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The Search Is On!

Editor's note — This is the first in an ongoing series over the next two years highlighting the search for a new LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra conductor. For this introductory piece, Editor Andrew Tallackson interviewed Tim King and Chuck Steck, while Correspondent Connie Kuzydym spoke with candidate Russell Ger after the Nov. 10 concert. Kuzydym and Tallackson will alternate between ensuing interviews with the candidates.

by Andrew Tallackson and Connie Kuzydym

To say Russell Ger left an indelible mark on LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra is putting it mildly.

A little more than a week after the Australian native kicked off LCSO's new season — the first of six conductor candidates — Chuck Steck and Tim King are still basking in a rapturous high.

"All I can say is, wow! From the moment he came to LaPorte and stepped up to the podium, he was non-stop," Steck, LCSO's interim artistic director, says. "He just went with this high level of

Russell Ger is photographed by The Beacher's Bob Wellinski during the Nov. 10 LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra concert.

enthusiasm, and an enthusiasm for the music because he knew the music so well.

"It was clear, he was a man to be respected."

And with that, the bar was set, the symphony's latest season, "Bravo, Maestro! The Search Begins!,"

off to an invigorating start.

When Philip Bauman stepped down in May after 24 memorable seasons as conductor and music director. LCSO officials began the intimidating task of recruiting a successor. King, an LCSO tenor. became the search committee director. It is commonplace within the orchestra community, he says, for guest conductors to helm a concert during the search process. It gives the candidates, and the musicians, fitting introductions to each other. Larger orchestras

with busier concert seasons can finalize the search, on average, within a year, King says. LCSO, by comparison, whose seasons unfold on smaller scales, knew it would have to extend the search over a two-

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year period. LCSO also met with South Bend Symphony Orchestra officials, which initiated a similar two-year process, and with everyone pleased by the results.

An LCSO search committee of eight individuals, which included board members, musicians and community members, initially received 28 applications, the candidates hailing from New York to California. Twenty six received their doctorates, King says. Submissions included not only resumes, but also programs and videos/recordings of performances.

The candidate field was narrowed from 28 to 10, then down to six, a "really hard" process, King says. Six candidates, and their concert dates, then were selected.

Ger conducted the LCSO on Nov. 10 at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. The ensuing schedule is:

- Maria Mercedes Diaz Garcia on March 10, 2019, at the Holdcraft Performing Arts Center, 1200 Spring St. She is a conducting fellow at Ohio's Bowling Green State University, where she is pursuing a doctorate in contemporary music.
- Alexander Platt on May 4, 2019, at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. He is the music director for Maverick Concerts, the Wisconsin Philharmonic, the Marion Indiana Philharmonic and The LaCrosse Symphony Orchestra.
- Carolyn Watson in November 2019 at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. She serves as director of orchestral studies at The University of Kansas, and continues a freelance career throughout the U.S.,

Europe and Australia.

- Wilbur Lin in March 2020 at the Holdcraft Performing Arts Center. The conductor and pianist is a doctoral candidate at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, artistic director of Chamber Philharmonic Taipei and Wabash Valley Youth Orchestra, and choir director and organist at Immanuel United Church of Christ, Indianapolis.
- Christopher Fashun in May 2020 at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. Assistant professor of music at Hope College in Holland, Mich., he serves as director of orchestras, music director of the Brazilian Music Ensemble, head of the string area and an instructor of instrumental music education. He also is an active guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator.

Serving as the bridge between candidates and his fellow musicians is Steck. As interim artistic director, he prepares the orchestra for each candidate's visit by leading rehearsals and communicating with the board about programming decisions.

Steck is the ideal choice to fill the void left by Bau-

man, having served as associate conductor for more than 15 years — let alone his accomplished musibackground. has Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music degrees from Valparaiso University, and has been a truminstructor there since 1990. In 2016, he



Christopher Fashun with the all campus band.



Maria Mercedes Diaz Garcia



Alexander Platt



Carolyn Watson



Wilbur Lin

became a trumpet instructor at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich., as well as brass instructor for Lakeshore High School and Portage High School. He also has a studio at his LaPorte home. Fans of the Tom Milo Band know him as a longtime vocalist and trumpet player with the group. In 2013, after a lengthy career as principal trumpet, he became the conductor and music



Chuck Steck

director of the LaPorte City Band. He has been the LCSO principal trumpet since 1980. He first joined the group when he was in high school. This weekend, he conducts the 24th Annual Holiday at the Pops Concert, a duty he greatly enjoys.



Tim King

Serving as interim artistic director has required that Steck learn a great deal of music literature, more than just the trumpet part he masters for any concert. That has resulted in a deeper appreciation of every musician's role within the orchestra itself, with King stressing that Steck's fellow musicians have the greatest respect for him, which makes the rehearsal process move along nicely.

Steck says he was awed by Ger's mastery of the music once he stepped in for the final rehearsals.

"He has amazing command," Steck says. "He would watch how the violinists bow to get the sound he wants. He really is an incredible student of the art. The techniques he was showing the string section, that was amazing."

King describes Ger as "generous" with compliments. If musicians impressed him, he made sure to praise them.

Praise for Ger, by contrast, also came from audience surveys that provided additional input.

"I think, by the end, we're going to know exactly who we want," King said.

Steck agreed. In fact, he's already been in contact with all six candidates.

"Each has a different personality, their likes and tastes in music," he said. "It's going to be exciting to see how their success stories will fit in with ours."





Ger: LCSO Achieved "Something Different and Quite Special"

LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra's first concert of the season began on a cold November evening, with Russell Ger stepping onto the podium at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. Speaking a few words about himself and the first selection, Ger turned to the orchestra, which immediately sprang to life, playing the fiery piece from Hungary, Antonin Dvorak's "Slavonic Dance, Opus 46, No. 8." At the rousing finish, there was a split second of silence, before the audience broke out in thunderous applause.

"The audience was stunned, just stunned," King recalled. "Then it burst into applause, like, 'What just happened?' The orchestra rose to the occasion: amazing sounds coming from all of them."

The audience then embarked on a "Whirlwind Tour of Europe" — the concert theme — featuring music from Finland, France, Italy, England, Germany and Russia. The program ended with Tchaikovsy's "Overture 1812, Opus 4."

ally, but it is rare to see such chosen selections in a single concert.

"Someone after the performance remarked to me that despite knowing most of the music, they felt that they were hearing much of it for the first time," Ger said. "That was a really exciting comment for me to receive because it affirmed the impact that we were able to create, and the fact that it moved people."

Ger's in-depth knowledge of not only the musical aspect of each piece, but also the historical and cultural context enabled him to take something familiar and elevate it to the next level.

"While most people know the music of Tchaikovsky's '1812,' they don't know the historical background," Ger said. "So, I tell them the story and plant the ideas for the audience to experience as the music is performed."

The orchestra rehearsed twice with Steck and



Everyone who encountered Russell Ger praised his boundless energy. Photos by Bob Wellinski.

From the instant Ger dropped his baton, the audience was captivated by the conductor and orchestra. There did not appear to be any shifting or moving among the patrons. At the concert's end, a spontaneous standing ovation erupted for the musicians, as well as the maestro, who received several curtain calls.

"I felt they were right along with us for the whole ride," Ger said. "They were totally invested in the experience and invested in our success. It was obviously very gratifying."

Ger's choice of programming added to the night's success. After looking through previous LCSO programs, he had a feel for what had been done. For his debut, he chose straight classical music using recognizable pieces, where portions of the music have been used in commercials or movies. In the past, the orchestra may have played this music individu-

three times with Ger. He was impressed with the strings, and the adaptability of the ensemble to immediately go from one style and one composer to another without skipping a beat. He saw a willingness among musicians to adapt to the way he worked with them — to his requests or demands. Ger's favorite part of the rehearsal was when he spoke with the low brass about the ending of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." Above the notes was marked "fff," which means to play very loud. Instead, the section was playing moderately loud.

"I said, 'You guys are very polite but, in this passage...is where the Russians finally triumph over the French in the Battle of 1812'," Ger said. "When we played it again, the brass really tore the roof down. It was like giving someone a very fast car and saying there's no speed limit. It was a really fun moment in the rehearsal."



Russell Ger and the LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra receive a standing ovation. Photo by Bob Wellinski

In live performances, there comes a moment when the conductor and performers feel their hard work has come together in a special way.

"The refinement over the course of the week was exponential, and as the week progressed, the more I asked, the more they gave, which is a very rewarding experience," Ger said. "The feedback I received from the audience and orchestra was that the orchestra had never sounded so good.

"One of my favorite things as a conductor is when an orchestra surprises itself, and there was a palpable sense among the musicians that they had achieved something different and quite special."

Ger's week in LaPorte was not all work. Symphony officials took him throughout the community, where he enjoyed various activities

The conductor met with first-through third-graders at Renaissance Academy, attended a Friends of the Symphony luncheon, met guests at a VIP cocktail party at a LaPorte city councilman's home, mingled with guests at Portofino Grill for a special A La Carte event, and toured LaPorte Civic Auditorium and Holdcraft Performing Arts

At the VIP cocktail party, Ger serenaded guests on a 1901 Steinway grand piano, which according to him was one of the finest pianos he has played.

He also visited the LaPorte High School Symphony Orchestra, where he taught their class.

"I had a wonderful time at LaPorte High School," Ger said. "I was really excited. About six of them came to the concert and the after party...We had a long talk about what they were going to do after

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they finished school. A couple of them were going to become educators. I said, 'Just remember that the most important thing you can do is teach with passion, because there's nothing that people respond to like passion'."

During his time at LaPorte High School, King says Ger was full of surprises. A French exchange student, for instance, had trouble understanding Ger's English. No problem. Ger instantly shifted to French, inspiring awe...and laughter.

moment...that "That was priceless," King says.

It is not surprising, however, that Ger enjoved his time at the high school. He is the conductor of the Norwalk Youth Symphony in Connecticut, where every Sunday he works with young people.

"I believe strongly in nurturing the next generation of musicians,' Ger said. "Whether or not they become musicians themselves, I believe in nurturing a love

for and an appreciation for orchestra music for the next generation."

For those who met Ger and attended the concert, they caught a glimpse of what he would bring to LCSO.

The conductor is the face of the organization, Ger says. Part of the conductor's work is being a visible presence in the community and an avenue of engagement outside of the music. In that sense, it is important to demystify the role of "maestro" to help make orchestral music accessible, enjoyable and entertaining, as well as uplifting, inspiring and moving.

One way he does this is by briefly speaking to the audience, before and during the performance, conveying a sense of the "emotional content and historical context" of whatever the audience is about to hear. By taking this approach, the feedback he repeatedly receives is that it increases the audience's ability to appreciate the "story" of the music.

Ger considers himself a deeply passionate musician. He subscribes to the advice he gave those LaPorte High School students: "I believe that passion is recognizable when I perform; and that the orchestra and the audience are aware of this and

appreciate its intensity and directness."

Ger's background Award for Australian in 2014. He is music diburgh Symphony North America and Aus-

speaks for itself. He won prestigious Brian Stacey Memorial Trust Emerging Conductors rector of Greater New-Orchestra and Park East Synagogue, which are both in New York. He has a broad repertoire he has conducted across tralia. In addition, he toured North America

with renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, promoting a recording for Sony of Jewish art music in 2012. Their Performances drew capacity houses at the Hollywood Bowl with members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and at the Boca Raton Arts Festival, Boston Celebrity Series at Symphony Hall, Ravinia Festival in Chicago, Long Island and Toronto.

If selected, Ger would bring a wealth of orchestra experience and passion to LCSO.

"I believe I can grow the artistry, grow the audience and reach beyond LaPorte," Ger said. "Make it a point of pride of the community."



Russell Ger chats with LaPorte Mayor Mark and Laura Krentz at the Nov. 10 concert. Photo by Bob Wellinski



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A Doublewide, Texas Christmas

"A Doublewide, Texas Christmas" marks the seventh comedy by the Jones-Hope-Wooten team to grace the Footlight Theatre stage.

The holiday production by Footlight Players kicks off a two-weekend run Friday, Dec. 7, at the theater, 1705 Franklin St.

Jones, Hope and Wooten also wrote the Futrelle sisters comedies, "The Dixie Swim Club" and "The Savannah Sipping Society."

In their latest, 10 ec-

centric characters learn the county is double-crossing their Texas town of Doublewide, and it may not be recognized as a real-live city. Determined to bolster their legitimacy, they set their sights on winning the county-wide "Battle of the Mangers" competition with their entry, "Nativity at the Alamo."

Director Bobby Komendera has assembled a cast that includes Laura Meyer as the town "celebrity," Caprice Crumpler, who is constantly at odds with her daughter, Joveeta (Emma Blanchard), the town mayor. Caprice also is hounded by an eligible bachelor, Haywood Sloggett (David Mikolajczyk), at the same time having to keep an eye on her sweet, if slightly dimwitted son, Norwayne "Baby" Crumpler (Andrew Vendl).

Other residents are: Georgia Dean Rudd (Dee Piotrowski), manager of Bronco Betty's Buffeteria; her long-lost love Nash (Rick Slogett); his daughter,



Lark Barken (Di Younce), the town nurse and manager of Stairway to Heaven Retirement home; Big Ethel Satterwhite (Diana Hirsch); and the bitchy newcomer, Miss Patsy Price (Linda Didelot).

The town set is created by Set Designer Floyd Colosky, Scenic Artist Chris Whybrew and Set Dresser Joy Davidson. Lighting is by Chris West and sound by Declan Rice. Meyer is the costumer, with Debbie Bartholomew doing double-duty as assistant director and hair design.

Artwork by John Ryszka of The Rising Phoenix Gallery will be showcased in the lobby.

Performances are Dec. 7-9 and 13-16. Thursday, Friday and Saturday times are 7:30 p.m., with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 on Thursdays and for children 12 and younger. Make reservations by calling the box office at (219) 874-4035 or at www.footlightplayers.org. All First Responders with proper ID receive a discounted ticket price of \$10 on opening night, Dec. 7.

In conjunction with the holidays, Footlight Players will host its annual food drive. The group asks members, patrons and audiences to donate nonperishable, non-expired food items and/or toiletries during December's performances, as well as at the "Holiday Memories" concert Dec. 29. Doors are open from 5:30 to 10 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.





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First Friday Event, New Exhibit at Lubeznik Center



Three authors will discuss their books, answer questions and sign copies during the First Friday event "Give a Book for the Holidays" from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7, at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St.

At 5:30 p.m., writerphotographer-artist Sara Noë will present her science fantasy novel A Fallen Hero. Former

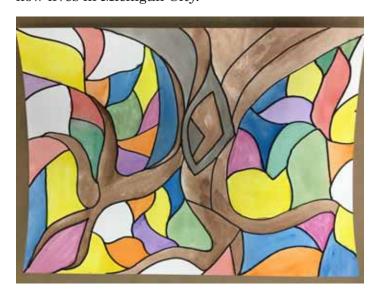
disc jockey John Records Landecker will discuss the new and expanded edition of his memoir, Records Truly Is My Middle Name, at 5:45 p.m. At 6 p.m., women's rights advocate Rebecca Sive will discuss Vote Her In, a guide that explains why and how to elect the first U.S. Madam President in 2020.

In Noë's work, Cato is the only half-human, half-ghost in existence, and one of eight young fugitives on the run from the human government and the Shadow Guards of the Ghost Realm. A LaPorte resident, Noë is an active participant in LCA's Sandcastle Writers Group.

The recently-released Hall of Fame edition of Landecker's award-win-



ning book contains four new chapters and 70 additional photos. Born and raised in Ann Arbor, Mich., and well-known to Chicago-area radio listeners, he now lives in Michigan City.



Sive drew on her decades of political experience to write Vote Her In. She has held executive positions in business, government, philanthropy and nonprofits. She was a gubernatorially-appointed founding member of the Illinois Human Rights Commission and been recognized by her alma maters, Carleton College and the Univer-



sity of Illinois, for her community leadership. She lives in Chicago and Keeler Township, Mich.



During the First Friday event, guests also can view the exhibit "New Perspectives," which showcases work by student artists of LCA's Health Promotion through the Arts Program.

Now entering its 11th year, the program offers a creative space and arts instruction for adults with cognitive disabilities. In partnership with

Paladin Inc. and The Social & Learning Institute, the weekly visual arts classes explore and develop motor and vocabulary skills, and foster social support and peer relationships.

The exhibit, held in the NIPSCO Art **Education Stu**dio through Jan. 12, features works created by almost 40 artists who participated in the program in 2018, features and variety of media, including sculpture, drawing and printmaking.



A cash bar is planned during the First Friday event. Visit www.lubeznikcenter.org or call (219) 874-4900 for more details.





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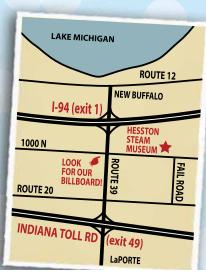
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One City, One Sound to Feature Hundreds of Students

More than 900 vocalists and instrumentalists will kick off the holiday season during Michigan City Area Schools' "One City, One Sound" concert at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, at Michigan City High School's gymnasium, 8466 Pahs Road.

This year's "One City, One Sound" will feature:

- 298 voices in a chorus of sixth-graders from all eight Michigan City elementary schools.
- 150 voices in a chorus of students from Barker and Krueger middle schools.
- 115 voices in the MCHS Beginning Boys and Girls Choir, Concert Choir, Treble Chorale and "City Singers."
- 110 instrumentalists in a seventh- and eighth-grade band.
- 140 instrumentalists in a sixth-grade band.
- 110 instrumentalists from the MCHS bands.

Each group will perform individually, and the opening and closing numbers will involve all bands and choruses in "Holiday Favorites" and Handel's



"Hallelujah Chorus." Other numbers include "Run Rudoph, Run," "Carol of the Bells," "All I Want for Christmas is You" and "Baby It's Cold Outside."

Music teachers from throughout MCAS will lead their groups, while MCHS Choral Director Mi-

> chelle Howisen and Band Director Frank Gast will direct the combined numbers.

> Admission is free; however, those attending are encouraged to take a canned good/non-perishable food item for The Salvation Army. Monetary donations to The Salvation Army will be accepted as well.

The concert will be broadcast live on Channel 98 educational TV. It also will air live on radio station WEFM (95.9 FM).

After the concert, traffic leaving the high school on Pahs Road using the east drive will exit only to Johnson Road. The west drive will exit only to Woodland Avenue.





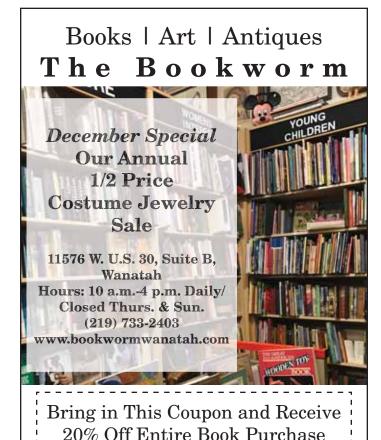


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- For the opportunity to stand up and be heard by local government, even if the elected and appointed officials do only a small part of what you requested.
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Holiday at the Pops Concert

The Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte will present the 24th Annual Holiday at the Pops Concert at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St.



Mark and Laura Krentz.

Associate Conductor and Interim Artistic Director Charles Steck will conduct LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra. Guest artists include Mayor Mark and Laura Krentz, Cripple Creek, Donna Mitchell and The Singing Co. of La Porte Countv's Children's Chorus, directed by Matthew Nelson.

Attendees also can sample snacks and drinks sold at the event.

Balcony tickets, available at holidaypopslaporte. org, cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. A limited number of \$500 and \$600 main-floor tables can be purchased online. Main-floor tickets sell quickly



Chuck Steck with North American Brass Co.

Proceeds benefit HFL's Healthy Children initiatives. In addition to funding grant projects that benefit the health and wellness of area youth, HFL is engaged in two initiatives. The first is a three-year, school-based prevention grant that helps schools identify, implement and sustain substance use-prevention programs. The second initiative created a coalition that will address low-birth weight and infant mortality across LaPorte County.







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Harbor Country Singers



Harbor Country Singers will present free Christmas concerts at 2 p.m. EST Sunday, Dec. 9, at The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich., and 7 p.m. EST Wednesday, Dec. 12, at Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, Mich.

The theme is "An International Christmas." This is the third year HCS has presented the concerts.



Calendar Release Party

Dig the Dunes will host a release party for its popular calendar contest during First Friday Art Walk, from 5 to 8 p.m. Dec. 7 at SFC Gallery, 607 Franklin St.

Participants entered up to three photos of the dunes, Lake Michigan or Northwest Indiana trails. After three rounds of blind judging, 12 winners and a cover photo were picked.

Calendar winners are:

- Cover: Karen Cercone.
- January: Jim Pappas.
- February: Lauren Konyk.
- March: Shane Griffin.
- April: Phillip Kohler.
- May: Susan Kirt.
- June: Heather Punak.
- July: Larry Brechner.
- August: Erin Healy-Erickson.
- September: Hilda Tsai.
- October: Jeevitha Paulraj.
- November: Dean Blobaum.
- December: Laura Niemiec.

Designer Izzy Hutnick, who heads the project, organizes the contest, designs the calendar and helps with everything from printing to the party.

Triple A, three Chesterton High School students, will perform at the party. Beer, wine, soda and refreshments will be served. The photos will be framed for viewing, and the winners announced and awarded. Guests can buy calendars for \$20, with 10 percent of the proceeds going to Save the Dunes. Calendars also are available at DigtheDunes.com

Plein Air Painters Exhibit

A new Duneland Plein Air Painters exhibit runs through January at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

About 20 members are displaying works partially or fully completed in "plein air," or outside.

The group started 10 years ago with Pat Herman, Julia Holmaas and Julie Kasniunas. It meets once a week for about six months of the year, or while the weather cooperates. Artists gather at different venues, set up stations and paint for a few hours. Then, they hold a critique and have lunch.

Visit www.chestertonart.com for details.



Dr. Kathryn Meyer, Psy.D.



We are pleased to announce Dr. Kathryn Meyer has joined the practice of Sacks Clinical Consulting, PC. Dr. Meyer is a licensed Clinical Psychologist and is currently accepting appointments for adolescent and adult clients.

> For her complete bio visit www.sacksclinicalconsulting.com.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Meyer, please contact our office at 219-628-6463.

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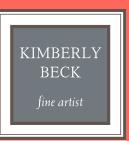


"Dinner Party"

A poster printed from the original oil painting by local artist Kimberly Beck depicting 22 common Midwest birds, and a "guest" from the South

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Celebrating 20 Years of Odyssey Exhibits

by Linda Weigel

Purdue University Northwest celebrated the 20th anniversary of its Odyssey Sculpture and Art Exhibits on Nov. 3, and the presentation was an eye-opener, a stunning example of a clear vision and dedication to the visual arts.

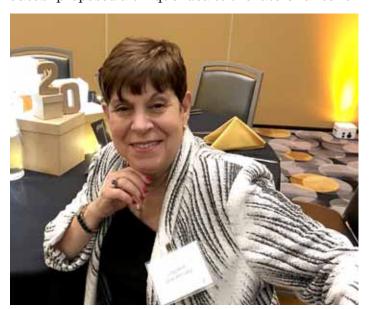
That vision has consequently evolved into one of the best representations of contemporary art in our region.

Judy Jacobi, PNW assistant vice chancellor of University Art Collections and Special Programs, began the presentation by recognizing the influence of art literacy.

"Art literacy is a very important part of our Purdue brand promise. Our students should learn, discover and engage in a beautiful environment. Everyone learns better," she said. "The arts and cultural awareness are

necessary to deliver on our most important promise: Purdue Northwest will graduate world-ready students."

This promise had its beginnings 20 years ago when Jacobi proposed a unique idea to the late Chancellor



Judy Jacobi, photo by Linda Weigel



Jeffie Brewer's "Bunny," provided by PNW

Dale Allspaugh. The chancellor was about to retire, and as a way to commemorate his tenure, perhaps they could do so by renting and installing sculptures.

At the time, Jacobi was working in advertising at Morse & Jacobi, where the firm had begun helping sculptors with their own advertising and promotional needs.

"I had never heard of leasing sculpture!," Jacobi said. "So, I called sculptor Tom Scarff."

Thus began a journey that has led to not only outdoor sculptures, but also two-dimensional and other three-dimensional works installed within the Westville and Hammond campus buildings.

It takes a large team to make this program function well, and to continue providing outstanding artworks to both locations. Support comes from

- "The Art Ladies" Elizabeth Bernel, coordinator of Art Collections and Special Programs, Michelle Wiser, the only artist on the team specializing in conservation and installation, and Annie Mac-Donald, all-important tracker of incoming and outgoing artworks.
- The building and maintenance department with its critical knowledge of the landscape.
- University officials.

Between March 1 and Nov. 1, Bernel and Wiser installed more than 430 pieces on the two campuses and the Portage Meeting Center and the Counseling Center. That is a lot of art to pick up at various locations and drop off for installation or removal.

I asked Judy how they select the artists. She explained it is a combination of efforts. They begin with a public call for artists accessible through the PNW website. Additionally, everyone involved has been building relationships with fine artists now for 20 years, which, one would imagine, provides many referrals and leads. They also work closely with Eric Stephenson, PNW sculpture curator and an art consultant, who operates according to his schedule and is in continuous contact with established and emerging sculptors.

Most of the campus-installed sculptures are rented and only a few donated. The majority of works are only available for short-term exhibits, many of which meet the cultural awareness and diversity vision of the university. For example, they have hosted traditional Russian crafts, textiles from Guatemala and Central America, and *molas* from the Panamanian isthmus. Currently, they have three Frank Lloyd Wright exhibits on loan.

Once they have researched and prequalified artworks, they have to evaluate how those pieces will work into the collection, and if they can even fit in their truck.

Indeed, transporting valuable works of art requires a lot of pre-planning and muscle power.

More than 42 artists were recognized as having contributed to PNW this year,



"The Art Ladies: Judy Jacobi, Elizabeth Bernel and Michelle Wiser, provided by PNW



Detail of "Into Thy Hands" by Janet Austin, provided by PNW

including Carol Block, Tom Brand, Carol Stodder – all Area Artists Association members – and Wiser.

So, next time you are driving down U.S. 421, heading south and past PNW, swing by and take a little side trip through the campus, taking your time to admire the many contemporary outdoor art works. The campus is open Monday through Saturday to explore. Check out online first which parking lots are open for visitor parking.

If interested in knowing more or setting up a time to view the art inside campus buildings, call beforehand because some multi-purpose spaces are not always available. Free customized tours by Jacobi are encouraged for adults and children. Arrangements for tours can be made by contacting Bernel at (219) 785-5719 or ebernel@pnw.edu







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Is your shoulder pain due to a rotator cuff tear?

FREE ROTATOR CUFF AND SHOULDER PAIN WORKSHOP REVEALS HOW TO ACCELERATE HEALING AND AVOID SURGERY

Do you have shoulder pain with any of the following day-to-day activities?

- · Reaching Overhead?
- Reaching into the Back Seat?
- · Reaching Behind Your Back?
- · While You Sleep?

Dear Fellow NW Indiana Resident,

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you surely know shoulder pain can be such a menace...

It can ruin a good nights sleep...and when you lack sleep, you get cranky.

It can change the way you put on your shirt...or for the ladies, your bra...because it's just too painful to do it the way you used to.

It can stop you from enjoying daily simple tasks...making you frustrated...forcing you to take more pain pills than you would care to admit.

And for golfers out there...it can ruin your game...getting scores you're too embarrassed to tell...your friends are probably wondering why you even care to play!

Is your rotator cuff the culprit?

The rotator cuff is a group of four muscles that run from our shoulder blade into the top end of our bone in our arm. They help keep the ball end of our arm bone centered in the shoulder socket.

When healthy, the rotator cuff allows us to reach in all directions smoothly and without pain.

If you experience pain, weakness or difficulty during the tests mentioned here, it is highly likely you are suffering from a rotator cuff tear.

- This first test is called the Drop Arm Test. With your arm relaxed by your side, turn your arm out so your thumb faces directly to the side. Slowly raise your arm to the side, then slowly lower the arm. Test is positive if the arm suddenly drops or you experience severe pain on the way up or down.
- 2. The Lateral Jobe Test. In this test for the right shoulder, raise your right arm out to the side by lifting your right elbow to 90 degrees, with your hand hanging down, fingers pointed to the

- ground, your thumb pointing to your tummy. With your left hand, push down on the right arm just above the elbow. Test is positive if you experience pain or weakness.
- 3. The 3rd test is called Lift-Off Test. The hand of the affected arm is placed on the lower back. Now try lifting the hand off the back without straightening your elbow. Test is positive if you're unable to lift the hand off.

Now you may be asking...can a rotator cuff tear heal and pain subside without medications, injections or surgery?

In most cases, yes...but it depends on, but not limited, to the following factors.

- What is the grade of the tear? There are 3 grades.
- Which of the 4 muscles of the rotator cuff is torn?
- How old is the tear?

•

FREE Rotator Cuff And Shoulder Pain Workshop

Due to overwhelming requests from the NW Indiana community, Orthopedic and Balance Therapy Specialists will host our Rotator Cuff and Shoulder Pain Workshop on the following dates and locations:

- Tuesday 6 PM December 11, 2018, at our LaPorte office (1405 E. Lincolnway, Suite B)
- Thursday 6 PM December 13, 2018, at our Valparaiso office (3125 Calumet Ave., Suite 8)

Here's what you'll learn during the workshop:

- Know which rotator cuff muscle is affected and the grade of the tear
- Correct the cause of your pain and speed up the healing process
- Prevent your shoulder from getting worse, and avoid the single biggest mistake shoulder pain sufferers make

Due to the interactive nature of this workshop, there are only 20 spots available for each location. **To hold your spot, please call:**

- (219) 380-0809 in LaPorte
- (219) 202-2500 in Valparaiso

Sincerely,

L /

Dr. Arlan Alburo, PT, DPT, MTC

Orthopedic and Balance Therapy Specialists

PS-Call (219) 380-0809 in La Porte OR (219) 202-2500 in Valpo to hold your spot for the FREE Rotator Cuff and Shoulder Pain Workshop on Tuesday, Dec. 11, in La Porte, and Thursday, Dec. 13, in Valpo.









Michigan City Public Library

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

• Needle Arts League at 5:30 p.m. Thursdays, Dec. 6, 13, 20 and 27.

Membership to the group, formerly known as the Knit Club, is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome.

• Monday Musicale: "The Sounds of the Holidays" at 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8.

Members will present traditional Christmas music. Donations to The Salvation Army food pantry will be accepted.

• Story Time at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts at 11 a.m. Monday, Dec. 10, at the LAC, 101 W. Second St.

The Story Time Crew entertains families with stories and songs, and guides a craft project. The interactive program is appropriate for infants through age 5 and their parents or guardians.

• CoderDojo at 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 10.

The free coding club for ages 8-18 explores programming such as Ozobots, Spheros, Chibi Chips and 3-D modeling. Coding tools include Scratch, Hopscotch and MakeCode. Children 12 and younger must have a parent attend. Visit the library's CoderDojo page or contact Jonathan at jlovett@mclib. org for details.

• Ozobots! at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11.

Program Ozobots using color codes and block-based coding with the Ozoblockly app. Call (219) 873-3045 and ask for Dave for details.

• Polish Advent & Christmas Customs at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 16.

Father Wally Wladyslaw Rakoczy leads the program that includes his collection of szopki (Nativity scenes), ornaments, Koledy (Polish Christmas) albums and paintings on glass. He also will share stories and information on how Advent and Christmas are celebrated in Poland. The program is free, but seating is limited. Call Theresa Child at (219) 464-1369 or Robin Kohn at (219) 873-3049 for reservations.

• Learning Center Volunteers Needed

The Learning Center needs volunteer tutors for children and adults. Students need assistance in: reading, math, high school equivalency and English as a Second Language. All supplies and training are provided. All that's required are two hours a week. Contact Jessica Hoffmaster at (219) 873-3043 or stop by the center for more information.

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

"Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus"

LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St., will present the holiday favorite "Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" on Dec. 7-9 and 14-16.

In the play, 8-year-old Virginia (Goldie Samardzija) and her friend, Mary Jo (Norah Richardson), are faced with the question so many young children ask: "Is there a Santa Claus?" Virginia hears her father (Adam Wogoman) say *The New York Sun* is the ultimate resource for truth, so she decides to write a letter to the paper for the definite answer to her life-changing question.



Tori Satchwell and Brandon Dudley.

With the support of her mother (Kristen Allison) and older sister (Elizabeth Wadle), the entire family is happily surprised when the answer is revealed in the paper by a young reporter, Francis Church (Brandon Dudley). The reporter is about to lose his job if he does not produce a great article.

Francis not only surprises his editor (Doug Campbell), but also helps revive Virginia's family's faith in Santa.

Director Matt Robinson, assisted by Jackie Robinson and Tony J. Thomas, transition scenes with holiday carols. A full chorus of carolers are led by Robinson, Norah Gartland and Marie Parrette.

Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for children. Visit laportelittletheatreclub. com for reservations.

Friday Hours

The Beacher Weekly Newspaper, 911 Franklin St., closes at 2 p.m. Fridays

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Westchester Public Library

The following programs are available:

• Gingerbread House Decorating on Friday, Dec. 7, at Hageman Library, 100 Francis St., Porter.

Adults and children 5 and older are invited to the free program. Materials are provided, but factory-sealed packages of candy donations will be accepted.

Sessions start at 3 p.m. and continue every half hour until 6 p.m. Space is limited, and registration is required by calling (219) 926-9080.

• Christmas at Westchester Township History Museum on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 8-9.

A traditional Victorian Christmas party is from 2 to 4 p.m. At 2 p.m., Dot Pakan will lead Christmas caroling to the accompaniment of the 19th-century Hillstrom organ. At 3 p.m., Rory McMahan will read a Christmas story. Visitors also can see the temporary exhibit, "The Cold War in Duneland," and enjoy Victorian-era refreshments. Jim Nelson will help celebrate Swedish Christmas music and traditions at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9. He will sing traditional Swedish Christmas music, and tell the tales behind them. Some songs will be sung in Swedish.

The museum is located at 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

• Intro to the Ukulele from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sundays through Dec. 9 at the Thomas Bertha Wood Room, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Learn basic chords, rhythm and ukulele history. Ukuleles will be provided, although participants can take their own and should indicate so during registration. No experience is necessary, and space is limited. Register at the Thomas Branch Reference Department or by calling (219) 926-7696.

• "Dealing with Caregiver Stress and Considerations for those with Dementia During the Holidays."

The program, led by Sarah Milligan, Alzheimer's Association Greater Indiana Chapter care consultant, is from 3 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, at the Thomas Branch. No registration is required

• Pizza Pajama Book Club for Teens from 7 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12, in the Thomas Library Young Adult Room.

Teens in grades 6-12 will discuss David Levithan's "Every Day." Pizza will be provided. Registration is required by calling (219) 926-7696.



New Buffalo Public Library

The following programs are available through New Buffalo Public Library, 33 N. Thompson St. (all times Eastern):

Thursday, Dec. 6

• Teen STEAM Series: December Engineering, with signup for ages 11-18, 4:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 7

- Yoga 1:30 p.m.
- Story Time 4 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 10

- Read with Newdle the therapy dog, 11 a.m.
- Lego Club 3 to 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 11

• Lego Club — 3 to 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 12 —

 Stitches, Needles, Threads and More — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

 $Email\ nbtlcreate@gmail.com\ for\ more\ detail.$

LaPorte County Public Library

The following program is at the main branch of LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave.:

• Fandom Fridays from 3 to 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7.

This month's focus is Marvel Comics.

The following program is at the Coolspring branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North:

• Essential Oil Gifts You Can Make from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8.

Learn how to make essential oils gifts, including lava bead bracelets, sugar and salt scrubs, and bath bombs. All supplies are provided. Online registration is required.

Visit www.laportelibrary.org for more details.

Cookie Sale & Bazaar

"Christmas Blast," the annual cookie sale and bazaar, is Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 8-9, at St. Mary of the Lake Church, 718 W. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich.

The hours are (all times Eastern) 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Santa will visit at 6 p.m. Saturday, while a Christmas concert is at 3 p.m. Sunday.

Admission is free.

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Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

The following programs are available:

• Holiday Traditions in the Dunes on Saturday, Dec. 8, from 10 a.m. to noon at Dunes Learning Center and noon to 3 p.m. at Bailly Homestead and Chellberg Farm

Learning center staff will celebrate the season with a Swedish pancake breakfast covered in ling-onberry syrup, as well as traditional pancakes and maple syrup. Folk music and seasonal Swedish customs, including the Santa Lucia tradition, are planned. Local author and historian Ken Schoon will speak at noon about his new book, Swedish Settlements on the South Shore of Lake Michigan. The cost of the breakfast is \$9.95 for adults and \$7.95 for children 3-12. Pre-register at duneslearningcenter.org/events/pancake.

A free traditional Swedish Christmas begins at Chellberg Farm from noon to 3 p.m. In the farm-house, volunteers in traditional dress will explain Swedish holiday customs and decorations on display, and present Santa Lucia and her story while Jul Tomte (Santa) listens to children's wishes in the parlor. Then, meet Papa and learn how the Santa Lucia legend is celebrated in many Swedish households. Finish the tour in the kitchen, where various Swedish foods of the holiday season will be displayed and a traditional holiday cookie given to each visitor.

Chellberg Farm is on Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter. Dunes Learning Center is located at 700 Howe Road in Porter.

• Stargazing from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Kemil Beach parking area.

Members from Chicago Astronomical Society, Michiana Astronomical Society and Calumet Astronomical Society will attend with telescopes. Dress for the weather. Take binoculars. The Kemil Beach parking lot is located at 27 N. East State Park Road, Chesterton.

• Miller Woods Hike from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9 and 16, at the Paul H. Douglas Center.

The ranger-led stroll explores a rare black oak savanna, and offers views of Lake Michigan and Chicago.

The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is at 100 N. Lake St. in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Call (219) 395-1882 for more information.

Read The Beacher On Line http://www.thebeacher.com/

Barker Mansion

The following programs are at Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St.:

• Venture behind the scenes, and explore all 38 rooms, during "Christmas Behind the Scenes Tour" from 7 to 9 p.m. Fridays, Dec. 7, 14 and 21.

The interpreter-led tour features the mansion's "Christmas Room," which is the storehouse for thousands of ornaments.

The cost is \$15 per adult or \$10 per senior or youth 15 and younger. Reservations are through Eventbrite or by calling the mansion at (219) 873-1520, Ext. 5.

• Christmas tree lights are the only source of illumination during "Glowing Lights Nights" from 4 to 6 p.m. Saturdays, Dec. 8, 15, 22 and 29.

The public can take a self-guided tour of all three floors, which have been decorated for the holiday season by local non-profit groups. The cost is \$8 per adult and \$5 per youth or senior.

 $Visit\ www.barker mansion.com\ for\ details.$

"Burnt Offerings"

"Burnt Offerings," oil paintings by Tom Brand, opens during First Friday Art Walk, from 5 to 8 p.m. Dec. 6, at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St.

Held in the Area Artists Association NIPSCO Gallery, the project's title comes from the history behind the works exhibited. All were salvaged after surviving major fire damage. Brand lost more than 100 paintings in a garage fire last year. To recover from a sense of loss, he saved some of the "best" parts of many paintings by choosing details to cut out and remove. These fragments, converted into new creations and framed, became the exhibit.

Brand has been active in the Northwest Indiana arts community for more than 20 years. He exhibits throughout the region.

"Burnt Offerings" continues through December.

Free Christmas Concert

A free Christmas concert is at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, U.S. 12 and Moore Road.

The event features a performance by Southern Moonshine Bird Bath Trio, Grayslake, Ill. Light deserts and coffee follow the performance.

St. Luke Cookie Walk, Bazaar

St. Luke United Lutheran Church, 2000 E. Coolspring Ave., will host its 14th annual cookie walk and bazaar from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 8.

Cookies and crafts are planned, with the cookie cost at \$8 per pound. Call (219) 879-9415 for details.



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Nov. 27, 2018

TEAM STANDING	WON	LOST
1. Alley Katz	33	15
2. Gutter Gals	31.5	16.5
3. Pin Ball Wizard	31	17
HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES		SCORE
1. Sue Labovitz		174
2. June Salmon		173
2. Janet Miernicki		173
3. Nancy Kubath		166
4. Barb McCorkel		159
5. Tammy Nelmar		158
6. Lenore Hadaway		150
7. Mary Lou McFadden (series)		418
8. Cindy Beck (series)		411
9. Dottie Brinkman (series)		409
10. Peggy King (series)		401
SPLITS		
Carolyn Wiggins		3-10
Barb McCorkel		1-5-7
STRIKES		
Kathy Brown — 3.		

More bowlers are invited when teams meet at 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays at City Lanes.

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American Red Cross

The American Red Cross LaPorte County Chapter will sponsor the following bloodmobile:

• First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, La-Porte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 10.

Donate blood or platelets through Dec. 19 and receive a \$5 Amazon.com gift card by email. Donors 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 for more details.

Old Lighthouse Museum

Old Lighthouse Museum in Washington Park will be open from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 8-9, 15-16 and 22-23.

The museum also opens during First Friday Art Walk, which is from 5 to 8 p.m. Dec. 7. This month's focus is Wendy Wilcox Kermen, who captures local landscapes and people in watercolor and pastels.

SMSO Holiday Concert

Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra's holiday concert, "Glad Tidings," is at 7:30 p.m. EST Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Mendel Center Mainstage, 2755 E. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor, Mich.

The symphony will present carols, sing-alongs and storytelling in conjunction with local choruses and community members:



The Three Divas of Southwest Michigan.

- Choir teachers Katie Rohwer of Lakeshore High School, Rebecca Derbas-Selvidge of Coloma High School and Carrie VanDenburgh of Berrien Springs High School, performing under their professional moniker, "The Three Divas of Southwest Michigan."
- The Lakeshore, Coloma and Berrien Springs high school choirs.

Bill Downey, AEP communications representative and SMSO executive board member, will narrate the holiday classic, "Twas the Night Before Christmas." Other holiday selections include "O Holy Night," "Fantasia on Greensleeves," "The Bells of Christmas" and "Amahl and the Night Visitors."

Other activities include a visit by Mrs. Claus, and a post-concert reception in the Mendel Center North Lobby.

Tickets, which range from \$5 to \$35, are available at www.smso.org, by calling (269) 982-4030 or in person at 513 Ship St., St. Joseph, Mich.

FUMC Women's Cookie Walk

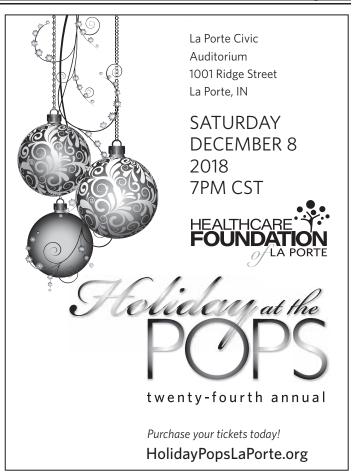
The 18th Annual Christmas Cookie Walk is from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 15, at First United Methodist Church, 121 W. Seventh St.

Presented by the United Methodist Women, guests can pick their favorite cookies, the cost being \$8 a pound.

Artists Studio Open House

An open house for the Artists Studio above Southern Shore Art Association, 724 Franklin St., is from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7.

Guests can tour the hallway galleries, meet the artists and sample wine and snacks.









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Lake Michigan Youth Orchestra

Lake Michigan Youth Orchestra will present a holiday concert at 6 p.m. EST Sunday, Dec. 9, at South Haven (Mich.) High School's LC Mohr Auditorium, 600 Elkenburg St.

The concert features the Youth Symphony with a special guest, the St. Joseph High School Chamber Orchestra. It also will present a preview of the chamber orchestra's Jan. 25 performance at the Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids.

The Youth Symphony is a full orchestra with wind, brass, string and percussion students representing 12 area schools.

Tickets, available at the door, cost \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and seniors. Contact the SMSO office at (269) 982-4030 or visit www.smso.org for reservations.

Lunch With the League

Regina Ruddell, director of PACT's Bradley Center for LaPorte County, will speak at Lunch With the League on Tuesday, Dec. 11, at Patrick's Grille, 4125 Franklin St.

The program is presented by The League of Women Voters of LaPorte County.

Since its origin as a halfway house for men in 1971, PACT'S Bradley Center has grown to provide residential/work-release programs for men and women.

Attendees may buy lunch from the menu. Doors open at 11:30 a.m., and orders will be taken as tables fill up. Reservations are not required. A donation is requested from non-members.

Email LWVLaPorte@gmail.com for details.

Service League Fundraiser

Service League of Michigan City will hold a fundraiser from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, at Fannie May, 102 W. U.S. 20.

A coupon obtained beforehand and presented at Fannie Mae results in 30 percent of the proceeds supporting the Service League, which loans medical equipment, at no charge, to any Michigan City resident for a three-month period.

More information about the coupons can be obtained at Service League, 301 E. Garfield St., or call (219) 872-1144.

Holiday Festival

A holiday festival is from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, at St. John's Lutheran School, 111 Kingsbury Ave., LaPorte.

The event includes Breakfast with Santa — call (210) 742-5802 for tickets — kids games, crafts, a bake sale and craft and vendor sale.

ICS Holiday Open House

Independent Cat Society, 4061 S. County Line Road, Westville, will host its annual holiday open house Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 8-9.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

The shelter will feature holiday decor, and guests can meet the resident cats and kittens. Also planned are refreshments, a bake sale, raffles, cat toys and catnip. Donations of canned cat food (Friskies pate, Fancy Feast), dry food, treats, paper plates, paper towels, laundry detergent and other essential items are appreciated.

Call (219) 785-4936 or email shelter@catsociety. org for details.

Girls Basketball Clinics

The Michigan City High School Wolves Girls Basketball team will hold three free mini basketball clinics for girls in grades K-8.

The clinics, held at the Wolves Den Gymnasium, are from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8 and 15, and 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 22.

Girls can attend one or all three. No advance registration is required; parents will be asked to complete permission slips at the door.



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In the Area:

Dec. 6 — "One City, One Sound" concert, 7 p.m., Michigan City High School gymnasium, 8466 Pahs Road. Free; Salvation Army donations accepted.

Dec. 7 — First Friday in the Chapel concert, organist Carol Garret, noon, LaPorte Hospital chapel, 1007 Lincolnway. Free. Info: (219) 325-7633.

Dec. 7 — Fandom Fridays, 3-4 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Dec. 7 — First Friday Art Walk, 5-8 p.m., Uptown Arts District (downtown Michigan City).

Dec. 7 — Reception, Tom Brand's "Burnt Offerings," 5-8 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St

Dec. 7 — Works by Wendy Wilcox Kermen, 5-8 p.m., Old Lighthouse Museum, Washington Park.

Dec. 7 — Open house, 5-8 p.m., Artists Studio above Southern Shore Art Association, 724 Franklin St.

Dec. 7 — "Give a Book for the Holidays"/"New Perspectives" exhibit, 5-8 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: www.lubeznikcenter.org

Dec. 7 — Dig the Dunes calendar release party, 5-8 p.m., SFC Gallery, 607 Franklin St. Info: Digthe-Dunes.com

Dec. 7 — Christmas Behind the Scenes Tour, 7-9 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Cost: \$15/adults, \$10/seniors or youth. Reservations: Eventbrite.

Dec. 7-10 — Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. *Now showing*: "Wildlife." Rated PG-13. Times: 6 p.m. Fri.-Mon. *Also*: "The Happy Prince." Rated R. Times: 9 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 3 p.m. Sat.-Sun. All times Eastern. Info: vickerstheatre.com

Dec. 7-9, 13-16 — "A Doublewide, Texas Christmas," Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Times: Fri.-Sat./7:30 p.m., Sun./2 p.m. Tickets: \$15/adults, \$10/Thursdays, children 12 & younger. Reservations: (219) 874-4035, www.footlightplayers.

Dec. 7-9, 14-16 — "Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus," LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$15/adults, \$12/children. Reservations: laportelittletheatreclub.com

Dec. 8 — Holiday festival, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., St. John's Lutheran School, 111 Kingsbury Ave., La-Porte. Breakfast with Santa tickets: (210) 742-5802.

Dec. 8 — Cookie walk/bazaar, 9-11:30 a.m., St. Luke United Lutheran Church, 2000 E. Coolspring Ave. Info: (219) 879-9415.

Dec. 8 — Monday Musicale: "The Sounds of the Holidays," 3 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 8 — Free Christmas concert, 2 p.m., St. Andrews Episcopal Church, U.S. 12 & Moore Road.

Dec. 8 — Essential Oil Gifts You Can Make, 3-4:30 p.m., Coolspring Library, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Registration: www.laportelibrary.org

Dec. 8 — Holiday at the Pops Concert, 7 p.m., LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. Balcony tickets: \$10/adults, \$5/children. Reservations: holidaypopslaporte.org

Dec. 8-9 — Candy Cane Express, Hesston Steam Museum, 1201 E. County Road 1000 North, La-Porte. Trains: noon-5 p.m. Fares: \$5/adults, children 3-12/\$3, children 3 & younger/free. Visit: www. hesston.org, (219) 778- 2783.

Dec. 8-9 — Annual holiday open house, Independent Cat Society, 4061 S. County Line Road, Westville. Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat., 1-4 p.m. Sun. Info: (219) 785-4936.

Dec. 8-9 — Annual cookie sale and bazaar, St. Mary of the Lake Church, 718 W. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich. Hours (Eastern): 4-8 p.m. Sat./10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun.

Dec. 9 — Christmas in the Gardens, 2-5 p.m., Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12.

Dec. 9, 12 — Harbor Country Singers free Christmas concerts, 2 p.m. EST Dec. 9, The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich./7 p.m. EST Dec. 12, Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, Mich.

Dec. 10 — CoderDojo, 5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 11 — Lunch With the League, 11:30 a.m., Patrick's Grille, 4125 Franklin St. Info: LWVLa-Porte@gmail.com

Dec. 12 — Polish Advent & Christmas Customs, 5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Free. Reservations: (219) 464-1369, (219) 873-3049.

Saturdays in December — Glowing Lights Night, 4 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Cost: \$8/adults, \$5/youth or senior. Reservation:

Through Jan. 4 — Holiday Artisan Market, Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: www.lubeznikcenter.org

Through January — Duneland Plein Air Painters exhibit, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: www.chestertonart.com

In the Region

Dec. 8 — Box Factory Artists and Members Show, 5-7 p.m. EST, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: www.boxfactoryforthearts.org

Dec. 8 — Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra holiday concert, "Glad Tidings," 7:30 p.m. EST, Mendel Center Mainstage, 2755 E. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor, Mich. Tickets: www.smso.org, (269) 982-4030.

Dec. 8-9, 15-16 — "Weekends With Santa," Gabis Arboretum at Purdue Northwest, 71 N. County Road 500 West near Valparaiso. Photos with Santa/noon-4 p.m. Carload admission: \$5. Info: (219) 462-0025.



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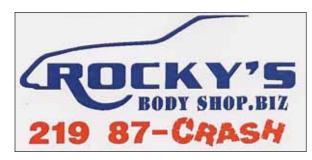
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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

<u>Past Tense</u> by Lee Child (hard-cover, \$28.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 382 pages)

"Jack Reacher caught the last of the summer sun in a small town on the coast of Maine, and then, like the birds in the sky above him, he began his long migration south...He didn't get far."

Jack Reacher, like the Energizer Bunny, just keeps going and going. He is one of the most enduring characters in modern fiction. And rightly so. For the past 21 novels, readers have been enraptured by the exploits of this ex-Army military cop. All of his books have been optioned for major motion pictures; two have made it to the big

screen starring Tom Cruise. Not my first choice, but then, no secret I always like the books better than the movies.

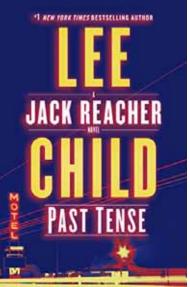
The thing about Reacher is not just his adventures. His stories have an intelligence that transcends the super-hero persona. If you read my review of his last book, <u>The Midnight Line</u>, you know what I mean. While he is the strong, unbending military man, there also is a part of him that is introspective and searching.

Before I go anymore Freud on you, let me give you the lowdown on Reacher's latest wandering...

As the opening lines suggest, Reacher is starting out in Maine and planning on hitchhiking to San Diego, Calif. Why San Diego? "...for an Army guy like Reacher was a little too full of Navy people, but which was otherwise a fine spot to start the winter." There you go. Just a little stroll to the other side of the country.

In New Hampshire, Reacher gets a partial ride from a friendly native. He leaves Reacher on a quiet stretch of highway where he soon comes to a fork in the road — a sign pointing to the left says Portsmouth, the one on the right says Laconia. The name Laconia strikes memories for our wanderer. It is where his late father was born and raised. Family history said he "escaped" there at 17 to join the Marines. Many vague family stories...of course even a man such as Reacher must wonder about where he came from. Choice quickly made...take the turn to the right and see what Laconia can tell him.

At the same time, about 30 miles away, a young couple, Shorty Fleck and Patty Sandstrum, both 25, are in a worn-out Honda Civic that somehow has made it from New Brunswick, Canada. They are making their way to New York City with a strange,



very heavy piece of luggage they guard carefully. They need a place to stay for the night and find a sign for a motel back in the woods. Since there's no other place in sight, they decide to stop. How could they know it will be the biggest mistake of their lives?

Reacher, meanwhile, makes it to Laconia. He is shifted from historical society to various county departments — not having any luck — even census reports show no Reacher family. While his family history is not the warm, fuzzy kind, still, like most of us, he is curious about his parents and grandparents, especially what drove his father to run away to the Marines at such a young age.

Lucky for him, Reacher makes a connection with a man who says there was a tin mill nearby named Ryantown. People worked and lived there in company housing. They came and went until the mill closed down in the 1950s. It's a place to consider.

Shorty and Patty, meanwhile, are beginning to wonder what kind of "motel" they have landed in. It's run by four young men in their 20s — Robert, Steve, Peter and Mark. Funniest thing, Mark's last name is Reacher. The four are very friendly, too friendly for innkeepers, or is that too nosy?

Next morning, the pair's car won't start. Red flag. Mark claims their phone is out. Red flag. There's no cell service for Shorty's phone and, supposedly, the men have no working auto. Red flag. Wow. How many red flags do you need? Shorty and Patty have also made the mistake of telling them no one knows where they are, or even where they were going. Huge mistake.

Back in Laconia, Reacher manages to get into trouble trying to save a young woman from an attacker who follows her home from work. Reacher beats him up and sends him on his way. Problem is, the attacker's father is rich and vindictive. Police think it's time for Reacher to move on. After all, it's a small, quiet town, and they don't need the trouble. Ha! They don't know Reacher...I never thought genealogy could become this physical!

Lee Child knows how to keep someone like Reacher human. He may be a killing machine — thanks to the Army — but deep down, there is a man who wants answers. How he gets them makes a climax worthy of any action/adventure story. That's why Reacher has lasted so long as a literary figure — there is always a deeper part to his story no matter how much trouble he encounters along the way.

Till next time, happy reading!

















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