitchen and bathroom has its obvious drawbacks. It is a bit far from the main campus if you do not have a car but the Oakland campus bus drives through there regularly to make things easier.

● **Chestnut Hills Apartments**
I've lived at Chestnut Hills Apartments on Stadium Drive for seven years. It is clean, quiet, well-maintained, and only three miles from campus. The whole complex is only one hundred units, and only one- or two-bedroom apartments. All utilities except electricity are included in rent, which is around $600 for a one-bedroom. There is a 24-hour fitness room available, in-ground pool, and coin-operated laundry on site. The property managers are friendly, attentive, and on-site daily. There are also two maintenance staff who live on-site and are always available. (Claire Herhold)

● **Ravine Apartments** (corner of Ravine and Drake)
Not the prettiest on the outside, but units are great looking, very clean, a lot of space. Ages vary, but very few college kids, making it perfect to sleep and not hear Ke$ha blaring. I pay $600 for close to 1000 sq. feet, one bedroom. Heat, water, sewage included. On site laundry. Pool, but it’s dominated by kids. Maintenance is in my apartment one hour after an issue. Love this place. Ten minute drive to campus. (Eric Denby)

- **Willow Creek**
  It is close to campus and the area is very safe, residential, mostly families and older people. It is quiet, not a lot of parties. Noise ordinances take effect at 10pm. The management is very helpful, if anything needs fixing, they respond promptly. It is a bit more on the expensive side, around 600 a month for a one bedroom/one bathroom. Trash/water is included. (Chelsea Stevens)

- **Regency Square Apartments in Kalamazoo** NOTE.
  I live at Regency Square Apartments on White's road, just off Westnedge. The location is extremely convenient, as it is close to gas, food, groceries and campus. Rent is very affordable at $660 for a large, two bedroom apartment. All utilities are included except electricity, and the complex has a pool. Great landlords. (Kyler Williamsen)

- **Maple Brooke Apartments in Kalamazoo**
  Four complexes with 16 apartments each. I pay $650/month for 2 bedroom. Heat and water included. Maintenance can be a pain, but the lending agent bends over backwards to help out. Coin laundry on site. (Rachel Hekman)

- **Concord Place Apartments in Kalamazoo** NOTE
  Rent is $566/month, includes cable and water. Heating and electricity is separate. Utility repair people are available and provided by the complex for free if you’re having utility trouble. (Alexander Milnikel)

- **Western View Apartments on campus**
  I was able to find an apartment on campus. I moved from out of state, so I didn't have a lot of time to shop around for a good place, and by chance was able to find a place in the Western View apartments. They fill up fast, but spots do sometimes open up. You have to deal with undergrads, but it has not been too much of a concern. My rent is $543 per month, and includes cable, water, internet (with a $80 fee per semester), in unit washer and dryer, and furnishings. (Joe Helzer)

- **58 West on campus**
  I pay $450 a month for a two bedroom, two bath at 58 West. This includes free water, internet, cable, pretty much everything except electricity. There is also an on-site gym and rec area, a pool, hot tub, tanning booths, and a bus stop at the apartment complex. (J. Alexander Killion)
PLEASE NOTE: As with any apartment search, it is possible that you could end up at a place that others have had issues with. If a place is not in the recommended section, be sure to contact Claire Herhold to get more information about the place you have in mind. A call or email may help avoid an unpleasant experience.
Breakfast Does a Body Good

- Nina’s Café: home baked bread, $5 to $10 for dinner breakfasts.
- The Crow’s Nest: Jamie thinks it is the best all around.
- Food Dance: expensive, but worth it.
- East Egg: cheap and close to campus.
- Breakfast at Tiffany’s: near campus, good for weekend brunch.
- Sweetwater’s Doughnut Mill: 24 hour doughnuts.
- Theo and Stacey’s: three area locations, greasy spoon goodness.
- Rykse’s on Stadium: family oriented with bakery on site. Cinnamon rolls as big as your head.
- Brewster’s on Portage: home style Sunday brunch / affordable and comfortable.
- ChocolaTea on South Westnedge: tons of tea, homemade chocolates, pastries.
- Water Street Coffee Joint: local, fair trade, organic, roasted, and ground in town, great stuff. Includes fancy breakfast pastries.
- Bob Evans on Stadium: show your student id to get 20% off.
- Big Apple Bagels: The French toast bagel is to die for.
- Boonzaaijer’s Dutch Bakery: Out of the way but very cheap and very good.
- The Grind: a short walk from campus for coffee
- Fourth Coast: a bit farther from campus, but very hip. Crow’s Nest is upstairs.

Lunch is for Winners

- Crow’s Nest: tiny bit pricey, but very good.
- Saffron Lunch Buffet: Indian buffet at a very reasonable cost.
- Shwarma House and King: great Mediterranean food. The location near campus delivers to the office.
- Peoples Food Co-op: they have home cooked take out.
- University Roadhouse: great patio, upstairs is bar-ish, downstairs for booths and such.
- Bell’s Eccentric Café: for those who like a liquid lunch (and they offer food).
- Water Street Coffee: Panini’s, neat cold salads, and tons of coffee.
- Jimmy John’s: they deliver to the office.
- The Farmer’s Market: when open they have great food trucks and stands.
- The Studio Grill: Downtown eatery for breakfast and lunch. Voted best burger many, many times.
- Bilbo’s Pizza: tasty, affordable food and Hobbit-themed. What more is there to life?
- Ray Rays Italian Beef: authentic Chicago food. DO NOT WEAR any Packer’s gear.
- Food Dance: Pricey, but you get the good food experience without paying the full dinner price.
Dinners

- **Food Dance**: expensive, but worth it. Great place for when someone else is buying.
- **Roadhouse**: cheap and standard pub fare.
- **Ouzo’s**: good food, not too expensive.
- **Rustica**: excellent Mediterranean place / expensive / best if someone else is buying.
- **Panda Forest on Westnedge**: lots of Chinese places in town. Most are cheap and bad but this one is very good but a little more expensive.
- **Martell’s on Parkview**: like other Millennium Group restaurants, this can be a little expensive, but is 40% off on Mondays. Great patio.
- **Erbelli’s on Stadium**: pizza, pasta, and great salads. Great place to watch the Wings’ games.
- **Gallagher’s**: sports pub and eatery.
- **Bilbo’s**: pizza and hobbit sticks. Lord of the Rings knowledge not required.
- **Martin’s Pizza**: mid-scale pasta and pizza place. Very neat upstairs room.
- **Fandango**: tapas bistro in downtown Kalamazoo.
- **Casa Bolero**: Latin Caribbean small plates in downtown Kalamazoo.
- **Rasa Ria**: Malaysian food on West Main.
- **Saffron**: Indian food.
- **Hunan Gardens**: They deliver and you can order online.
- **Saffron Indian Cuisine**: A bit more expensive, but worth every penny. Also has a fairly priced lunch buffet.
- **The London Grill**: Decent food and drinks.
- Learn how to cook – it saves money and is healthier.

Places for After Hours Patronization

- **Bell’s Eccentric Café**: hometown micro-brew. Great beer garden during warmer months.
- **Louie’s Trophy House**: A go-to for many unofficial graduate student get-togethers.
- **Green Top**: old and older. Nice place to get a drink without any pretention.
- **Kalamazoo Beer Exchange**: Fun atmosphere and a good place to try out different beers.
- **Pilsen Klub** (Bottom half of Waldo’s): dark, quiet, cozy, avoid top floor, which is haven for undergrads.
- **Old Dog Tavern**: proudly has NO TVS. Cheap specials, great atmosphere.
- **The Union for Live Music**: live music, comfy chairs.
- **The Wine Loft**: If you like wine, you’ll like this place.
- **Hopcat**: Opened in 2016, good food, tons of beers on tap. A Grand Rapids business that is expanding across America
Fun Places, Things, and Other Non-Drinking Activities

- **Downtown Activities:** Art hop, festivals, concerts, plenty of stuff to do.
- **Celery Flats Park in Portage:** Good place to bike, eat fresh air, hike, work on the grad school tan.
- **Farmer’s Market:** runs May through October, fresh, odds and ends, run by People’s Food Co-Op.
- Check out the hidden lake across from Water Street Coffee on Oakland: It has a beach.

If I Could’ve Known… (Stay away from these places)

- Stay away from downtown Kalamazoo in the **Wild Bull, Monaco Bay** area. It's for 18-21 year olds who enjoy having way too much to drink. There are plenty of other better, more upscale places to spend your time. (Chelsea Stevens)
- As with any city, some areas are better than others. I suggest taking the time to investigate the variety of neighborhoods that Kalamazoo has to offer. One easy way to accomplish this is by viewing the Wikipedia Page for Kalamazoo. You can also ask any of the students listed in the first couple of pages. (Leland Hart)
- Stay away from **KFC.** Really just any **KFC,** anywhere (Jamie McCandless)
- **Harvey’s on the Mall.** Bad reputation for charging drinks to your tab that you did not order.
- **Midas** on Westnedge near Meijer – not great (Jamie McCandless)

Dude, Where’s My Car? (Where to fix your car)

- **Muffler Man on West Main:** I’ve been there twice. Each time I was treated with respect. They even refused to work on my car because it would be cheaper to go to Discount Tire. (Eric Denby)
- **Hometown Automotive on East Michigan Avenue.** Although I haven’t had to use it yet, my best friend has had really good experiences there. (Claire Herhold)
- **Spring Valley Motors.** A local, family owned shop known for expertise on VWs, but skilled with most car makes. (Spencer Hunt)
- **Otto Kihm on Burdick** (Rachel Hekman)
- **Goodyear Auto Service Center.** One of the cheapest places to get an oil change in town. However, their complimentary inspection is an opportunity for them to try and sell you unneeded repairs. (Thomas Maurer)
Carrots, Radishes, and Mushrooms, Oh My! (fresh foods and stuff)

- **People’s Co-Op**: Health food, quinoa, organic produce, and really good vegan brownies.
- **Farmer’s Market**: get there early. Open every Saturday. Starting in June, they add Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- **Sweet Corn Stand** in front of Shell on West Main:
- **Dean’s Ice Cream** in Plainwell:
- **Meijer’s**: A Michigan powerhouse: Pretty low prices and produce is usually fresh.
- **Sam’s Club** in Portage.
- **Costco** located west of Drake St. just north of Stadium Drive.
- **Eric’s Awesome Little Fruit Stand**: Ask Eric Denby about a little fruit stand west of Ravine and Drake. When you’re craving for fresh fruit, and the Farmer’s market is closed, this place is great.
- **Northside Market on Park Street**: They have a fantastic soul food deli and great homemade baked goods.
- **Harding’s on Drake**: A little more expensive than Meijer’s, but the produce looks prettier and they’re more locally owned.
- **Sawall Health Foods**: Michigan’s oldest family owned natural food store since 1936.
- **Earth Fare**: Brand new store for the hippie-minded people that like bigger stores.
- **Pick Your Own**: there are plenty of farms and pick your own places around Western Michigan.
Ohm, Ohmmmmmm (relaxing activities)

- Walk, bike, or run on the Kal Haven Trail.
- **Read** at least one fun book per month.
- Make some **art**, even if it is coloring with crayons.
- Spend time with **friends**, family, etc.
- Kill things in computer **games**.
- Try to attend **lectures/workshops** outside of your field.
- **Yoga** at the Student Recreation Center.
- **Tai Chi** classes through the Confucius Institute on campus.
- There is a fantastic little **lake** near Water Street Coffee on Oakland – great spot to read by the water.
- Kalamazoo **Nature** Center.
- Oval **Beach** in Saugatuck.
- **Exercise** and have fun. Important to help carry you through those long nights of writing.
- **Landsharks** in Saugatuck. Snow and ski rentals.
- **Facials** once a semester. Especially good in the spring to get rid of all the damage caused by Michigan winters.
- **Netflix** is cheap and has enough stuff to find something to do.
- WMU offers campus **recreation** classes that includes yoga for a relatively cheap price.

Ain’t No Party Like an O’Douls Party, cause an O’Douls Party Don’t Stop (nonalcoholic activities)

- **K-Wings Hockey** at Wings Stadium.
- **Miller Auditorium and WMU Theater**: Great shows, both student produced and professional. Discounts for students at Miller. Free or low priced for student productions.
- **Late**-night Sweetwater Donut runs
- **Game or movie nights with friends**
- **The State Theater** is a beautiful venue with a lot of interesting shows
- **Goodrich 10 or Celebration Cinema** both standard movie theaters with the typical accoutrements
Just Three Things (You should know, or these people thought you should know)

From Jamie McCandless
- Visit the Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts.
- Visit the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.
- Visit Bell’s Brewery.

From Jacob Judd
- If you don't know this already, expect to read one book per week for each history class you take -- that's standard practice in grad school.
- Even if you're not particularly outgoing or extroverted (which many of us in this field are not), or even if you don't plan on being on campus very much, carve out time -- especially early on -- to spend with your fellow grad students outside of class or the office and get to know them.
- Take advantage of the various pockets of money either in the department or in HGSO for travel to research your interests.

From Jack Goodman
- Find the Farmer’s market.
- Live within a short distance of campus.
- Get to know the other new students early because you will see a lot of them your first year.

From Peter Dobek
- Meet and hang out with your peers before or during orientation week.
- Go to the Farmer’s Market.
- Visit Tiffany’s Liquor store (and other specialty shops).

From Chelsea Stevens
- DO NOT move in the same week school starts, move in beforehand.
- DO attend history department functions in the first week to get to know people.
- DO make sure you have all paperwork figured out beforehand.

From Leland Hart
- Walk the whole Kalamazoo River Valley Trail (KRV).
- A self-guided tour of campus to identify buildings, parking, and traffic patterns.
- Identify important government buildings such as post offices, Secretary of State, and Courthouse ahead of time.

From Kyler Williamsen
- Go to campus and walk around a bit – get used to where things are.
• Make sure to get to know both Linda McGuire and Dorilee Crown (office staff). They will make your life easier.
• Learn to **cook**. It will save money and you will typically eat healthier.

From Spencer Hunt

• Take advantage of the **nice weather** when you have it, but even when you don't, enjoy the amazing places to hike and enjoy the outdoors.
• **Art Hop.** On the first Friday of every month downtown showcases local artists with small refreshments at the local businesses.
• Take advantage of **HGSO** and other department outings. This is the best way to get to know people and make your experience in Kalamazoo positive.

From Brody Van Roekel

• Be patient.
• Make sure you go out a couple nights a week. Even if you’re not the most social, we’re a pretty accepting group and we like to have a good time.
• Figure out what you want to do early. The MA program flies by and you will be better off in the end if you can seek out possible paths as early as possible.

**Marginalia**

• Spouses/partners can have a difficult time finding work in Kalamazoo. Best advice is to go out and meet people. Lots of nepotism in this town. My wife volunteered at the art museum in town while she worked in retail before getting a job there in her field so my advice to significant others is to be persistent. (Jack Goodman)
• It's the Midwest, prepare for unexpected weather. Get your parking pass right away. (Peter Dobek)
• Get a Rub Down. Yep. Treat yourself to a massage, chiro adjustment, mani or pedi. If you are on the grad student insurance, you get one massage free per month. If not, check with your current coverage and see if they offer free or reduced rates. You can also check out **Massage Green Spa** (only $40 for a one-hour massage). (Eric Denby)
• Kalamazoo is almost halfway between Detroit and Chicago, and within less than an hour drive of Grand Rapids -- each of those cities has fun things to do and is absolutely worth visiting if you've never been. Canada really isn't far away either. (Jacob Judd)
• The **Kalamazoo River Valley Trail** is excellent for running, walking, or biking. Exploring the **Kalamazoo Mall** is also recommended for fun food and shopping. Trivia competitions are fun and abound in the area. Kalamazoo has many fun bookstores. (Leland Hart)
• Get everything in writing (documents, awards, emails, conversations, etc.) and make multiple copies of the document. (Peter Dobek)
• Don't be afraid to ask for help. Everyone here is helpful, and while we may also be unsure about things, it is nice to know you aren't the only one. Make sure you over-communicate with your professors. And reconfirm things. Better to be able to prove
that they made the mistake than you. Their position is not on the chopping block. (Kyler Williamsen)

- Join the Teaching Assistants Union. I know what it was like before and we are much better off for having them. (Jamie McCandless)

- Most history student gatherings (and department ones) are open to significant others. Don’t be afraid to bring them along. (Spencer Hunt)

- Kalamazoo Water is hard – invest in a Brita filter and use a vinegar treatment regularly if you have long hair (Rachel Hekman)

- If you enjoy the outdoors or hiking, make sure to travel up to the Upper Peninsula at some point while you're here. There's not much in the way of civilization, but it's a beautiful place, especially around Lake Superior. (Jacob Judd)

- The downtown library has a nice bookstore in the basement with fantastic prices. (Rachel Hekman)

- For any students who will not have a car in town, Kalamazoo has a decent public transit service. It's not the best I've seen, but it's enough to make do. Depending on where you live, there should be a line that can conveniently get you to school and a grocery store. (Joe Helzer)

- Join the union, join the union, join the union. Also, get to know the graduate handbook yourself and don’t wait for your advisor to remind you of deadlines. Come to HGSO meets and if you have questions, please ask! (Claire Herhold)

- Lake Michigan Credit Union is a great option. They offer ATM fee refunds, monthly interest on your savings, and a good number of branch locations. It is much better than a bank, at any rate. (J. Alexander Killion)

- Don’t procrastinate. This isn’t undergrad anymore. (Brody Van Roekel)

Only in Michigan

- Michigan has a bottle deposit law. Every time you buy soda/pop/cola, beer, some juices, etc., you pay an extra 10 cents per unit. All grocery stores are required to accept the bottles back and refund your deposit. So, do not throw your cans away. In a pinch, it could mean a dinner or another 12 pack.

Special Section - The Micro-breweries of Kalamazoo by Jack Goodman

Graduate school is a stressful, busy, commitment of your life. It may feel, at times, that it consumes all your time, but it is very important to make sure that it does not, that you have hobbies or activities that permit you to rest your brain, de-stress, and relax. For some, these activities include exercise, spending time with family, or cooking, or—as I prefer—a delicious, handcrafted microbrew. Kalamazoo is a vibrant center of the country’s micro-brewing movement, which seeks to reclaim a style of beer-drinking that was social, public, family-friendly, and about having a few, very good beers with food instead of a lot of
bad-tasting ones. Craft brewing is a foundational pillar of Kalamazoo culture now, and the breweries sponsor community events and hold activities promoting home-brewing and locally made products. I have a “when in Rome” mentality about living in new places and I hope you take advantage of this rather remarkable micro-culture in Kalamazoo and West Michigan. What follows is a brief guide of Kalamazoo breweries in the hopes that you can find them as therapeutic as I do. Please drink delectable, locally-made, handcrafted, Kalamazoo microbrew responsibly.

- **Bell’s Brewery and the Eccentric Café**: The father of Kalamazoo brew culture, Larry Bell founded this brewery more than 25 years ago. Since then it has grown into a nationally recognized brand and has the best-selling beer in Michigan (the summer wheat ale “Oberon”), and other award-winning beers such as its Double IPA “Two Hearted” and the Imperial Stout “Black Note.” Bell’s tap-room/café/music venue in downtown Kalamazoo—the Eccentric Café—is a great hang-out, with a beer garden which may be the best place to relax in spring and summer. Bell’s also has one of the Midwest’s best general stores for home brewers.

- **Arcadia Brewing Co**: Some may refer to this as the “new” brewery in town, but Arcadia has had a brewery and tap-room in nearby Battle Creek for almost two decades. Fulfilling the owner’s long-held dream to base his brewery in Kalamazoo, Arcadia has opened a second facility in downtown Kalamazoo, with a riverfront dining area which should be the city’s new “hotspot” this summer. Highlights include “Loch Down” scotch ale, “Cocoa Loco” stout, and “Sky-high Rye” rye ale.

- **Old Peninsula Brewpub**: More restaurant than brewery, Old Pen’s has been a Kalamazoo fixture for years now. The focus is on their food, which is good and affordable for Kalamazoo. The beers are solid, if nothing special, and if you want some decent brews with good sandwiches or calzones, then it is a great place to take visiting friends and family.

- **Latitude 42 Brewing Co. in Portage, Rupert’s Brewpub, Bigg Dogg Brewery, Boatyard Brewing Co., Tibbs’ Brewing co., Bilbo’s Pizzeria**: These are the other breweries in Kalamazoo. The first five have all opened in the last two years, and we will see if they all survive. The quality and atmosphere vary from Latitude 42, with a large and excellent selection of common beer types and some pleasant surprises (California Common ale) in a modern setting with great food, to Rupert’s with a handful of beers in eccentric flavors with no food beyond a food truck outside and local bands playing on weekends. All are worthy of a try though; beer preferences are very personal and you might find a favorite at any of these locales.

- **Kalamazoo Beer bars and Nearby Breweries**: The Beer Exchange (downtown Kalamazoo), Central City Tap House (downtown Kalamazoo), Dark Horse Brewing Co. (Marshall, MI), Founders Brewing Co. (Grand Rapids, MI), New Holland Brewing Co. (Holland, MI) Saugatuck Brewing Co. (Saugatuck, MI)

**A Very Basic Estimate of Expenses**
- Rent for a one-bedroom varies widely, but students have spent anywhere from $400 to $790.
• Rent for a two-bedroom varies as well. Expect $550 to $850.
• Internet from $40 to $60 depending on service.
• Electricity from $25 to $70.
• Groceries for one person per month anywhere from $200 to $300.
• Fuel could be $40 to $150 depending on make, model, and habits.

Important Links
We suggest you spend some time acquainting yourself with the various websites listed below.

Department of History – www.wmich.edu/history
Financial Aid – www.wmich.edu/finaid
Graduate Student Advisory Committee– www.wmich.edu/gsac
Graduate College – www.wmich.edu/grad
History Grad Program – www.wmich.edu/history/academics/graduate
Human Resources – www.wmich.edu/hr
Teaching Assistants Union – www.tauaft.org