

such as this summer's "Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers," an exhibit organized by the Smithsonian Institution that runs June 25-Sept. 18 and brings sport's biggest legends to life. 303 Pearl St. NW; 254-0400; www.geraddrfordmuseum.org

GRAND RAPIDS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM Permanent hands-on exhibits such as Bubbles, Bubbles, Bubbles, Live Bee Hive, Mirror Magic, Funstruction, a VW Bug, Wee Bank and others prove this is not your ordinary museum. Occasional national touring exhibits add to the excitement. This summer, Communities at Play celebrates neighbors and neighborhoods with monthly themes, a neighborhood banner project and more. 22 Sheldon Ave. NE; 235-4726; www.grcm.org

VAN ANDEL MUSEUM CENTER Stroll the streets and peek into the shops of Old Grand Rapids. Learn about Native Americans called the Anishinabek who once roamed West Michigan. Listen to the Mighty Wurlitzer Theater Organ and ride the restored 1928 Spillman carousel with a great view of the Grand River. The traveling exhibit "Cherished Possessions: A New England Legacy" opens July 1, showcasing approximately 200 objects that describe 300 years of life in New England. The Van Andel Museum Center also hosts an annual extravaganza of holiday lights and decorated trees beginning after Thanksgiving. 272 Pearl St. NW; 456-3977; www.grmuseum.org

VOIGT HOUSE VICTORIAN MUSEUM Perfectly preserved, this historic Heritage Hill home was built in 1895 by Prussian immigrant Carl Voigt (co-founder of bygone Grand Rapids department store Voigt, Herpolsheimer and Co.) and is filled with the Voigt family's original furniture and personal possessions. This example of Victorian life and style is available for private showings and small social gatherings. Open Tuesday afternoons and the second and fourth Sunday of the month. 115 College Ave. SE; 456-4600

► ART GALLERIES

AQUINAS AMC GALLERY The Aquinas College Art & Music Center Gallery exhibits works in all media by regional, national and sometimes international artists, in addition to works by students and faculty. It changes exhibits monthly from September-May (closed during school holidays). *Aquinas Art & Music Center, 1607 Robinson Road SE; www.aquinas.edu/art/gallery.htm*

AVOID WEATHER WARS: BECOME A SKYWALKER

Getting from place to place in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids doesn't need to be a burden when the weather turns inclement. Whether faced with snow, rain or the heat of a West Michigan summer, you can easily get from "point A" to "point B" in the River City without setting foot outside.

The climate-controlled elevated skywalk — officially known as the Grand River Concourse — was constructed in the 1980s. Extending five city blocks, it connects two major downtown hotels with the city's top entertainment venues. Beginning at DeVos Place to the north, the skywalk extends south through the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel and across Pearl Street. It continues through the National City Bank Building and the Campau Square Plaza Building, then across Campau Street to the Courtyard by Marriott. It then crosses Fulton Street and Market Avenue, extending through Arena Station and across Ottawa Avenue before ending at Van Andel Arena.

"We have seen a lot of traffic coming into DeVos Place (through the skywalk). The opening of the skywalk has been a definite plus for the convention goers," said Lynne Ike, marketing director for DeVos Place and Van Andel Arena. "We also have quite a few people entering the Arena for the Griffin's games, Rampage games and concerts."

Skywalk access is available through any of the connecting buildings during event hours, or through an exterior entrance at the corner of Market and Fulton. The section between the Amway Grand and the public access on Market is open all day, every day. Other sections are open based on Arena and DeVos Place events. Access to some hotel areas is by key-card only after 11 p.m. With an abundance of light and security cameras, the skywalk is safe, even well into the night.

There is no smoking in the skywalk, but you will find drinking fountains, a pop machine, trash receptacles and an ATM. A variety of businesses are located on the skywalk level, including the Schnitz Skywalk Deli and the Square Center Styling barbershop. Urban Mill, Subway and Margarita Grill on street level are also accessible via elevators or stairways. The entire concourse is handicap accessible, and color-coded "You Are Here" maps are prominently displayed.

— Dianna Stampfler

