Innovate
\(\text{in-\text{n}o-vate}\) vb:
to introduce something new

TOUCH TONE CULTURE

St. Joseph’s Krasl Art Center was looking for a new way to provide a more interactive experience for their guests.

“In the past we did real-estate-type boxes with fliers for each exhibition, but we wanted something a little more contemporary,” explains Tami Gabois, curator at Krasl. They heard about an innovative new audio tour that was experiencing success at a few other art centers around the country, and decided to give it a try.

It was called Touch Tone Art, and it allowed guests to use their cell phones to call a number posted at selected works of art. A guest merely dials the number, hears a short introductory message, enters the stock number, and voila! An audio explanation of the artwork, sometimes even from the artist himself.

In February they brought it to Krasl. In May, they took it one step further, collaborating with the city of St. Joseph to expand Touch Tone Art into Touch Tone Culture. “In addition to selected artwork inside the Art Center and our outdoor sculptures,” Gabois points out, “thirty city monuments will become part of Touch Tone Culture.”

Thanks to the innovators at Krasl Art Center, culture is now literally at your fingertips along Lake Boulevard in St. Joseph, Michigan, all summer.

KRASSL ART CENTER
707 Lake Blvd, St. Joseph, MI
269.966.0911, krasl.org

Can you remember back to the year before you started using email on a daily basis? What year was it that you started to carry a cellular phone with you everywhere? When did you start importing and exporting information about every person in your life from gadget to desktop to cyberspace storage facility? What’s the next new thing? Read on.

THE CATALYST RANCH

Eva Niewiadomski was an account manager at Quaker Oats in Chicago for many years, but even in that sometimes stuffy corporate world, she always managed to make her workspace unique. “It got to the point that my admin was actually giving tours of my cubicle to visitors,” she says.
Innovate
\textit{in-no-va-tion} n: to see change as an opportunity

BUCHANAN, MICHIGAN

Mary Listers family has been in Buchanan for many years. “It was heartbreak- ing to see business after business close,” she says, “so when people from the Chicago area started buying property and renovating a few years ago, I was excited to hear what they intended to do.”

One of those business owners was Alan Robandt, whose family once lived in the area. He rediscovered Buchanan a few years ago. “It was unsold and not overly developed— it reminded me of what New Buffalo and St. Joseph once were.”

He put his money where his heart was when he bought a 19th-century building in downtown Buchanan, rehabbed it, and relocated his antique business—Alan Robandt & Company—there. Many other innovators are following Robandts lead, people like Rob Strom, an owner of the new Wheatberry Restaurant and Tavern, and Tom Jolly, owner of another downtown antique shop, Redbud Home and Garden.

Steve Spergel is developing Lake Chapin Shores, an upscale residential area in nearby Berrien Springs, and a residential community in Buchanan called River bend Landings. He too was drawn by the unspoiled beauty of Buchanan. “It’s a wonderful, tight-knit community, attractive in its architecture, but without the hustle and bustle of places like New Buffalo,” he says.

While the innovators coming to town are helping to give Buchanan an artistic vibe, they don’t see themselves as agents of change. “It’s less about creating the feel,” Robandt says, “and more about nurturing the feel that already existed. Buchanan has a physical draw of its own.”

Most of it was built in the years after the Great Fire of 1869, historic designation consultant Pam O’Connor explains. “There are places in Buchanan that are so beautifully preserved. The Ross-Sanders Home, the first brick house in town, is still in great shape. The Library, which was built in the Frank Lloyd Wright style, and is being repurposed now as the Buchanan Art Center, is just beautiful.”

Mary Lister runs the Art Center, and she agrees. “We have over 3,000 people sign our registry in 2008, so we really are becoming a destination. That has been one of our goals.”

Innovation
\textit{in-no-va-tion} n: a new idea, method or device

ICREAM CAFÉ

Cora Shaw and Jason McKinney are innovators who have taken a classic idea, the ice cream shop, and given it a completely new twist. At Ice Cream Café in Chicago’s Wicker Park, they are using the new technology of a rapid freezing process (liquid-nitrogen-based) to offer customers a chance to make interactive “designer” ice cream or sorbet from scratch, while they’re in line.

By choosing your own treats (ice cream, low-fat ice cream, soy-milk ice cream, frozen yogurt, shake, etc.), and their own toppings and colors, customers can make the ice cream as healthy or decadent as they wish. “Part of the fun is watching it being made before your eyes,” said customer Bill Nicholson, who was waiting in line in front of us.

Our one-word review: “Yum.”

WHAT’S YOUR NEW THING? We asked several local business owners to tell us the latest gadget, tool or service they’ve been using just to get insight into the way they think and to get some ideas. Here’s what they told us...

Jason Rosenfeld of J. Rosenfeld Designs: “I’m often found to be playing with my cell phone---at any time.”

Josh Powell of J. Powell: “I always have a notepad and a pencil in my car. I always have one with me to jot quick sketches or notes for songs or ideas. I’m not addicted to my cell phone or my email, I don’t maintain a busy social life and I don’t have an email address. It’s my color, it’s my identity, it’s the color in my very, very, very small hands.

Barbara Zinman of Beyond Punk: “I have a little red vintage car. It’s the absolute best and that serves me perfectly. In March/April, I buy a month pass and can spend up to $5000 a month, but it’s just not necessary, but it’s SO MUCH FUN and the few times I couldn’t really get out, then help, it was complete and super fulfilling.”

Joy L. Holm of Joy L. Holm Designs: “I love lots and lots of papers and notes and post-it notes, and I keep a small day planner. I also keep a pen at my desk. I have a stainless steel metal box that sits on my desk, it’s very cool, because I never seemed to have the right stationery on hand before trying to write.”