

THE

# Beacher<sup>TM</sup>

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J. PANSON  
*Happy Holidays*



THE  
Beacher

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## Beacher Holiday Closings

*The Beacher* will be closed Friday, Dec. 23, and Monday, Dec. 26, for the holiday. Regular office hours resume Tuesday, Dec. 27. The office then will close Friday, Dec. 30, and Monday, Jan. 2, for the New Year's holiday. Regular hours resume Tuesday, Jan. 3.

# A Life Lived Abundantly

by Connie Kuzydym

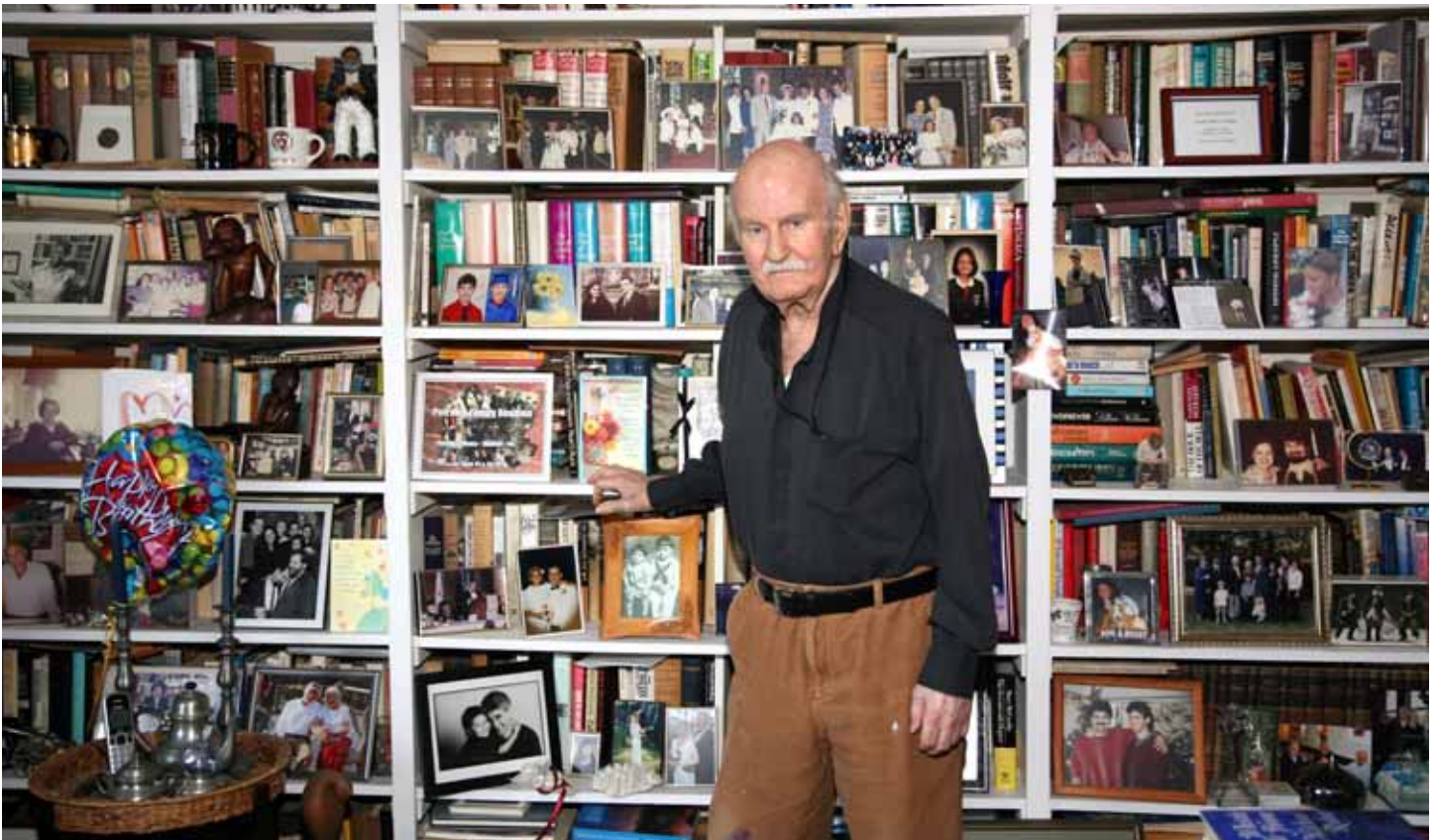
*Editor's note — This week, we continue our series, "Friends & Neighbors," which spotlights the many fascinating people in our beach communities. Recommendations for individuals to profile can be made to Editor Andrew Tallackson at (219) 879-0088 or drew@thebeacher.com*

To read Harry Mark Petrakis is to bask in a symphony of words so eloquently strung together, it leaves you thirsting for more.

At 93, Petrakis' remarkable life has spanned 58 years of published writings. Early in his career, he struggled while tackling subjects unfamiliar to him,

tional Book Award for Fiction two years in a row, on *The New York Times* best-seller list for 12 weeks, translated into 12 languages and made into a Hollywood film starring Anthony Quinn.

And that's just a fraction of his many accomplishments.



Harry Mark Petrakis fell in love with books as a child, when tuberculosis confined him to bed and reading proved his main escape. Photos by Paul Kemiel

such as cowboys and gangsters. It took a decade before his first short story, "Pericles on 31st Street," appeared in *Atlantic Monthly*. Once he tapped into his life experiences, his writing blossomed.

In 1959, he published his first novel, "Lion at My Heart." In 1966, "Dream of Kings" became his first international success. It was nominated for the Na-

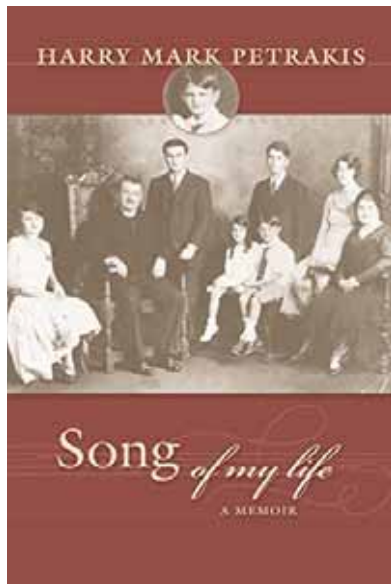
To understand his remarkable journey, one must take a step back to his youth. At 11, he contracted tuberculosis and was confined to bed for two years. His favorite radio programs aired at night, so he spent his days reading. He began with pulp magazines before moving on to books by Russian and Irish writers.



"I learned something about words and stories..." Petrakis said. "I would not have become a writer had I not had that period of time in bed. It whetted my appetite, simulated my imagination for stories. As I read more and more stories, I thought, how wonderful it would be to be able to write stories myself."

"It was that whole process of two years of steeping myself in literature that laid the groundwork. I didn't know when I came out of bed I was going to be a writer. I went through a lot of different things."

Unbeknownst to his parents, he stopped attending high school his sophomore year.



Petrakis' memoir, "Song of My Life," taps into stories of his family, which helped shape the kind of writer he would become.

of Crete in 1916 to minister to Cretan coal miners in Price, Utah. The family then moved to Savannah, then to St. Louis, where Petrakis was born, before finally making their home in Chicago.

Growing up on the South Side, in an immigrant community of Greeks, Italians, Jews and others, he witnessed and lived a wealth of experiences that ultimately gave life to the characters he would write about. In those days, various nationalities and religions lived amongst each other, but did not intermingle. When they did, the result was often quite intense. He recalls the time a Greek father whose son married a Jewish girl carried the son's clothes out to the backyard and set them on fire.

When Petrakis started working, it was at a variety of jobs. Some were menial, others not. He thought often about writing, but never allowed himself to believe it would become his profession. A one-page, Christmas-themed writing assignment in a broadcasting class at Columbia College changed the direction his life was taking.

"I read my story," Petrakis said. "Now, after each story was read, the class would vociferously join in

"I came out of the two-year period of illness far ahead in areas of literature and areas of reading, far more advanced than anybody my age, but far back in mathematics and sciences and far back in adopting how you get along with other children..." he said. "Between the difficulties and boredom, I dropped out."

Petrakis' father, a Greek Orthodox priest, had immigrated with his wife and four of his six children from the island

*Happy Holidays*

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# A Life Lived

Continued from Page 3

to criticize or praise. When I finished reading my story, there was dead silence. I thought to myself, 'My God, is it that bad that they have nothing to say?' The teacher prompted them, 'Come on, you had plenty to say about the other stories, talk to Harry's story...nobody said anything. Finally, one boy said, 'I can't say anything about this story. It's so obviously written from personal experience'."

Petrakis' story was about a waiter who comes home Christmas Eve to his wife. She's not there, but he knows where she is. She doesn't commit adultery, but drinks with other men, which is how he finds her at the bar. When he gets her home, he slaps her once, then remorsefully helps wash her up and put her to bed. Meanwhile, he puts the small Christmas tree he brought home inside, knowing when she awakens in the morning, she will be sober and they'll decorate the tree together, and for a little while, things would be all right between them.

"It was a clumsy story, not any smooth use of language," Petrakis said, "but the emotion was so stark and so real, they refused to believe I wasn't the waiter and my wife wasn't the alcoholic."

After class, on that snowy evening walk through Grant Park, Petrakis realized if his classmates were so convinced, maybe writing should become his profession.

With little formal education, his heritage, religious background, past jobs and neighborhood were

his foundation, teaching him about life and people, eventually reflected in his writings.

During the decade of writing and subsequent rejections from publishers, he wrote a variety of stories, often basing them on his ethnicity.

"I used the Greek because that's what I knew best...you start with that which is yours, but almost immediately after the names of the characters, their background, their neighborhood, you cross the threshold where you enter the universal areas,"

Petrakis said. "When you write of love, loneliness or death or jealousy, or vengeance, these aren't Greek or Polish or Irish or Armenian. They are universal."

Like most writers early in a career, Petrakis had help from editors and other writers. Critiques were, at times, hard to hear.

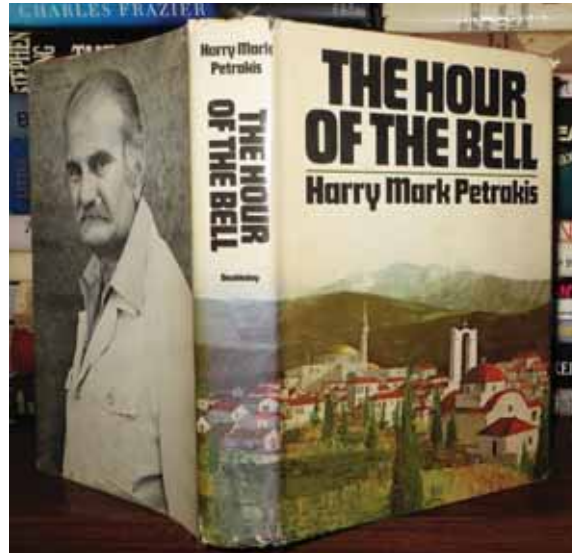
At a writing conference, for example, the presenter tore apart his story, yet complimented him, saying "This man writes like vomit...this man is born to write even though he can't yet write." A respected editor tore apart his novel, saying the ellipses — the dot dot dot — is an important part of English grammar, "but it's as if you loaded a shotgun with ellipses, aimed it at the book and

pulled both triggers."

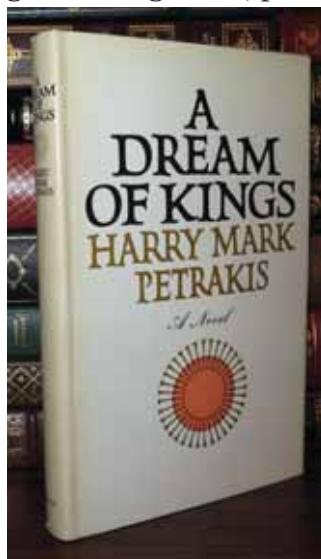
Taking a step back from the harsh criticism, and allowing his anger to subside, he was thankful for advice he realized was meant to help him.

From the numerous rejections came patience, and the realization the world wasn't "waiting for a story by Petrakis." When "Pericles" sold, he was beyond elated. The only thing topping that day was when his first published book arrived.

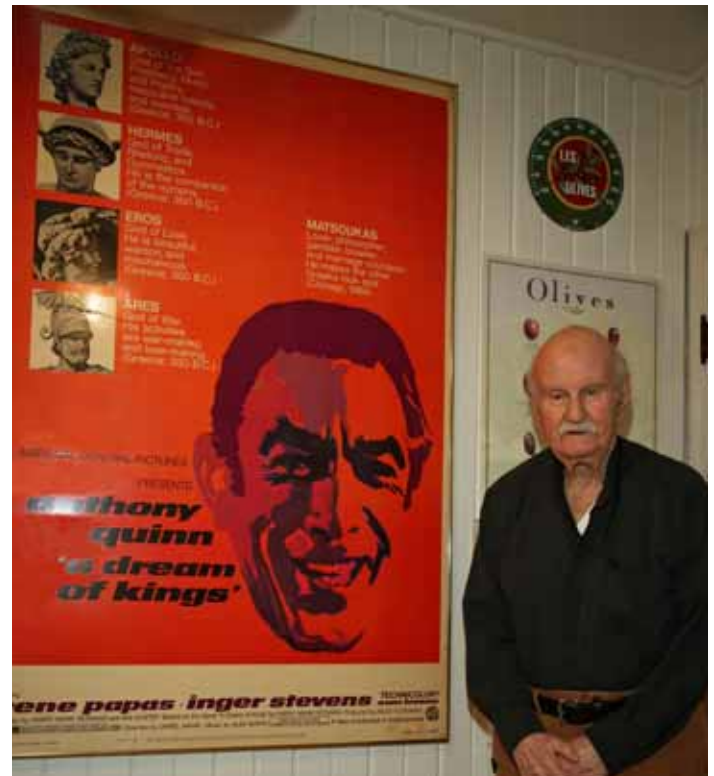
"It's incredible. I've loved books since childhood, I've loved the smell and feel of books," he said. "My



"The Hour of the Bell" was the culmination of a three-year period in the mid-1970s.



"A Dream of Kings" was Harry's first novel to become an international success.



Harry poses by the poster for the film version of "A Dream of Kings." Photo by Paul Kemiel

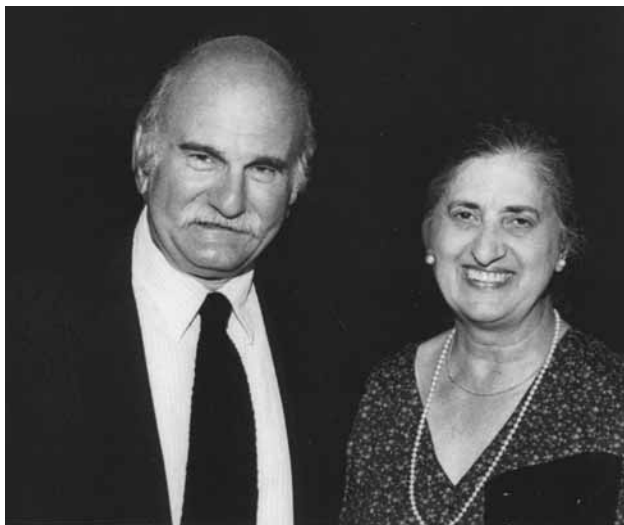
first book in my hands, the smell from fresh paper and ink, the feel of the binding, the look of the cover...it was a marvelous moment that I had been working on for 10 to 12 years."

Throughout his career, Petrakis has written short stories, novels, essays, even a screenplay. Short stories are his favorite.

"It's a tight form. It doesn't require the length of time that the novel does," he said. "You can set your goal and move towards it in the space of a week or two weeks. You hone it down like a jeweler polishes a diamond.

"When a short story is well done, it's something that can be read and appreciated. You don't have to sustain interest and revitalize interest as you do when you read a novel. With a novel, you have to keep going back to it. A short story, you can do in one reading and get the full emotional impact of it."

Each medium has its own challenges. In writing a short story, he said, you "leave out," whereas in a novel, you "put in." As any writer will tell you, it can be a difficult task to decide what to include. Objec-



Harry and his wife, Diana, have been married 71 years.

tivity requires that you ask, does this add to the story?

For Petrakis, he compares the process to learning the trade of a shoemaker.

"You learn your craft by doing it," he said. "When you do it long enough, you get a feel for the material, and you begin to sense as your style develops. Style is nothing more than voice. As your style and voice develop, you get an inherent sense of what should be left in and what should be left out and what sequence of scenes you have to tell. After a while,

it becomes kind of intuitive. You feel it more than fully understand it...It's a mixture of intuition, and knowledge and discipline. You've got to be able to cut a scene however good you think it is, if it doesn't belong in the sequence of the story."

Having taught at 73 writer's conferences, Petrakis talks with writers about their technique, how their stories should start, how they should handle dialogue. The only true way to learn to write, he says, is simply by writing.

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## Last-minute gift ideas await you at Al's.

Just because an idea comes to you at the eleventh hour, doesn't make it a second-rate idea.

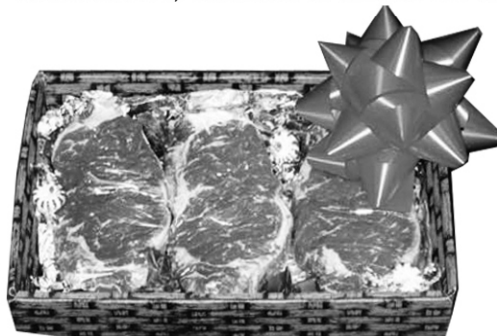
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# A Life Lived

Continued from Page 5

"You have to set your routine," Petrakis said. "You have to put things aside. You have to be able to concentrate, to focus on the writing. That's the most important lesson I think I tried to communicate."

Petrakis' long career also parallels the longevity of his marriage. Petrakis and his wife, Diana, have been married for 71 years. They grew up in Chicago. They spent the first half of their lives there, then the second half in Dunes Acres.

When asked for his best advice on a successful marriage, he thoughtfully replied he did not have

the slightest idea. You do that dance for yourself, he says. He and his wife experienced difficult years, but things worked out, allowing them to forge a good life for themselves.

Petrakis still continues to write and be published. Today, he tells his stories from a far different perspective, that of an older storyteller. Although infirmities of old age have set in, he still strings words together in such a fashion that make you thirst for more.

It is his own words, in fact, that are a fitting end to this article. The following piece appeared June 9, 2016, on *The Huffington Post*.

## The Writer in Old Age

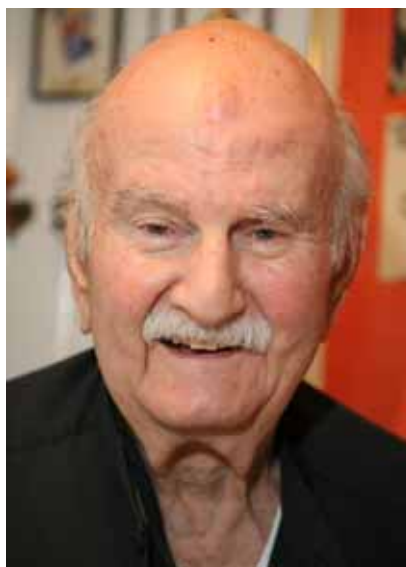
by Harry Mark Petrakis

At my present age of 92, the afflictions of aging assail me like the onslaught of an army bent on my destruction. Each week seems to bring a new, unwelcome impairment. My chest rents space to a pacemaker, and I have several stents in my arteries. I have a spinal stenosis that restricts my reach and prevents me from putting on my stockings. Add to that a peripheral neuropathy that causes burning in my toes and numbness in my fingers, making it difficult for me to button my shirt. I also have chronic digestive problems and an insidious fatigue. Not long after I rise in the morning I yearn to recline on the couch.

If I live a few years longer, I will enter the realm of Gero Panakis, who I remember as a boy to be the oldest member of my father's parish. While no one could be sure, it was rumored the old man was near 100. I remember him after he had received the sacrament of Communion, lurching down the center aisle in church, bent double as he walked, limbs trembling, cheeks twitching, his carcass withered, worn-out, fossilized. As he passed the pew where I sat, a wrenching at my nostrils confirmed he also smelled like a goat. God spare us such length of life!

What faculties do I now retain? I can still walk (with the aid of a cane), still talk, eat, sleep (with the aid of pills), smile and (on occasion) laugh. Most thankfully, I am still able to fashion words together to make stories. I am no longer confident enough to start a book-length novel but I do manage essays and short stories.

Yet while sitting at my computer and fashioning my stories, resisting an urge to lie down, I cannot help plaintively remembering the years of my creative vigor when my body and spirit jubilantly embraced the strain and rigors of writing. A short



In a recent blog, Harry writes of little things he cherishes amid the heartache of old age, one of which is the ability to smile and laugh. Photo by Paul Kemiell

story could be written in several days to a week. A novel took from a year to three years. Yet in the heat of creating, time seemed inconsequential, a week passing as if it were a day.

For a three-year period in the mid-1970s, while I was working on "The Hour of the Bell," my historical novel on the 19th-century Greek War of Independence, I remember how I'd wake eager to work and, in the evening, regret having to stop.

My day would begin with a light breakfast of coffee and a muffin. Afterwards, I'd ascend to my study, a magnificent, high-ceilinged room set in a rainbow of sand dunes, thickly foliated fir and pine trees and a boundless panorama of water. That lake view ranged from serene to turbulent and in color from cerulean blue

to shades of light gray. I'd raise one of the blinds and permit myself a brief look at the splendor of the emerging day. Then I'd lower the blind again quickly as a precaution against the lure of daydreaming. I sat down at my desk feeling myself a cauldron of energy ready to detonate.

I was still writing on an electric typewriter then, and in the hours that followed there would be fitful starts and stops. Revisions then required a page of paper withdrawn and a new page inserted. Bond in different colors designating different drafts mounted in piles at the corner of my desk.

A book began slowly, with uncertainty. Fearing false starts and treacherous detours, I carefully felt my way. As the manuscript lengthened, the stacks of pages building, the characters becoming more fully formed, a greater confidence in the unfolding story developed. Through the months into years of writing that followed, nurtured by a regular daily routine, a rhythm of writing took over. Sentences

Continued on Page 8

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and paragraphs began to interweave effortlessly. A harmony between writer and writing was achieved. The writing began to emerge with such resilience and fluidity I could not help feeling myself a conduit from some wellspring of boundless power. A poet whose name I cannot recall referred to those periods of creativity as “taking God’s dictation.”

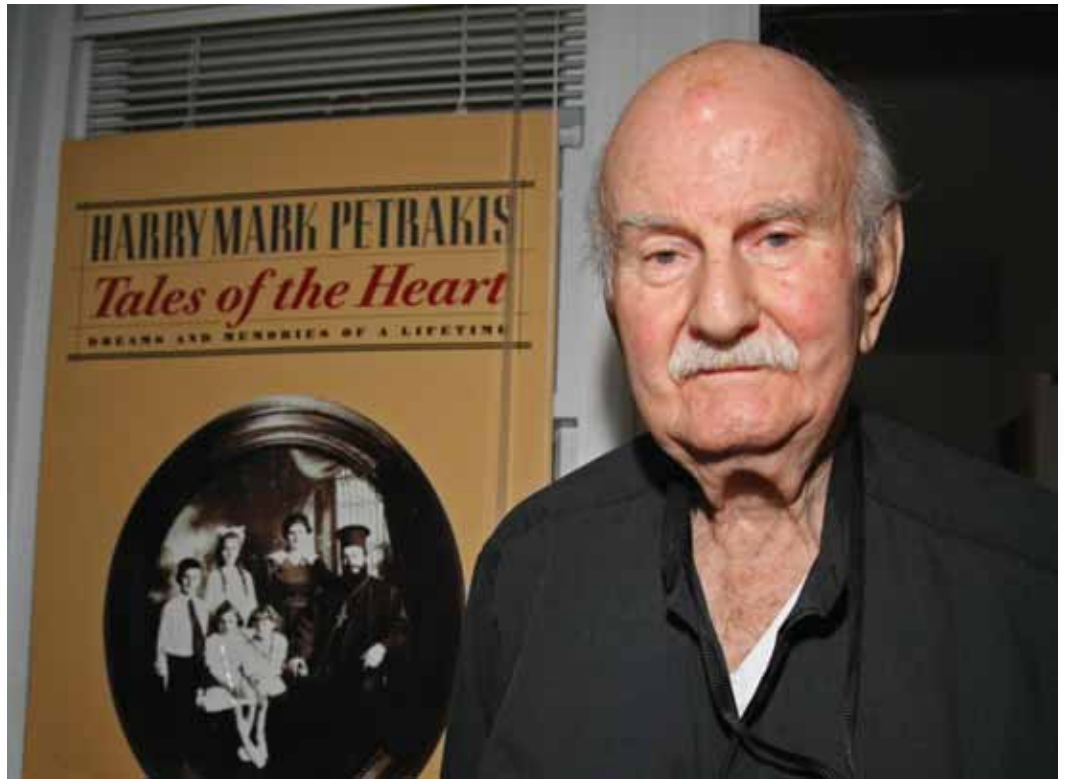
That creative force and excitement kept me at my work for 10, 12 hours at a time. When I did break briefly for lunch or dinner, I carried the resonances of writing with me. At the table with my wife and our sons I felt strangely disembodied, their voices coming to me as from a great distance.

When I finally went to bed, curled beside my wife, sleep eluded me. My mind swirled with the faces and voices of my characters, with the skeletal structuring of still unwritten scenes. After I had fallen asleep, the characters in my book invaded my slumber, playing out scenes already written or still unwritten.

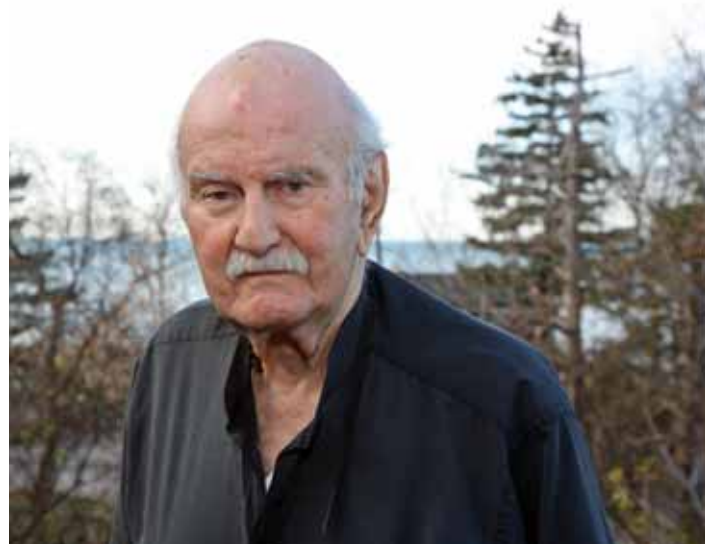
For those months that I wrote, the world of my book consumed my life. The hours I spent away from the work were fretful and restless, fragmented between fantasy and reality. I had become a man with a fever, fully functioning only when I was writing. That was the way it used to be. Then there is the way it is now.

Yet I know I am not alone. As I age, so do multitudes. The musician with diminished hearing, the artist with fading sight, the actor with slurring speech, the athlete with faltering strength. All living things experience such loss. And each human being must find a way to cope with that decline.

In the end, despite my expiring body and my lamenting about how it was once, I must be grateful that in a world where the moment we are born we are old enough to die I have been allowed to live 92 years. I have a wife who has been lover and companion now for more than 70 years still beside me. People cannot mention the name of one of us without, in the same breath, speaking the name of the other. We have good, loving sons and grandchildren and a great-grandchild. We have battled adversity, overcome frailties, and I have written my books. Kurt Vonnegut said that, for a writer, writing one’s books and having one’s children should be enough and we



The photo of Harry’s family used with “Tales of the Heart” hangs in the Ellis Island Immigrant Museum.  
Photo by Paul Kemiell



The magnificence of the dunes is something of which Harry never tires. Photo by Paul Kemiell

should not be greedy. Yet we have had much more, including durable friendships and travel across the world. With all human flaws, we have lived abundantly fulfilling lives that we will carry into eternity.

I need now to be prepared for death without brooding about death. I need to try to put remorse and regrets aside, to temper my hopes, to remember daily to be tolerant and kind to those whose lives touch mine. Above all I need to continue my daily struggle to harness my waning spirit and body and endeavor to put words together to make sentences, and to fashion those sentences into stories. There is no saner way for an old writer to end his days.



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## “Rogue One” Ranks With the Best in the “Star Wars” Franchise

by Andrew Tallackson

For the fans, “Rogue One” is like a shot of adrenaline. It is everything you’d want from a “Star Wars” movie, yet packaged in a way that is unlike anything before it in the franchise. You leave the theater on a high, pumped up, eager to see it again.



The film’s visuals create a world rich in detail.

The movie is the first stand-alone picture in the “Star Wars” canon since J.J. Abrams expertly mended the tattered remains of fan expectations with last year’s “The Force Awakens.” Picking up some 30 years after “Return of the Jedi,” that film was less a journey through picturesque worlds and more about restoring the vital bare-bones essentials of George Lucas’ vision: story and character.

The irony is that “Rogue One” so beautifully locks into the saga’s mythic structure, it may as well be labeled Episodes 3.5 through 3.9. It answers everything we need to know about what went down before 1977’s “A New Hope,” and it is infinitely more satisfying than watching a young Darth Vader tell his future babymama he doesn’t like sand in Lucas’ limp-noodle prequels. This is the real deal: lively, exhilarating, unexpectedly moving, with a final 10 minutes that are sheer perfection.

Rather than barrel through the plot, a more effective approach with this review is to illustrate why “Rogue One” is one of the best films in the entire series.

### The Lead Character



Felicity Jones is a commanding presence as Jyn Erso.

“A New Hope” opened with Princess Leia fleeing the Galactic Empire aboard her star cruiser, having just received stolen plans that revealed how the Death Star might be destroyed.

“Rogue One” it appears, unfolds just weeks — even minutes — beforehand as members

of the Rebel Alliance first get word of the Death Star. Jyn Erso (Oscar-nominee Felicity Jones, an indomitable force), whose father, Galen Erso (Mads Mikkelsen), was coerced into designing the Death Star, is seen by the Alliance as key to uncovering a weakness to the Empire’s new weapon.

Again, we are reminded that, for all the creative ingenuity of a series that envisions worlds pulsating with imagination, these are films about people, specifically the fragile bonds between family.

Jyn Erso emerges as the story’s driving force. She is neither overly masculinized nor condescendingly feminized, but a vulnerable woman who summons unfathomable courage not only within herself, but also in those she unites with to fight the Empire. She is an ideal role model for children, regardless of gender.

### The Tone of the Film

Every film since 1977’s “A New Hope,” including the prequels and last year’s “The Force Awakens,” has taken giant technological leaps forward, the visuals crisp and elegant.

Director Gareth Edwards (2014’s “Godzilla” and 2010’s little-seen, thoughtful “Monsters”) — working from a script by Chris Weitz (“About a Boy”) that received a sterling polish by Tony Gilroy (the first four films in the Jason Bourne series) — treats the story as a combat picture. It’s “Star Wars” filtered through the sensibilities of Ridley Scott’s “Black Hawk Down.” Dark, gritty, with deliciously murky terrain, the visuals frequently provide a soldier’s-eye perspective of battle. The result is exhilarating. You are plunked down into the thick of war. And the worlds the story explores are so dense and rich in detail, the film all but warrants a second viewing to take it in.

### New Characters

All the effects money can buy amount to zilch if





Of all the new characters, Donnie Yen's Chirrut Îmwe, a blind warrior who embraces the Force, is the most unforgettable.

you care little for the people navigating through them.

Weitz and Gilroy, enhancing a story by John Knoll and Gary Whitta, have introduced a rousing slate of heroes and villains that symbolizes the light and the dark within any "Star Wars" picture. With the good guys, you witness characters rising to the challenge, even willing to die for a greater good. That is certainly true of Donnie Yen as Chirrut Îmwe, a blind warrior who believes in the Force, and wields a sword like no other, and Jiang Wen as Baze Malbus, Chirrut's mercenary companion



Ben Mendelsohn creates an intriguing villain in Orson Krennic, who heads the Empire's weapons research.

boasting furious agility with a blaster. These two, along with Imperial droid-turned Rebel ally K-2SO (voiced by Alan Tudyk), Rebel Alliance intelligence officer Cassian Andor (Diego Luna) and Bodhi Rook (Riz Ahmed), an Imperial defector, infuse courage, heroics and, most importantly, heart into the action sequences.

Ben Mendelsohn is intriguing as well as Orson Krennic, who heads the Empire's weapons research. Mendelsohn, who resembles a younger Ian McKellen, creates an exceedingly complex character: imposing, yet feverishly trying to assert himself within the Empire's hierarchy.

## Old Favorites

Darth Vader, magnificently voiced again by James Earl Jones, makes a brief, yet memorable return, as do the droids C3-PO and R2-D2, effectively linking "Rogue One" to the entire franchise.

What's debatable, though, is the use of digital effects to manipulate the faces of new actors so they closely resemble Grand Moff Tarkin (the late Peter Cushing) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) in "A New Hope." In some respects, the "recreations" are an astonishing fusion of technology and live actor, but look closely at Grand Moff Tarkin, and the eyes have the same zombie-like emptiness of Robert Zemeckis' "The Polar Express." It is an uneasy, almost queasy effect.

## The Last 10 Minutes

The final moments of "Rogue One" surpass anything Lucas attempted with his regrettable prequels. Emotionally consuming amid noble sacrifices, the action directly, and frantically, segues into "A New Hope" with such bold confidence and unbridled optimism, the audience I saw the film with vigorously applauded as the closing credits appeared and the thunderous score by Michael Giacchino (composed by the "Up" Oscar winner in only 4 1/2 weeks) revives the unforgettable themes of John Williams.

I cannot wait to experience "Rogue One" again in theaters. It's that good.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [drew@thebeacher.com](mailto:drew@thebeacher.com)

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Casey Affleck (left) and Lucas Hedges star in "Manchester by the Sea."

## Powerful "Manchester by the Sea" Misses the Mark for Greatness

by Andrew Tallackson

A film written and directed by Kenneth Lonergan is the equivalent of a good book: patient in tone, exceedingly careful in spilling its secrets. His characters are ordinary people, his camera like a fly on the wall documenting their torment.

I happen to be a fan of his 2000 directorial debut, "You Can Count On Me," not so much of his troubled follow-up, 2011's "Margaret." "You Can Count on Me," however, is a pitch-perfect exploration of tumultuous siblings (Laura Linney and Mark Ruffalo), culminating in a farewell so affecting, only a hardened soul could be unmoved by it.

With "Manchester by the Sea," Lonergan reinvents a tired indie trope — the prodigal son returns home — so zero trace of any cliché remains. His film is a wise, painful, at times hard-to-watch examination of grief and loss. It is blessed with moments of brilliance and three Oscar-worthy performances... but misses the mark for greatness for reasons that are puzzling.

The film is a revelation for Casey Affleck, who for too long suffered from an acute case of the blahs, content, it appeared, to exist as the brother of Ben. Here, he taps into a startling well of anguish as Lee Chandler, a janitor in Quincy, Mass., and an enigma: sharper than he lets on, prone to lashing out with obscenity laced tirades.

We burrow into Lee's tortured soul after he's summoned home to Manchester-by-the-Sea. His beloved brother Joe (Kyle Chandler), diagnosed a few years back with congestive heart failure, has passed away, leaving Joe's 16-year-old son Patrick (Lucas Hedges) on his own since his mother (Gretchen Mol), an alcoholic, is no longer in the picture.

Were this a Lifetime channel movie, Lee would be an errant ne'er-do-well who finds purpose through

the cuddly nephew he must parent. Lonergan, however, is not the sort to gravitate toward cheap theatrics. He weaves through flashbacks that exist like the ghosts of Lee's past. Lee is a shell of a man, the psychological wall he's erected crumbling brick by brick.

Lonergan is that rare storyteller whose films capture the ebbs and flows of life. He has a keen eye for minute details, and dialogue that springs from honest emotion.

The moment late in the film when Lee unexpectedly runs into his ex-wife Randi (a superb Michelle Williams), the two unable to suppress their history, is the single most devastating scene this year. Your heart breaks for these two because Lonergan's passage through their fractured souls is complete. Not so, however, with Patrick. Hedges is an astonishing young actor — raw and ferocious — but Patrick is a curious individual, seemingly unphased by his father's death, selfish and abrasive to the point of being an irritance, not just for Lee as his uncle, but for the viewer as well.

Why should we care about Patrick in the way we so profoundly do for Lee and Randi? That is the quandary Lonergan never solves.

And, there is a bigger problem. Where's the ending? We don't expect a tidy resolution, but the final shot is abrupt and empty, as if Lonergan decided to stop shooting and turn the project over to his editor. Does the resolution offer hope? Maybe. To Lonergan's credit, his film has tapped into what Thomas Wolfe believed: You *can't* go home again. Home can be a treacherous landscape bathed in despair. That message, however flawed the end conveys it, hits home like a sledgehammer.





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## Christmas Chimes to Ring Out From Trinity Church Bell Tower

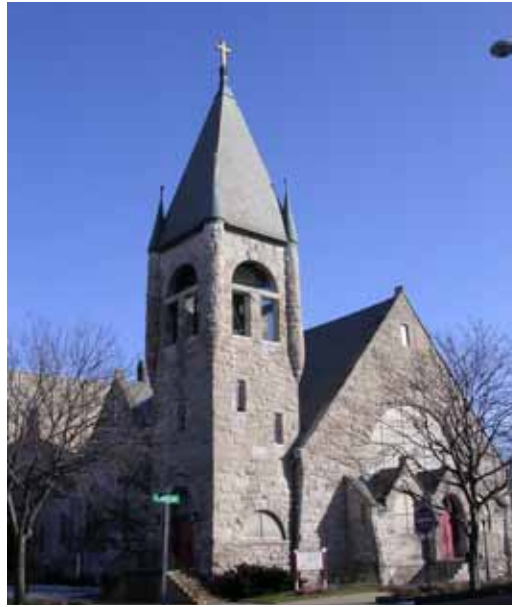
Trinity Episcopal Church, 600 Franklin Square, will present its annual outdoor Christmas Chimes Concert at 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 24.

The concert will be played on the renovated Van Pelt Chimes hung in the church bell tower. The chimes, donated by Harriet Van Pelt in 1930, have been described as a giant doorbell with 12 chimes, where the largest chime is the size of a small telephone pole. The low E note chime is 12 feet long and 7 inches in diameter. The chimes are loud enough that they can be heard throughout much of Michigan City.

Parking in front of Trinity Church and benches along Franklin Street will provide seating for those wishing to attend the outdoor concert. Trinity organist George Karst will play several organ carols combining the chimes, recently installed organ trumpet stop and restored Vox Humana stop.

The program will include traditional Christmas hymns and carols: "Adeste Fideles," "Silent Night," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "Once in Royal David's City," "While Shepherds Watched," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "Angels from the Realms of Glory," "The First Noel," "Brightest and Best," "Away in a Manger," "As with Gladness Men of Old" and "O' Tannebaum."

Master electrician Tom Orlowski, assisted by retired electrician Paul Townley, are supervising the ongoing restoration of the chimes, which includes maintenance of the mechanical switching mecha-



nism and rewiring electrical striking motors in the bell tower. The electric motors have been rebuilt by S&W Electric, La Porte.

Repair and maintenance require climbing to the top of the Romanesque Revival-style bell tower through a series of hatches and ladders. The chimes are hung from a heavy timber frame three stories above the street. Repair of the electrical components required an additional climb to the top of the chimes frame. The tubular bell chimes will be played from a keyboard located next to the organ console. The striking mechanisms in the tower are coupled via electrical

relays to the keyboard.

The Trinity Church tower chimes were manufactured by J.C. Deagan Co., Chicago, which manufactured more than 400 tower chimes made of tubular bells from 1917 to 1958. They were installed in 44 states, Canada, Mexico and South Africa. Today, only 78 Deagan tower chimes sets are known to still be operable.

John Calhoun Deagan (1853-1934) founded the Deagan Company in St. Louis in 1880 and moved the firm to Chicago early in the 20th century. A professional clarinetist, Deagan was fascinated with the science of acoustics. Besides cathedral chimes, he also manufactured high quality marimbas, vibraphones and a wide variety of bells, many of which are still highly prized by symphony orchestras worldwide. The modern xylophone as we know it was a Deagan creation.



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## How Would You Make the Most of This Year's Leap Second?

by Andrew Tallackson

Ever hear of a Leap Second?

Yeah, me neither...but it exists. It's tacked on periodically to what is called Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) so clocks are synchronized worldwide as the Earth's rotation slows.

Now, here is where it gets a little tricky. UTC is determined by two factors: International Atomic Time, which controls the speed for which clocks tick, and Universal Time, commonly referred to as Astronomical Time, or the Earth's rotation around its axis. When the difference between the two nears 0.9 seconds, *voilà*, a leap second is added to our clocks.

The website [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com) indicates that in Chicago, this year's Leap Second arrives at 5:59:60 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31.

What would you do with one more second? How would you make the most of it? That's the question we posed to members of *The Beacher* staff. The task was to answer the question in only a few sentences.

Here is what they wrote:

### Janet Baines, Inside Sales and Customer Service Representative

I would use the extra second to give thanks to the Lord for all the multitude of blessings in my life, or give a dear family member or friend a big hug, but it is more realistic to say I would probably take another picture!



### Sally Carpenter, Retired *Beacher* Editor and Book Reviewer

You're asking what a true blue, dyed-in-the-wool bibliophile since birth would do with extra time? Really? Silly you.



### Matt Cunningham, Correspondent

I'd do something productive or positive, or maybe

even a combination: multitasking, meditating, rereading an entertaining or inspiring quote — Bukowski, maybe Dr. Seuss — but I'd probably chug some cold coffee and check Instagram...again.



### William Halliar, Correspondent

The best advice on what to do with an extra second of time this year is from my wife, "When the clock strikes 12, drop everything that you are doing and give the person next to you a hug."



### Paul Kemiell, Photographer

I would give my wife, Patricia, and daughter, Lillianna, an extra long hug. What a bonus the additional second would mean with this loving act. You can't get enough hugs.



### Connie Kuzydym, Correspondent

One tick of the clock is just that, but within that one click begins a thought, a hope, a dream. In my extra second, I will pray that the new year brings peace, happiness, good health, fulfillment of dreams to those whose lives I touch.



### Kevin Scott, The Fitness Rebellion

If I had an extra second to use, I would use it to spend time with my family. Everyone is being pulled in a million different directions each and every day. I miss the days of the hectic Thanksgiving dinners, and Christmas days with all my grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles and cousins. If I had an extra second, I would put



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**Robert Stanley, Art & About**

Wonder at the Cosmos, and our flicker of understanding of it and each other.

**Andrew Tallackson, Editor**

Back in September, my wife and I surprised our son, Will, with a puppy for his 10th birthday. We recorded the exact moment we presented it to him. That recording is on my facebook page. His joy — pure, wild and ecstatic — is something I will never forget, so with an additional second, I would watch that video one more time to savor it yet again.



**Kayla Weiss, Correspondent**

It's not very original or inspiring, but if I'm being honest, if I had an extra second tacked onto the very end of New Year's Eve, I probably wouldn't even notice. Not because I don't care, but because I would be too busy with my family and friends — celebrating the arrival of a new year, full of new possibilities — to be staring at a clock. I would be experiencing the night, and it would more than likely slip my mind.



**Bob Wellinski, Photographer**

One second...it doesn't sound like a very long time. In photography, a fraction of a second is the difference between a good picture and a great picture. In life, a second can mean the difference between life and death. Time, no matter how short, is precious. With my extra second this year, I would spend it with my family. We have six children, three are away on their own, including two in the Air



Force, and it would mean the world to me to have everyone together at one time...even for a second.



**Matt Werner, Correspondent**

One extra second. I will spend that time thinking about what I will do on Feb. 29, 2020.

**Drew White, Print Salesman**

I would take a nap. No. I'll sleep in. Come to think of it, maybe I would just go to bed a second earlier.



**Becky Wirebaugh, Typesetter/Designer**

I would use the time being thankful for my many blessings.



**Scooby Blue, Cover Model**

Arff, arff, woof, growl, woof, arff, snarl, woof, woof, arff, woof arff, arff, woof, snarl, woof, growl, woof, snarl.

(Translation: I will use the extra second to get a head start on that pesky squirrel that keeps taunting me.)




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## About the Cover

by Andrew Tallackson

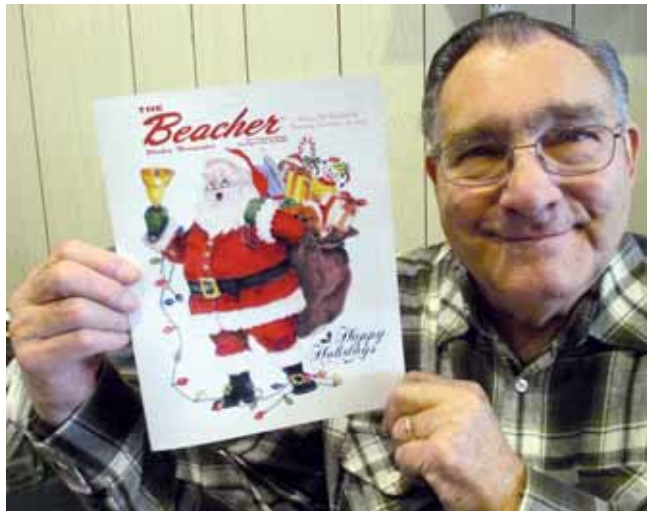
Thank Janet Baines for the delightful rendering of Jolly Old St. Nick that graces the cover of this week's Christmas edition.

John Fanson, a familiar face in the local art community, stopped by *The Beacher* one day to have copies made of his colored pencil vision of Santa Claus. Janet, our inside sales and customer service representative, was so taken with it, she suggested we use it for this week's cover.

Fanson's inspiration for the piece was born from the many old-fashioned Santa Clauses he buys his wife each year in New Carlisle. In all, he did five different drawings.

What appears on our cover captures all the joyful spirit of the Christmas season.

Fanson, 81, lives between Michigan City and La Porte. Drawing has been part of his life since he was a child. He even studied for a year at Chicago's



John Fanson holds a copy of the cover of this week's Christmas edition.

American Academy of Art. Over time, he painted signs displayed throughout Michigan City, along with names that appeared on the backs of boats.

Once he was in his 60s, however, he began to pursue his artistic interests in greater detail. He was involved with Michigan City Art League, and was among the artists who helped create Southern Shore Art Association, 724 Franklin St.

Colored pencil remains his favorite medium.

"It's something I can do in my spare time," he said, adding with a chuckle, "I don't have to clean them up, just sharpen them."

"It's a very relaxing hobby. You lose yourself in it. You can stop when you want and pick it back up."

Lucky for us, and our readers, Fanson's "hobby" makes a charming addition to the tradition of local artists gracing our Christmas cover. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.



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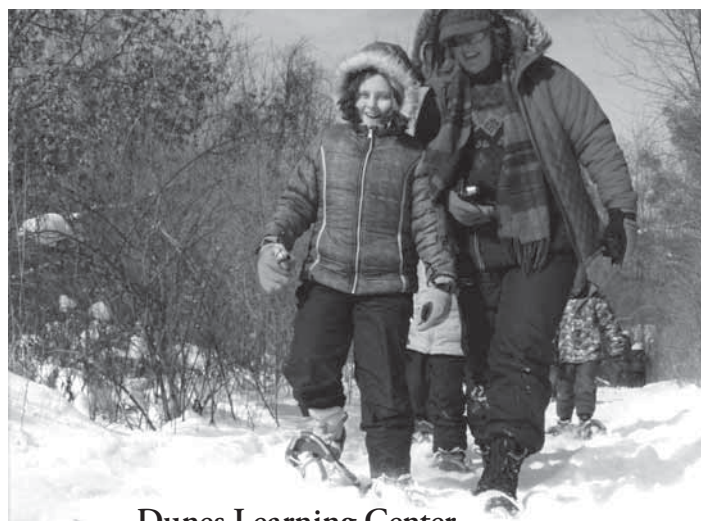


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## Doorway to Christmas



The Beacher's Drew White was one of the local judges who helped pick the winning entry in a contest at Edgewood Elementary School that involved decorating doors for Christmas. White appears before the first-place winner, a gingerbread house made by the instructional assistants. Second place went to the Christmas tree on the music room door and third place to the Charlie Brown scene. Photo by Andrew Tallackson



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### Tuesday, February 21 Dunes Dinner Club @ Dunes Learning Center

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Our second pop-up dinner offers food for thought at Dunes Learning Center's Cowles Lodge. The evening begins with a screening of *The Land*, a short but provocative documentary film. A four-course dinner, beverages, and sparkling conversation, to follow. Space is limited. Reserve online before February 14th.







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## Dear Friends and Family,

As 2016 draws to a close, we feel fortunate as a small business to share our successes with our friends and neighbors in Northwest Indiana.

The real estate market was BUSY this year! Houses are taking less time to sell, and some homes, especially in residential markets, received multiple offers within weeks of listing. We are seeing how low housing inventory and high demand are creating a more balanced marketplace for buyers and sellers.

Our agents' business saw tremendous growth this year, with a record number of agents becoming Million Dollar Producers and a few Multi-Million Dollar Producers.

Jane Cooley, The Hat Lady, continues her decades long streak as a Multi-Million Dollar Producer. Her dedication to her career, and marketing programs specifically crafted for her sellers, are an incredible benefit to her clients. Cari Adams, in her dual role as a seasoned Real Estate Broker and our Social Media Director, is a Multi-Million Dollar Producer who has created a trusted name for herself in the beach market. Danelcy Patterson, our multi-lingual real estate specialist, is a first-time Multi-Million Dollar Producer this year, listing and selling multiple homes in the beach and beyond.

Marge Skwiat-Gloy, a Million Dollar Producer, continues to amaze us with the can-do attitude she gives her clients. Diana Hirsch, again a Million Dollar Producer in 2016, brings a positive force into our office and to her clients, showing us how going the extra mile for everyone positively reflects in a business model.

Rose Pollock, a Million Dollar Producer, had a successful year of bank-owned, residential and secondary beach home properties. Denise O'Connor, a Million Dollar Producer, made strides in the beach area in 2016, adding to her already impressive track record of listing and selling homes within 3% of list price. Betty Sams, who joined our office in August 2015, also is a Million Dollar Producer for 2016, successfully selling in areas of expertise (Beach ~ Town ~ Country).

Cindy Hernandez is a new grandma to a very beloved Ellie, spending lots of new Grammy time while handling her prosperous real estate career with ease. Gail Mathews and Joe Gazarkiewicz are esteemed team members, wowing us with their ability to successfully manage a full-time career and real estate. Joe also was a Million Dollar Producer in 2016.

Val Pudlo (aka My Pal Val) offers her clients more than 20 years of real estate experience, and she loves working with buyers! Jane "Regie" Palella's commitment and initiative as a real estate broker continue to reflect her accomplishments in a busy Northwest Indiana real estate market.

We are ever blessed by our community and our wonderful team of knowledgeable and driven real estate brokers, which has helped us exceed our 2016 goals. We look forward to serving you in 2017.

*Thank you for a blessed year,  
Tricia & Jeff Meyer*



From left to right: Marge Skwiat-Gloy, Rose Pollock, Cari Adams, Tricia Meyer, Jeff Meyer, Jane Cooley, Danelcy Patterson, Betty Sams, Gail Mathews  
Not pictured: Diana Hirsch, Cindy Hernandez, Jane "Regie" Palella, Joe Gazarkiewicz, Val Pudlo



Tricia &amp; Jeff Meyer, Owners



Cari Adams, Santa (played by David Bradley), Tricia Meyer



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48 Dogwood Dr  
3 Bedrooms/2 Baths



Michigan City \$159,000

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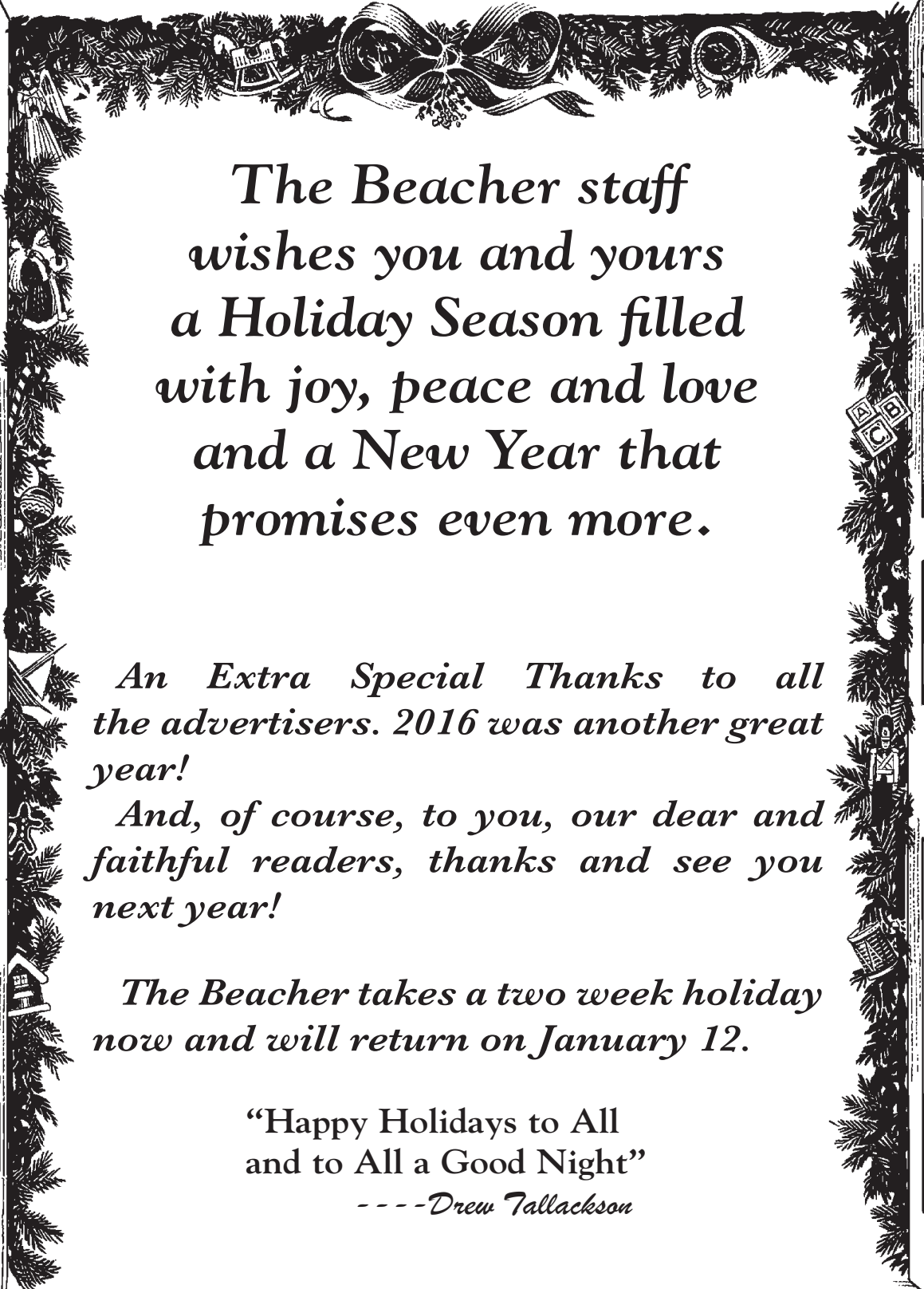
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# From Our House to Yours...



*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. 2016 was another great  
year!*

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

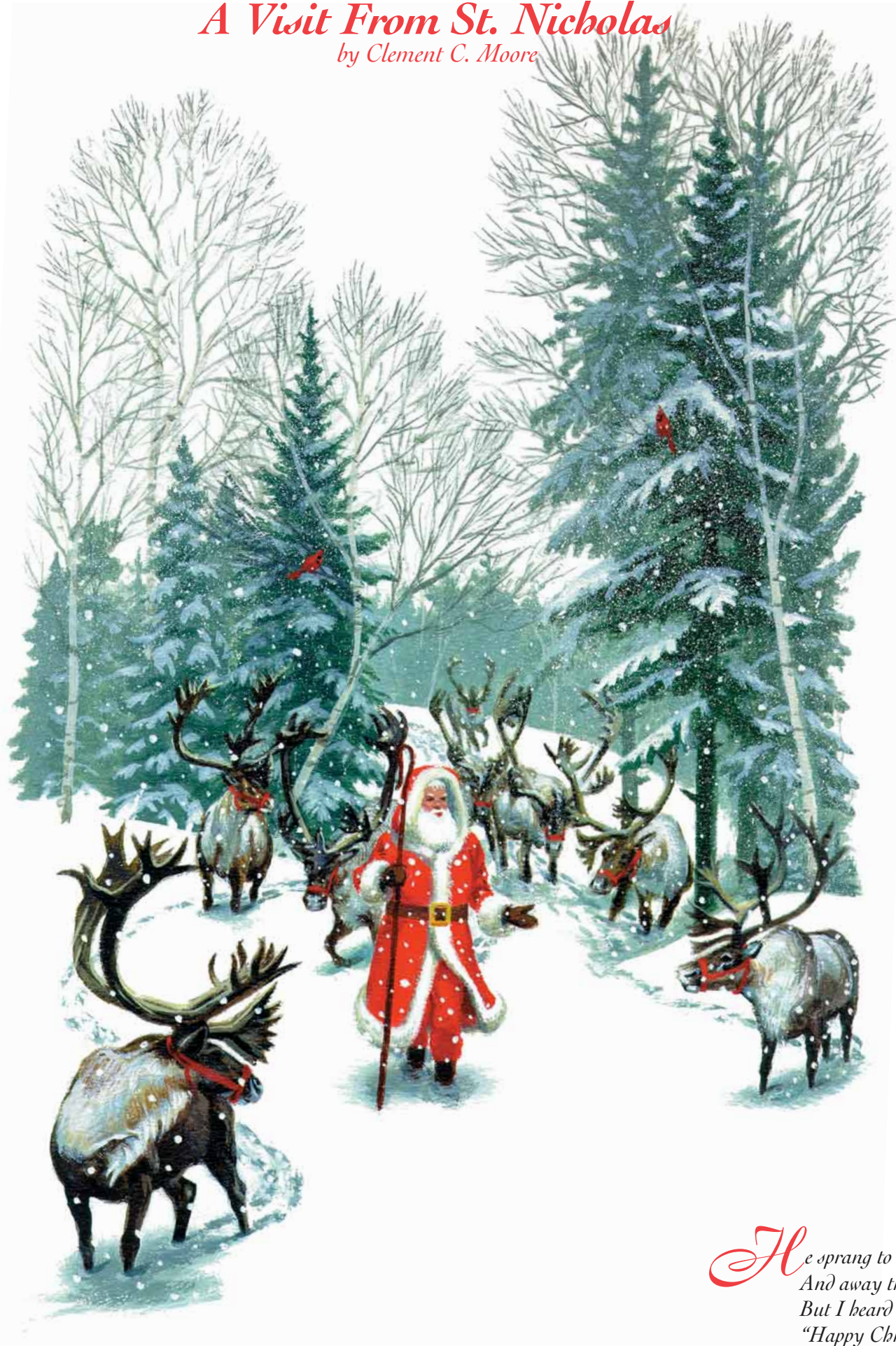
*The Beacher takes a two week holiday  
now and will return on January 12.*

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

*-----Drew Tallackson*



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



*‘Twas 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!”*



## “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 Lindsay Jurczak for helping us out. Enjoy!



Dear Santa,

My name is Mark. I am 7½ years old. My role is to be a good student. How are you Santa? How much gass mileage dose your sleigh get? Also how do you get to all the places in one night? For Christmas could I please have a Gold Dig It, Lego Jurassic World, Pokemon Sun, and Seiris 10 Lego Blind Bags? I have been good at home because my mom has told me to do something one time and the same for school.

*Your Friend,  
Mark*

Dear Santa,

I'm Colleen. I am 8 years old. I'm going to Florda for Christmas. Is it cold in the North Pole? This is why I am on the nice list. I helped my mom and dad to the leaves. I would like a LEGO theam park set. Watch out on Sunday there is going to be a snowstorm. What kind of cookies do you like?

*Love,  
Colleen*

Dear Santa,

My name is Braedan. I love piz-za, pizza tacos, and noodles. I live in Michigan City, IN. Can I please have a big Batman set, any kind of Lego set, Flipeeze, and a interactive R2D2? At home for my mom's birthday, I made a necklace and a treasure hunt. In school I help people if they can't spell or read something. How are your riend-eer?



*Merry Christmas,  
Braedan*

Dear Santa,

My name is Mary. I am eight years old. I live in Indiana. I go to Noter Dame Cathlick School. I'm on the good list because I helped Danel with work sometimes, and at my house I made breckfast and its not my chore. I would like Pokemon cards, make-up, and a camra please. Merry Cristmas!

*Love,  
Mary Elizabeth*

Dear Santa,

Hello my name is Lucille. I am 7 years old. I live in Indiana. I am a student at Notre Dame Catholic School. At home I think I have ben OK. I have helped Mary E. when she hurt her hand and at home I have helped my mom. I would re-aly love to have a lot of cookey doe, a Ipod, and a Easy Bake Oven. How are you? How do you deliver all the presnts in one night? How is Roodollf?

*Your Friend,  
Lucille*

P.S. Please!!!!!!

Dear Santa,

My name is Daniel. I am 7 years old. I live in Indiana. I'm a student from Notre Dame Catlflice School. I do my home work. I work hard. I would like Skylanders Trap Team, and Lego Dimensions but gold. How does the ringdeer flys?



*Love,  
Daniel*

Dear Santa,

My name is Ella. For Christmas I would like a knitting set please because I love to knit and I have been good. How do you fly? How do you get to every house on Christmas night?



Love,  
Ella

Dear Santa,

My name is Timothy. I live in LaPort Indiana. I am eight years old. I am a student at Notre Dame Catholic School. I need gloves so my hands don't get cold. May I please have a remote control car and helicopter, Itunes card, and a lot of raw cookie dow, and a Ipod please? At home, I cleaned the toy room and helped build a train track for my little brothers. At school, I helped my friends and worked hard. How do you diliver all of the presents to people and how do your raindeer fly?

Sincerely,  
Timothy

Dear Santa,

My name is Aidan. May I please have a Xbox one, PS4, and Nintendo 3DS? Wich list am I on? How many Elfs do you have? How do you go around the hole earth at night? How many presents am I going to get this year? What year were you born? How many Raindeer do you have?



Your Friend,  
Aidan

Dear Santa,

This year for Crismis I want 2 Xbox remotes, 1 Wii remote, 1 Xbox 360, 1 disc of Scilander Gients. How are Misis Clos and you doing? Am I on the bad or good list? I helped my mom cook my faveret food. I let my dog out every day. My name is Dorian. I live in Indeana. I have a sister that is 2 years old.

Love,  
Dorian

Dear Santa,

How are you doing? How are your rainder doing? I want a My Friend Pikachu, Minecraft wii edison, New super Mario Bros wii, and Netendo games please. I am 8 years old. I live in Indana. My school is Notre Dame. I hope you have a safe trip Santa.

Your Friend,  
Bryan

Dear Santa,

My name is Lucy Rose. I am 7 years old. I live in Indiana. I am a student at Notre Dame Cathlic School. At school I helped my hurt friend. At home I donated food. May I please have a knitting kit? That is all I want. So how are you doing? What is it like living at the North Pole?



Merry Christmas,  
Lucy Rose

Dear Santa,

Hi Santa my name is Jalen. I am a good 8 year old boy. I live in Indiyana. At home I do good deeds. I help my mom and family. At school I am good. I would like Lego Sonic and Lego Dmenshons, Bat Man, Kai, Jay, Cole and Zane please. What do you do over the sumer? How are you Santa?

Your friend,  
Jalen

Dear Santa,

This year for Christmas, can I have a hoe for my farm, a real horse, My Little Ponys, a pink dirt bike, new camera, cowgirl boots, toy pig, and a veterinar-ein kit? My name is Mary Kate. I am 8 years old. At home, I cleaned my room. Are you having fun?

Merry Christmas,  
Mary Kate



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## Genealogist of the Year



Rita Duncan (right) poses with Pat Harris after receiving the award.

Rita Duncan is the new La Porte County Genealogist of the Year.

Duncan received the honor at the Dec. 13 meeting of La Porte County Genealogical Society.

Gloria Arndt, speaking on behalf of committee members Fern Eddy Schultz and Dorothy Palmer, said the award

honors someone who has promoted genealogy in La Porte County through publications, programs and/or by assisting others in their search for source records. This also includes someone who has abstracted, indexed and/or taught about source records or methodology.

Duncan was introduced by Patricia Harris, who nominated her. She is a genealogist and historian who has studied and clarified the story of Native Americans who have lived in the area around the Great Lakes. She has found and preserved records previously unknown, and teaches young people, especially Native American children, their history and heritage.

The next meeting is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the La Porte City Parks Department, 250 Pine Lake Ave., La Porte. Visit [tinyurl.com/ndooe7s](http://tinyurl.com/ndooe7s) for more details.

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## Proper Ways to Dispose of Holiday Waste

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, Americans generate an additional million tons of household waste beyond the amount usually created at other times of the year.

That's according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It's a massive 25 percent spike in waste that occurs like clockwork each year.

But responsibly disposing of extra holiday waste this Christmas season is easy with the La Porte County Solid Waste District's help.

"Most of that waste, such as packaging and boxes, greeting cards, used batteries and old electronics, can be recycled through the Solid Waste District's various programs," said Alicia Ebaugh, the District's education and public-outreach coordinator. "And many things can be reused, recyclable or not."

Here's a quick guide:

- **Curbside recycling** – Recycle cardboard and paperboard boxes, plastic packaging and greeting cards. Do not recycle Styrofoam packaging or peanuts, gift wrap or bows. Take all plastic bags back to the local grocery store for recycling if unable to reuse them.
- **Used batteries and cell phones** – These are accepted year-round at 16 locations throughout the county, including Al's Supermarkets, Kabelin Ace Hardware stores and the District office, 2857 W. Indiana 2.
- **Used electronics and Christmas lights** – TVs, DVD players, video game systems, computers or other electronic devices can be recycled at one of the District's electronics recycling trailers. Christmas light strands also are accepted. The

site at 1027 Hitchcock Road in Michigan City is open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and the site at the District office is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

If cell phones or electronic items still work, try finding new homes for them instead of throwing them out. Perhaps a local homeless shelter, church or family in need could use them.

Live Christmas trees may be composted at the Zigler Road site and the Westville Correctional Facility site after Jan. 2. They also may be picked up by the local trash hauler for composting. Check with them for details.

Contact the Solid Waste District at (219) 326-0014 with any questions, visit [www.solidwastedistrict.com](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com) or message the District on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/LPCoRecycling](https://www.facebook.com/LPCoRecycling).



## Ways to Avoid Creating Waste During the Holidays:

- Give the gift of an experience: music lessons, lessons for a new hobby, a massage, a trip to a state park or tickets to a sporting event or play.
- Invest in family and friends. Instead of giving a gift, contribute to a child's savings account, education IRA or give them a U.S. Savings Bond.
- Give a monetary donation to a local charity in someone else's name.
- Keep it simple. One thoughtful gift is better than six wrapped packages of unwanted gifts.
- Rather than wrapping gifts for youngsters, hide the presents and turn Christmas into a treasure hunt.
- Create a recyclable wrapping paper by using the Sunday comics, magazines and wrapping paper recovered from previous events.
- Reuse bags and boxes. Items like shredded wrapping paper, broken ornaments and greeting cards can be great for art projects.
- Recycle unwanted and duplicated gifts by promptly exchanging them or giving them to a local charity.

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## Photo of the Week Contest

### Help Us Capture Life Along the Beach!

Snap a high-resolution photo of a friend or family member, place, event...even the beautiful scenery. Include the day, time and location of the photo.

Submit the photo to The Beacher by 5 p.m. each Wednesday. We'll contact you by 5 p.m. Thursday if the photo is chosen to appear in an upcoming edition.



THE  
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Email high-resolution photos to [drew@thebeacher.com](mailto:drew@thebeacher.com)



## La Lumiere 3-D Art Students Unveil Art Installation Project



La Lumiere seniors Xi Zhang (from left), Isabelle Hendricks, Pat Jelinek, Isaiah Coleman Lands, Eduardo Maitin, Ethan Dolezal and Ethan Murillo pose with their 3-D art project "Quantum Threads."

La Lumiere School's 3-D art class unveiled its art installation project, "Quantum Threads," to the student body earlier this month with a presentation during the daily morning meeting and an all-day art room open house.

Prior to the installation, art and physics students traveled to Fermilab in Batavia, Ill., to study the relationship between art and science, and to see the unseen — images of subatomic particles colliding in a particle accelerator.

Upon their return, art students began drawing images of collided particles, writing poems about

them and, with the inspiration of artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, using fibers and the conceptual art practice of wrapping to weave a story about the underlying fabric of the quantum field, to make it visible to the human eye.

"In studying fiber art, installation art, conceptual art, color theory, quantum mechanics and cosmology, we took a journey into the relationship between science and art," La Lumiere Art Teacher Katie Wall said. "We took common threads, synthetic fibers and threads, and recycled or found fabrics to create a quantum web."



La Lumiere 3-D art students Duong Chu Vu and Andi Breitowich sew images of particles colliding into fabric during art class.



Studies for "Quantum Threads."

## Indiana Dunes State Park

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

### Saturday, Dec. 24.

The Nature Center closes at 2 p.m.

#### • 10 a.m. — Ninth Annual Christmas Eve Shopping Stroll.

Meet at the Nature Center for the annual 60-minute trek through dune forests, culminating with a fire, hot cocoa and other holiday snacks at the Nature Center.

### Saturday, Dec. 31

#### • 10 a.m. — Winter Hike into Beaver Bayou.

Meet at the Nature Center for a short stroll to this past summer's beaver activity and the flooded area they created.

#### • 2 p.m. — Animal Adaptations.

Meet at the Nature Center Auditorium to learn about the different survival options animals have during the winter.

### Sunday, Jan. 1

The Nature Center is open from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

#### • 10 a.m. — First Day Hike: 3DC!

Meet park staff at the Nature Center for a special 3 Dune Challenge hike. Explore recent park projects and possible ice shelf formation, with the hike ending with snacks and a fire. The program is part of a 50-state initiative, America's State Parks First Day Hikes, which serves as an opportunity to connect with the outdoors.

*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.*

## Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

*The following programs are available at  
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore:*

#### • Christmas Bird Count on Thursday, Dec. 29.

Thousands of families, students, amateurs, birders and scientists are invited to use binoculars, bird guides and checklists to count the world's bird populations. The National Audubon Society and other organizations use the data to assess the health of bird populations, and guide conservation action.

The event is free, but requires advance registration by Dec. 26. Contact ranger Christine Gerlach at (219) 395-1885 or [christine\\_gerlach@nps.gov](mailto:christine_gerlach@nps.gov).

*The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is on Lake Street in Gary. Call (219) 395-1882 for more information.*

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Friday at Noon is the deadline for the following week's issue. (219) 879-0088



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## Westchester Public Library

*The following programs are available:*

• **Family Coloring Friday Nights from 5 to 7 p.m. Fridays at Hageman Library, 100 Francis St., Porter.**

Materials are provided, but patrons can take their own. No registration is necessary.

• **Cupcakes and Canvas from 10 a.m. to noon or 2 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 27, at Westchester Township History Museum, located in the Brown Mansion, 700 W. Porter Ave.**

Children 6-12 can paint step-by-step with an instructor to create a winter-themed piece. No previous art experience is necessary, and all supplies are provided. Participants should wear clothes that can get messy. A parent or guardian must accompany each child. Class size is limited to 10 children. Register at the museum or by calling (219) 983-9715.

• **Pokemon League from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays at Thomas Library.**

The program is aimed at children in first grade and older. Attendees learn to make decks of 60 cards. They don't need to take anything unless wanting to take a starter pack of cards.

• **Children's Crochet Club from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Wednesdays in the Thomas Library Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

Aimed at children in third grade and older, attendees learn beginning crochet from Sadie Steciuch. Children should take a size G crochet hook and skein of medium weight yarn. Class size is limited, and registration is required by calling (219) 926-7696.

• **Holiday Closings.**

Thomas and Hageman branches, Westchester Public Library Service Center, Westchester Township History Museum, Chesterton Adult Learning Center and the Westchester Township Trustee office will close Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 24-25, for the Christmas holiday. Regular hours resume Monday, Dec. 26.

All facilities again will close Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 31-Jan. 1, for the New Year's holiday. Regular hours resume Monday, Jan. 2.

## First Friday Art Walk

The First Friday Art Walk is from 5 to 8 p.m. Jan. 6 in Michigan City's Uptown Arts District.

Businesses, galleries and other attractions will host everything from art to entertainment and refreshments.

Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., will present an Open Mic event for poets, musicians, comedians and anyone else interested.

Spots fill quickly, so those interested should register at [tinyurl.com/zm7yxbc](http://tinyurl.com/zm7yxbc)

Visit [www.uptownartsdistrict.org](http://www.uptownartsdistrict.org) for general information on First Friday.



Incoming Beach Garden Club President Beverly Bruesch (left) and Outgoing President Rima Binder.

### Beach Garden Club

Rima Binder summarized the Beach Garden Club's accomplishments during her tenure as president during its Christmas luncheon at Long Beach Country Club.

With the help of Dee Caulfield and Pat Latchford, club liaisons to the Long Beach Park District board, the park district allocated money to buy plants and bushes for a Long Beach park.

Club members selected, purchased and planted at the Veterans Garden, the garden along the tennis court, the planter at the Moore entrance to Long Beach, planters at the community center and planters at the old Lake Shore Drive pumping station.

In 2107, new planters will appear at the Veterans Garden. Thanks to the donation of plants from the Caulfield garden, the club extended the planting along the tennis courts.

Members volunteered hours to maintain the garden at Michiana Humane Society, and planted a maple in memory of longtime member and past president Marianne Gossweiler.

Binder presented two long-standing members as honorary members: Marilyn McKay and Betty Duggan. New President Beverly Bruesch and Vice President Beverly Johnson were installed.

Joan Langley completed the morning reading, Richard Jauron's "The Gardener's Version of The Night Before Christmas."

### Holiday Tree Bonfire

Haverstock Funeral Home will host the Holiday Tree Bonfire at 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 8, at La Porte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. Indiana 2.

The event includes hot chocolate, popcorn and treats. Families with real trees may drop them off in front of the designated horse arena anytime after the holiday and through Jan. 7. The La Porte Street Department also will pick them up.

Everyone is invited to the event, regardless if dropping off a tree. Call (219) 362-3333 for details.

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## Visclosky Honors Rotary Club

U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky recently honored Michigan City Rotary Club before the U.S. House of Representatives for celebrating its 100th anniversary.

The club was founded on Oct. 19, 1916, to promote civic development and public welfare. There were 65 original members. Over the years, it participated in the movement to establish Indiana Dunes State Park, and aided the formation of the local chamber of commerce, the City Planning and Zoning Commission and Michigan City Historical Society.

"The Rotary Club of Michigan City has been successful due to the unwavering dedication of its leadership and members," Visclosky said. "Northwest Indiana is not only grateful but proud to have the organization's support for the past 100 years."

## Michiana Volley Series

by Kayla Weiss

Long Beach native Colleen Wall-Lane has partnered with Ross Balling, EVP National Volleyball Tour owner and commissioner, to bring the Michiana Volley Series to the area.

Starting in January, Balling and Wall-Lane will present training sessions for youth in grades 4-8 from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturdays at Notre Dame School and 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. CST Mondays at St. Mary of the Lake, New Buffalo, Mich.

The sessions will emphasize the mechanics, self mastery drills and game-type situations.

"We provide a great alternative for those families who are not able to commit to a juniors club," said Wall-Lane, who grew up by Stop 30. "We are so excited to bring this to the beach area this winter!"

The EVP Tour supports beach volleyball events and channels resources to support the top teams so they can compete on the national tour event.

Balling has played professional beach volleyball, and owned and operated the EVP tour for 25 years, coaching and producing events all over the country. EVP operates youth programs — indoor and outdoor — throughout the Chicagoland area.

Lane was part of the three-time volleyball state championship team at Marquette Catholic High School. She played volleyball at Purdue University, coached at PNC from 2007-2008 and played in the women's A and AA division for the Great Lakes region out of Chicago. She also operated the Hoosierland Volleyball Club with her husband, Kevin Lane, in Bloomington, Ind.

The cost to participate in the Michiana Volley Series is \$60 per month. Visit [tinyurl.com/znvebv7](http://tinyurl.com/znvebv7) to register or for additional information.

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## Land Trust Receives Grants

Shirley Heinze Land Trust has received multi-year grants from ArcelorMittal and The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation.

Namely, the grants will fund a development director who will help Shirley Heinze grow faster and advance its work in regional land protection and conservation.

Executive Director Kristopher Krouse said the new position will aid recent expansion of the group's geographical coverage into St. Joseph, Starke and Marshall counties.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust has been protecting and preserving natural land since 1981. More than 2,100 acres in Lake, Porter, La Porte and St. Joseph counties have been preserved for the public's benefit. Visit [www.heinzetrust.org](http://www.heinzetrust.org), call (219) 242-8558 or access its Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/heinzetrust](http://www.facebook.com/heinzetrust) for more details.

## 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.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org) for more details.

### Nature's Tiny Tots

Designed for parents and grandparents, explore nature with toddlers and preschoolers. Enjoy music, dancing, storytelling and, weather permitting, hiking.

The free program is from 10 to 11 a.m. Jan. 23 and 30, March 6 and 20, and April 3 at Luhr County Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West. Call (219) 325-8315 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 topic. Programs are appropriate for children 3 to 8, with an adult required to participate. Times are from 6 to 7:15 p.m. at Luhr 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 next program is:

- Jan. 25 — Hunting Tracks.
- Feb. 8 — Happy Hibernators.
- Feb. 15 — Flying High.
- March 8 — Snakes Alive.
- March 22 — Spring Has Sprung.
- April 12 — It's Feeding Time.
- April 19 — Tree Treasures.

### Chit-Chat with the Park Superintendent

Park Superintendent Jeremy Sobecki invites the community to the meet and greets, which are from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25, at Luhr Park Nature Center, and 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, at Red Mill County Park — Pat Smith Hall.

No pre-registration is required. Those attending can share their thoughts and ideas, and learn about what's new in county parks. Coffee will be served.

### Breakfast with the Birds

The free program is from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, at Luhr County Park Nature Center.

Registration is not required. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

### Shelter and Hall Reservations

Call (219) 325-8315 to make reservations for one of many picnic shelters at any of the four county parks, or Pat Smith Hall at Red Mill County Park for a family function.

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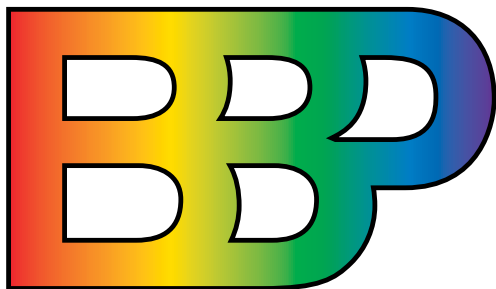
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## Michigan City Public Library

*The following programs are available at Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St.:*



• **“Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 22.**

The movie, which is Rated PG, will be shown in memory of the late Alan Rickman. Light refreshments will be served. Children 18 and younger are eligible to win a copy of the movie.

• **Holiday closings.**

The library will close at noon Friday, Dec. 23, and remain closed Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 24-25, for the Christmas holiday. The library also will close Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 31-Jan. 1, for the New Year holiday.

• **STEAM Ahead Kids: Marshmallow Snowman Decoration Craft at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 27.**

Children will make a snowman. They must be present to receive craft materials.

• **“The Secret Life of Pets” at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28.**

The movie is Rated PG. Light refreshments will be served. Children 18 and younger are eligible to win a copy of the movie.

• **“The BFG” at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 29.**

The movie is Rated PG. Light refreshments will be served. Children 18 and younger are eligible to win a copy of the movie.

Contact Robin Kohn at (219) 873-3049 for more information on library programming.

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## Tri Kappa Scholarship

Michigan City's Tri Kappa Delta Mu Chapter is offering 2017 scholarships.

*For the 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 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 within the jurisdiction of the sponsoring chapter.

*For the general scholarships, 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 enrolled full time during the subsequent school year.
- Be a U.S. citizen and Indiana resident within the jurisdiction of the sponsoring chapter.

The application deadline is Jan. 14. Contact Scholarship Committee Chairwoman Rhonda Kowalski at (219) 898-5088 or rmkowalski@sap-corp.com to obtain an application or for more details.



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## Barker Mansion at Christmas

The last chance to view the holiday decorations at Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St., is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31.

Self-guided and guided tours are available, with cocoa, tea and kids' crafts planned. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$5 for youth 15 and younger. Visit [www.barkermansion.com](http://www.barkermansion.com) for more details.

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## Activities to Explore

### In the Area:

**Dec. 22** — "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," 10 a.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Dec. 23-Jan. 9** — Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. *Now showing:* "Manchester By the Sea." Rated R. Times: 5:45 p.m. Dec. 23-29. *Also:* "Moonlight." Rated R. Times: 9 p.m. Dec. 23, 3 p.m. Dec. 27 & 29. *Also:* "A Street Cat Named Bob." Not Rated. Times: 3 p.m. Dec. 26 & 30, 6 p.m. Jan. 6-9. *Also:* "The Entertainer." Not Rated. Time: 2 p.m. Dec. 28. All times Eastern. Info: vickerstheatre.com

### **Dec. 24 — HANUKKAH.**

**Dec. 24** — Ninth Annual Christmas Eve Shopping Stroll, Nature Center @ Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Dec. 24** — Outdoor Christmas Chimes Concert, 4 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 600 Franklin Square.

### **Dec. 25 — CHRISTMAS DAY.**

### **Dec. 26 — BOXING DAY.**

**Dec. 27** — STEAM Ahead Kids: Marshmallow Snowman Decoration Craft, 10 a.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Dec. 27** — Cupcakes and Canvas, 10 a.m.-noon or 2-4 p.m., Westchester Township History Museum in Brown Mansion, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton. Registration: (219) 983-9715.

**Dec. 28** — "The Secret Life of Pets," 10 a.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Dec. 29** — "The BFG," 10 a.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Dec. 31** — Final day for holiday decorations, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Cost: \$8/adults, \$5/youth 15 & younger. Info: [www.barkermansion.com](http://www.barkermansion.com)

**Dec. 31** — Winter Hike into Beaver Bayou, 10 a.m., Nature Center @ Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Dec. 31** — Super Happy Funtime (Adults 18+), 9 p.m. EST, The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30. Info: [www.acorntheater.com](http://www.acorntheater.com), (269) 756-3879.

### **Jan. 1 — NEW YEAR'S DAY.**

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

**Jan. 6** — First Friday Art Walk, 5-8 p.m., Michigan City's Uptown Arts District. Info: [www.uptown-artsdistrict.org](http://www.uptown-artsdistrict.org)

**Jan. 6** — Open mic, 5-8 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Registration: [tinyurl.com/zm7yxbc](http://tinyurl.com/zm7yxbc)

**Through Dec. 28** — Holiday Artisan Market, Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: lubeznikcenter.org, (219) 874-4900.

**Through Jan. 6** — Exhibit, Dorothy Graden, Laurel Izard & Edwin Shelton, Visit Michigan City La Porte. Opening reception: 5-8 p.m. Nov. 18.

**Mondays** — Codependents Anonymous (CoDA), 6 p.m., Franciscan Alliance-St. Anthony Health. Info: (219) 879-3817.

**Mondays, Fridays** — Overeaters Anonymous, 7 p.m. Mon./Franciscan St. Anthony Health, 301 W. Homer St., 9 a.m. Fri./First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Info: <https://oa.org>, (219) 879-0300.

**Wednesdays** — Al-Anon meetings, 6-7 p.m., Franciscan Alliance-St. Anthony Health. Info: (708) 927-5287.

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## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



**On December 22, 1864**, during the Civil War, Union Gen. William Sherman sent a message to President Lincoln from Georgia, saying, "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah."

**On December 22, 1944**, during the Battle of the Bulge, U.S. Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe reportedly replied "Nuts!" when the Germans demanded the Americans surrender in the World War II conflict.

**On December 22, 1991**, Ethlerose James Owens, the last grandchild of outlaw Jesse James, died at the age of 84.

**On December 23, 1823**, *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, by Clement Clarke Moore, was published in the *Troy (New York) Sentinel*.

**On December 23, 2003**, the federal government announced the first suspected case of Mad Cow Disease in the United States.

**On December 24, 1814**, the United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812. However, word of the treaty failed to reach British forces before their attack on New Orleans the next day — an attack repulsed by the Americans.

**On December 24, 1818**, Germany's Franz Gruber of Oberndorf, Austria, composed the music for *Silent Night*. The words were written by Josef Mohr, and it was sung for the first time on Christmas Day.

**On December 24, 1851**, in Washington, D.C., fire swept through the Library of Congress, destroying more than 35,000 priceless volumes.

**On December 24, 1871**, Verdi's spectacular opera *Aida* had its world premiere in Cairo, Egypt. The Khedive of Egypt commissioned the composer to write the opera, which was to be part of the festivities celebrating the opening of the Suez Canal.

**On December 24, 1951**, the first opera written expressly for television, "Amahl and the Night Visitors" by Gian Carlo Menotti, was performed on NBC.

**On December 25, 336**, the first recorded celebration of Christmas on Dec. 25 took place in Rome.

**On December 25, 1223**, St. Francis of Assisi assembled one of the first Nativity scenes in Greccio, Italy.

**On December 25, 1865**, Chicago's Union Stock Yards, the world's largest at the time, opened at Halsted and 39th streets.

**On December 25, 1931**, New York's Metropolitan Opera broadcast an entire opera over radio for the first time: "Hansel and Gretel" by Engelbert Humperdinck.

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beg to whom God has given such great power To come to my assistance. Help me in my present and urgent petition, In return I promise to make your name known and cause you to come to my assistance. Say 3 Our Fathers, 3 Hail Mary's and 3 Glory Be's. Publication must be promised. St. Jude pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Amen. This Novena has never been known to fail. This Novena must be said for 9 consecutive days.

**On December 25, 1973**, the astronauts aboard *Skylab 3* began a record setting 7-hour space walk.

**On December 25, 1991**, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned as president of the Soviet Union.

**On December 25, 1998**, British mogul Richard Branson, American millionaire Steve Fossett and Per Lindstrand of Sweden gave up on their attempt to make the first non-stop, round the world balloon flight seven days into their journey, ditching off Hawaii.

**On December 26, 1799**, Col. Henry Lee eulogized the late George Washington as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

**On December 26, 1931**, an enthusiastic audience was on hand at New York's Music Box Theatre for the opening of George Gershwin's musical *Of Thee I Sing*. Besides being a smash hit, this was the first musical to win a Pulitzer Prize for drama.

**On December 27, 1831**, naturalist Charles Darwin set out on a voyage to the Pacific aboard the HMS "Beagle." Darwin's discoveries during the trip helped to form the basis of his theories on evolution.

**On December 27, 1845**, Chicago's first steam-powered press was set up in the office of the "Chicago Democrat."

**On December 27, 1900**, Carrie Nation staged her first (of many) raids on a saloon. She marched into the bar at the Carey Hotel, in Wichita, Kan., and smashed all of the liquor bottles in sight.

**On December 27, 1903**, in New York City, "Sweet Adeline," the all-time favorite with barbershop quartets, was sung for the first time. The song was composed by Henry Armstrong, to words written by Richard Gerard. The title was suggested to the composers when they saw the name of the great operatic soprano, Adelina Patti, on a theatre marquee.

**On December 27, 1904**, "Peter Pan," the play about a boy who refused to grow up, opened in London.

**On December 27, 1932**, Radio City Music Hall opened in New York City.

**On December 27, 1947**, the children's television program "Howdy Doody" made its debut on NBC.

**On December 28, 1897**, the play "Cyrano de Bergerac," by Edmond Rostand, premiered in Paris.

**On December 28, 1944**, the musical "On the Town" opened on Broadway.

**On December 28, 1945**, Congress officially recognized the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the American flag.

**On December 28, 1981**, Elizabeth Jordan Carr, America's first "test tube" baby, was born in a Norfolk, Va., hospital.

**On December 28, 2004**, opera singer and musician William Diana, a native of Michigan City who performed extensively throughout the United States and Europe, died in Chicago at 59.

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**Long Beach home for rent this season.** Four bedroom, 11 beds, 2  
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**American  
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*The American Red Cross La Porte County Chapter will sponsor the following bloodmobiles:*

- Franciscan St. Anthony Health — Michigan City, 301 W. Homer St., 8 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Dec. 27.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 220 Crescent Drive, La Porte, 2 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28.
- IU Health La Porte Hospital, 1007 W. Lincolnway, La Porte, noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28.
- Family Life Center, 154 Main St., Westville, noon to 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 29.
- Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St., 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30.
- St. John's United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road, Michigan City, noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 3.
- Anytime Fitness La Porte, 59 Pine Lake Ave., 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 5.
- Anytime Fitness, 4112 Franklin St., Michigan City, 3:30 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 5.
- Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1237 E. Coolspring Ave., Michigan City, 3 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 5.
- St. Joseph Church, 109 C St., La Porte, noon to 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 6.
- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, La Porte, noon to 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 9.

*Donors receive a free long-sleeve Red Cross T-shirt while supplies last through Jan. 8. They must be in good general health and feeling well, at least 17 (16 with parental consent) and weigh at least 110 pounds. Call (800) 733-2767 or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) for more details.*



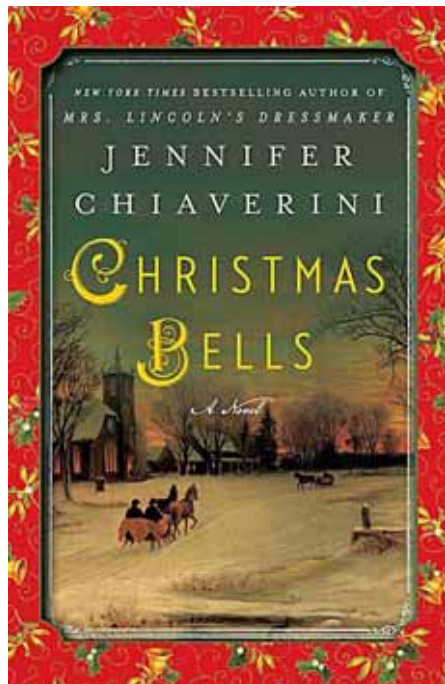


## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

**Christmas Bells** by Jennifer Chiaverini  
(oversize paperback, \$16 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook)

Parade magazine has said Chiaverini “brings history to life.” That is evidenced by her previous bestselling titles: Mrs. Lincoln’s Dressmaker, The Spy Mistress, Mrs. Lincoln’s Rival and Mrs. Grant and Madame Jule. With apparent ease, she brings to life real characters from the past while adding fictional ones who blend in so well, they seem just as real.



In this seasonal story, Chiaverini has combined the great American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and the dark days of the American Civil War with a present-day story of people fighting their own personal wars and uncertain futures.

Our story begins in the present at St. Margaret’s Church in Boston, a catalyst for a group of people whose lives will come together in the most surprising ways. A Christmas miracle? Maybe.

The church’s priest is Father Ryan, who is assisted by Sister Winifred, who’s been there since before he was born. The church has a children’s choir led by Sophia, with piano accompaniment by Lucas. They’re in love, but can’t admit it to each other, let alone themselves!

Charlotte and Alex, two siblings in the choir, have a father who’s MIA in Afghanistan, while Camille, recent widow of a state senator, quietly sits in the back of the church listening to the choir sing.

Each of these people has a story told in the manner of The Canterbury Tales. Be patient. The meshing of their stories will have a profound effect on each of them in this season of hope, and so proudly and loudly proclaimed by the ringing of the Christmas bells.

In between these stories, we learn something of Longfellow. The chapters tell the story of how he came to write the poem, “Christmas Bells.” Music was added to it, and it became a favorite Christmas

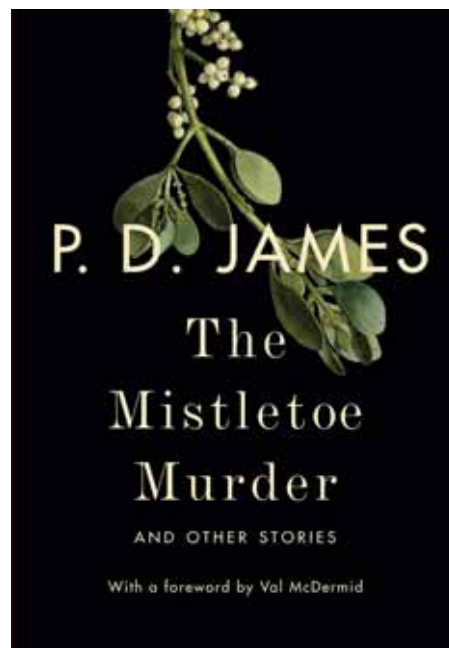
carol. What you might not know is that Longfellow wrote that poem during Christmas 1863, while the nation was in the throes of a hateful war that threatened to divide our nation forever.

The summer of 1861, tragedy struck the family when his beloved wife died in a bizarre accident. Then, after war broke out, Henry’s oldest son begged his father to sign papers so he could join the Union Army. Here he was, suffering from the loss of his wife, and now, the possible loss of his son. He didn’t have to worry. Charley ran away and joined the army anyway, and Longfellow lost his desire to write...

Then, in 1863, Longfellow listened to the ringing of the church bells on Christmas Day and contemplated the state of his world. He remembered his wife’s words: “*God is not dead, nor doth He sleep.*” It reminded him of his faith in God’s plan and realized he did believe good would prevail, and soon there would truly be peace on earth.

**The Mistletoe Murder and Other Stories** by P.D. James (\$24 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook)

These are four previously unpublished short stories that James left behind at her death. It’s a slender volume, but packed with the psychological themes and fleshed-out characters mystery lovers have come to enjoy. As The Boston Globe wrote: “P.D. James is the undisputed grande dame of the modern mystery.”



In the title story, the narrator is a crime novelist who recalls a murder case from 50 years ago. “A Very Commonplace Murder” tells of a clerk who witnesses a murder, but won’t come forward because... well, you’ll love this one! Two other stories feature her popular Chief Superintendent Adam Dalgliesh and round out a thoroughly delightful read for the lovers of mystery novels.

Till next time, Merry Christmas, and have a safe and Happy New Year!

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### 3008 Northmoor Trail, Long Beach \$450,000

Hidden Treasure with lake views! This home features 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms and two fireplaces. Perfect getaway! Call for your private showing.



### 2017 Lake Shore Drive, Long Beach \$629,000

If you are looking for views, then this is it. MOVE IN READY! Beautiful 4-bedroom, 3-bath home on Lake Shore Drive. Living room with wood floors, wood-burning fireplace & sliders to enclosed porch. Huge master bedroom suite with gas fireplace, French doors opening to balcony & private bath. Lower level rec room, three-car garage and driveway parking. Beautiful Stop 20 beach is ready to enjoy.



### 160 Turner Court, Michigan City \$1,999,000

The living is easy in this impressive, generously proportioned open concept residence with lake views, located within a stroll to the sand and surf. Wonderful kitchen with stainless steel appliances, granite countertop, custom-made cherry cabinets and large living area with wood-burning fireplace.



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