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The Entertainer

by Andrew Tallackson



Alan Barcus, photographed by The Beacher's Bob Wellinski after a performance last fall at The Acorn Theater in Three Oaks, Mich.

Alan Barcus has stories to tell. Magnificent stories. Hysterical stories. Stories so remarkable, they prompt me to give pause, astonished the man seated across from me, so humble and ingenuous, enjoying a cup of coffee, has forged such an extraordinary life for himself.

A La Porte native, for instance, who boasts a lifelong friendship with actor Joe Mantegna ("He's regarded as the nicest man in Hollywood, and he

is"). The guy who wrote a song for a young Richard Marx. Who once served as an orchestra conductor at Chicago's legendary Playboy Club ("I couldn't tell my mother where I worked — all those naked people walking around"). Who generated nearly 2,500 radio and TV spots, the most iconic being Car-X's "rattle, rattle, thunder, clatter, boom, boom, boom" campaign ("That might be my epitaph").

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Entertainer

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For Barcus, how his life turned out was not part of some master plan. To hear him tell it, success shadowed luck. Pure luck. Plain and simple.

"So much of it is by accident," he says. "None of it was planned. And to top it off, in the beginning, all I wanted to do was succeed in track."

In the Beginning — Athlete or Entertainer?

Indeed, the parental influences in Alan's childhood could have tipped the scales in either direction. He was born in La Porte, growing up in what was referred to as "Poletown." Densely populated with Polish immigrants, a young Alan became "fluent in Polish profanity," he says with robust laughter, raised by parents who were polar opposites.

His father was Ray Barcus, a minor-leaguer through the Chicago White Sox.

"So much of the time," Alan said of his childhood, "I would easily be out throwing a curveball with my dad. He was a power pitcher. I was a junk pitcher."

His mother, Nellie, was a pianist. She preferred he follow in *her* footsteps, carting him off to piano lessons with Hilda Wagner Pease. Alan, however, showed no interest. In fact, he loathed piano lessons, doing everything possible to persuade his mother to call it quits. Eventually, he succeeded.

So in school, he loved football, baseball, basketball and track. There was just one problem. Weighing only 149 pounds, he was getting hurt all the time. In fact, he broke his wrist diving for the end zone during a high school football game. He ended his high school career with the Slicer baseball team.

Socially, life was frustrating. He describes himself freshman year as a "miserable 14-year-old."

"I looked like a straw," he continued. "I didn't



Alan's parents, Ray and Nellie Barcus.
 Photo provided by Alan Barcus

think of myself as shy, but I was uncomfortable about girls. Years later, I wrote the song '14,' about all the women who passed me by."

After graduating from La Porte High School, Alan attended Indiana State University in Terre Haute, where his dexterity in cross country and track saw him make the track team freshman year.

"The coach said, 'Who are you?,' and I said, 'I don't think I'm anybody.' But I was so thrilled."

Alan, in fact, was part of the same Hall of Fame class that includes the legendary Larry Bird. And, it should be noted, it was the night before a track meet that the seeds of song his mother planted amid his youth finally emerged. Riddled with nerves, Alan could not sleep. He tried ev-

everything to calm himself: a five-mile walk, seeing a movie. Nothing worked. In a burst of inspiration, he headed over to the practice rooms at the campus music department. He fiddled around with notes, sequences of chords.

Slowly, but surely, a musician was born.

From Teacher to Performer

Upon graduating from ISU with a master's degree in business in 1960, Alan did not stray far from campus. His first job out of college was in nearby Brazil, Ind., teaching and coaching basketball, cross country and track at the local high school. His mother, Nellie, certainly was proud. It was precisely what she wanted for her son. A respectable career. A steady income. A family. Alan was now married. He and his wife, Ann, had a daughter, Katie.

For a while, Alan was content. Life was good. Gradually, he grew restless. He couldn't shake the love of music that flourished in college. He realized, if he was to succeed in music, he needed to escape a



Alan, in his track days at Indiana State University.
Photo provided by Alan Barcus

provincial Indiana life and head for either Los Angeles, New York or Chicago. The decision was agonizing, but with the support of his family, and with no solid job prospects in sight, he, Ann and Katie moved to Chicago.

The aforementioned luck was the catalyst for Alan scoring his first two big gigs.

One was as an orchestra conductor at Chicago's Playboy Club. This, Alan says, was back in the days when first-rate musicians performed, when then unknowns like Steve Martin and Billy Crystal tested material as fledgling standup comedians. Playing five nights a week, Alan never told his mother where he was performing. She was insistent on not only seeing him, but also bringing his former piano teacher. Those requests, Alan says with a chuckle, were denied.

"Those bunny costumes, alone, would have made her faint," he said. "She would have fallen over. Dead."

Alan would work at The Playboy Club for four years, and it was during this time that his path crossed with Dick Marx, then a top music producer in Chicago, his forte being commercials. Alan's style, Dick felt, in some ways resembled Elton John, and it impressed Marx, who started hiring him for various ad campaigns. It was also what, down the road, lead Alan to help Dick's son, Richard, write a song the musician would take with him to Los Angeles to pursue a career.

Alan also was hired as the music director for a production of "Hair." The landmark Broadway musical also marked the stage debut, in 1969, for a

Entertainer Continued on Page 4



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young actor named Joe Mantegna.

Mantegna, of course, would go on to co-write "Bleacher Bums," the award-winning play introduced by Chicago's Organic Theater Co., and become a regular in David Mamet productions, winning a Tony as Richard Roma in Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross." His subsequent career has spanned film and TV, but the friendship that emerged between him and Alan never dimmed. They produced the Chicago play "Eli," with Mantegna co-writing the book and Barcus writing the book, music and lyrics. Mantegna recommended Alan to score the Oscar-nominated short film, "Medusa Challenger."

Alan also had the opportunity to work with the likes of Dennis Franz ("NYPD Blue") and Andre DeShields, the later whose esteemed career began with that Chicago production of "Hair." He also originated the title role in the beloved Broadway musical "The Wiz."

Alan recalls the time DeShields headed to Marshall Field's while still showcasing his trippy hair from Stuart Gordon's "Warp!" A guy saw him in his wild getup and shouted, "Get a job!," unaware, of course, that DeShields was a respected actor. And, Alan stresses, DeShields went on to an expansive career not only as a performer, but also in writing and directing. He is, Alan says, an intellectual whose knowledge of theater is staggering,

Alan stays in touch with DeShields and Mantegna. Mantegna, of course, became one of Hollywood's most respected entertainers. When he acts, Alan says, "it's pure magic."

And in those early days, if Alan's mother ever doubted he would make it as a musician, he offered her these words of reassurance. In Chicago, as a performer, he made more money in one week than he did in two months as a teacher.



Alan (seated at the piano) rehearses for a show with the likes of Joe Mantegna and Andre DeShields. Photo provided by Alan Barcus



Alan (center) with Joe Mantegna (bottom) and respected set designer and scenic artist John Paoletti. Photo provided by Alan Barcus

The Car-X Man

Alan can tell you the exact number of TV and radio spots he created. It's 2,498. His gift for tapping into what appeals to consumers has spawned work for Pepsi, State Farm Insurance, McDonald's and Kellogg's. Remember the "Oo, La, La" jingle for Tresemé shampoo? That's Alan.

But the big one, *the* one, the one that earns him scads of recognition, is the "rattle, rattle, thunder, clatter, boom, boom, boom" campaign jingle for Car-X."

How did that memorable jingle come about? It was just a burst of inspiration, says Alan, who comes across as flattered, amused, even befuddled by its success. He frequently jokes that the jingle will appear on his tombstone.

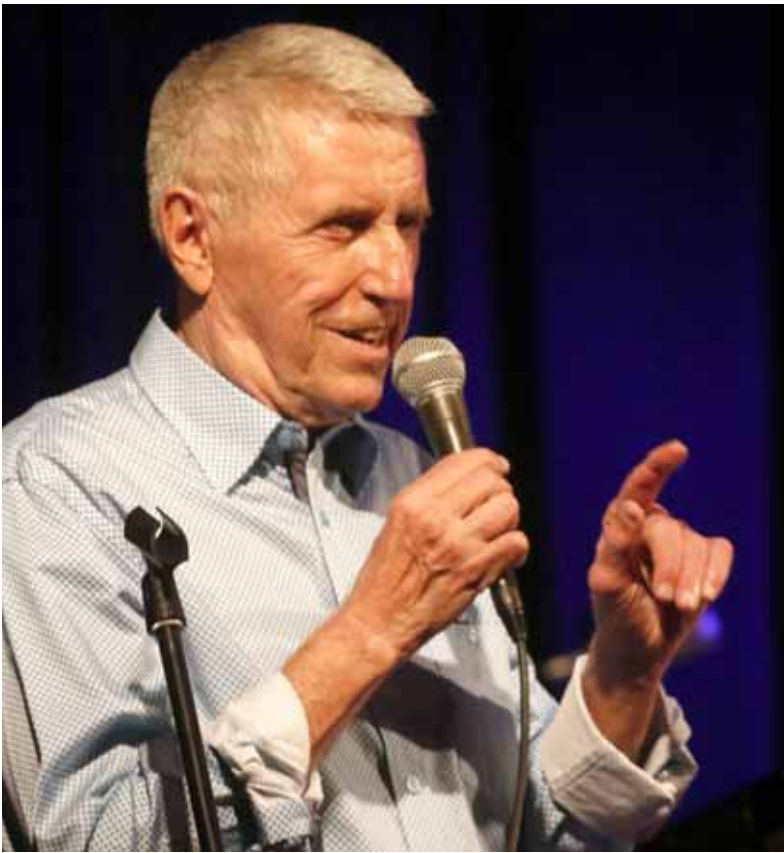
"I said once that if I get really lucky, and win so many Grammys, and make film scores, if I win the Nobel Prize or a Pulitzer...if I get hit by a car, people will say, 'Look who died. The Car-X Man.'"

Go Cubbies

For many die-hard Cubs fans, Steve Goodman's "Go Cubs Go" is the team's definitive anthem. However, when Goodman's health was rapidly failing, he wrote a song, "A Dying Cubs Fan's Last Request," that took shots at The Tribune Co.

Incensed, Alan says, The Tribune Co. dropped "Go Cubs Go" and began the search for a new fight song. Any artist who referenced baseball in one of their songs was considered.

Enter Alan, a Cubs fan whose love of the sport cultivated by his father made him the perfect candidate. Alan's baseball tribute, "You're My Cubs," became the team's official fight song that ushered



Alan shares colorful stories from his past during the show at The Acorn.
Photo by Bob Wellinski

players onto the field from 1989 to 2001.

From time to time, it's still played at Wrigley Field.

Looking Back

These stories only scratch the surface of Alan's marvelous journey through life.

In his early days, he recorded an album, "The Alan Barcus Trio." Only 3,000 copies were made. Much to Alan's amazement, a friend told him he purchased the recording off eBay for \$113.

His work on "Lords of the Levee," a musical production about Chicago politics, involved the likes of Rick Kogan, Julian Frazin and The Acorn Theatre's Kim Clark. Or, the time he wrote a song for his 50th high school reunion, "Oh What a Time It Was Then," dedicated to the La Porte High School Class of 1955.

Life, too, has a way of coming full circle. His daughter has two children, Sam and Grace, Sam ran track in high school.

Looking back, does he regret any choices he made, the paths he followed?

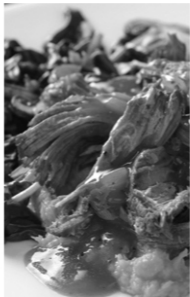
Not one bit.

"It's been good," he said, a smile emerging. "It has succeeded beyond my wildest dreams."



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Spielberg Makes a Few Wrong Moves in Otherwise Strong “Post”

by Andrew Tallackson

“The Post” is a strong film. No question about it. Steven Spielberg, one of our greatest living directors, perched himself atop the timeliest of soapboxes, the age-old war between journalism and government exceedingly relevant.

For all its noble intentions, though, “The Post” is good, but not great Spielberg. The director, you see, cranked this one out. With one project on hold (“The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara”) and another in post-production (“Ready Player One”), he seized on an opportunity to tap into the zeitgeist — Trump’s election, Meryl Streep’s protect-the-press Golden Globes war cry.

But by blazing through “The Post” in eight to nine months, you’d be hard-pressed to recognize this sometimes slow, sometimes schmaltzy docudrama as a Spielberg movie. Only when the race is on to publish the Pentagon Papers does the director, a master of imaginative visuals and sneaky wit, transform a real-life crisis into edgy, crackling entertainment.

“The Post,” which opens Friday in theaters nationwide, efficiently explains how Daniel Ellsberg (Matthew Rhys), who worked on the Pentagon Papers, leaked the information first to *The New York Times*, then *The Washington Post*. The papers, which commented on U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967, were especially damaging toward President Johnson, stating he lied to Congress and the public. After *The New York Times* unveiled three articles, President Nixon received an injunction, halting further publication.

We meet a handful of *Washington Post* reporters and government officials, but the prime focus is Editor Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks) and Publisher Kay Graham (Streep), the first woman to hold such a newspaper position. Hanks hasn’t been this randy since “Charlie Wilson’s War,” playing a pre-Watergate Bradlee as a man itching for a fight. Indeed, Graham has her hands full with him, preferring news coverage not rock the boat, yet respecting hold-no-punches journalism. She’s also wrestling with a board, and legal counsel, that doubt her every move. Streep is fascinating here. Graham isn’t portrayed as a feminist pioneer, but a woman wildly unsure of herself: tremulous, indignant of the role



Meryl Streep stars as Kay Graham, the first woman to serve as a newspaper publisher.

she holds after her husband’s death.

Spielberg uses early scenes to explore Graham’s struggles so we understand her courage in supporting Bradlee when the Pentagon Papers surface. The director knows his way around dialogue — “Lincoln” relishes the spoken word — but the movie’s first half is awfully slow and talky, the images flat, like a polished TV movie. It lacks Spielberg’s personal stamp, that of a man who knows how to shape every aspect of a scene so it pops to life.

The minute pages from the Pentagon Papers arrive in the hands of *Washington Post* reporter Ben Bagdikian (Bob Odenkirk, of “Better Call Saul,” in a sly, what-me-worry performance), “The Post” kicks into high gear. Spielberg, working with his longtime editor, Michael Kahn, treats the decision-making with clock-is-ticking breathlessness. Antsy legal counsel, frazzled reporters, Bradlee and Graham at

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odds — it unravels with the same frantic tempo of Spielberg's greatest thrillers. What we are witnessing is smart people forced to make gutsy decisions

otal moment reduced to treacly melodrama.

Subtle, it ain't. When Spielberg shows Graham move through a crowd conveniently populated only with women, all of whom turn their heads in admiration, "The Post" trips over its own sentimentality.

(Far more effective, in beautifully understated work, is Sarah Paulson as Bradlee's wife, who carefully reminds her husband why Graham deserves more respect than he affords her.)

I suspect this review reads like a disapproval of "The Post." Not so. The core drama, the race to publish the Pentagon Papers, is vintage Spielberg, with Hanks and Streep in sterling form. However, it should be noted that "The Post" was co-written by Oscar winner Josh Singer, who helped pen 2015's "Spotlight." That picture, which saw its journalists venture through equally murky waters, knew newspapers inside and out, that tedious,

yet diligent grunt work can bring wrongly concealed truths to light.

"The Post" is not in the same league as that picture. It is, however, entertaining and thoughtful. You can't deny Spielberg that.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



Tom Hanks stars as a pre-Watergate Ben Bradlee.

in a matter of seconds. Streep, in particular, is electrifying when Graham gives Bradlee the OK to publish, her approval a slippery blend of confidence and what-did-I-just-do hesitation.

Such bravery, in and of itself, is the ingredient for a powerful story. But Spielberg is not content with letting "The Post" rest on the laurels of its real-life journalists. He wants his audience exiting the theater moved, so he hammers away at the obvious.

Consider the corny choices Spielberg makes late in the picture, like the moment when Bradlee shows Graham the other newspapers that followed their lead. Hanks overacts the scene, Bradlee slamming newspapers across a table. John Williams' score cranks up, as if to cue the Spielbergian choke hold. Minutes later, Williams, as composer, takes the same approach. As reporter Meg Greenfield (Carrie Coon) reads aloud the high court ruling on the role of a free press, Williams' score turns mushy, a piv-



When the race is on to publish the Pentagon Papers, "The Post" is vintage Spielberg.

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MLK Community Breakfast

Purdue University Northwest will host Gonzalo Curiel, East Chicago native and U.S. District Court judge, at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration Breakfast from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Monday, Jan. 15.

The program is in the James B. Dworkin Student Services and Activities Complex Great Hall. Free and open to the public, reservations are required at www.pnw.edu/MLK-celebration

Curiel's address will reflect the program's theme, "Together we win with love for humanity."

Curiel received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Indiana University and his Juris Doctor from the Indiana University School of Law. He acted as assistant U.S. attorney and served as deputy chief and then chief of the Narcotics Enforcement Division before being appointed to the State Superior Court in 2006.

With President Barack Obama's nomination in 2011, Curiel was approved by the U.S. Senate and received his commission as a U.S. District judge on October 1, 2012.

At the program, Michigan City Police Officer Dion Campbell will serve as emcee, with musical entertainment by PNW student Casey "C.J. Musique" Baker and guitarist Angelo Cicco. Judy Jacobi, assistant vice chancellor of University Arts Collection and Special Programs, will lead campus art tours.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. invites guests to take new or gently used hats, gloves, socks, scarves, coats, sweaters and other seasonal wraps for donation to local families in need.

Call (219) 785-5545 for more details.



Michigan City Public Library

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

• **Duneland Stamp Club at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11.**

The club meets the second Thursday of each month. New members are invited.

• **Talk to a Lawyer for Free from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 15, in the meeting room.**

The Indiana State Bar Association, Northwest Indiana Volunteer Lawyers Inc., Pro Bono Committee of the First Judicial District and local bar associations sponsor the walk-in site open to anyone who needs legal help, but can't afford an attorney. Volunteer attorneys will provide referral information if further legal assistance or social services are needed. No appointment is necessary.

The project, now in its 15th year, honors the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

• **Martin Luther King Jr. Day at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 15, at Youth Services.**

Purdue Northwest will host a variety of activities for children in honor of MLK Jr. Day.

• **Story Time at 1 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 16, 23 and 30, and 10 a.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 17, 24 and 31.**

Children birth to age 5 and adults will enjoy stories, songs and crafts. Arrive a few minutes early to receive a name tag.

• **Volunteers Needed for VITA Tax Program.**

Volunteers are needed at least one day a week during the tax season (February-April) for the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. The IRS provides some training, and volunteers must pass the VITA test through the intermediate level. Testing and training are online.

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

Harbor Country Hikers

Harbor Country Hikers will present "Hiking and Health" at 6:30 p.m. EST Tuesday, Jan. 16, at New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

The program is by HCH member Larry Bernstein. Ensuing programs include (all times Eastern):

• "An Introduction to Off-Trail Hiking" at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 3, at New Buffalo Elementary School Nature Study Trails.

• "The Unwritten Story of Our Landscape" at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at Bridgman Public Library, 4460 Lake St.

Although membership is encouraged, events are open to everyone, and children are welcome if accompanied by an adult. Membership is \$20 for individuals or \$30 for families. Visit harborcountryhikers.com for more details.



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10:00-10:50	Find Out What’s Causing That Kink in Your Neck
	Top 3 Simple Do It Yourself Techniques To Loosen Up Your Neck (instructions provided)
11:00-11:50	How to Heal Naturally from the Top 3 Causes of Low Back Pain
	Your 2 Main Core Muscles and How to Strengthen Them (exercise sheets provided)
12:00-12:50	Top 5 Natural Vitamins and Supplements for Pain Relief, Better Sleep, and Higher Energy
1:00-1:50	Don’t Fall in 2018: Balance and Fall Prevention Workshop
	Simple Techniques to Strengthen The 3 Main Components of Balance Control (instruction sheets provided)
2:00-2:50	How to Fight the Effects of Osteoporosis and Naturally Increase Bone Density
	Top 5 Exercises for Osteoporosis (exercise sheets provided)
3:00-3:50	The Gift of Healthy Shoulders: Rotator Cuff and Shoulder Pain Workshop
	Top 3 Tips for Natural Healing (instructions provided)

4:00-4:50	Heel and Foot Pain Workshop: Top 2 Most Common Causes Top Tips for Proper Shoe Fit Plus Self-Help Techniques for Natural Healing

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PS- Call 219-380-0809 to hold your spot for the Healthy "You" Health Fair All Day Event. Call and let us know what classes you want to attend. Limited to only 20 badges per class.

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JROTC Embraces Spirit of the Holiday Season

Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps demonstrated the true meaning of Christmas by giving of their time and talents during the holiday season.

Cadets helped set up, assisted and helped clean up for "One City, One Sound," the Michigan City Area Schools holiday concert that involved all elementary schools, both middle schools and MCHS. They also assisted The Salvation Army with distributing supplies and toys for needy families in the Michigan City area.

Besides these community service projects, the MCHS Color Guard presented the colors for both boys' home basketball games in December.

"One of the leadership traits we teach is unselfishness,"

Maj. Tom McGrath, the senior Marine instructor,



Private 1st Class Dylan Cabanaw (from left), Lance Cpl. Traelyn Parks and Gunnery Sgt. Zach Benedict discuss the distribution of toys at The Salvation Army.

said in a press release. "Our cadets take that lesson out of the classroom and put into action in our community."

The cadets continued to support The Salvation Army through Christmas. They also had drill team practice over the winter break in preparation for the next military drill competition at East Aurora (Ill.) High School on Jan. 13.

The team will deliver presentations to eighth-graders at Barker and Krueger middle schools on Wednesday, Jan. 17.

These presentations are important to the JROTC program, as MCHS is required to maintain an enrollment of 100 cadets.

The Color Guard was to present the colors at the boys' home basketball games on Jan. 6, and will do so again Jan. 26, along with the Lighthouse Invitational Tournament on Jan 27.

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By Robin Annette

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Library Renovation Honored

MKM architecture + design received one of two merit awards from the American Institute of Architect's Fort Wayne branch for its interior renovation of La Porte County Public Library's main branch, 904 Indiana Ave.

The historic Carnegie building was transformed into a modern public library equipped with a more accessible collection, teen area and new SPARK Lab for educational programming, all while retaining the classical exterior.

Visit laportelibrary.org or follow the library on social media for more details.

Duneland Weavers Guild

Duneland Weavers Guild meets at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, at Westchester Public Library's Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Guild member Kathy O. will present a program about Erica de Ruiter, a Dutch weaver, designer and teacher. Her work emphasizes 2- and 3- shaft weaving techniques.

Visitors and potential new members are welcome. Meetings begin with Show 'n Tell. Visit www.dunelandweaversguild.org for more details.

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Food Drive a Hefty Success



Michigan City Area Schools students and staff collected more than two tons (4,237 pounds) of canned goods and other non-perishable food items through an annual holiday food drive. The food filled two school buses, delivered to The Salvation Army by volunteers from the MCAS transportation and food service departments, with assistance from high school students in the A.K. Smith Facilities Maintenance Program.

U.S. Baseball Academy

U.S. Baseball Academy has added Purdue University Northwest to its winter-spring lineup.

The academy operates a national network of affordable hitting, pitching, catching, fielding and base-running camps for players in grades one through 12. Players who choose multiple skills qualify for discounted session prices.

Registration is under way at www.USBBaseballAcademy.com. The session in Westville runs Jan. 14-Feb. 4 at Purdue University Northwest. PNW assistant coach Shane Prance is the director, with instruction by a staff of the area's best coaches.

With a player-coach ratio of 7-1, each player gets individual attention in a small-group atmosphere. They also get a preseason tuneup that helps enter practice in mid-season form. With numerous age-specific sessions, instruction is specially tailored for each ability level.

Since 1988, the academy has run hundreds of camps and clinics for thousands of players nationwide. Each week, hitters rotate through supervised stations, including indoor batting cages, with each drill designed to teach a different aspect of hitting. The program aims to improve pitch and strike-zone recognition, timing, balance, power, situational hitting, bunting and other aspects. Pitchers are supervised by coaches who can help with all aspects of pitching, from fundamentals and mechanics to more advanced concepts. Drills and repetition will improve speed and control. Players get instruction on stance, signs, receiving, framing, blocking, throwing, fielding bunts, tags and the mental aspects of dealing with pitchers.

Complete details and times, as well as registration forms, are available at www.USBBaseballAcademy.com or by calling (866) 622-4487.

Holiday Comfort and Cheer



Coolspring Elementary School student council members recently made four "comfort blankets" for patients at Michiana Hematology Oncology Center. Pictured are sixth-grade council members Meaghan Painter (left) and Krystanni Quinn.



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Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

The following programs are available:

• **Dunes Learning Center Winter Open House 2018 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, at the center, 700 Howe Road, Chesterton.**

Explore the outdoors with knowledgeable naturalists, or head inside for crafts, cookies and cocoa. Visit www.duneslearningcenter.org/events for more information.

• **Stargazing from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, at the Kemil Beach parking area.**

Members of regional astronomical societies will attend with telescopes. This month, the Milky Way will cross the night sky from northwest to southeast, while the Orion nebula will be high in the sky. Star clusters Pleiades and Auriga will be visible. Dress for the weather. Take binoculars. The Kemil Beach parking lot is located at 27 N. East State Park Road, Chesterton.

• **In the Footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Join a park ranger for an armchair tour of national park sites that commemorate the struggle for civil rights.

• **Free Movie Showing — “Tuskegee Airmen: Sacrifice and Triumph” on Sunday, Jan. 14, at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center theater.**

The documentary tells the story of the first African-American pilots, the Red Tails.

• **Snowshoe Hike from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 14, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Join a ranger for a brief indoor program, then try on snowshoes during a ranger-led hike through fields and woods surrounding the center. A traditional hike is planned if there is not enough snow. A limited number of snowshoes are available for free, or take your own.

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.



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1. “Wonder”



We live in a cruel world. Just turn on the TV. Any news channel will convey inhumanity run rampant across the globe.

Here is a miracle of a movie, lovingly adapted from R.J. Palacio’s 2012 novel, that celebrates how kindness reflects tremendous bravery in the face of adversity. Jacob Tremblay, the fine young actor from “Room” (2015), is masterful as Auggie Pullman, a facially deformed boy who enters the “real world” for the first time by attending middle school. That precarious journey is conveyed not just from Auggie’s perspective, but also from those closest to him, from parents to friends, even school bullies.

Told with tremendous restraint and empathy, “Wonder” is blessed with awards-worthy work not just by Tremblay, but also Julia Roberts as his unflappable mother. The first viewing produced a lump in my throat. The second, knowing what was coming — full-blown sobbing. This is a movie that earns every tear. You leave the theater on a high, your heart soaring.

2. “Wind River”



Writer-Director Taylor Sheridan’s follow-up to last year’s Oscar-nominated “Hell or High Water” has the feel of a stylish, if routine whodunnit...until the final scenes, which convey the devastating intent behind the picture.

Jeremy Renner stars as a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agent investigating the brutal death of

a Native American woman on Wyoming’s Wind River Indian Reservation. Wrestling with his own demons, the scenes where he muzzles that grief to offer hope to wounded souls are a career high for Renner.

The bleak, oppressive winter setting ideally accents the film’s payoff. Sheridan isn’t so much concerned with “who” dunnit, but the reckless, dismissive “why” behind it. *That* is what gives “Wind River” its power.

3. “Megan Leavey”

A rare “feel good” true story that delivers on its promise.

Kate Mara, in a career best, stars as Megan, who flounders in life until joining the Marines, bonding with her military working dog, Rex, then rallying to become his owner.

Don’t worry. The dog doesn’t die. There are no false notes in the pic-



ture, no cheap sentiment, but gritty realism and a conclusion of surprising power.

Somehow, though, distributor Bleecker Street dumped this remarkable film into theaters the same weekend as Tom Cruise’s regrettable “Mummy” reboot and the relentlessly bleak “It Comes at Night.” In the process, it died a swift death at the box office. However, I’ve seen the movie three times — twice with my son. Older children should watch it with their parents, the message being the extraordinary bond between human and animal.

4. “Get Out”

“The Stepford Wives” meets the Trump era.

Comedian Jordan Peele’s straightforward, metaphorical horror tale — with dark, satirical edges — has more to say about race than any Oscar bait.

The Best Films of 2017

by Andrew Tallackson

I will confess to having compiled 10-best lists solely with highfalutin Oscar bait. Pictures admired, yet never revisited.

The objective? Being respected as an intellectual.

The older I get, the less that issue is of any concern. What struck me about the films listed here is that I’d seen most of them more than once. They emphasize people, real emotion, not big-budget effects and explosions. The characters endeared themselves to me through their actions, through courage amid the impossible.

Over the next several weeks, however, I will explore several films vying for Academy Award nominations, including “The Shape of Water,” “I, Tonya,” “Call Me By Your Name” and “Phantom Thread.” Also in the works is our annual Oscar contest, which we will reveal after the nominations are announced Wednesday, Jan. 24.

And with that, let’s cut to the chase: my favorite movies of 2017.

Photographer Chris Washington (an increasingly persuasive Daniel Kaluuya), who is black, is ushered by his white



girlfriend (Allison Williams, superb) to meet her parents, only to discover something isn’t right with them *and* the community.

Unquestionably the year’s sharpest movie, exploring the way white America attempts to subjugate blacks to the sociopolitical

background.

Equally sly, thrilling and unsettling, “Get Out” reveals Peele as a formidable talent.

5. “Dunkirk”



The year’s most immersive experience.

Christopher Nolan, guaranteed that elusive Best Director Oscar unless voters are mysteriously lobotomized, strands you with the thousands of Allied soldiers who retreated to Dunkirk. Their rescue is conveyed by air, land and sea, and Nolan amps up the sights and sounds in ways few war pictures have succeeded. It’s thrilling, heartbreaking and moving.

Oscar-winner Mark Rylance’s quiet turn as a boat captain has earned praise, but who can forget the look on Kenneth Branagh’s face as rescue ships arrive at Dunkirk. The overpowering relief in his eyes is all that needs to be said.

6. “The Shape of Water”



Weird and wild. Must be a new Guillermo del Toro picture. No one takes the unconventional and makes it so readily embraceable like him. The “Pan’s Labyrinth” mastermind concocts a fanciful love story between a mute cleaning lady (Sally Hawkins) and the “Creature from the Black Lagoon”-like oddity (Doug Jones) at the lab where she works. By all means, this high-concept fairy tale shouldn’t work, but under capable hands, and with Oscar-winner Octavia Spencer wrestling away scenes from her co-stars like a pro, “The Shape of Water” is unexpectedly enchanting.

7. “It”



Stephen King said it best. Andy Muschietti’s first installment of a two-part adaptation of the author’s 1986 chiller surpassed any and all expectations. “*I was not prepared for how good it really was,*” King told reporters after his second viewing. Along with good, old-fashioned chills — I jumped three times, as a pal who saw the film with me can attest — the movie is deeply affecting, vintage King in exploring the ties that bind young outcasts. Muschietti’s cast is like watching the next generation of standouts. The movie ultimately hits home because the characters are worth rooting for.

Continued on Page 20

8. "The Big Sick"



A small independent film that redefined the romantic-comedy. Kumail Nanjiani wrote the script with his wife, Emily V. Gordon, inspired by how they met. Nanjiani, a Pakistani standup comic, has a meet-cute with a young white woman (Zoe Kazan) at one of his shows. The two fall for each other, then she's hospitalized for a rare illness, Nanjiani gradually bonding with her parents as they await her recovery. The parents are played by Ray Romano and Holly Hunter, the actress all but assured a Best Supporting Actress nod for her fiery performance. "The Big Sick" has a lot to say not just about ethnic clashes, but also the emotional vulnerabilities of men and women.

9. "Wonder Woman"



"Thor: Ragnarok" had the most laughs. "Spider-Man: Homecoming" bested its predecessors.

But the most satisfying comic-book adaptation arrived through Gal Gadot's career-making turn as the super hero. She's personality plus, with a killer smile and ferocious screen presence.

Credit, too, Director Patty Jenkins (the Oscar-winning "Monster") for treating DC's pulpy material with epic grandeur, especially the haunting visuals that convey the desolate World War I landscape.

Gadot shattered expectations that movies with female leads don't sell. "Wonder Woman" was the year's highest-grossing comic-book movie, and rightly so. It has the emotional and exhilarating resonance of a comic-book classic.

10. "The Shack"



As close to perfection as one could hope for in this long-awaited adaptation of William P. Young's best-seller, about one man's spiritual collapse after the murder of his daughter...and the three "visitors" in a secluded shack who restore his faith. Not for everyone's tastes, but a deeply moving experience bolstered by Sam Worthington in fine form as the grieving father and, in a beautiful performance, Octavia Spencer as "Papa."

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Unity Scholarship Recipients

Two La Porte County students will receive full-tuition, four-year scholarships as Unity Foundation of La Porte County 2018 Lilly Endowment Community Scholars.

Jorden Clemens and Bailey Scott will receive tuition to an accredited public or private Indiana college or university of their choice, and an annual \$900 stipend for required books and equipment.

Clemens will graduate with an academic honors diploma from South Central High School, having taken several advanced placement and dual credit courses. He has demonstrated leadership and initiative by becoming an Eagle Scout and is in the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's National Honor Society, due to his volunteer work. He is a math and English mentor tutor who actively participates in National Honor Society, Quiz Bowl, Robotics Club, German Club and FFA. He also serves his community through church activities and is a nine-year 4-H Club member. He works as a stocker at a retail store, and looks forward to pursuing a career as an agricultural scientist.



Scott is at the top of her class at La Porte High School and will graduate with an academic honors diploma, including having taken several dual-credit and advanced-placement level courses. Bailey has a great interest in political and social events, as evidenced by her participation in the Mayor's Youth Council. She is an active member of National Honor Society, Girls Reserves and Student Council. She volunteers in a variety of programs, many with a focus on serving women and children. She works at a local restaurant year-round and, seasonally, at a camp where part of her duties involve leading activities for youth. She plans to pursue a career in international relations, hoping to volunteer in the Peace Corps.



Unity Foundation received 80 applications for the Lilly scholarship from students in the county. Applicants were judged on academic achievement, service to others, extracurricular activities and, to a lesser extent, financial need.

A committee comprised of La Porte County residents reviewed the applications, not knowing the applicants' names until after the finalists were selected. The nine finalists were interviewed and the nominees submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana Inc. for final selection.

CALL THE BEACHER WITH YOUR NEWS!

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

REFINING THE SEARCHES

It is fun to narrow searches down to smaller and smaller geographical areas to see what differences exist. This month, I am considering the lakefront to the west of Michigan City and the lakefront to the east (we all know the lake is not square, so east and west are very relative directions).

Numbers from west of Michigan City

Year	Units	Med. Price	Total \$Volume
2011	14	\$188,000	\$4.3 M
2015	28	\$458,000	\$13.8 M
2016	14	\$435,000	\$8.0 M
2017	25	\$435,000	\$9.8 M

Remember that less than 30 units can cause numbers to behave erratically. But there are some insights we can glean from these numbers. 2011 was bad. Knew that. 2015 was a great year. Prices were stable the past three years, and 2017 was a good year for number of sales, but probably not for high end properties (\$Volume was not up commensurate with the number of sales).

Now for east of Michigan City

Year	Units	Med. Price	Total \$Volume
2011	82	\$289,000	\$29.5 M
2015	121	\$290,000	\$43.6 M
2016	139	\$325,000	\$50.0 M
2017	144	\$358,000	\$59.3 M

These are solidly improving numbers year over year. 2011 was a bad year to sell, as we already knew. But the past three years have seen solid gains in number of sales (although 2017 shows some weakness in increase in units sold), sale price and total \$Volume. Good market.

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Westchester Public Library

The following programs are available:

• **Knit Wits and Purls of Wisdom at 9 a.m. Thursdays, Jan. 11, 18 and 25, at Hageman Library, 100 Francis St., Porter.**

The weekly meeting is open to the skilled and novices, with no registration required.

• **NorthShore Health Center free blood-pressure screenings from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at Hageman Library and 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Jan. 17, in the Thomas Library Bertha Wood Meeting Room, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.**

Interested patrons also can receive help calculating Body Mass Index.

• **Bits & Bytes series, Intro to Facebook, from 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, in the Thomas Library Serials/Automation Department.**

Registration is required by visiting or calling the IT Department at (219) 926-7696, or registering at www.wpl.lib.in.us. Click on the Bits & Bytes link.

• **Music at the Museum from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.**

The Flashbacks will perform. Members are: Suzanne Keldsen, playing guitar, recorders and fiddle; Julietta Raby, playing fiddle, mandolin and guitar; Nancy Cairns on dulcimer and ukulele; Paul Mache playing guitar and banjo; and Marti Pizzini on autoharp, dulcimer and guitar.

• **Lego Club from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12, at the Thomas Library Children's Department.**

Children build around a different theme using the library's Legos. Registration is required by calling (219) 926-7696.

• **Intro to the Ukulele from 2 to 3 p.m. Sundays, Jan. 14, 21 and 28, and Feb. 4 and 11, in the Thomas Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

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.

• **Sunday Matinee: "Victoria and Abdul" at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 14, in The Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.**

The movie is Rated PG-13. Free popcorn will be available.

• **Maker Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 15, in the Thomas Library upstairs IT classroom.**

Local software engineer Adam Johnson will lead a hands-on program, appropriate for patrons 12 and older, about Arduino circuit devices.

• **Children's Crochet Club from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays through April 24 in the Thomas Library Children's Department.**



"Victoria and Abdul."

Children in grades 3 and older learn beginning crochet from instructor Sadie Steciuch. They should take a size G crochet hook and skein of medium weight yarn. Call (219) 926-7696 to register.

• **"Peaceful People" from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Feb. 27, at the Thomas Library children's department.**

Aimed at children 6 and older and their caregivers, each session opens with a short exercise to become aware of breathing, followed by a book or two that stress empathy or kindness. Activities are designed to increase feelings of peace and well-being, including mandala construction, gratitude journaling and painting kindness rocks.

Registration is required because space is limited. Call (219) 926-7696 or visit the library to register.

• **Minecraft Meet-up from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, at Thomas Library.**

Registration is required and must be done in person. The WPL Gaming Policy and Rules of Conduct must be signed upon registration as well. Parents are welcome to attend, but required for youth 10 and younger.

• **Nail Art for All Ages from 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, in the Thomas Library Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

Learn new trends and techniques in nail art with Miss Sandra. This month's theme is snowflakes. Registration is required in person or by calling (219) 926-7697

• **Pizza Pajama Book Club for Teens from 7 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, in the Thomas Library Young Adult Room.**

Teens in grades 6-12 can discuss books they have read or are reading. The focus is Rick Riordan's "The Sword of Summer." Pizza is provided. Registration is required.

Students Chosen for Honor Choir

Four Michigan City Area Schools vocalists have been selected to sing in the 146-member Indiana Elementary Honor Choir.



Pictured are (back row, from left) Darius Flores and Brooklynn Accardi of Pine Elementary. The front row is (from left) Arriana Pytynia and Madison Gresham of Knapp Elementary.

The students, who are from Knapp and Pine elementary schools, will sing at the Indiana Music Education Association's professional development conference Jan. 11-12, performing at Fort Wayne's Embassy Theater.

The students were chosen based on teacher recommendations and recorded auditions. Choral directors are Jeanne Bolen (Pine) and Steve Chambers (Knapp).



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LCA Honors Retiring Board Members

The staff and board at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., recently honored several retiring, long-standing board members.

Nick and Sue Bridge, Suzanne Cohan-Lange, Shari Diamond and Bunny Fisher were recognized during an event in the LCA Hyndman Gallery. Each played significant roles in establishing the center at its present location, in the heart of what is now the Uptown Arts District.



Fisher has been the LCA's longest-serving board member. As past president, she was instrumental in developing plans to convert the former Restaurant Management Building into an art center. She also established the LCA's annual gala fundraiser, now known as ArtBash.

Cohan-Lange owns and operates Blink Contemporary Art on Franklin Street with her husband, Richard Lange. At 13 consecutive years of service, Fisher was the one who asked her to serve on the board. In addition to a two-year term as board president, she curated major exhibits by sculptor Richard Hunt and photographer Victor Skrebneski.



Bridge has served as board president. His wife, Sue, has "done everything from develop the ArtMaker programs and events, run meetings, write beautiful persuasive letters and wash floors!" Executive Director Janet Bloch said. Sue also has chaired the annual Art Bash many times.

Diamond made an exhibit of Belle Epoch posters possible and, according to Bloch, "added so much wisdom to the governance committee."

Children's Art Classes

Jennifer Martin will host children's art classes in January at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

The goal is to introduce children to various artists, their styles and techniques, with projects reflecting what they are learning. Classes meet weekly, and are open to all ages and skill levels. Several mediums will be used, including drawing, painting, *papier mache*, mosaic, sculpture and collage.

Each month, a different artist is featured. January's focus is Amedeo Modigliani, an Italian-Jewish painter and sculptor known for modern portraits with elongated features. He lived from 1884 to 1920 and spent much of his life in France. Students will create a *papier-mache* piece inspired by Modigliani as part of their projects.

The schedule is:

- Monday, 1-2 p.m., preschool, 4- to 5-year-olds.
- Monday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (beginner), 5- to 8-year-olds.
- Tuesday, 1-2 p.m., preschool, 3- to 4-year-olds.
- Tuesday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (intermediate), 6- to 9-year-olds.
- Wednesday, 11 a.m.-noon, preschool 4- to 5-year-olds.
- Wednesday, 1-2:30 p.m., homeschool, 8- to 15-year-olds.
- Wednesday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (intermediate), 6- to 9-year-olds.
- Thursday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (advanced), 8- to 12-year-olds.
- Thursday, 5:15-6:45 p.m., after school (advanced painting), 10- to 16-year-olds.

Tuition is \$90 per month for after-school and home-school students (the member rate is \$70), and \$75 for preschool students (the member rate is \$55). Supplies and a snack are included. Students must be registered before the start of each month.

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Paladin Gives Back

Paladin Inc. collected more than 100 new, unwrapped toys for children in need over a two-month period as part of the 2017 Toys for Tots drive.

It is tradition each December that a group enrolled in Paladin's services, along with a staff member or two, go shopping to support children in need.



Pictured are (from left) Tim Vaughan, Toys for Tots local coordinating officer, Amanda Roby, Jim Hodges, Toys for Tots representative, Erin Mooneyhan, Cornell Benson and Bill Trowbridge, president/CEO.

Prior to the recent merger that created Paladin, Michiana Resources and Parents and Friends participated separately. Both had clubs that would host fundraisers and events. As the years progressed, the clubs decided they wanted to give back to the community and support other nonprofits and/or charities. Several years ago, an individual met a Marine who suggested reaching out to the local Toys for Tots organization.

Paladin has locations in Michigan City and La Porte. Call Kathleen VanGilder at (219) 324-0656, Ext. 2012, for details.



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Salvation Army Finds Gold Coins in Red Kettles

The Salvation Army of Michigan City last month had a pleasant surprise as red kettle donations were being counted for the day.

Two gold coins were dropped into local kettles: one outside Big R Stores and another at Walmart.

Capt. Johnny Bartsch, who oversees the local Salvation Army with his wife, Kerry, is the one who discovered the coins as he was gathering the collection for the day.

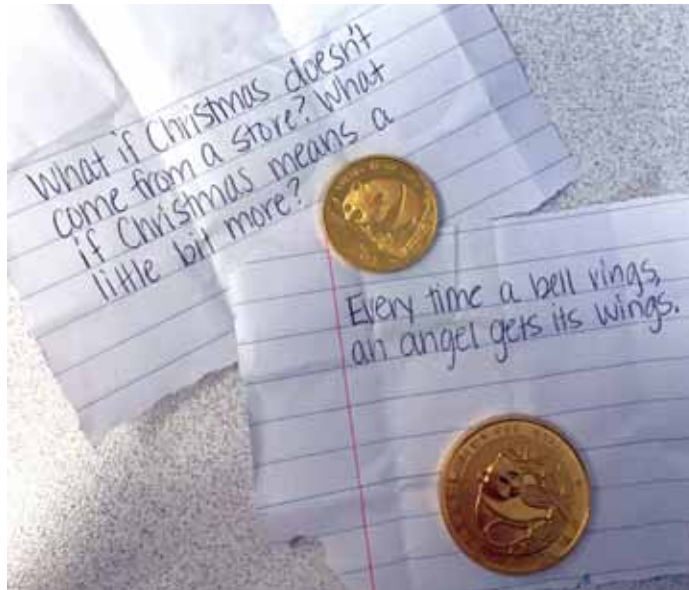
"It was exciting to see the gold coins," he said, describing how each was wrapped in a small piece of paper with a holiday movie quote written on it.

One read, *"Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings,"* from the classic *"It's a Wonderful Life."* The other read, *"What if Christmas doesn't come from a store? What if Christmas means a little bit more?"* from *"How the Grinch Stole Christmas."*

Bartsch loved the movie quotes, saying they connect red kettle donations and The Salvation Army mission back to the true meaning of Christmas.

The gold coins both feature a panda. One weighed in at a half ounce of gold and the other one quarter ounce of gold. At today's value, the coins are worth approximately \$945 total.

"It's really exciting to see someone give something like that in total anonymity," Bartsch said. "Often-times, one of the benefits of making a large gift is the tax write-off. But this person can't because



The movie quotes included with the gold coins left in red kettles.

there is no proof that they gave a gift – it was completely out of the goodness of their heart."

While the appearance of gold coins or bars in Salvation Army kettles is not completely uncommon, Bartsch said the local corps did not receive any gold coins last year.

"We just want to thank the person who gave this wonderful gift to The Salvation Army," he said. "We are so grateful for all of the support we receive all year, but this definitely made for an exciting Christmas surprise for

us."

With a goal of raising \$100,000 during the annual Christmas Campaign, Bartsch said this gift represents about 1/100 of the overall goal.

Funds raised helped The Salvation Army serve more than 400 meals on Thanksgiving Day, and provide Christmas assistance to nearly 600 Michigan City families. It also will help fund programs and services provided by The Salvation Army of Michigan City throughout the year.

More information is available by calling (219) 874-6885 or visiting www.samichigancity.org



Capt. Kerry Bartsch holds the coins.

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Flutist Joins Music School

Flute performer and teacher Julie Littell has joined the faculty of The School of American Music in Three Oaks, Mich.

Littell, Michigan City, will teach beginning, intermediate and advanced flute courses for children and adults. Among her many teaching positions, she headed the flute department at the Talent Education Suzuki School in Norwalk, Conn. She was a faculty member at Merit Music, also in Norwalk, and at Claremont (Calif.) Community School of Music. She has played with bands and ensembles in Los Angeles, Tarrytown, N.Y., and Michigan City.

Littell has a Bachelor of Arts in flute performance from Principia College, and received teacher training and certification from schools in Iowa, Wisconsin, California and Japan.

Those interested in studying flute should contact Donna Mitchell at SAM at schoolofamericanmusic@gmail.com or (269) 409-1191.

SAM provides one-on-one instruction with experienced teachers who also are performing musicians. Besides flute, it offers courses in guitar, piano, violin, baritone ukulele, voice, music reading and composition and studio recording. Its affiliated Arts & Education Center houses the Harbor Country Singers, programs in Yoga and Tai Chi, and periodic short-term musical and other workshops.

Tai Chi classes are from 10 to 11 a.m. EST Tuesdays. Instructor Edward Vanek teaches the Cheng Man-ch'ing style developed by Yang Lu-ch'an.

The cost is \$10 per session. Classes are held at the Three Oaks Arts & Education Center, 14 Maple St. in downtown Three Oaks.



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Activities to Explore

In the Area:

Jan. 11 — Music at the Museum, 2-3:30 p.m., Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

Jan. 12 — Cookies and Canvas, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Times: children 3-7/5-6:30 p.m., 8 & older/7-8:30 p.m. Cost: \$10, \$5/members. Info/registration: www.chestertonart.com, (219) 926-4711.

Jan. 13 — Duneland Weavers Guild, 10 a.m., Westchester Public Library's Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton. Info: www.dunelandweaversguild.org

Jan. 13 — Winter Open House 2018, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Dunes Learning Center, 700 Howe Road, Chesterton. Info: www.duneslearningcenter.org/events

Jan. 13 — In the Footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 2-3 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Jan. 13 — Stargazing, 5-7 p.m., Kemil Beach parking area, 27 N. East State Park Road, Chesterton. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Jan. 13 — Mary Fahl (former October Project lead singer), 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30. Info: www.acorntheater.com, (269) 756-3879.

Jan. 14 — Snowshoe Hike, 1-3 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Jan. 14 — Sunday Matinee: "Victoria and Abdul," 1:30 p.m., The Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Jan. 15 — Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration Breakfast, 8:30-10 a.m., Purdue University Northwest, James B. Dworkin Student Services and Activities Complex Great Hall. Free. Reservations: www.pnw.edu/MLK-celebration

Jan. 15 — Martin Luther King Jr. Day, 10:30 a.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Jan. 16 — Harbor Country Hikers, "Hiking and Health," 6:30 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: harborcountryhikers.com

In the Region

Through Jan. 21 — Cracker Jack exhibit, "Toys Across Time," Fernwood Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. Info: www.fernwoodbotanical.org, (269) 695-6491.

Through Feb. 25 — "Here and There: Intimate and Large Scale Views in Photography," Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Info: (574) 293-6660, www.MidwestMuseum.US

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New Buffalo Streetscape Project

New Buffalo, in partnership with the New Buffalo Downtown Development Authority, is in the final phase of making improvements to the community's downtown area.

The work will replace water and sewer lines, and create a new streetscape.

New Buffalo DDA staff provided this information with answers to specific questions about the project:

Q: What is the difference between the Downtown Development Authority and the Planning Commission?

Response: The DDA, authorized by state legislation, works to improve economic conditions and preserve historical elements in the business district. Funding comes from Tax Increment Financing based on property taxes in the district. DDA funds support the business district and promote tourism.

The planning commission is a delegated committee, authorized by state legislation, to assist with the master plan and state zoning codes. It provides oversight for property improvement and land use, and it does not have a funding mechanism.

From the City of New Buffalo website:

The Downtown Development Authority is organized with reference to Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975, as amended for the purpose of correcting and preventing deterioration in the business district, to increase property tax valuation where possible in the business district, and to eliminate the causes of deterioration and to promote economic growth.

- A. Prepare an analysis of economic changes taking place in the district.
- B. Study and analyze the impact of these changes upon the district.
- C. Plan and propose the construction, renovation, repair, remodeling, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation or reconstruction of a public facility, an existing building or a multiple family dwelling unit which may be necessary or appropriate to the execution of the plan, which in the opinion of the board, aids in economic growth of the downtown district.
- D. Develop long-range plans in cooperation with the City of New Buffalo Planning Commission designed to prevent deterioration of property values in the district, to encourage economic growth in the district and to take steps necessary to implement the plans.
- E. Implement and plan for development that may be necessary to achieve the purpose of the Act in accordance with the Ordinance and the authority granted by said Act.

The planning commission plans functions, as covered in Michigan's Planning Enabling Act and Zoning Enabling Act, as well as the city's general ordinances. Commissioners use the zoning ordinance, master plan and planning commission bylaws to assist with their duties.

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



On January 11, 1770, Benjamin Franklin, in London, shipped the first rhubarb to America.

On January 11, 1805, the Michigan Territory was created.

On January 11, 1935, aviator Amelia Earhart took off from Honolulu bound for Oakland on the last leg of a flight that made her the first woman to fly solo across the Pacific.

On January 11, 1982, Chicago's schools were closed the day after a record-breaking cold, when mercury dropped to 26 degrees below zero. At 11 a.m. the temperature climbed to zero for the first time in two days.

On January 11, 2000, Carlton Fisk, star catcher for the White Sox for 13 years and for the Boston Red Sox for 11, was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

On January 12, 1773, America's first public museum was established in Charleston, S.C.

On January 12, 1927, Chicago dedicated Midway Airport.

On January 12, 1971, the long running "All in the Family" made its debut on CBS.

On January 12, 1999, Mark McGwire's 70th home run ball was sold at auction in New York for \$3 million.

On January 13, 1906, the first advertisement for a radio, a Telimco selling for \$7.50, appeared in Scientific American magazine.

On January 13, 1966, Robert Weaver became the first black Cabinet member when President Lyndon Johnson appointed him Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

On January 13, 2002, the off-Broadway musical "The Fantasticks" was performed for the last time, ending a run of nearly 42 years and 17,162 shows.

On January 14, 1870, in a cartoon by Thomas Nast in Harper's Weekly, the Democratic Party was represented for the first time by a donkey.

On January 14, 1900, Puccini's opera "Tosca" received a mixed reception at its world premiere in Rome.

On January 14, 1914, Henry Ford started the assembly line that reduced the time of putting together a car from over 12 hours to 93 minutes. This contributed to lowered automobile prices, smog, energy shortages, traffic jams, fast food restaurants and Arab dominance of the oil market.

On January 14, 1952, the Today show, featuring

Dave Garroway as host, premiered on NBC.

On January 14, 1970, Diana Ross and the Supremes performed together in concert for the final time, at the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas.

On January 15, 1844, the University of Notre Dame received its charter from the state of Indiana.

On January 15, 1974, "Happy Days" premiered on ABC.

On January 15, 2004, the NASA Spirit rover, rolled onto the surface of Mars for the first time since the vehicle bounced to a landing nearly two weeks earlier.

On January 16, 1936, Florida's "Hialeah Race Track" installed the first electric-eye photo-finish camera to record the winner of each horse race, eliminating the question of which horse really came in first.

On January 16, 1964, the stage show "Hello Dolly," starring Carol Channing, began a run of 2,844 performances.

On January 16, 1985, Reuben Anderson was sworn in as Mississippi's first black justice on the state Supreme Court.

On January 16, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia blasted off with Israel's first astronaut, Ilan Ramon. The mission ended in tragedy Feb. 1, when the shuttle burned up during its return, killing all seven crew members.

On January 16, 2006, "Brokeback Mountain" won four Golden Globes, including best motion picture drama; "Lost" won best dramatic television series while "Desperate Housewives" won for best musical or comedy series.

On January 17, 1778, Captain James Cook discovered the Sandwich Islands (now the Hawaiian Islands), naming them after Lord Sandwich, head of the British Admiralty.

On January 17, 1923, following the enactment of an ordinance reducing the number of alderman in Chicago wards from two to one, First Ward Alderman Michael "Hinky Dinky" Kenna announced that he would step down in favor of the ward's other alderman, John "Bathhouse John" Coughlin.

On January 17, 1955, the USS Nautilus made its first nuclear-powered run from its submarine berth in Groton, Conn.

On January 17, 1984, the Supreme Court ruled that the private use of home VCRs to tape TV programs didn't violate federal copyright laws.

On January 17, 1997, an Irish court granted the first divorce in the nation's history.

On January 17, 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that Oregon doctors who helped the terminally ill under the state's assisted suicide law couldn't be arrested under federal drug laws.

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CONDOMINIUM WITH UNIVERSAL APPEAL IN THE SHORES! 2BR/2.5BA/main-floor den, at 2210 Bayview Drive. \$224,500. Sale by owner. Household items, furniture items available by appointment. (219) 393-4609.



The American Red Cross La Porte County Chapter will sponsor the following bloodmobiles:

- Kingsbury Elementary School, 802 W. County Road 400 South, La Porte, 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12. Students who recruit one presenting donor receive a Red Cross medal while supplies last.
- Bethany Lutheran Church, 102 G St., La Porte, 1 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16.

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.

Support those who advertise in the Beacher!
Tell them you saw their Ad!

Chesterton Art Center

The following programs are available through Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.:

• **Jennifer Martin will host a Polar Blast edition of Cookies and Canvas on Friday, Jan. 12.**

Children 3-7 attend from 5 to 6:30 p.m. and youth 8 and older from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The evening will include an 8" x 10" snow-themed, stretched canvas painting, as well as cookies and juice.

The cost is \$10 per child, or \$5 for members. Registration and payment are required no later than Thursday, Jan. 11.

• **Life Drawing Open Studio from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Mondays.**

Clothed models of different ages and genders will serve as subject matter. The open setting requires that artists take supplies and clean up afterwards. While not structured, some instruction and critique are available if needed.

The cost is \$10 per session, plus a tip for the model. The winter/spring sessions run Jan. 15-May 21.

• **George Kassal will offer a three-session Beginning Digital Photography class starting from 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17.**

The class is designed for people new to digital, and who primarily use point-and-shoot cameras. Kassal, Long Beach, will cover basic operation, and features such as scene modes, exposure compensation, white balance and flash.

Students should take a camera and instruction manual to class. The cost is \$65, with members receiving a \$20 discount.



Call (219) 926-4711 or visit www.chestertonart.com to register or for more details.

**Prayer to the Blessed Virgin**

(Never known to fail.)

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

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



Off the Book Shelf

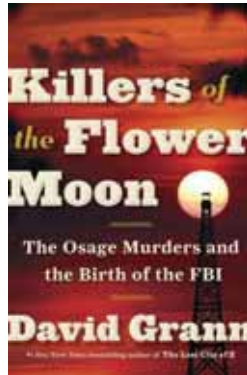
by Sally Carpenter

Happy New Year! Wow — 2018. My first thought is, “Time to see what new books are coming out!” But it’s also a time to look back at all the great reads of 2017 — and there were plenty.

Since I review 50 books a year, this is not an easy task by any means, but I have come up with 10 books that would appeal to a variety of readers... and don’t ask me to mark them 1-10. It just can’t be done!

Killers of the Flower Moon

by David Grann. This is one of my non-fiction choices. It’s emotional, it’s hard to believe, but it’s all true. Osage Indians on the Oklahoma reservation were being killed off — a lot by poisoning — by greedy white men eager to steal the rich ore and oil deposits under their ground. One man’s crusade to discover the truth brings up an ugly page in American history.



News of the World by Juliette Jiles. This National Book Award finalist tells the story of a man who makes a living in the late 1800s reading newspapers to settlers in far-flung areas of Texas. He is paid to take a former Indian hostage, a young girl, back to her relatives. Their journey inspires many revelations for the man about himself and his charge, the harsh landscape providing a background that brings out each other’s true grit. Historical fiction at its finest.

Another Brooklyn by Jacqueline Woodson. Longlisted for the National Book Award, this story follows three African-American girls growing up in 1970s Brooklyn. A socially and politically changing decade, it also was a time when girls faced the fears of growing up, met boys and tried to make sense of the world around them — not an easy task. Beautifully written, lovingly told.

Nutshell by Ian McEwan. Truly “something entirely different.” It’s told by a baby in utero! What this baby hears is first the radio, then the strange conversations of his mommy. What he hears becomes sinister and scary. What will happen to him when he’s born? It will be a surprise!

Midnight Sun by Jo Nesbø. Ulf is a hit man in Oslo, Norway. Not a new theme. However, in this story, Ulf wants out of the business. He wants a new start and heads north for the home of the Laplanders, where he hopes he can disappear and live out his life in peace. Is that possible? A

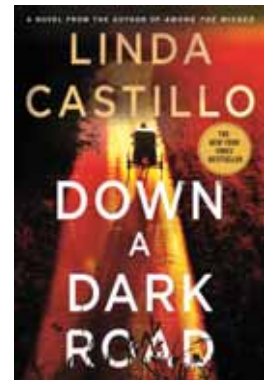


fascinating story of a man questioning the choices he made in the past and wondering if a different future is even possible.

The River at Night by Erica Ferencik. What is more ferocious — man or nature? Four women are about to find out as they begin a white-water rafting trip along a wild and uninhabited section of northern Maine. The story shows what happens when friendship is pushed to the limit and life and death are on the line.

Skitter by Ezekiel Boone. I felt it was necessary to include this book in the horror/sci-fi genre to provide more variety. It’s the second in a trilogy, preceded by **The Hatching**. It had me as hooked like the first one! Spiders are wrecking havoc on the earth, but this is not just a bloodbath. It’s a story of how the scientific community wants to handle the spiders, and how the U.S. government reacts. Of course, it’s a cliffhanger — there’s one more book to go!

Down a Dark Road by Linda Castillo. This author has created a stellar series about Kate Burkholder, born Amish, who left the community to join the big city police force, and now is back as sheriff in her hometown of Painters Mill, Ohio. Castillo’s strength rests in her ability to show us the Amish mindset and life in their community, and provide a strong female character. In this book, an Amish wife and four of her five children are brutally murdered in their home. The husband is nowhere to be found. Is he guilty? Facing brutal odds, Kate sets out to discover the truth.



Gunmetal Gray by Mark Greaney. If you like action stories, then Mark Greaney is your man. His character, Court Gentry, known as The Gray Man, is ex-CIA, now an independent contractor and the subject of a popular series. His name derives from the fact he works in that gray area, somewhere inside and outside the law. A pure adrenaline rush!

All the Gallant Men by Donald Stratton. This is my second non-fiction choice, written by a sailor who was on the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Stratton’s memories, the injuries he suffered and how after a year of recuperation at home, he re-enlisted in the Navy, reminds us of why his was part of “the great generation.”



Till next time, happy reading!

Happy New Year!

We are grateful for clients & customers like you, who have been the key to our success. We wish you a wonderful New Year in 2018!

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Karrie McCorkel 219.898.1009

Micky Gallas Properties is pleased to announce our newest Broker Associate, Karrie McCorkel, to our team. Welcome home, Karrie!

"The experience of selling my own homes to recently building my current home has piqued my interest in working in real estate. As a life long resident of Northwest Indiana, I am very familiar with the area and I am confident I will make it my business to exceed your expectations.

If you or someone you know is interested in buying or selling a home, please contact me. I would love the opportunity to work together!"

- Karrie McCorkel



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302 Birch Tree Lane, Michigan City • \$119,000

Sell your lawnmower and move right in! This wonderful condo has updated kitchen, crown molding and tasteful neutral decor. Affordable living with many amenities! Enjoy the pool or trek on down to the beach! Association dues include heat, water and common area maintenance.



333 Lake Shore Drive, Sheridan Beach • \$220,000

Beautiful condo with lake views and walking distance to Lake Michigan! 2-bed, 2-bath unit with a beautiful kitchen, living room, dining area and den. Attached garage and storage are under unit. Wonderful viewing deck with pool and hot tub. Walking distance to Washington Park, zoo, marina, lighthouse, restaurants and more.



805 Birch Tree Lane, Michigan City • \$176,000

Best of both worlds! Enjoy low maintenance 3-bedroom 3-bath condo living within a beach community! Only one of four units this size. Wonderful amenities include garage, private patio and pool area. Beautiful common area. Association fee includes gas, trash, water, grass, snow removal and all of the pool maintenance.



202 N. Lake Ave #EW • \$1,076,000

Family compound? Rental property? You decide! Both units for sale separately, as well as the entire building. 202 N. Lake Ave. is a well-maintained beach compound with 2 separate townhomes: 202 East and 202 West. Each unit has 4 floors, private rooftops and views of Lake Michigan. West unit has 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, and east unit has 3 bedrooms 4 baths. Each has parking for 4 (8 total spaces)!



3307 Calumet Trail, Duneland Beach • \$439,900

Living is easy in this generously proportioned 2-story residence on a double lot in desirable Duneland Beach. The floorplan encompasses four spacious bedrooms with plenty of storage, three bathrooms and a kitchen that flows to the eating area. The master bedroom is complete with walk-in closet and master bath. Large living room and rec room on main floor, finished basement. Wonderful screened-in porch overlooks expansive yard and deck with above ground pool. Perfect for a year-round family or as a summer retreat, this home is a 4-minute walk to the beach!



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