

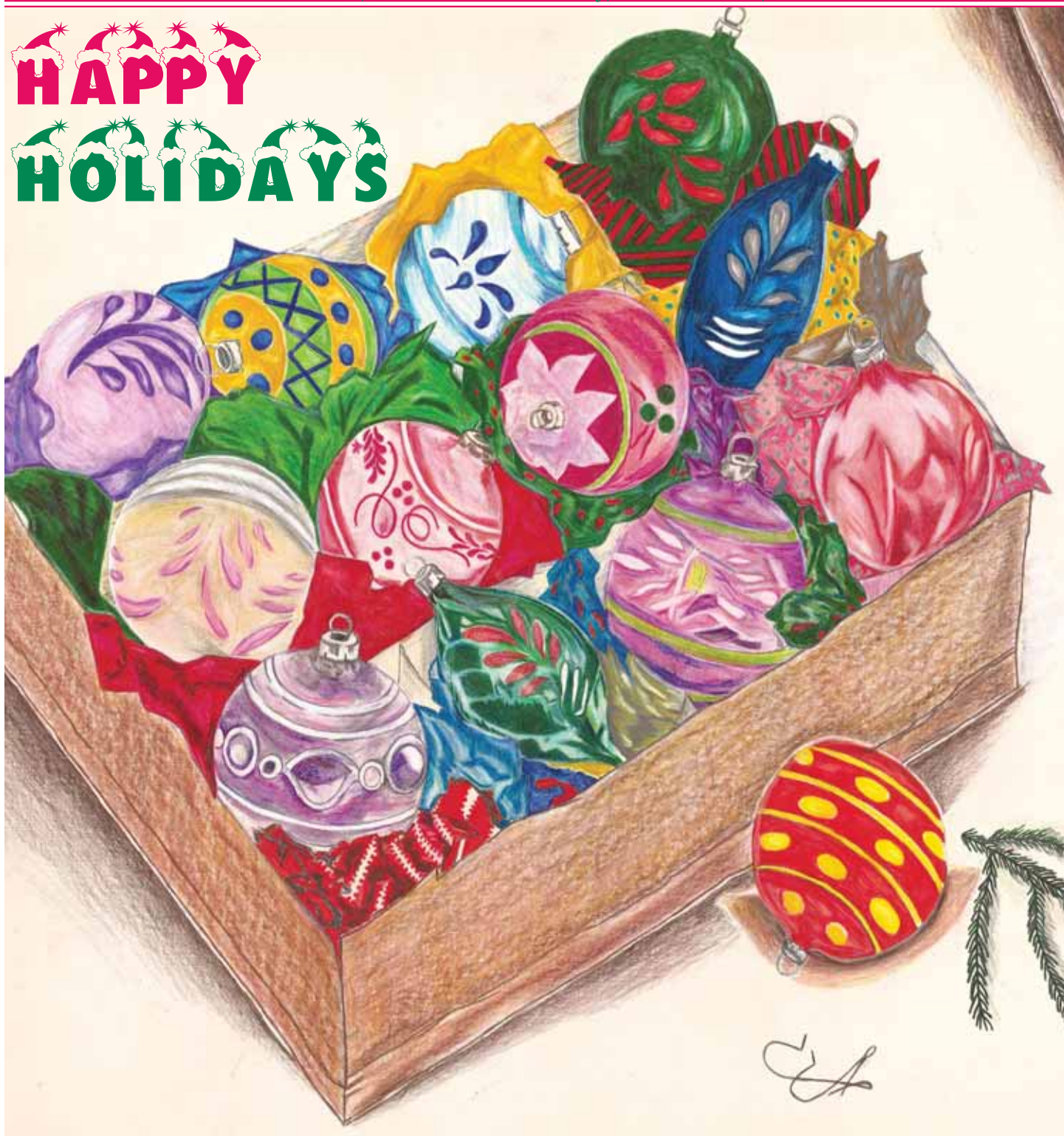
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*Weekly Newspaper*

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# Remembering "Prancer"

## Director, Star Look Back on Christmas Classic Amid Its 25th Anniversary

by Andrew Tallackson

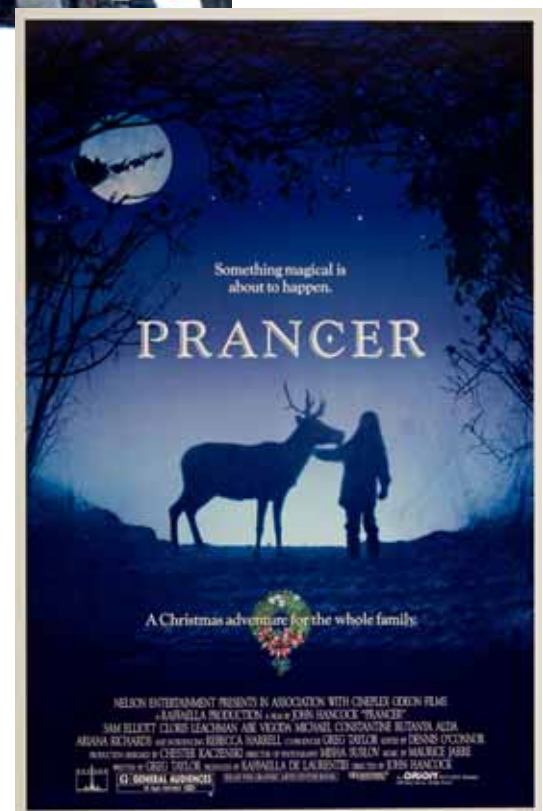


Sam Elliott stands in front of the Old Republic House in New Carlisle during production on John Hancock's "Prancer."

"Usually, when you see your movies again, you see the mistakes, but not this time," Hancock said, relaxing in his Galena Township home. "When you see it with a live audience, none of that matters. This was maybe one of the best screenings I've had."

When people meet John Hancock, one of the first things he hears is that "Prancer" is one of their favorite movies. They've grown up with it. They watch it every Christmas. Its story of courage, determination and hope has lost none of its power.

Upon hearing this, the director is flattered. Until earlier this month, though, he'd not seen the movie on the big screen, and with a full audience, since it was released 25 years ago. Sure, he'd watched it at home, at special showings here and there, but not like this. This was at Vickers Theatre in the Southwest Michigan village of Three Oaks, where much of "Prancer" was shot. The free screening was part of the Three Oaks Holiday Celebration, amid the beating heart of the holiday season. Families huddled together, munching on popcorn, laughing at the film's lighter moments, wiping away tears amid the tender ones. The power of film as a shared experience, of waiting in line to get a seat, of audience reactions having a ripple effect within the confines of the theater, reminded Hancock of how moviegoing was when "Prancer" was first released.



The original poster for "Prancer."

**"P**rancer" tells the story of 8-year-old Jessica Riggs (Rebecca Harrell, in her film debut), a force of nature who marches to her own beat. Her mother has passed away, but from what, the movie does not say. The family farm, run by her father, John (Sam Elliott), is not doing well. Her older brother, Steve (John Duda), is like most children: annoyed by his sibling, prone to teasing her for being different. Helping out as best she can is John's sister-in-law, Sarah (Rutanya Alda). When an injured reindeer appears one snowy night, Jessica believes it's the real Prancer and sets out to care for him.

The story of "Prancer" is perfect holiday fodder... and Hancock initially wanted nothing to do with it.



Director John Hancock (right) talks with Sam Elliott on the set of "Prancer."

The director, who scored an Oscar nomination for the short film "Sticky My Fingers...Fleet My Feet" (1970), and directed Vincent Gardenia to a Best Supporting Actor nomination for 1973's "Bang the Drum Slowly," had amassed a resume of films aimed squarely at adults, especially his last two pictures. "Weeds" (1987), starring Nick Nolte, was inspired by a true story, telling of a San Quentin inmate who creates a musical, performed by fellow inmates, about life in prison. In 1988 came the HBO film "Steal the Sky," another fact-based drama about an Iraqi jet pilot defecting to Israel.

Hancock was introduced to "Prancer" while having lunch with producer Raffaella De Laurentiis, with whom he'd worked on "Weeds." De Laurentiis,

Continued on Page 4



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## "Prancer" Continued from Page 3

whose family has a long, rich history in Hollywood, was a producer in her own right, her credits at the time including the two "Conan" pictures and David Lynch's "Dune."

Hancock read the screenplay for "Prancer" by Greg Taylor, who would later adapt Chris Van Allsburg's "Jumanji" in 1996, and had no inclination to direct it.

"I didn't want to do a kiddie film with a girl and a reindeer," he admits. "It felt like 'E.T.' to me: a lonely child finds a creature and helps it go home, the scene with the girl leading the reindeer along with the cookies, like they did in 'E.T.' with the candy."



The crew films the scene at La Porte's Maple Lane Mall where Jessica (Rebecca Harrell) begs a department store Santa (Michael Constantine) to help Prancer return home.

It was Hancock's wife and frequent collaborator, Dorothy Tristan, who persuaded him to give the screenplay a second chance.

"She said, 'Read it again. It will become a Christmas classic, and people will watch it every year.'"

Hancock heeded his wife's advice, but with two stipulations: He wanted assurance he could make a good picture, and he had to cast the right girl in the lead role.

Tristan then did an uncredited rewrite, beefing up the dialogue and sprinkling local references throughout. One example, a line that scores a big laugh for area audiences, involves the reindeer being sold to the owner of Drier's Meat Market in Three Oaks.

Financing for "Prancer" was secured through the Canadian distributor Cineplex Odeon Films. Hancock

had the option to shoot the film in Montreal, but felt he'd have more creative control if he wasn't close to those holding the purse strings. He and his wife lived in Malibu at the time, but they also had connections to La Porte County, with his side of the family having run fruit farms here.

"I knew you could be pretty sure of having snow, and you wouldn't be incredibly cold," he said.

The three-month shoot commenced in December 1988, with a cast of locals alongside familiar Hollywood faces...and with snow present on the first day of filming.

Elliott, Hancock said, was a class act, at one point assisting the crew in waist-deep snow on his day off from shooting. He'd also, in large part due to "Mask" and "Road House," become a sex symbol. Women, Hancock said, were everywhere trying to catch a glimpse of him during the shoot. When Elliott's wife arrived for a visit, they moved him to a Severs Road location, away from his La Porte hotel — where women camped out hoping to meet him — so the two could have privacy.



Cloris Leachman has fun during downtime on the set of "Prancer."

Oscar-winner Cloris Leachman ("The Last Picture Show") was cast as Mrs. McFarland, the ornery recluse who unexpectedly befriends Jessica, Abe Vigoda (TV's "Fish") as the local veterinarian and Michael Constantine ("My Big Fat Greek Wedding") as a department store Santa in a scene shot at La Porte's Maple Lane Mall. Also cast was Mark Rolston, who played a Marine in James Cameron's "Aliens" (1986), then took roles in Hancock's "Weeds" and "Steel the Sky." He appears as Herb Drier, who buys Prancer

from the Riggs family and puts the animal on display in front of his business. Rolston later gave a memorable turn as a brutal inmate in "The Shawshank Redemption" (1994).

Plenty of child actors, in addition to Harrell, got their big break in "Prancer": Johnny Galecki (TV's "The Big Bang Theory") as a classmate who taunts Jessica, Ariana Richards ("Jurassic Park") as Jessica's best friend, Carol, and Jesse Bradford ("Swim-

fan”) as one of the boys at school.

Many of the film’s exterior shots were done in Three Oaks, along with the Old Republic House in New Carlisle and Starved Rock State Park in Utica, Ill. The film’s top-flight production crew recreated interior scenes on sets, while seven people helped operate the puppet reindeer head for closeup shots.

Indeed, Hollywood trickery was used to pull off certain shots. Take, for example, the scene where Jessica and her father come across Prancer while in their pickup truck. That was filmed on County Road 700 North near Hancock’s home, the trees providing a haunting canopy over a road blanketed with snow. The images of Elliott and Harrell emerging from their truck, however, were shot in Pinola, on a set recreating the stretch of 700 North so Hancock could have better control over all the elements.

Shooting wrapped in March, the movie released in theaters across the country Nov. 17, 1989. Reviews were positive, and the film was a success at the box office. The general rule of thumb is that if a movie can gross three times what it cost to make, covering subsequent post-production and marketing expenses, it turns a profit. “Prancer” cost about \$6 million to make, grossing about \$18.5 million in theaters. Add to that showings on TV and cable, and video and DVD sales, and the movie did quite well.

Continued on Page 6



The crew recreates a section of County Road 700 North on a set in Pinola.



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# "Prancer"

Continued from Page 5

It was, in fact, the movie's presence during the holidays on TV, and eventually through DVD sales, that "Prancer" gained its foothold in the pantheon of Christmas classics. Hancock attributes the film's success in large part to the performances by Elliott and Harrell, and its gritty, unsentimental approach.

"I didn't want to make a sugar plum, a movie for children," he said. "I wanted to make a good movie for adults."

In his review of "Prancer," the late film critic Roger Ebert wrote, *"what really redeems the movie, taking it out of the category of kiddie picture and giving it a heart and gumption, is the performance by a young actress named Rebecca Harrell, as Jessica. She's something. She has a troublemaker's look in her eye, and a round, pixie face that's filled with mischief. And she's smart — a plucky schemer who figures out things for herself and isn't afraid to act on her convictions."*



Rebecca Harrell Tickell with her husband, Josh, and their daughter, Athena.

Rebecca Harrell Tickell can still recite Ebert's review of her performance as Jessica in "Prancer." Now 34 and living in Ojai, Calif., with her husband, Josh, and their 8-month-old daughter, Athena, she still pinches herself that at 9, she starred in a movie widely regarded as a Christmas classic.

"Every time I watch it, it's still pretty crazy," she said in a phone interview. "I was so young. It's interesting to have this time capsule, to look at yourself at an early age. It's a rare thing.

"People tell me (with Jessica) it's typecasting," she continued, laughing. "All those personality traits are there. I'm still defiant and rebellious, strong-willed, full of hope."

Born in Ohio, but raised in Vermont, Rebecca fell in love with acting early. Her mother took her to New York to experience Broadway plays, encouraging her to be creative. Her mother, in fact, once received a phone call from a teacher saying her daughter took two hours to perform her version of "Evita." Rebecca subsequently appeared in school plays and talent shows, and met with a vocal coach for singing lessons. Her mother eventually took her to New York to meet with talent agencies.

A year went by. Nothing.

Then one day, while home sick from school, her mother received a call from an agent saying a casting director, Susan Willett, was seeking a child to play the lead in a Christmas movie.

(Willett, who would work on three more films by Hancock, "A Piece of Eden," "Suspended Animation" and "Swan Song," passed away this year.)

Rebecca and her mother headed to New York, where she was among scores of girls filling the hallway ready to audition. Suffering from dyslexia, her mother helped her with the script to prepare for the audition. She went through six callbacks before being told she had the part.

"In my heart," Rebecca recalled, "I knew I was going to get it. I remember my mom reading the script to me and thinking, 'That's me.'"

Having never acted on film before, Rebecca credits Hancock with culling a performance out of her.

"He's a brilliant director," she said. "He's gritty, like the movie. He will tell you exactly the way he sees it. He was able to sniff out authenticity. If there was a scene and the acting was bad in it, that was unacceptable. We would do scenes until it was authentic to him."

Hancock also afforded Rebecca and her co-stars the chance to improvise. The cast would first do a scene as written, then in some cases were told they could go off-script. Some of those moments ended up on film.

"Some of the quirky things my character said were because I misspoke," Rebecca said. "The part where I say, 'History is going to love you for this,' it was supposed to be 'You are going to go down in history for this.' Things like that."

Rebecca also held her own against Elliott, a method actor whose weary, weathered character frequently berates his daughter for misbehaving.

"He was gruff. He was tough," Rebecca said. "He would not do a scene and come out of it this warm and fuzzy guy. He would stay in character.

"I understood the difference between the story and real life, so when he was in character and treating me like that, it didn't upset me.



Casting director Susan Willett.

"In fact," Rebecca continued, laughing, "Sam would swear a lot. We had a swear jar on the set and there was an arcade at our hotel. I would charge him a dime every time he swore, and I would follow him around left and right to see if he swore so I could charge him a dime and then go play arcade games with the other kids."

Rebecca has fond memories of being with other children in the cast. All the girls, she said, had crushes on Galecki, and Richards, who was from California, was a vegan. Everyone became close, with the cast helping celebrate Rebecca's 9th birthday as shooting neared its end.

"I was having so much fun," she said. "It was a dream come true. It was something I wanted to do and I didn't care how many hours I worked. I had gotten the part and was working with all these famous people. It was so incredible."



Rebecca Harrell in a scene from "Prancer."

The movie hit theaters, and Rebecca became an instant celebrity. Then, the price of fame came crashing down on her. Adults embraced her. Her peers did not. Children she was once friends with wanted nothing to do with her. By the time kids started throwing rocks at her, her mother pulled her out of public school. She would continue to act over the years, including two more films for Hancock, "A Piece of Eden" and "Suspended Animation," but over time came to peace with the fact that being famous was not something she desired.

"There is no manual for how to deal with it," she said of her experience with fame. "It is really chal-

lenging. It has been a long path, a transformation really, in seeking what my values are and what is really important to me."

These days, her family, and the environment, are top priority. She met her husband, Josh Tickell, when she produced their first documentary, "Fuel," which in 2008 received the Sundance Film Festival Audience Award for Best Documentary. In 2010, she and her husband released the documentary "The Big Fix," about the BP oil-spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. The movie was an "Official Selection" at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival.



Rebecca Harrell Tickell (left) appears at the premiere of "The Big Fix" with its executive producer, Oscar-winner Tim Robbins (second from right), and friends Amy Smart (next to Harrell Tickell) and Laura Dern.

She and her husband drove the first car across America powered by algae gasoline, and she co-founded and co-directs the non-profit organization I'll Be The One, which concentrates on clean air, food and water.

Rebecca says she's comfortable with the life she and Josh have created for themselves as filmmakers, and now, as parents.

"It's been freeing for me, this passion for making movies," she said.

"It dawned on me, too, that I was living my dream when I was 9 years old," she said, "and with 'Prancer,' I don't know if I'll be able to top that. The movie is pretty darn near perfect."

### Special Thanks

The Beacher would like to thank its photographer, Bob Wellinski, for sharing with us photos of the "Prancer" shoot from his personal collection.



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## New Buchanan Art Center Exhibits

Buchanan (Mich.) Art Center, 117 W. Front St., will have a public reception for four new exhibits from 2 to 4 p.m. EST Sunday, Jan. 11.

The exhibits are: "Birds, Bees, Dogs and Trees," mixed media collage by Catherine Chmiel-Goetzinger in the Roti Roti Gallery; "Oil on Canvas 2014," paintings by Dorothy Tristan in the Showplace Gallery; "Café con Leche, Por Favor," watercolors by Tami McClellan in the Hess Library; and "Surface Reactions," pottery selections by Lynda Price, Helen Kloswick, Janis Schibley and Ann Flannery in the BAC Showcases.



Catherine Chmiel-Goetzinger's "The Happy Tree."

Upcycling is not Chmiel-Goetzinger's main intent, but she does enjoy creating something beautiful from cast-off pieces. Her formal training was from Herron School of Art, Indianapolis. Her informal training in sewing, embroidery and quilting came from her mother, maternal grandmother and a long line of craftswomen. Love of gardening shows through much of her work.

Tristan attended the High School of Industrial Art in New York City, then the Art Students League.

After graduating from high school, she worked for six months as an industrial designer until she was picked up by Eileen Ford and became a top model. She painted while modeling in Rome. She returned to the U.S. and began an acclaimed acting career, appearing with the likes of Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, Al Pacino and Gene Hackman. She is a frequent collaborator on films with her husband, director John Hancock, and is now painting full time.



Dorothy Tristan at work in her La Porte County home.

McClellan is a Buchanan native who returned home seven years ago. She is finishing her doctorate in counseling psychology at Andrews University. She pursued art in her undergraduate career, completing two years of art school and excelling at watercolor, color pencil and pastel work. This is her second exhibit at the center.

"Surface Reactions" features the work of the JHL Eclectic Pottery group, led by retired art teacher and longtime BAC member Lynda Price. Formed in 2011 by Price, the women are longtime friends. They all work in clay, but their surfaces are varied.

The exhibits run through Saturday, Feb. 21. BAC hours (all Eastern) are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. It is closed Sunday. Call (269) 697-4005 or visit [www.buchananartcenter.org](http://www.buchananartcenter.org) for more information.

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*Cari Adams Gee was promoted to Social Media Director and continues to be a strong real estate broker for our office, handling rentals, listings and sales.*

*In April, we welcomed back Juli Ann Merrion. Juli Ann grew up discussing real estate over the dinner table. Her real estate experience is a true benefit to our office.*

*In May and June, we welcomed new agents Danelcy Patterson and Jane Palella. Danelcy is a multi-lingual agent who speaks fluent English, Spanish and Dutch. Jane Palella has sold 3 properties and has 2 more under contract!*

*In October and November, we welcomed seasoned real estate brokers Rose Pollock and Cat Houchins. Rose and Cat have a tremendous knowledge base and look forward to a strong future in real estate!*

*Marge Skwiat-Gloy had an amazing year in real estate, selling 13 transactions, and is a Million Dollar Producer. Joe Gazarkiewicz continues to be a strong real estate broker whose knowledge of the Northwest Indiana area is a real asset!*

*On Friday, December 12, we resurrected our Merrion Holiday Party! It was a smashing success - Great food and company! Thank you to all who attended!*



*As we reflect on 2014, we are grateful to our growing team of knowledgeable and driven real estate brokers and our community, which has helped us meet and surpass our 2014 goals. We look forward to serving you in 2015.*

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## About the Cover

by Andrew Tallackson



Lisa Brown grew up in Rolling Prairie, the daughter of parents who frequently participated in arts and crafts shows. She'd tag along as they displayed dried flowers or pieces fashioned from wood.

One event saw a street artist create portraits of festivalgoers. Lisa was intrigued. The artist allowed her to observe, offering tips along the way.

That was it. Lisa was hooked. From then on, art was her passion. Colored pencil has become her medium of choice, and her lovely rendering of carefully arranged Christmas ornaments caught our attention, which is why we've featured it on the cover of our Christmas edition.

Lisa has no formal training, yet she's steadily refined her skills over the years. Starting in junior high and continuing into high school — she attended New Prairie High School — Lisa enjoyed drawing people, then moved on to outdoor scenes, taking classes with teachers at school.

She and her husband, George, live in Michigan City and have two children, Thomas and Elizabeth, who are now in their 20s. As they grew older, Lisa found she had more time to resume her creative interests. She's taken workshops through Michigan City Art League, as well as colored pencil classes with local artist Kristy Kutch.

She's created the covers to her own Christmas cards for the past three years, preferring colored pencil because of the attention to detail. That's evident in the intricate lines and curves that adorn every ornament in her work featured on this week's cover.

Lisa, thank you for sharing your talents with us. We know our readers will appreciate them as much as we have.

## State Parks Youth Ambassadors

The Department of Natural Resources seeks young adult volunteers to document their experiences at Indiana's state parks and reservoirs for the America's State Parks Youth Ambassador program.

The effort aims to promote the outdoors to other young adults. Photos, videos and blogs by participants will be posted at [AmericasStateParks.org](http://AmericasStateParks.org), along with entries from other Youth Ambassadors from around the country.

Applicants should be between 18 and 26 and must apply by Dec. 30. They will visit state parks and reservoirs within a defined region to photograph and blog at least once a month about events, hikes, camping, hunting and fishing.

The regions are: northeast, northwest, east-central, west-central, southeast and southwest.

Youth Ambassadors may be asked to cover specific events. The program requires at least a one-year commitment. Ambassadors receive an annual entrance pass for all state parks and reservoirs and free or reduced camping (when available).

Applicants must have a basic knowledge of Indiana's state parks and reservoirs, an enthusiasm for natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation, an ability to write in a conversational style, an ability to use a digital camera for photographs and videos and pass a criminal background check. They are expected to provide their own transportation, meals and lodging (unless a campsite is available.) A digital camera will be provided.

To apply, email Jody Heaston, DNR Division of State Parks volunteer coordinator, at [jheaston@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:jheaston@dnr.IN.gov) with the following information:

- Name, mailing address and email address.
- Preferred region.
- A paragraph describing an experience at an Indiana state park.
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### 2001 Melrose Drive, Long Beach

Santa can leave a key or use the keyless entry. The elves are leaving the furnishings and you can move right in. This home near Stop 20 beach has an open main floor plan, a lower level family room and three baths. The best part may be the 100' site adjoining Nature Conservancy and Town dunes. Loads of parking, decks on both sides, plenty of room to play or enjoy an evening fire. Right across from Long Beach town park.



### 2813 Elbridge Way, Long Beach

Santa already stopped here! He left a big package with three fireplaces, one in the master suite, which has his n' her dressing sinks. On the way back to the chimney, he sprinkled the kitchen with granite, stainless appliances, a wine cooler and opened it all to the living and dining areas. He took most of the maintenance and left 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, just a few hundred feet from Stop 28.



### 2919 Lakeshore Drive, Long Beach

All I want for Christmas is privacy, spectacular views of Lake Michigan, EZ access to the best beach in Long Beach and 100' of frontage on the hillside of Lakeshore Drive. Yikes, Virginia, that is quite a list...but Santa is listening and you've been a good girl. Take a look at this home high on the hill with drive and parking behind on Ridge Rd. and room to expand or divide the site.



### 2502 Lakeshore Drive-Lakeside Lot, Long Beach

This unique build site has 60' of Lake Michigan beach frontage, with a nature conservancy to the west and a private beach club to the east. Enjoy the view and privacy. Two 60' frontages that were built for spec nearby sold for an average of \$2.2M in 2014. What are your plans for 2015? Ask Santa for a dune to build your brand new home.

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# Candy Cane Express





Christmas arrived early on the grounds of Hesston Steam Museum as visitors could ride trains decked out for the holidays and visit with Santa in a real railroad caboose. Dec. 13-14 marked Hesston's final weekend open to the public in 2014, reopening Memorial Day weekend 2015.

Photos by Bob Wellinski



## YMCA Joins Forces with Schools to Open Michigan City Branch

The La Porte County Family YMCA has announced an agreement with Michigan City Area Schools to open the Michigan City branch of the La Porte County Family YMCA in the former Elston Middle School building.

Cindy Berchem, La Porte County Family YMCA executive director, and MCAS Superintendent Barbara Eason-Watkins, as well as their respective boards, have been working toward the agreement for several months.

A YMCA strategic planning process is guiding a rollout of programming for the repurposed Elston facility. Phase One in January will include Preschool Basketball, Youth Coed Basketball, Preschool Cheerleading, Youth Coed Cheerleading and Youth Coed Indoor Soccer. Shortly thereafter, the Y will offer swim lessons, open family swim and lap swimming. Phase Two will include wellness classes, and "School Day Out" and "Snow Day" camps. Phase Three will include the establishment of a Wellness Center. Further programming beyond the first three phases will be added.

Eason-Watkins credited Michigan City Mayor Ron Meer and the Michigan City Parks and Recreation Board for helping forge the agreement with the YMCA.

The new Michigan City branch will be overseen

by Bobbi Petru, who is back in her roots at the Y. Petru spent a lot of her time opening, directing and promoting YMCAs in northern Michigan and Chicago after college. She supervised three workout centers, four outdoor pools and 145 part-time employees. She also chaired the Aquatics Committee of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. Prior to joining the local YMCA, she served as director of the local Red Cross chapter.



Petru

Petru will be responsible for daily operations of the Michigan City and Long Beach branches, staff development and community outreach. Her office will be at Ivy Tech Community College – Michigan City Campus, 3714 Franklin St. She can be reached at (219) 595-9201 or [bpetru@lpymca.org](mailto:bpetru@lpymca.org).

Positions available at the Michigan City branch are: desk staff, certified lifeguards, swim instructors, aerobics instructors, wellness class instructors, volunteer coaches for youth basketball, indoor soccer and cheerleading, and referees. Details of each position are available at [lpymca.org/our-y/career-opportunities](http://lpymca.org/our-y/career-opportunities). Lifeguard certification and recertifications are available at the La Porte branch. Contact Kyle Jeffers at (219) 325-9622 or email [kjefers@lpymca.org](mailto:kjefers@lpymca.org) for more information.



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## Teens Helping Teens



Members of the Barker Middle School National Junior Honor Society, pictured here with Advisor Amy Harmon and Principal Mohamed Mroueh (back row), purchased more than \$700 in toys for The Salvation Army, which will be distributed to families in need this holiday season. The honor society earned money for the toys through fundraisers, shopping for items they knew would appeal to middle school-age students.



*Wishing you and yours  
a happy holiday season!!*



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# "Dear Santa Claus..."

A beloved tradition returns to The Beacher with letters to Santa Claus from Notre Dame Elementary School second-graders, presented to you just as the children wrote them. Thanks to second-grade teacher Trish Baczkiewicz for helping us out. Enjoy!

Dear Santa

You are the best! Am I on the good list? I think I have been good all year? Santa, is our elf going to be a girl or a boy? On Monday, Eric and I helped grandma with the groceries. What do you like to eat? What is your favorite color? I can't wait until Christmas morning! I would like a mini laptop for Christmas.

Your friend,  
Ella Slivinkas

Dear Santa,

You are the best. Your elves make the awesomest toys. Fred is the awesomest elf in the world! Fred does silly and crazy things. I can't wait until the cool presents under my tree on the 24th. I hope you have a merry Christmas.

Your freind,  
Brennen Schau

Dear Santa,

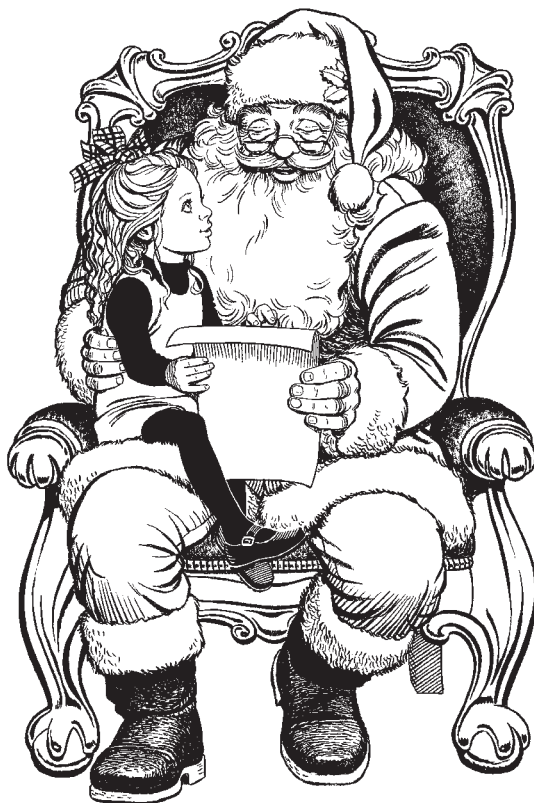
Hi! Hope you are doing well. Are you getting excited for Christmas? I am! I have been very good this year. I hope you think so, too. I am hoping you will please bring me these presents: a glow in the dark fish tank. Can I also please have new water bottles? And a soft blanket and a dress and boots for Bitty? Thank you very much.

Safe travels,  
Morgan McCarthy

Dear Santa,

I know this is a big gift, but is a mini ipad possible. Well, I never know so I'll find out on Christmas.

Love,  
Hazel Murphy



Dear Santa,

I always wanted a ipod touch. I have sent you a letter about it. How are the reindeers doing? Can the elves make a ipod touch? I sure hope they can. My family is spending Christmas at my sister's house. I sure hope it is good. I am putting out cookies for you.

Your friend,  
Bobby Looney



Dear Santa,

I like you because you give out toys and fill our stockings. We both like candy cocies and milk.

I'm glad you give out toys.  
Love,  
Aine Rudzevicius  
Don't pass my chimney.

Dear Santa,

How is the North Pole?

I have been good and bad this year. I will try to be better.

Please may I have a remote control car, American girl doll clothes, a girl Nerf gun, a speed sled, a cotten-candy maker, a Nobie, and a pack of earrings, and finally a basket-ball xBox.

Thank you for thinking about me.

Love always,  
Livia Balling

Dear Santa,

Are the raindeers ready for the big trip?

I have been good and bad this year. I hope you think I've been more good!

Please may I have a Nobi, and an I pod, a cotten-candy maker, a remote control Jeep that can go in the snow, a speed sled, a password journal, a real microphone, and please, please, a real dog.

Thank you for helping me be good and loving.

Love always,  
Elaina Balling

Dear Santa,

I'm looking forward to Christmas. I would like an X-box.

Thank you,  
Jack Egan

Dear Santa,

I want Monster high dolls, markers, a cross necklace, tennis shoes, clothes, a doll house, books, coloring books for girls, candy, ponytails, bows for my hair, pink, purple and light blue bracelets and pictures of my sister Renee and my brother George,

Love,  
Chloe Barnes

Dear Santa,

Santa, you are nice, and you are kind. Dont you ride a sleigh with your reindeer. What I want for Christmas is an iPhone 4s and a call of duty case with items and with belts and that is it by Santa. Have a Fantastic Christmas.

Your friend,  
Maddux Wiles

Dear Santa,

Thank you for all the things you done for me.

I want a pet dog, Madden 15, Madden 14, Madden 13, Madden 12, the mega bow, the mega rifle and other Nerf guns.

I will leave milk and cookies, carrots for the reindeer. Have a safe trip.

From,  
Matthew

Dear Santa,

Thank you for the toys that you have brought to my house and other houses. Who makes all the toys?

Have a Merry Christmas.  
Love,  
Macey Hamilton

Dear Santa,

For Christmas I would like football gloves, because I can catch better. Thank you Santa for the baseballs last year. I am sorry for being bad.

Love,  
Bud McLinden

Dear Santa,

How are the reindeer doing? How is Mrs. Claus doing? Do you get presents on Christmas? How many elves do you have? Does anybody come visit you? Have a merry Christmas Santa!

P.S. Can you please tell Bricklyn hi for me?

P.P.S. I will try to be good.  
Love,  
Benjamin Lee



Dear Santa,

Am I on the nice list? If I have been I hope you give me a Christmas present. If I am not I will get a lump of coal. I love you Santa. I hope you love me. I am going to leave you a treat on Christmas night. I would like a mini laptop for Christmas. Is our elf going to be a boy or a girl? We are going to have Christmas at our Grandma and Grandpa's house.

Your friend,  
Eric Slivinkas

Dear Santa,

How are you? I doing good! For Christmas I want the Monster high Wolf family, Monster high catacombs, the Xbox, Minecraft game, Nerf for ball bow nado, easy bake oven, a phone, the camera and mikesone.

Your friend,  
Maggie McDonald

Hope you have a grate Christmas! Ho ho ho!

Dear Santa,

How are you doing today? Are you feeling good, bad, happy, sad or are you okay? Am I on the naughty list? Am I going to get coal for Christmas this year? Thank you for all the presents you have given me for Christmas Santa. You are the best Santa I could ever have so I will do nice things to return the favor Santa.

Love,  
Anne Marie Wadle

Dear Santa,

I hope I am not a naughty girl for Christmas and I hope that I don't get any coal for Christmas. I want a lot of stuff for Christmas. I want that is my Christmas list. It has some of the stuff I want for Christmas. I really need a sled that isn't on the Christmas list. But that's one of the things that I want for Christmas.

Thank you Santa!  
Sincerely,  
Madelyn Shinn

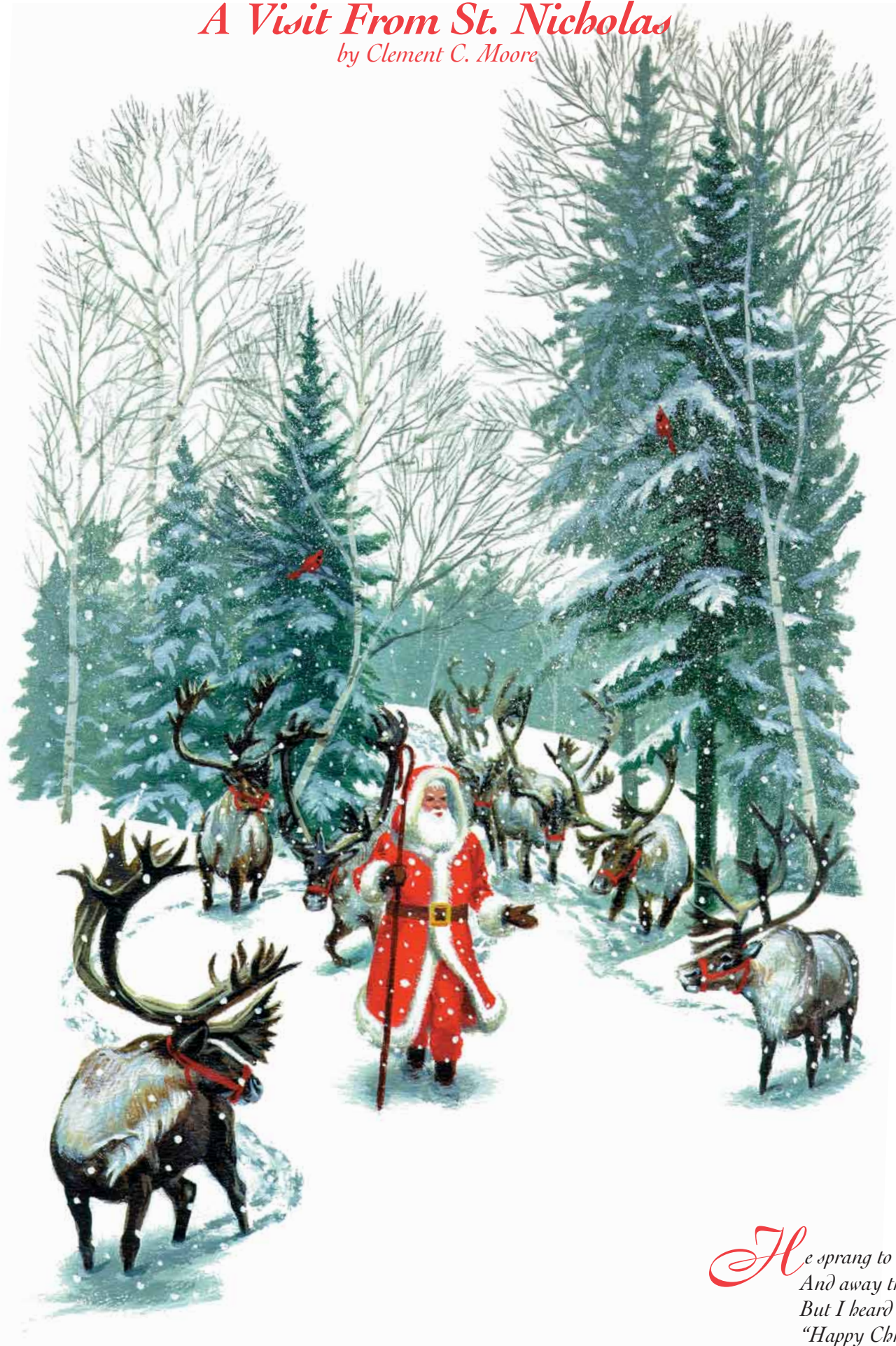
Some items on the list: a coloring set, a chalk board, a bed, snow pants, boots, soccer ball, a room, a trip, T-shirts, socks, shampoo, cookie maker, blanket, necklace, bracelet, radio, stuffed animals.

Dear Santa,

What I want for Christmas is:

1. Madden 15 PS3.
  2. Tony Hawk game PS3.
  3. Halo PS3.
  4. Assassin's Creed brotherhood PS3.
  5. Assassin's Creed Rogue PS3.
  6. Football.
  7. 3 game packs.
  8. \$100.
  9. bike helmet.
  10. iPhone 6 plus.
  11. A picture of you and your elves.
- Hope I've been good.  
Your friend,  
Elijah Bennett

## *A Visit From St. Nicholas* by Clement C. Moore



*Was the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.*

*The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads;  
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.*

*Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.*

*The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below;  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick..*

*More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:  
“Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!*

*As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleighful of toys, and St. Nicholas too.*

*And then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.*

*He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot:  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.*

*His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.*

*He had a broad face, and a little round belly  
that shook, when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly.*

*He was chubby and plump - a right jolly old elf -  
And I laughed, when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.*

*He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.*

*He sprang to his sleigh, to the team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew, like the down of a thistle,  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!”*

## From Our House to Yours...

The Beacher staff  
wishes you and yours  
a Holiday Season filled  
with joy, peace and love  
and a New Year that  
promises even more.

*An Extra Special Thanks to all  
the advertisers. 2014 was a great year!*

*And, of course, to you, our dear and  
faithful readers, thanks and see you next  
year!*

*The Beacher takes a two week holiday  
now and will return on January 15.*

“Happy Holidays to All  
and to All a Good Night”

----Drew Tallackson



## The Fitness Rebellion

by Kevin Scott

*Editor's Note — "The Fitness Rebellion," written by staff at Michigan City's Anytime Fitness, appears every other week in The Beacher. This column was written by Manager Kevin Scott.*

We are approaching 2015, and with the new year comes new goals, new plans and New Year's resolutions. We look to New Year's Day as a time to stimulate new habits that will take us to new heights. Whether it is financial goals, health goals, goals of happiness, family goals or any other areas in our lives, we look to Jan. 1 to start fresh.

Since this is The Fitness Rebellion, let's take a look at our health in the new year.

About 66 percent of Americans make fitness their main goal/focus of New Year's resolution. Out of that figure, 73 percent will give up prior to achieving their goals.

Fast forward six weeks later.

This is the time that nearly half of those who set out to create a healthier lifestyle will quit. Six weeks! For something so important, that is pretty fast to throw in the towel. But guys and gals, we are talking about your health, your well-being and the future for yourself and your family.

Why such a low number for something that people have put so much thought into, and that is supposed to be so important to them?

Far too often, the goals we set out to achieve are just not attainable. We set high goals like losing 100 pounds, win our work's "Biggest Loser" contest or win a 5K. The list can go on and on, but the point is, we shoot for the stars. This is a great quality we all have because, inevitably, we want to achieve the best for ourselves. However, the goals we typically set out to achieve seem to be like the carrot in front of the horse. So what can we do to improve the odds of reaching that goal?

Start off by setting smaller goals that will eventually lead you to conquering larger ones. Be specific. Saying you will hit the gym seven days a week, cut out all bad food and only drink water will just set yourself up for failure. Try to lower your intake of items such as soda and fast food. Then, once that becomes easy, set a new goal. If your goal is to lose 50 pounds, set a date where you want to lose 10 pounds. Crush that one, then set a new date. Remember that winning small battles leads to winning the war. In this case, wage war against fat and inactivity, and fight it with healthy eating and training.

Next, consistency is king. If you go to the gym

two straight days, but can't physically move until the next week, chances are you will become frustrated. Once again, you are setting yourself up for a letdown. Instead, start off with getting to the gym consistently and seeing improvements.

Finally, getting to a healthier place has never been so hard. Everywhere you turn, there is a "quick fix." You hear commercials about the latest craze in health and fitness. And then one month later, a new one has replaced it. Stick to the trifecta of healthy living: nutrition, weight training and cardio.

(Note: notice the word nutrition, not diet.)

One of my favorite quotes is, "Athletes eat and train, they don't diet and exercise." This can apply to anyone who is trying to better his/her lifestyle. Take one piece of the puzzle away, and you will find an imbalance. So if you plan on getting healthy in 2015, start off with adding something to all three areas. Be honest with yourself, log your food and see what you really are putting in your body. Start walking/running to get your cardio in. Add free weights and weight lifting to help build muscle.

So, 2015 is right around the corner. According to "Back to the Future: Part II," we should have flying cars, hoverboards and the Cubs winning the World Series, which, for a Sox fan, is starting to look a little scary with this off-season.

This year, stay with your goals. With the convenience of things like Netflix, online shopping and instant mashed potatoes, we have gotten used to instant gratification. Put some work into your goals this year, and you will see results.

Stick it out in 2015, and get to a healthier place!

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Christmas Eve Midnight Mass @ 10:00 p.m.

**DECEMBER 25**

Christmas Day Mass @ 9:30 a.m.

**JANUARY 1**

All City New Year's Day Mass @ 9:00 a.m.

**WEEKEND MASSES:**

Saturday @ 4:00 p.m. • Sunday @ 9:30 a.m.

## Critique Night at CAC

Local painter Mark VanderVinne will host Critique Night at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7, at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

Guests are welcome, with no prior registration required. All ability levels and artistic styles are encouraged to attend. While VanderVinne is a painter, he can advise artists in other mediums.

Guests may sit and listen, but participation is encouraged. Artists can take a piece at any stage, from conception to the final version. While it will be a friendly environment, it will be a critique involving VanderVinne and others providing advice and insight into the effectiveness of the work or artistic concept. Call the center at (219) 926-4711 or visit [www.chestertonart.com](http://www.chestertonart.com) for more information.

## Open Mic Night

Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., will host Open Mic Night from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 2, as part of the Uptown Arts District First Friday art walk

The event is open to poets, musicians, dramatists and storytellers. The registration deadline is Tuesday, Dec. 30. Register at [lubeznikcenter.org](http://lubeznikcenter.org) or call (219) 874-4900.

## Michigan City Public Library

Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St., will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 24 and 25, for the Christmas holiday.

The library also will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 31, and Thursday, Jan. 1, for the New Year holiday.

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## Vendors Sought for Rittenhouse Event

Rittenhouse Senior Living, 4300 Cleveland Ave., Michigan City, will host its Sixth Annual Valentine's Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7.

Anyone interested in participating as a vendor should contact Rittenhouse by Jan. 10 for a vendor agreement form and return it with a \$25 payment.

Last year, Rittenhouse had 26 vendors with a variety of goods for sale (crocheted items, silk flower arrangements, jewelry, arts and crafts, baked goods, Tupperware and candles).

Breakfast will be served from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., with tickets sold at the door for \$6.

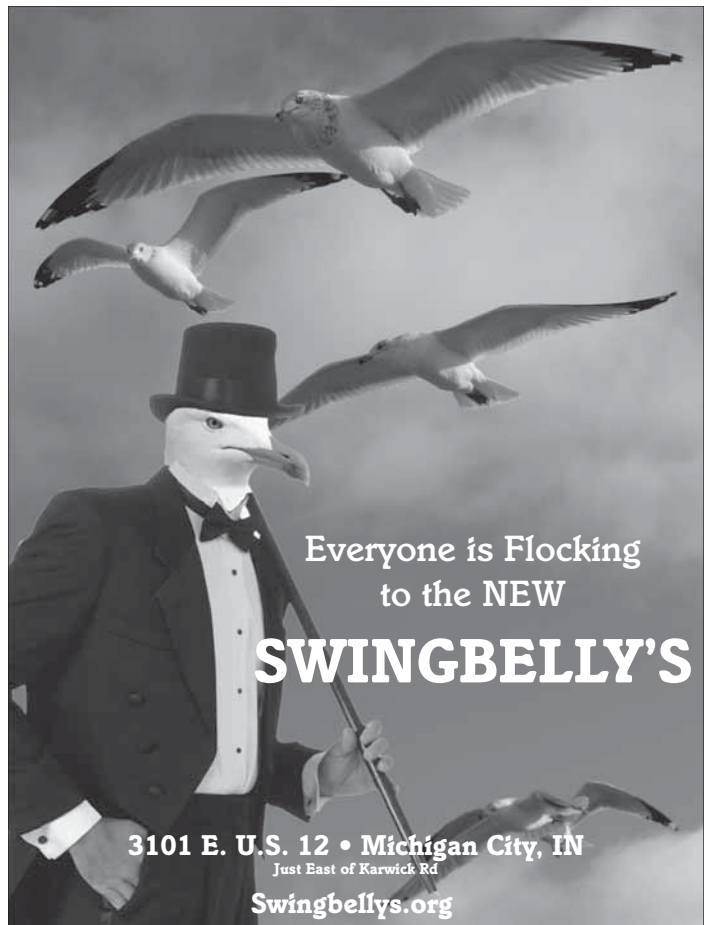
The bazaar supports the non-profit Alzheimer's & Dementia Services of Northern Indiana. Anyone seeking more information or a vendor application should contact Tracy at (219) 872-6800.

## Beginning Digital Photography

George Kassal will teach a three-week Beginning Digital Photography class in January at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

The class is designed for people new to digital and primarily use "point and shoot" cameras. Kassal will cover the basic operation of the cameras, and the use of features such as scene modes, exposure compensation, white balance and use of the flash. Special topics will include moving images from the camera to the computer, uploading to online photo sharing sites, sending images by email and hints for basic shooting conditions.

Students should take their camera and instruction manual to class, which starts from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 14. The cost is \$40 for members and \$45 for non-members. Call (219) 926-4711 for more information.



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**Indiana Dunes State Park**

*The following programs are offered through Indiana Dunes State Park:*

**Friday, Dec. 26****• 10 a.m. — After Christmas Trek.**

Meet at the Nature Center for the hour-or-so hike to blowouts and back.

**• 2 p.m. — Turtle Time.**

Meet at the Nature Center Auditorium for a look at what wintering turtles are up to.

**Saturday, Dec. 27****• 10 a.m. — End of the Year Waterfowl Tour.**

Meet at the Nature Center for the annual carpool tour to find congregations of duck species. Participants likely will drive 10 minutes to the Port of Indiana. Take a driver's license/ID for access to the site.

**• 2 p.m. — "100 Years of Indiana State Parks."**

Meet at the Nature Center auditorium for the 50-minute documentary, produced by PBS in 2009, that captures 100 years of Indiana state parks.

**Sunday, Dec. 28****• 10 a.m. — Dunes Trivia Hike.**

Meet at the Nature Center for the 45-minute stroll that features a guessing game.

**• 2 p.m. — Pine Cone Bird Feeders.**

Meet at the Nature Center for the make-it, take-it craft.

**Thursday, Jan. 1****• 10 a.m. — First Day Hike: 3DC!**

America's State Parks First Day Hikes is part of a 50-state initiative. Meet Assistant Property Manager Doug Stuke at the Nature Center for the hike that explores recent park projects and possible ice-shelf formation.

**Saturday, Jan. 3****• 10 a.m. — Snowshoe Shuffle.**

Meet a park interpreter in the Nature Center for an introduction to the mode of winter transportation, then take a short walk through the woods. A short hike will be offered if there isn't enough snow.

**• 2 p.m. — Critter Feeding Time.**

Meet at the Nature Center Auditorium to help feed snakes, turtles, frogs and other animals.

**Sunday, Jan. 4****• 10 a.m. — Feed the Birds.**

Join a naturalist outside the Nature Center for the daily feeding. Get close views of chickadees, cardinals and woodpeckers.

**• 2 p.m. — Animal Survivor.**

Meet at the Nature Center auditorium for a look at park critters who survive the cold winter months.

*Indiana Dunes State Park is at 1600 N. County Road 25 East (the north end of Indiana 49), Chesterton. Call (219) 926-1390 for more information.*



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## Barker is Contest State Finalist

Barker Middle School is an Indiana state finalist in the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest, a nationwide competition to increase interest in science, technology, engineering and math.

The contest challenges teachers and students to take topics out of traditional classroom settings and into local communities.

In addition to being awarded two Galaxy Tabs, Barker Project Lead the Way instructor Gary Gray has received a professional development course from PBS TeacherLine.



Barker Project Lead the Way teacher Gary Gray.

Barker Principal Mohamed Mroueh said this is the second year the school has reached the state finals. It was honored for a proposal submitted by Gray that uses STEM to address a community infrastructure project. During the next phase of the competition, he will create a detailed lesson plan in which students in Barker Gateway (pre-engineering) classes will

study Michigan City roads, bridges and utilities, and will create a video report on problems they see. They will meet with city officials to discuss how the issues can be addressed.

The 51 state contest winners were to be announced this month. They will receive a Samsung camcorder and laptop to create a video showcasing their solution to the challenge. In addition, state winners will receive \$20,000 in technology for their schools. Fifteen state winners will be profiled online for public voting, and national finalists will receive additional technology grants and other awards.

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## "Abstract Painting with Kandinsky"

Marsha Browne will teach an "Abstract Painting with Kandinsky" class from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7, at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

The five-week class will focus on watercolor painting, acrylic painting and mixed media. Discussions of Wasily Kandinsky and the art period called "Blue Rider" will be incorporated into lessons. Kandinsky was a Russian painter credited with the first truly abstract works. The "Blue Rider" portion of his life includes paintings with large, expressive, colored masses, not controlled by forms and lines.

The class cost is \$65, with members receiving a \$5 discount. Call (219) 926-4711 to register. Visit [www.chestertonart.com](http://www.chestertonart.com) for more information.

## "Origami for Kids"

Leslie Cefali will teach an "Origami for Kids" class from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, Jan. 16, at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

Duneland schools do not meet that day. Class is designed for children 9 and older with some experience folding origami. Students will move beyond the basic models and fold intermediate designs and modulars. Participants are encouraged to bring examples of their work, with the first half hour earmarked for show and tell.

The cost is \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members. Each child is asked to take a package of origami paper. Call the center at (219) 926-4711 to register. Visit [www.chestertonart.com](http://www.chestertonart.com) for additional information.

## Ceramics Class

Dean Hultman will offer another five-week ceramics class starting from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 5, at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

The class is designed for students to either work on the wheel or use a handbuilding technique. During the first four classes, participants will focus on building original works. Then, during the fifth class, they will glaze their pieces.

The cost is \$100 for members and \$125 for non-members. Students can buy 25 pounds of clay for \$25. All other supplies are included. Call (219) 926-4711 to register. Visit [www.chestertonart.com](http://www.chestertonart.com) for more information.

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## Westchester Public Library

*The following programs are available through Westchester Public Library:*

• **The Bits and Bytes series, "Introduction to Hoopla,"** from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6, and 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8, at Thomas Library, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Registration for the free class is under way. Visit or call the Serials Department at (219) 926-7696, Ext. 1125, or register online at <http://www.wpl.lib.in.us/>. Click on the Bits and Bytes link.

• **Christmas and New Year's closings.**

Thomas and Hageman branches, Westchester Public Library Service Center and Westchester Township History Museum will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 24-25, for Christmas. All sites resume regular hours Friday, Dec. 26.

The Chesterton Adult Learning Center and Westchester Township Trustee office also will be closed for the Christmas holiday.

Library facilities will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1, for the New Year's holiday. Sites resume regular hours Friday, Jan. 2.

## Sarett Nature Center

*The following programs are available through Sarett Nature Center, 2300 Benton Center Road, Benton Harbor, Mich.:*

• **Weather permitting, sled on Pear Hill at 1 p.m. EST Tuesday, Dec. 30.**

Targeted at children 7 and older, the cost is \$1. Registration is required.

• **Celebrate Winter starting at 9:30 a.m. EST Friday, Jan. 2.**

Aimed at children 6 and older, the morning session, which costs \$3, includes learning about animals in winter, snow and winter survival. The afternoon session, which costs an additional \$3, involves snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. Children should dress appropriately and take a lunch.

Call (269) 927-4832 to register for either program or more information.

## Michigan City Rifle Club

Michigan City Rifle Club, 4801 W. U.S. 20, will host an eight-hour National Rifle Association Basic Handgun Shooting Course at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 17.

The course introduces students to the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to safely own and use a handgun. Fees range from \$175 to \$125, depending on if participants take handguns and ammunition or use club equipment. The fee includes light refreshments and lunch. Class size is limited, and preregistration with deposit is required.

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# HOLIDAY AT THE POPS



Holiday decorations, local performers and La Porte County Symphony Orchestra took center stage during the 20th annual Holiday at the Pops concert Dec. 13 at La Porte Civic Auditorium. The show was presented by La Porte Hospital Foundation to support IU Health La Porte VNA Hospice and HomeCare patients and families.



Photos by Bob Wellinski



## Adobe Photoshop Program

The Purdue University-North Central Office of Graduate and Extended Learning will offer a non-credit program on Adobe Photoshop software.

The program will meet from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 13-Feb. 17. The \$159 registration fee includes all materials. Special rates are available for PNC students, alumni and employees. The registration deadline is 4 p.m. Jan. 6.

The class, for which there are no prerequisites, will include a review of basic Photoshop features, as well as a series of exercises involving more advanced tools and techniques. Participants will focus on non-destructive editing techniques, such as layer masks and smart objects, toning images, creating panoramas, working with raw files and how and why to change color spaces.

Contact Cassandra Boehlke, Graduate and Extended Learning coordinator, at (219) 785-5748 or cboehlke@pnc.edu for more information.

## Master Artist Workshop

South Bend Museum of Art will host a master artist workshop, "Traditional Techniques, New Art with Jason Wesaw" from noon to 4 p.m. EST Sunday, Jan. 10.

The ceramic workshop is in conjunction with SBMA's "Window on the West" exhibit. Wesaw, an artist and Pokagon Potawatomi tribal citizen, will outline how to create works with clay directly harvested from the Great Lakes. Participants learn about historical native pottery while creating works alongside the artist. Participants will use clay harvested in and around South Bend.

The workshop has limited spots available. The cost is \$100. Register online at southbendart.org or call (574) 235-9102. The SBMA is located in The Century Center, 120 S. St. Joseph St.

## CAC Watercolor Class

Dick Church will offer a six-week Beginning/Intermediate Watercolor Class starting from 10 a.m. to noon Friday, Jan. 2, at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

Church will lead students through a variety of watercolor techniques.

The cost is \$60 for members and \$65 for non-members. Supplies are not included. Church will discuss supplies with all beginners to start the class. Call the center at (219) 926-4711 to register. Visit [www.chestertonart.com](http://www.chestertonart.com) for more information.

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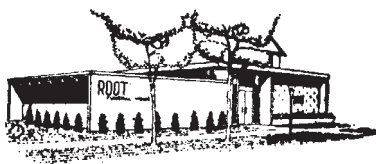
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## Activities to Explore

### In the Local Area:

#### December 25 — CHRISTMAS DAY.

**December 26-Jan. 1** — Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. *Now showing*: "Bird-man." Rated R. Times: 6 p.m. Dec. 26-30 (a film discussion with Professor Judd Chesler follows the Dec. 29 screening) and 9 p.m. Dec. 31-Jan. 1. *Also*: "The Overnights." Not rated. Times: 9 p.m. Dec. 26 & 30, and 6:30 p.m. Jan. 1. *Also*: "Whiplash." Rated R. Times: 3 & 9 p.m. Dec. 27-28. *Also*: "The Invisible Front." Not rated. Time: 12:30 p.m. Dec. 27. *Also*: "The Theory of Everything." Rated R. Times: 6 p.m. Dec. 31 and 3 p.m. Jan. 1. All times Eastern. Info: [vickerstheatre.com](http://vickerstheatre.com)

**December 27** — End of the Year Waterfowl Tour, 10 a.m., Nature Center, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East (north end of Indiana 49), Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**December 30** — New Year's-themed open mic, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. No cover charge. Reservations: [sandra@acorntheater.com](mailto:sandra@acorntheater.com)

#### January 1 — NEW YEAR'S DAY.

**January 1** — First Day Hike: 3DC!, 10 a.m., Nature Center, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East (north end of Indiana 49), Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**January 2** — Uptown Arts District First Friday art walk, 5-8 p.m., downtown Michigan City. Info: [uptownartsdistrict.org](http://uptownartsdistrict.org)

**January 2** — Open Mic Night, 5-8 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Registration deadline: Dec. 30. Register: [lubeznikcenter.org](http://lubeznikcenter.org), (219) 874-4900.

**Wednesdays** — Al-Anon meetings, 7-8 p.m., Long Beach Old School Community Center, 2501 Oriole Trail. Info: (219) 716-2690.

### Farther Afield:

**December 27** — Free indoor flea markets, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. EST, New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road. Info: Janna @ (773) 375-1514 or [janna@jannariley.com](mailto:janna@jannariley.com)

**January 3** — North American Brass Co., 7:30 p.m. EDT, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Tickets: \$10/general admission, \$8/students and seniors, free/children 12 and younger. Info/reservations: (269) 983-3688, [info@boxfactoryforthearts.org](mailto:info@boxfactoryforthearts.org), [www.boxfactoryforthearts.org](http://www.boxfactoryforthearts.org)

**January 10** — The Trio San, Emily and Jacob, 7:30 p.m. EDT, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Tickets: \$10/general admission, \$8/students and seniors, free/children 12 and younger. Info/reservations: (269) 983-3688, [info@boxfactoryforthearts.org](mailto:info@boxfactoryforthearts.org), [www.boxfactoryforthearts.org](http://www.boxfactoryforthearts.org)

**January 11** — Public reception for four new exhibits, 2-4 p.m. EST, Buchanan (Mich.) Art Center, 117 W. Front St. Info: (269) 697-4005, [www.buchananartcenter.org](http://www.buchananartcenter.org)

## JROTC Competes in Events

The Michigan City High School Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps competed in two military drill meets Saturday, Dec. 13.

First-year cadets traveled to Indianapolis for the Pike High School First Year Cadet competition, earning a first and second place in two of the five events. The remainder of the drill team competed in the Purdue University ROTC meet in West Lafayette, also earning a first- and second-place finish in two events.

Cadet Capt. Alex Wyman commanded the armed squad that earned first place. Cadet Capt. Cody Joseph commanded the unarmed platoon that earned second place. Michigan City also competed in color guard, armed platoon, armed exhibition and personnel inspection.

Maj. Tom McGrath, the senior Marine instructor who led the first-year cadets, said the competition in Indianapolis was a great opportunity.

"The three cadets who commanded, Cadet Privates 1st Class Kayla Krachinski, Austin Lee and Ceria Burnett, all did exceptionally well for their first time leading a unit," he said.



The first-year cadets display their trophies. Cadet Private 1st Class Austin Lee (left) commanded the second-place color guard, Cadet Cpl. Artero Moreno (center) finished fifth out of 100 cadets in individual competition and Cadet Private 1st Class Kayla Krachinski (right) commanded the first-place armed squad.

Krachinski's armed squad earned first place, and Lee's color guard earned second place out of seven teams. Also, cadet corporals Michael Livengood and Artero Moreno finished 10th and fifth, respectively, in individual competition out of 100 cadets. Krachinski finished ninth in that competition.

The cadets' next drill competition is the Chicago-land Drill Meet on Jan. 31 in Arlington Heights, Ill.



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## What's New at Springfield Elementary



Staley da Bear, the official Chicago Bears mascot, visited Springfield and Coolspring elementary schools on Dec. 11. His message was "Tackle Reading." Staley visited with students, danced and had reading team challenges. La Porte County Public Library sponsored the event that will include a five-week reading challenge starting during Winter Break.



Springfield Elementary School's National Elementary Honor Society recently helped The Salvation Army by gift wrapping presents.

## Marquette Questers

Marquette Chapter 139 Questers has completed its 2014 season, resuming meetings in spring 2015.

The last meeting was Nov. 12 at Michigan City Christian Church and School. Nine members attended. Kaye Martin gave the program "Edwin Way Teale." The following is an excerpt:

*"Edwin Way Teale was a literary naturalist and photographer. He won the John Burroughs Medal for distinguished nature writing. His books have been published in French, German, Italian, Swedish, Finnish and English, as well as in Braille.*

*"Mr. Teale was born in 1899 in Illinois and once lived on East U.S 20. in Furnessville. His parents were strict and had him spend most of his summers on his grandparents' farm, "Lone Oak," in Furnessville. This is where he fell in love with nature.*

*"He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1966 for his non-fiction book "Wandering Through the Winter," which describes his boyhood adventures in the Indiana Dunes."*

Martin recommends "Dune Boy" as a must-read to grasp the fun and adventure Teale had growing up in the area. His "Near Horizons," however, has a wonderful story about his insect garden, as well as more than 160 photos by the author, along with a story behind each photo.

New members are welcome in the spring. The group is working on a book/pamphlet on respecting local history and the history of the park's bandstand, to which the group is in the process of making improvements. In addition to providing funds, it is working with the park department to obtain grants and outside donations for the improvements.

The Questers held its annual Christmas party Dec. 3 at Duneland Beach Inn.

## Grant Writing Program

The Purdue University-North Central Office of Graduate and Extended Learning and Office of Learning Technology, in partnership with Westville's Independent Cat Society, will offer a non-credit workshop explaining how to write grants.

The 10-week workshop meets from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 11-April 15. It will be taught by Anastasia Trekles, PNC clinical professor and director of learning technologies, and Roberta Jocius, grant coordinator and an adoption counselor for ICS, a non-profit organization dedicated to animal welfare.

The course helps participants become more skilled in grant writing and identifying grant-providing agencies and foundations.

Registration is \$395 and includes materials. Special rates are available for PNC students, alumni and employees. The registration deadline is 4 p.m. Feb. 4. A portion of the proceeds will benefit ICS. Visit [www.pnc.edu/gel/](http://www.pnc.edu/gel/) or contact Cassandra Boehlke, Graduate and Extended Learning coordinator, at (219) 785-5748 or [cboehlke@pnc.edu](mailto:cboehlke@pnc.edu)

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## La Porte County Parks



*All registrations/questions go through the Red Mill County Park Administrative Office, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, La Porte. Call (219) 325-8315 or visit [www.la-portecountyparks.org](http://www.la-portecountyparks.org) for more information.*

### Stroller, Baby and You

Aimed at toddlers and preschoolers, programs include music, dance, storytelling and a hike (weather permitting).

The free program is from 10 to 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 5, 12 and 26, Feb. 2 and 9, March 2, 16 and 30, and April 6, 13 and 27 at Red Mill County Park. Call at least one week in advance to register.

### Parent & Child Discovery Days

The program includes arts and crafts, games and snacks. All activities are related to the program topic. Programs are appropriate for children 3 to 8, with an adult required to participate.

Programs are from 6 to 7:15 p.m. at Red Mill County Park. The cost is \$5 per child/per program. Pre-registration and payment are required at least one week in advance or until full, whichever comes first. The lineup is:

- Jan. 28 — "It's Cold Outside."
- Feb. 11 — "Oh Deer."
- March 11 — "Insect Insight."
- April 1 — "Turtle Talk."
- April 15 — "Spring Has Sprung."

### Senior Lifestyles

Join the free 55+ Club, a social club designed for adults 55 and older to learn and explore various types of nature. Free coffee is served to participants.

The group meets from 9 to 10 a.m. at Luhr County Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, La Porte. Call at least one week in advance to register. The schedule is:

- March 4 — "Sleep Disorders and Their Effects on Your Health" with Mindi Whittacker.
- April 1 — "Heart Disease Risk Factors — Know Your Numbers" with cardiovascular nurse navigator Nancy Blossom.
- May 6 — "Gardening" with Sacha Burns of Sunk-issed Organics.

### Daddy Daughter Dance — "Princess Style"

An evening of dancing, refreshments and pictures is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Friday or Saturday, March 6 or 7, at Red Mill County Park.

The cost is \$15 per couple, or \$5 for each additional daughter. Pre-registration is required at least one week in advance or until full, whichever comes first.

## Tri Kappa Scholarships

Tri Kappa — Delta Mu Chapter, Michigan City, is offering 2015 scholarships.

To be eligible for the Tri Kappa Key Scholarship, applicants must:

- Be enrolled at an accredited college offering an associate or baccalaureate degree for at least one semester prior to making the application.
- Have no previous undergraduate degree beyond high school.
- Have not had an interruption in education for at least five years prior to current enrollment (this must be documented).
- Plan to enroll in a minimum of six credit hours for the next semester.
- Be a U.S. citizen and Indiana resident from within jurisdiction of the Michigan City chapter.

The Tri Kappa General Scholarships apply to Academic, Art-Music-Dance-Drama (Performing or Teaching — Fine Arts) and Twanette Nutter Fleming Music (Teaching — Fine Arts). Applicants must:

- Be enrolled full time at an accredited college offering a baccalaureate or graduate degree.
- Be a sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student at the time of application and be enrolled full time during the subsequent school year.
- Be a U.S. citizen and Indiana resident from within jurisdiction of the Michigan City chapter.

The application deadline is Jan. 16. Contact Scholarship Committee Chairwoman Rhonda Kowalski at (219) 898-5088 or [rmkowalski@sap-corp.com](mailto:rmkowalski@sap-corp.com) for more information or an application.

## First Friday Art Walk

Uptown Arts District will present the First Friday art walk from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 2, throughout downtown Michigan City. Visit [uptownartsdistrict.org](http://uptownartsdistrict.org) for more information.

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## New Museum Board Members

The board of directors at New Buffalo Railroad Museum, 530 S. Whittaker St., has elected three new board members: Vincent Lauricella, Vanessa Holecek Thun and Mary Lou Wattman.

Coming to the New Buffalo area in 1991, Lauricella is employed by the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant in Covert, Mich., as a work week manager. He and his wife, Traci, have three children: Zachary, Zoe and Zane.

A lifelong New Buffalo resident, Thun and her husband, Chris, own Beach Combers Cleaning and Beach Combers Vacation Rentals. They have two children: Taylor McDonald and Lucas Thun.

A Michiana resident, Wattman is the president of 1920West, a training and coaching company, co-founder of 3ethos, a leadership training and research company, and co-author of the book "LeaderMetrics®: What Key Decision-makers Need to Know When Serving in a Critical Leadership Role."

The three join current board members Katha Kissman (president), Nadra Kissman (vice president), Sherri Kerhoulas (treasurer), Cookie Ferguson, Janet Hayes and Rich Knoll in presiding over the museum founded in 1989.

Visit [www.newbuffalorailroadmuseum.org](http://www.newbuffalorailroadmuseum.org), facebook ([www.facebook.com/newbuffalorailroadmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/newbuffalorailroadmuseum)) or email [ask@new-buffalo-railroad-museum.org](mailto:ask@new-buffalo-railroad-museum.org) for more information.

## 2014 Genealogist of the Year



Alan Zeller (left) accepts the 2014 Genealogist of the Year Award from Committee Chairwoman Gloria Arndt during the Dec. 9 La Porte County Genealogical Society meeting. The award honors a living individual who has promoted genealogy in La Porte County. Zeller has served as an officer of the society and presented programs at society meetings.



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## SBMA Winter Classes

Open enrollment is under way for South Bend Museum of Art's winter classes, which run Jan. 12 through March 7.

Teen sessions include weaving, ceramics, spinning wheel, sketching, drawing and painting. Adult classes include drawing and painting, portraiture and ceramics.

The SBMA is located in The Century Center, 120 S. St. Joseph St. Visit [www.southbendart.org/](http://www.southbendart.org/) or call (574) 235-9102 to register or for more information.

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## Visit



-- submitted by the  
LaPorte County  
Convention and  
Visitors Bureau

Visit Michigan City La Porte kicked off the holiday season by hosting the 14th Annual Winter Glo.

This is a party held each year at the Visitors Bureau office. The event is a time for the bureau staff and board of managers to thank our community partners in person. We invite government officials, friends of the bureau and business associates from neighboring counties to enjoy the party. The "Winter Glo" also is a way to share the bureau's activities and successes from throughout the year.

Many restaurants, bakeries and beverage partners put "a taste of La Porte County" under one roof. Each participating partner brings a signature dish or beverage. This year's participants were: Arturo's Baked Goods & More; B&J's American Café; Blue Chip Casino, Hotel & Spa; Burn Em Brewery; Della Nonna's Cookies; Ivy Tech Community College; Lakeshore Coffee; Maxine's; Portofino; Ryan's Irish Pub; Shoreline Brewery & Restaurant; Sophia's House of Pancakes; T Bone's @Pier 11; Timbers; Top Dog & Great Lakes Catering; and Uptown Cakery. Thanks to all these wonderful chefs.

The bureau, as always, was filled wall-to-wall with people and the mouth-watering aroma of fine food. Our gift shop was a hive of activity, and we were happy to help fulfill some holiday wish lists with items from our local art community.

Thanks to everyone who donated to The Salvation Army mitten tree, and a big thank you to those of you who made a donation to The Salvation Army's Angel Tree. We say, "Thanks. You are an angel."

In addition, we would like to thank Rick Scobey for adding a perfect musical touch to the occasion.

Thanks to all those community partners who contributed their specialties to this year's successful Winter Glo.



Visit Michigan City La Porte representatives at the 14th Annual Winter Glo included Aaron Collings (from left), Linda Simmons, Rick Wright, Jane Daley, Amy Riehle, Lorie Scobey, Dale Cooper, Chelsea Snyder, Jan Chambers and Jack Arnett.

## Guest Quilter



Janet Woodruff visited Joy Elementary School on Dec. 12 to speak to second-graders about the history of quilts. She has presented a similar program to Joy students for more than 15 years, demonstrating quilting and showing a variety of samples. The children's favorite seemed to be the one she saved for last: Woodruff's daughter, second-grade teacher Mary Beres, has a square in it that she sewed when she was little.



### Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the 'Sea, help me and show me, herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth! I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in

this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3x). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in Eternal Glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. After 3 days, the request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor is granted.

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## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

The stockings are hung by the chimney, the tinsel's on the tree and everyone's stuffed themselves with Christmas cookies...What a great time of the year it is!

With dinner aside and the kids busy playing with new toys, maybe you find yourself with a little free time to relax. To me, that means reading. There isn't time to get into any 500-page novel, of course not, but I can highly recommend the smaller Christmas classics by Penguin Books. I only have room today for two of the titles in this great series, but there are three others: A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, The Night Before Christmas by Nikolai Gogol and The Nutcracker by E.T.A. Hoffmann. Each book is a compact 5-by-8 inches with beautiful, seasonal covers and stories that are short enough for those times when there isn't much time!

As Anthony Trollope said, *"What on earth could be more luxurious than a sofa, a book, and a cup of coffee?...Was ever anything so civil?"*

Indeed.

**Christmas at Thompson Hall & Other Christmas Stories by Anthony Trollope** (hardcover; list price \$16 in bookstores and online)

Trollope (1815-1882) is one of the most respected and prolific English writers of the 19th century. He explored the life and mores of the "landed gentry," providing this volume with the title, the very hysterical Christmas at Thompson Hall. Can you imagine a proper English wife slipping down into the dining room of a French hotel to get some mustard for a mustard plaster for her complaining husband--at midnight? And what if she gets lost creeping back to their room--where might she end up? Oh, you'll be surprised and laugh yourself right off the sofa!

There are four other stories here that all revolve around Christmas, one even taking place in America during the Civil War that considers a Kentucky gentleman with two sons — one ready for secession, the other a West Point graduate ready to fight for his country — and the woman from Maine who loved the son in gray uniform. What happens when one Christmas, they both return home to Kentucky?

So many things in these stories are familiar, and yet some seem from a far away time. I love the language used in the 1800s. When's the last time you

used punctilious or jocose in a sentence?! All the stories are a joy to read and take away the stress of the day.

**A Merry Christmas & Other Christmas Stories by Louisa May Alcott** (hardcover; list price \$16 in bookstores and online)

Alcott (1832-1888) was an American author of the 19th century. Who doesn't remember the March sisters of Little Women? Jo, Amy, Beth and Meg. It brought back memories of an ideal American Christmas filled with the spirit of generosity and charity. The first story, "A Merry Christmas," is taken from the pages of Little Women.

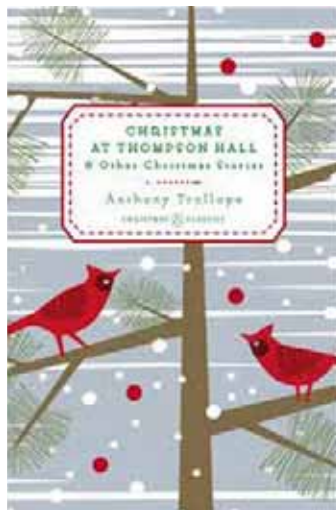
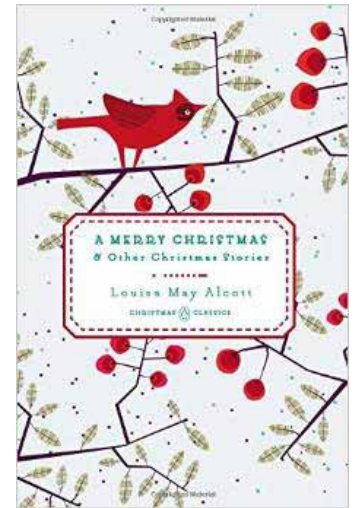
"What Love Can Do" shows how the residents of a boardinghouse can unite to make a special Christmas for two poor girls who had nothing.

*"You see, when people once begin to do kindnesses, it is so easy and pleasant, they find it hard to leave off; and sometimes it beautifies them so that they find they love one another very much--as Mr. Chrome and Miss Kent discovered that wondrous day."*

There are five other short stories in this charming volume you will pass around to friends and family and read again and again each holiday season.

Faith, hope and charity come to life in these Penguin Classics of Christmas past, and remind us of the true meaning of the season.

Till next time, have a very Merry Christmas and a bright and happy New Year. And, as always, happy reading!



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*The friendship of those we serve is the  
foundation of our progress.*

*Sincerest thanks & warmest wishes to  
those who've shown their friendship  
& support throughout the years.*

*Happy Holidays from all of us at  
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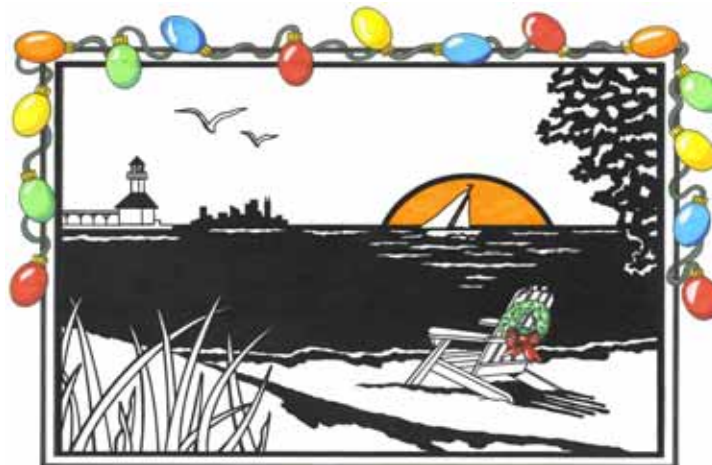
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