What in the Dickens Are They Doing?

See a Charles Dickens Christmas at the Barker Mansion

by Maggie Beyer

Charles Dickens and his family take center stage in the Barker Mansion’s annual Christmas production this year. All through the Mansion there are scenes of Christmas as this famous writer of the 19th century might have celebrated it with highlights from the holiday classic, “The Christmas Carol” and from “Oliver Twist”. Actors on the stage in each room are carefully reproduced mannequins including ghosts from Christmas Past, Present and Future; even Tiny Tim sits by his father, Bob Cratchitt, with his tiny crutch at his side.

There is also something special. The lavishly decorated tree in the main foyer is decorated to the tree top with hundreds of ornaments that have the taste of olden days with many offered for sale. Pick your favorites and take them home for gifts or your own special tree. Another first for Christmas 2000 at the Barker is the introduction of a souvenir book that reproduces Barker Mansion scenes and treasures in full color, handsomely printed on glossy-rich pages that tell the story of the Barker family. Another great gift idea of one of Michigan City’s treasures. On hand as well for stocking-stuffer seekers are tea-time favorites from the Mansion’s annual Victorian teas.

An open house when guests can wander through the Mansion at leisure begins December 2nd, Monday through Friday at noon to 3 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 4 pm, until December 17th. From December 18th through January 15th, the decorations can be seen on regular guided tours that are held Monday through Friday at 10 am, 11:30 am and 1 pm; Saturdays and Sunday at noon and 2 pm. The Mansion will be closed December 24th, 25th and January 1st.

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“We chose the Dickens theme for this year because his story of “The Christmas Carol” marks the beginning of how we celebrate Christmas,” Cecilia Zubler, director of the Barker Mansion said. “When Scrooge declares, “I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all year”, his message became part of how we came to feel about the celebration of this holiday. We’ve had fun all year planning just what we’ll do with each room to carry out the theme.” “We” includes Mary Kintzele, tour guides Terry Pabon and Jan Woodruff, and Elke Zimmerman, textile curator.

Local community groups that include the Women’s Study Club, CISV, and AAUW add their own ideas, contributions and resources. Weekends will find music in the air as local musicians gather around the grand piano in the Mansion’s living room.

The living room holds art treasures of marble treasures, oil paintings and porcelains; look closely at the white marble fireplace and you can find John H. Barker’s face. Catching the light through lace curtains is a 19th Century Italian sculpture “Three Musicians of the Renaissance” which was returned as a gift to the Barker Mansion by the Vail family of Michigan City; originally it had been presented by Mr. and Mrs. John H. Barker as a gift to Mr. and Mrs. William Walter and Georgiana Vail.
Along with the many people who bring friends and family to see the Barker Mansion when it wears its Christmas finery, are over 1800 school groups who visit with their teachers. To introduce them to this year’s theme of Charles Dickens, Terry Pabon has developed a pre-tour video on *The Christmas Carol* and *Oliver Twist* along with a list of other materials available at the Michigan City Public Library they might use to enrich the experience. Tour guides add additional notes that have been researched by the Mansion’s staff as they take the young people through each room.

Charles Dickens in his study...his daughter peeps around the corner.

*Charles Dickens had 10 children, and in the French Room, we find the author busy at his desk, surrounded by crumbled papers, a sign that he was busy at work. From the adjoining room that was once Catherine Barker’s bedroom, one of his daughters peeks around the corner to see if Papa can be disturbed. In this children’s room, it was good to see the model dollhouse of the Barker Mansion lovingly made by Al Fieldhouse of Michigan Shores before his death, one of many things he did for the community.*

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Barker Continued from Page 3

The former guest room, now called the Bride’s Room and used by many bridal parties who use the Barker Mansion and its gardens for their weddings, has been transformed into a scene from *Oliver Twist* with the pathos of the poorhouse where a hungry Oliver asks for “more”. Dickens wrote this and *David Copperfield* from his own experiences as a child. His schooling was interrupted at the age of nine when father was imprisoned for debt in 1824 and Charles was forced to support himself by working in a shoe-polish factory. He did get back to school, but was mostly self-educated and read widely with Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett among his favorite authors. At the age of 15 he became a legal clerk, learned shorthand to become a reporter in the courts and Parliament; by the time he was twenty-five, he published his first sketches of daily life in London using the name *Boz*.

The Master’s Bedroom of the Barker Mansion has been transformed into the room where Scrooge has visits from the ghosts of Christmas Present, Christmas Past and Christmas Future. *The Christmas Carol* was published midway in his career after many successes at the same time he was busy managing a theatre company that played before Queen Victoria and traveling through England and America giving readings from his works. His works in later years of his life took on a deeper meaning from the humor and pathos of earlier books, looking into the human condition and the evils of ignorance and want that existed in the midst of lavish lifestyles around them, as the Ghost of Christmas Present portrays in *The Christmas Carol*. *Oliver Twist, Hard Times, A Tale of Two Cities* are among these later books, and he was at work on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* when Charles Dickens died and was buried in Westminster Abbey in 1870.

*Please sir, can I have some more*, asks Oliver in a poorhouse scene from Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*. The Ghost of Christmas Present with a lavish holiday feast, far from the life of those in ignorance and want as Dickens described it. The Ghost of Christmas Past foretells the fate of Scrooge if he persists in his uncaring ways.

A crutch rests by Tiny Tim as the Cratchit family celebrates Christmas in Dickens’ *Christmas Carol*. The Master's Bedroom of the Barker Mansion has been transformed into the room where Scrooge has visits from the ghosts of Christmas Present, Christmas Past and Christmas Future. The Christmas Carol was published midway in his career after many successes at the same time he was busy managing a theatre company that played before Queen Victoria and traveling through England and America giving readings from his works. His works in later years of his life took on a deeper meaning from the humor and pathos of earlier books, looking into the human condition and the evils of ignorance and want that existed in the midst of lavish lifestyles around them, as the Ghost of Christmas Present portrays in The Christmas Carol. Oliver Twist, Hard Times, A Tale of Two Cities are among these later books, and he was at work on The Mystery of Edwin Drood when Charles Dickens died and was buried in Westminster Abbey in 1870.
There is a story within a story this year as visitors tour the Christmas theme at Barker Mansion. Another hidden story is in the making of the mannequins that depict the family and characters of Charles Dickens. Beneath the robes and gowns they now wear, many started life as headless department store dummies. The heads are a donation from a beauty parlor, now painted and tressed to show expressions that range from stately Queen Victoria to the ghoulish Christmas Past, have been gowned, groomed and painted by Elke Zimmerman and Mary Kintzele inspired by books and magazines they have researched for the period. The research has laid the groundwork for other staff members and community groups to see the scene of an English Pub in the Mansion’s state-ly dining room (It was known that Dickens liked to frequent pubs).

And the staff’s creativity gets full play as they recycle ornaments and decorations from previous years. “It’s become a game for some people who come every year to see how we’ve put to use things they may have seen before,” Cecilia Zubler said. “For instance, we’ve resurrected Queen Victoria from our Victorian Christmas two years ago, because she and Prince Albert were largely responsible for the Christmas tree and ornaments we use today. Albert had introduced the decorated fir tree from his native Germany and when a picture of the Royal Family sitting around the tree at Christmas was circulated in London, common people wanted the same setting for their homes. The idea traveled across the ocean so we have it here today.”

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Prince Albert reigns in the Mansion’s library where a traditional tree, decked with handblown glass ornaments, drenched in tinsel, sets the scene for a German Christmas. Mary Zintzele has produced some of the other traditional German Christmas goodies like Stollen and Prune People and wooden designs driven by the heat of candle flames. Some members of the Monday Musicale, which holds regular concerts at the Mansion, said that a preview was like revisiting a childhood in Germany.

There is tradition everywhere at the Barker Mansion at Christmas, a melange of ideas to take home perhaps for decorating schemes, a wonderful trip into the Victorian world of Charles Dickens, and some fine giftables to take home as well. Who could ask for more in starting off a celebration of the Christmas season, here at 631 Washington Street in Michigan City.
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6 bedrooms, 3 baths. Oak log home on 3 acres. Large kitchen, fieldstone fireplace, walk-out lower level. Covered front porch, screened porch and barn.
“Remember Pearl Harbor”

December 7, 1941, “a day that will live in infamy”, marked America’s entry into World War II. We remember and salute the veterans, both living and dead, with a song written by Don Reid, music by Don Reid and Sammy Kaye, which became an instant hit during those dark days.

Remember Pearl Harbor

History—in every century, records an act that lives forevermore.
We'll recall—as in to line we fall, the thing that happened on Hawaii's shore.

Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR—
As we go to meet the foe—
Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR
As we did the Alamo.

We will always remember—
how they died for liberty,
Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR
and go on to victory.

Another tremendously popular song at the time was “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition.” This song, written by Frank Loesser, was based on a remark allegedly made by a chaplain, who, during the attack, while assisting military personnel in attempting to shoot at the attacking aircraft with machine guns, was asked to say a prayer for the men at their battle stations.

The chaplain was reported to have said, “Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.”

Pearl Harbor Survivor
by Bill Burns

I lived to see our ships in Edo Bay
And all the Nippon arms and where were they

Here Patrick roams from his Seattle home
At ease in Hoosier corn producing loam

How fared in battle the Pacific son
The Japanese can tell who fell when it was done

I'll berth in my harbor later on or soon
A cloud above Pearl Harbor is my Brigadoon

William P. Burns, born in Seattle, Washington, was inducted into the military service on June 12, 1941. He reached the rank of Corporal and was at Pearl Harbor where he worked with a Chinese surgeon under fire and helped save thirty of thirty-four men. His experience prompted him to write a poem, “Pearl Harbor Survivor” which was later published in a book of the same name by Turner Publications.
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“Two Hearted River” at Blank Center

Paintings and mixed media work by local artists, Rita and John Dagys—which have been collectively named “Two Hearted River”—will be exhibited at the John G. Blank Center for the Arts, 312 E. 8th St., Michigan City. The show will continue through January 19th.

Rita and John Dagy’s work is in some ways very similar, and in others, quite different. The “river” is what connects them not only by marriage and spirit, but also by the similarities in their work. They both are influenced by a deep love of the dunes, of nature, solitude and spirituality. Though Rita works with acrylic and canvas for the most part, and John uses other methods, it has been said that these similarities show through.

John’s work has been influenced by his background in architecture, also by his travels to the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and by mythology.

Rita’s background is music (an MM composition) has great influence on her painting. The 20th century era of Austrian expressionism of Berg, Webern, and Schoenberg sparked a great interest in her, as does the music of the East and as well as more traditional Western music. Over many years Rita developed a deep interest in psychology and takes great interest in Jung and his followers. Rita always listens to classical music when she paints and feels that helps guide her work. That, and a higher power. Interest of the written word, specifically modern poetry, is also an influence. Rita also sometimes writes a poem for her pieces and displays the painting and poem together, with copies of the poem available for those who wish to have one.

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ImageChecker is an excellent diagnostic tool in the hands of our experienced team. Board-certified radiologist Esther Lee, MD, who is the Director of Mammography at the Center for Breast Health, says, “The R2 ImageChecker will help radiologists in detecting breast cancer at an earlier stage. Finding breast cancer early means increased survival and good outcomes for women in our community.”

We think you’ll agree that ImageChecker is a valuable community health enhancement. We urge all women to take advantage of it by having their regularly-scheduled mammograms. Call the Center for Breast Health at 219/877-1980 today to make your appointment.

The First and Most Accurate Technology in the Area.
Appointments are being taken now.
Second opinions welcome.
Enjoy old-fashioned Christmas spirit and experience fascinating customs at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore on Sun., Dec. 10th, from 1-4 p.m. Events will take place at Chellberg Farm and the Bailly Homestead.

A traditional Swedish Christmas will be seen at Chellberg Farm. Volunteers, clad in Swedish clothing, will explain and recreate the magical legend of St. Lucia. Processions will be held in the farmhouse every 1/2 hour from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Swedish tunes will be played on traditional instruments and a smorgasbord of Swedish foods will be on display in the kitchen.

After a short trek to Bailly Homestead, warm up with a cup of hot cider and travel back in time to the fur trade era where you will learn about the lifestyles and winter activities of the Potawatomis and fur traders of the 1820’s. Learn about French Christmas traditions through stories and song as you tour the Bailly house.

For more information about this program, phone 219/926-7561, ext. 225.

John Watson and Marti Pizzini provide a festive mood as they create traditional Swedish music during “Christmas in the Dunes” at Chellberg Farm.

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Handel’s “Messiah” to be Presented

The 36th annual performance of Handel’s “Messiah” will be presented at the First Presbyterian Church, 9th and Washington Streets, Michigan City, on Sun., Dec. 17th. About two hundred vocalists and instrumentalists from the Michigan City area will participate.

The 250-year-old oratorio will be directed by Dan McNabb and will feature professional soloists. John Remmel will play the church’s 2428 pipe, Steiner-Reck organ. The soloists are Peggy Balensuela, Kimberly Jones, Steven Caress and Robert Orth.

Performances will be at 3 and 7 p.m., and admission is by ticket only. Tickets are free through the church office; their phone is 879-4501.

Community Sing at the Old School

Everyone is invited to sing Christmas Carols at the Old School Community Center on Sunday, December 17th, at 1 p.m. The caroling will be led by a choir from Queen of All Saints Church. Carolers will gather around the piano in the Harbart Gallery, which is located near the main entrance, and later enjoy hot chocolate and cookies in the Lake’s Edge Gallery next door. Come one and all to welcome the holiday season with song and to visit with old friends!

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Information Prepared Pursuant to NNR and Equal Housing Opportunity
The Chesterton Art Gallery has been attracting a steady stream of gingerbread house admirers for the past two weeks.

The gallery’s first Gingerbread Exhibit and Contest officially opened during the town’s Hometown Christmas festivities November 24th, and voting for individual favorites has been heavy, according to the gallery’s office manager Phyllis Gniadek.

“Entire families have been coming in to look at the exhibit,” Phyllis said. “Looks like this will become an annual event.”

“Next year, we hope that professional bakers will add their entries to the exhibit. We had several interested who called for information, but no entries.”

Being its first year, organizers did not know how many houses would be entered until they were brought in to the gallery just before Thanksgiving deadline.

“We’re really excited with the results. The houses are beautiful,” Judy Gregurich, gallery director, said. The entries came from Chesterton, Valpo, Portage, and as far away as Rolling Prairie.

In addition to two villages, entries include children’s and adult categories. Clients from Opportunity Enterprises in Valparaiso created a village consisting of a church, bakery, and miniature art gallery. Students from Portage High School created individual mini-houses and assembled their works to create a sprawling village. Voters are asked to pick their favorite from each category, and prizes will be awarded at exhibit’s end, December 20th, after all the votes are counted.

Spearment trees, a cinnamon-scented sled and reindeer, and all manner of candies add to the sweet-smelling gingerbread aroma wafting through the art gallery this month. And many of the baker-artists who created their homes took special pains to decorate their house’s chimney in distinct ways. One entrant used chocolate and butterscotch chips to mimic stones on his chimney. Another entrant chose bridge mix to portray a similar effect. Yet another made sure that the chimney atop the roof was stuffed with “pre-sents” consisting of colorfully wrapped mini-chocolate bars.

Carol Wheeler, an exhibitor from Portage, said she used a recipe handed down from her mother. “I remember my mother making gingerbread boys for us at Christmas time,” Carol said. “I love to bake, and have been making the houses for ten years or so.”

Carol, who suffered damage to her hand this past summer in an accident, uses her gingerbread house making skills as therapy, she explained. “I go to a hand therapist several times a week, so a project like this helps.”

Christina Dougherty heard about the exhibit and contest in The Beacher. The Rolling Prairie resident said that she hadn’t done a gingerbread house in years and the gallery exhibit news gave her the incentive to create one.

“I had a ball doing it,” Christina said. “I used a traditional German recipe from Time-Life magazine.”

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“I had a ball doing it,” Christina said. “I used a traditional German recipe from Time-Life magazine.”

The fun, she admitted, consisted of “scouring candy stores from here to Chicago” in search of the perfect decorating touches.

When asked about critters, she admitted that she had to keep the finished product high up on a shelf, away from little fingers. (And when I said critters, I was thinking of the four-legged kind that tends to follow their noses to edible stuff packed away.)

“If you cover it with bubble wrap and box it carefully, it should last,” Christina elaborated. Christina added that since the gingerbread gets as hard as a rock, eating a house isn’t an option. “Unless you just pick off some of the candy,” she said.

Christina said that it took her three days to complete her house. “The roof was the hardest, because it kept sliding. On the last day, I spent most of the time just decorating it.”

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The exhibit runs concurrently with the gallery’s holiday gift boutique, a selection of artist-made items to complement the variety of artworks for sale. Hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays, and 1-4 p.m., weekends.

The gingerbread exhibit runs through December 20. The gallery is located at 115 S. Fourth Street, Chesterton. For more information call 926-4711.
A Blueprint for Gingerbread Homes

by Paula McHugh

You begin with a rolling pin. Well, there may be the minor task of mixing ingredients first, but the rolling pin is a must.

Gingerbread is the goal—the hard cookie variety here, not the cake and sauce type sometimes known as Scottish Gingerbread. Artists among us are conjuring up ideas for houses to please happy Hansels and Gretels, minus the witches.

Visions of gingerbread and sugarplums are traditional at this time of the year. So too are the sweet aromas of cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger wafting through the kitchen. It’s nice to know that the craft of gingerbread house construction is alive and well despite the modern rush to do everything instantly. Despite the ready-made kits available for constructing confection-decorated cookie abodes, traditionalists rely on the rolling pin, and their favorite gingerbread and royal icing recipes.

An Equal-Opportunity Enterprise

Diehard house builders collect a stash of ideas cut from magazines or from viewing others’ finished works of art. Gingerbread house construction is an equal opportunity enterprise, meaning that the stereotype of a woman peeking into the oven to check the sensational-smelling baking cookie is out of date. My extensive research shows that mixed-gender gingerbread house parties have added a twist to the traditional tree-trimming gatherings. I found that information on the Internet. The photo samples also suggested that maybe an over-spiked punchbowl was dipped into while partygoers were playing candy architects. Other superb castles and even an amusement park constructed of the spicy baked dough are testimony that the male gender, whether in the role of pastry chef or family kitchen king, takes the sweet dough and candy architecture very seriously.

Children’s gingerbread house construction projects are gathering in popularity too. Trading graham crackers for the gingerbread recipes, young builders can use canned frosting and their choice of confections to build a sweet miniature fantasyland. Some houses are edible at project’s completion, but not all. Sometimes only a shot or two from a glue gun will hold certain pieces in place. But edible or not, homemade gingerbread houses are an artful addition to Christmas as decorated eggs are to Easter.

From Barns to Fancy Victorians

Construction designs for the houses have evolved from the simple, four walls and a roof. “Thatched” cottages, Victorian mansions, rowhouse facades, barns, castles, and other elaborate structures grace the pages of many a magazine this time of year. You can be sure that Martha Stewart will contribute her creativity to the mix. Her online ‘zine gives step by step directions for baking and building a 2-story saltbox design.

Gingerbread house makers think up new uses for candies, nuts, cereal and other items, including pastas and sticks of gum. Bread sticks transform into logs, and Cheerios and Fruit Loops perform well as chains, tiles, shingles and small wheels. Licorice becomes fireplace brick and licorice ropes turn into window pane edging and reindeer harnesses. Nuts serve nicely for stones and shingles, and almond bark mutates to stone masonry. Rolled dried fruit snacks can serve fancier models as window shades, and most gingerbread house makers are familiar with the trick of melting hard candies to achieve a stained glass effect. Inverted ice cream cones, and on a smaller scale, Bugles snacks are a standard landscaping prop to add to the candy house’s total effect.

Icing or Glue Guns?

Other whimsical “building supplies” can include shredded wheat for thatched roofs; mini chocolate bars for shingles, shutters and doors; and a candy kiss makes a dandy churchbell. Candy cane sticks topped with a gumdrop transforms to a lamppost, and lollipops become road signs. Pretzel sticks and their cousins, pretzel braids are popular builders’ tools for making fencing and roofing. Lifesavers become wreaths and marshmallows become snowmen.
Royal icing, the glue confection that makes everything stick, comes in edible and inedible versions. If you decide that you want to allow your favorite little “sugar plums” to consume your baked and candy-coated creation, be sure not to use recipes that call for raw eggs, say some bakers. Others say that using egg whites is okay. Rarely does a gingerbread house sit unseen in a refrigerator, so ingredients meant to be consumed need to withstand room temperatures. Some bakers use meringue powder as a substitute, while others use canned frosting mixed with extra confectioner’s sugar. Construction artists who know that their creations are only to be seen and not eaten might be caught using a glue gun here and there to keep walls and creatures standing upright. And the gingerbread itself can become so hard that risking a cracked tooth isn’t worth sampling a candy-covered house.

We’ve included some recipes to get you started on your own design.

**Gingerbread Cookie Dough***

½ c. butter; ½ c. shortening; 1 c. sugar
1 ¼ tsp. Ground ginger
1 ¼ tsp. Ground allspice
1 tsp. Baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 egg
½ c. molasses
2 tbsp lemon juice
3 c. all purpose flour
1 c. whole wheat flour

1. In large mixing bowl, beat butter and shortening with mixer until fluffy. Add sugar, ginger, allspice, baking soda and salt. Blend well.
2. Add egg, molasses and lemon juice, and beat until combined.
3. With mixer, add as much as the all purpose flour as you can. Stir in the remaining flour with a spoon.
4. Divide the dough in half and wrap each in plastic. Chill for several hours until firm enough to roll out.

*Make two batches of the recipe. Do not attempt to double the recipe.

**Royal Icing**

3 egg whites
16 oz. pkg powdered sugar, sifted
1 tsp. Vanilla
½ tsp cream of tartar
optional food coloring

1. Combine egg whites, sugar, vanilla and cream of tartar in large mixing bowl.
2. Beat with electric mixer on high speed until very stiff, (7-10 minutes). Use icing immediately.
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Everyone’s Invited to Join the Living Poets Society

The Beacher will be an open mike for its issue during Christmas week, inviting anyone in our reading audience to submit a poem for possible inclusion in the last issue of the year. It could be one with a holiday theme, or a message for the New Year. Or it could be just something you would like to share (if not original, then credit the source). A bit of prose is welcome, too; 200 words or less.

It’s your choice, and your issue. Deadline is Wed., December 13th for submissions. We know you are out there. Don’t be shy about sharing and letting your light shine. Carpe diem!

Hupke Watercolor Exhibit

The original watercolor paintings of Ann M. Hupke will be featured in an exhibit at 18 Artists Studio and Gallery through the month of December. An opening reception will be held for the artist on Sun., Dec. 10th, from 1-4 p.m.

Both Ms. Hupke’s technique and subject matter are characterized by contrast and diversity. Featured in this exhibit are highly realistic and detailed representational paintings of the natural world which differ greatly from Ms. Hupke’s unique and graphically interesting collages.

In addition to watercolor, Ann is experimenting with different water media, papermaking, and collages. She has won numerous awards for her art, and her work is displayed in both private and corporate collections in New Zealand, Germany, England, Ireland, Sweden, France and Japan.

18 Artists Studio and Gallery is located in the Shoppes of Indian Oaks, at 540 Indian Boundary Road, Chesterton. For more information, phone 219/926-6306.

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Sinai Sunday Evening Forum
In a tribute to “The Greatest,” Geoffrey Ewing will bring to life the story of Muhammad Ali, the world famous American boxer, in a dramatization before the Sinai Sunday Evening Forum. The program will take place at 7:30 p.m. at the Michigan City High School. Muhammad Ali’s comment to the actor after viewing the play in New York City was “You’re good. You’re good. You’re jus’ like me.” Mr. Ewing, a stage and screen actor, is a recipient of an Obie Award and star of “Guiding Light” and “Loving.”

No single event tickets are sold for the Forum series. For information about season tickets, phone the Sinai Temple at 874-4477 or visit their website at www.lc-link.org/orgs/forum

Beggar’s Rhyme
Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat,
Please to put a penny in the old man’s hat;
If you haven’t got a penny, a ha’penny will do,
If you haven’t got a ha’penny, God bless you.

———Traditional

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A trip to Chicago during the Christmas season is not complete without a trek around Marshall Field's on State Street to see what theme has been picked for the store's massive windows.

This year's theme is the story of the first Harry Potter book and the magical moments and memorable characters of his enchanting world created by author J.K. Rowling.

Herewith we present to you a vision of Christmases past and present. What do you think the theme for 2001 will be?
Travels with Charley:

Trained to turn Holiday Shopping into a Zoo

by Charles McKelvy

December 7, 2000

So there were Natalie and I the day after Thanksgiving riding a Metra train to the Loop from my mother’s house in the cozy community of Beverly on the far southwest side of Chicago.

We had every intention of being good little lemmings by joining the madding crowds at Marshall Field’s on State Street and along the Magnificent Mile of North Michigan Avenue.

We were going to whisk through the Christkindl Markt with its German vendors at the Daley Center Plaza, have our fill of hot chocolate, wait in line to see Santa, circle at least two major Christmas trees, and perhaps even watch them dye the Chicago River red and green.

Sorry, wrong holiday: they only dye the Chicago River green for Saint Patrick’s Day.

Well, you get the picture — there were the two of us lost in America again, intending once more to outrage our tender writer natures by lumbering along with the herd in an annual stampede of consumer madness.

Yes, we were hearkening to the herald of high-ticket holiday spending.

We were going to shop ‘til we dropped and not come home to my mother’s house until well after we had exceeded our credit limit and all available daylight.

But then along came the conductor to take our tickets.

Actually, he came along about the time we were gliding over the ever-exciting Dan Ryan Expressway to sell us some tickets. I say sell because the ticket office at the station at 99th Street where we had boarded was closed for the holiday weekend.

So we were fully prepared to pay some huge premium for having to purchase our tickets aboard the train, and we were fully surprised when, after brusquely telling another passenger to take his big, ugly feet off the seat, he turned to us and said: “Have I got a deal for you.”

What, we thought, disentrainment on the banks of the Ryan, thus leaving us to thumb our weary ways to the Loop?

Nope.

Not by a country mile.

No, the friendly fellow smiled up at the two of us who were perched in seats in the upper deck and said, “I’m going to sell you two Holiday Special Fares for a grand total of $10. For a mere $10 you can ride all the Metra trains you want today, wherever you want, as far as you want — unlimited. You could even go to Antioch and back if you wanted.”

I thought the man had imbibed some question-able cranberry sauce on turkey day, but dear, trusting Natalie took him at his word and ordered me to give the nice conductor $10.

“We could really go to Antioch and back?” she asked.

“Oh yes,” he said, handing us a pair of Holiday Special Fare 2000 tickets emblazoned with colorful turkeys.

Natalie looked at the passports to adventure while I looked out the window and continued thinking about standing in long lines at Marshall Field’s for the sole purpose of having a nanosecond’s nibble under their fabled tree.

“Well,” Natalie said, interrupting my reverie, “what do you think?”

“What?”

“About what?”

“I don’t think about Antioch. As a general rule, at least.”

“All right,” she said, “how about anywhere else along the Metra system?” She popped open the handy Metra schedule we had brought along from my mother’s and pointed at a map. “They go everywhere in the Chicago area. We could go to Evanston and shop there. And you would get at least two more train rides. This is like the poor man’s Eurail Pass.”

“Right,” I said, regarding the map and allowing inspiration to illuminate the dark recesses of my brain. “Yeah, we sure could do some serious train riding today with these passes, and not only that, but we could even go to Brookfield Zoo!!!”

Clearly I had out-Natalied Natalie with that bold suggestion, because the poor old girl was rendered speechless.

While she tried to find her tongue, I continued with: “Yeah, Brookfield Zoo! I remember reading about walking groups that go there by taking the train to the stop nearest the zoo and just hiking over to the entrance. I’m sure the train stops right there. What do you say?”

“Let’s ask someone,” Natalie said.

We did just that when we reached LaSalle Street Station a short time later, and, to our utter delight and amazement, we found that the schedule for Metra’s Burlington Northern Santa Fe line between Chicago and Aurora did indeed list a “Zoo Stop.”

“That’s it,” I said, “we’re going.”

And we did.
But first we actually did a spot of shopping in the Loop and environs. Granted, we limited our purchases to five tasty walnut raisin bran bagels and two cups of killer coffee at Jacobs Bros. Bagels Bakery & Restaurant in the Monadnock Building at Jackson and Dearborn, but we did manage quite a holiday hike about the city center before boarding the 12:30 p.m. train for Zoo Stop at Union Station over on the south branch of the Chicago River between Adams and Jackson.

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We passed past the very epicenter of holiday shopping frenzy — Marshall Field's on State Street. Actually, there were so many people out there trying to see Field's famous Christmas window displays — this year featuring characters and scenes from the Harry Potter books — that we quick-marched across State Street and watched the spectacle from the opposite curb.

And then we did indeed breeze through the Christkindl Markt that was colorfully encamped in the Daley Center Plaza, and we actually heard and saw some authentic German merchants cheerfully selling the best and wurst of their native land to genuine Chicagoans.

"Don't worry," Natalie said, spotting a sign, "they're going to be here until December 20th, so we can come back before Christmas. Now we'd better hurry or we're going to miss our train to the zoo."

First, of course, we had to feed ourselves, and we did so along the way to Union Station at a Subway restaurant that was remarkably uncrowded and staffed by a friendly trio from India. We got to talking to them about travel possibilities in their native land and thus nearly missed the 12:30 for Zoo Stop.
Zoo
Continued from Page 27

Having nearly missed the 12:30 for Zoo Stop, we were hard-pressed to find two seats together on a train crowded with west suburban workers who had come into the city for a half-day of work. Many appeared to be traders of one sort or another, and from what we could hear of their conversations, the trip into town had hardly been worth the effort.

But our extra effort to catch the 12:30 train was certainly worth it because we enjoyed every minute of the ride through the West Side and the close-in western suburbs and thus were relaxed, refreshed, and totally ready for an afternoon at Brookfield Zoo when the Metra train deposited us at Zoo Stop right on schedule at 12:53 p.m. There was a helpful sign pointing the way to Brookfield Zoo, and we followed it along a winding street through a pleasant neighborhood of well-kept homes and presently found ourselves at the South Gate of the legendary zoo. (For those of you who haven’t been there for a while, admission is now $7 for adults, $3 for children, $3.50 for seniors 65 and over. Parking is $4 per car and $8 per bus, so we certainly saved by taking the train.)

The zoo was all done up in “Holiday Magic” finery, and it was kind of funky looking at the elephants with Christmas trees in the foreground and Christmas carols wafting out of the public address system. I could wax poetic for three more pages about all the wonders that we beheld at Brookfield Zoo that day, but I know you’re ready to move on to the classifieds, so allow me to summarize it all by saying: “Moon Jellies.”

Yes, as in the amazing jellyfish that looked like full moons that we saw floating up and down and all around a subtly lighted tank of saltwater in the zoo’s truly magnificent Living Coast exhibit. In addition to the Moon Jellies, the zoo-within-a-zoo features such creatures of the Pacific coast of South America as vampire bats, rare Humboldt penguins, and hand-fed pelicans.

Then, of course, there was Wolf Woods, and that fabulous exhibit simply called “The Swamp,” and . . . I know — the classifieds await.
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11 a.m. **HOME IN THE DUNES.** Bundle up for a hike through the dunes in search of animal homes. Discover which animals make their homes here, which habitats they prefer, and why. The homes are here, but they aren’t always easy to find...how many will you find? Meet at the entrance to the Nature Center.

7 p.m. **THE INDIANA CHRISTMAS SHIP CONCERT.** Legendary Great Lakes folk artist Lee Murdock will perform at the Nature Center. His combination of history, music, storytelling and fun will delight all ages. Learn about the Christmas Ship that sailed Lake Michigan and other famous and lesser known stories of our Great Lakes region. Murdock is renowned throughout the Great Lakes region for bringing the history of our Great Lakes to life in a lively and entertaining fashion. The concert is sponsored by the Friends of Indiana Dunes and is free of charge although the park entrance fee will apply.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**

1 p.m. **BREATHTAKING BIRDS.** Meet in the Nature Center auditorium for this relaxing look at the wide variety of adaptations that enable birds to be birds. This eye-opening look at birds will last about 45 minutes.

3:00 p.m. **DUNES TUNES.** This is an “Open Stage Popular Music of the 20th Century” program held in the Nature Center. Members of the public are invited to come out and enjoy listening to the work of area musicians. People are also invited to bring their own instruments and become a part of the performance. The program is free of charge although the usual park entrance fee will apply.

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**DAILY SPECIALS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Special</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Flauta Dinner (Chicken, Beef, Pork)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Tamale Lilliana Dinner</td>
<td>$7.25</td>
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| Wednesday| Margarita/Fajita Fest
Fajitas (Steak or Chicken) | $9.50 |
|        | Margarita (House)                            | $3.75  |
| Thursday| Taco Night (Chicken, Beef, Pork)            | $1.25  |
|         | Flauta Dinner                                | $6.25  |
|         | Domestic Drafts                              | $1.00  |
| Friday  | Shrimp Fajita Dinner                         | $9.99  |
|         | Blue Skye Friday                             | $4.50  |
| Saturday| Crockett Rib Dinner (1/2 Slab)               | $7.95  |
|         | All Margaritas (Glass Only)                  | $1.00 off |
| Sunday  | 3 Amigos (Chicken, Beef, Pork)               | $5.25  |
|         | Tamale Lilliana Dinner                       | $7.25  |

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November 27, 2000

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<th>Team</th>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucky Strikes</td>
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<td>Sliders</td>
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<td>2. O’Malley’s Lassies</td>
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<td>2. Margaret Haviland</td>
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<td>3. Helen Stephenson</td>
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<td>4. Sandy Hageman</td>
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**Small’s Dept. 9 Gifts**

**Christmas Shopping Specials**

- **Wednesday-Saturday, December 6-9**
  - Port Merian - 50% off
- **Wednesday-Sunday, December 6-10**
  - Furniture - 30% off

- **Monday-Sunday, December 11-17**
  - Gourmet Foods - 30% off
- **Monday-Friday, December 11-15**
  - All Artificial Christmas Trees - 40% off

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'Tis the Season of Giving
From now thru Christmas Eve, bring in Children's Toys and/or Canned Goods for the Salvation Army's Christmas & receive discounts on Custom Framing:

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Discount does not apply to “Frame Specials” or labor charge

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Rediscover Harbor Country


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Hesston Steam Museum
Ride the Candy Cane Express

Visit with Santa & do some Christmas shopping in the Gift Shop. Pictures with Santa will be available.

Saturday & Sunday, December 2, 3, & 9, 10
Noon - 5:00 p.m.

Our Gift Shop features a large selection of great Thomas Toys for children & train-fan gift ideas!

On LaPorte County Road 1000 N. (219) 872-7405 or 872-5055
FREE Parking & No Admission Charge
On Sunday, November 26th, as part of the Yuletide Splendor 2000, an Olde Fashioned Musical Holiday Dinner was held at the Michigan City Senior Center from noon to 3 p.m. The center was decorated for the holidays with Christmas greenery, lights, and snow flakes on the windows. A delicious buffet was prepared and served by Great Lakes Catering to more than 150 people. Andy Praschak & Co. provided music for dancing.

The menu consisted of tossed salad, pasta salad, potato salad, vegetables and dip, rolls, meat balls, Italian beef, chicken breast, Vienna hot dogs, wild rice stuffing, potatoes, and green beans. Serving at the buffet were Ed Kis, Jeanne Hoyle, Daniel Jones, and his grandmother, Anne Jones. Members from the Senior Center serving at the dessert and beverage table were Jan Mertl, Jerri Burns, Lois Ramey, and Betty Price. Proceeds from this table are for the Miss Duneland Pageant. “Miss Duneland can’t be here because she became Miss Indiana!” the women told me.

Everyone present was enjoying the food. I photographed many of the people and spoke briefly with them. At one table were: Verna Skierkowski, Lorraine Keeler, Sue & Rick Pelis, Norm Keeler. From Michigan City, they were present at the yuletide event for their second year.

Dawn Wisniewski, head of the LaPorte County Tourism Bureau since mid-June, was present with her husband, David, and son, Zackery. “I love it here!” she said. “I’m having fun and learning so much.”

At another table were: Marcie Harris, George Averitt, Malah Heiser, and Clarence Thornberg. Both couples enjoyed dancing to the music of Andy Praschak & Co.
At the front desk, I photographed Annette La Berge as she took tickets from Mary Jane, Jessica, and Joshua Kutch. Annette has been working for Great Lakes Catering since August. “My kids started working for Ed and then finally their mom (me). My kids are Elizabeth, Mary, Peter, and Paul. They all enjoy their work and so do I!”

At another table were Willie Milsap with his daughter, Shayla, who was taking pictures, and also Charles and Nebula Lungren.

The two members of Andy Praschak & Co. are Terry Sulcer from Portage, on the drums, and Andy Praschak from Glenwood, Illinois, on the keyboard and vocalist. They have played together for over twenty years. Among their numbers were “It Had to be You,” “Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer,” and many other favorites. People enjoyed dancing or just listening to their music.

Enjoying the buffet meal.

After the meal, a time to relax and listen to the music.
And then the special guests arrived! They included various cartoon and animal characters pictured below. There were Big Bird, Frosty the Snowman, Mickey Mouse, and Tony the Tiger. Also present were Winnie the Pooh, Elmo, and other animal friends. And finally there was Santa with his elf and even Mrs. Claus!

Mayor Sheila Brillson arrived in the afternoon with two of her daughters. After a consultation with Joe Doyle, President of the Park Board, and other committee members, it was decided to postpone the Snowflake Parade to 4:00 p.m. on the following Sunday, because of the rainy weather and in hopes of better weather to culminate the Yuletide Splendor event!

On December 9th from 7-9 p.m., the Michigan City Senior Center will have a Holiday Dance with refreshments and music from the library of the Bob Schilling Band. Tickets are $2 each; plan to attend!
IZWIN
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219-874-1395 izwin@adsnet.com

IZWIN
Holiday Sale
Dec. 9th, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
1021 Cooper St., Michigan City, IN
219-874-1395 izwin@adsnet.com
The Giese Miniature Church on Display

This LaPorte tradition came out of a local man’s dream to create something wonderful to help others appreciate the Christmas spirit. Serving in the Armed Forces during WWII, including the Battle of the Bulge, Otto Giese began his plans for an ideal miniature church. Back in LaPorte, he did just that with the help of local carpenters, electricians, and other craftsmen. The completed church was first put on display in 1947.

Built of wood in the style of a typical New England church, the building features a mechanized choir that performs with tiny candles and music. Illuminated with tiny chandeliers and multi-colored lights, visitors can peer in through the perfectly scaled windows and the oak double doors. The tiny minister raises his arms and gestures to the congregation dressed in the costumes of many lands. The sermon, short and sweet, features narration by LaPorte’s own Ken Coe.

Visit this wonderful holiday tradition at the LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, located in the county complex in downtown LaPorte. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Admission is free. Donations are welcome. For more information, log onto www.lapcohistsoc.org

Book Club Meeting Date Changed

The Harbor Country Book Club will not meet on its regular date but will meet on Thurs., Dec. 28, at 7:30 p.m. (MI time). The location of this meeting will be at the Petterson home at 6629 East Road, Three Oaks. Phone 616/469-2604 if you plan on attending. The group will read The Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson and share other favorite poems.
Activities to Explore

In the Local Area:

December 7 — Flying Carpet Travelogue series—"Austria." 7:30 pm. MC Junior High School Performing Arts Center. Single tix $5/adults, $2.50/students.

December 7 -- “Just the Three of Us”. Concert by the Faculty Jazz Trio of Valparaiso University. 7:30 pm. Held in the University Theatre of the Center for the Arts on campus. Free.

December 8-11 — “Dancer in the Dark.” Rated R. A film by Lars Von Trier starring Katherine Deneuve and Bjork. Winner Best Picture & Palm D’or Cannes Film Festival. Fri & Sat at 6:30 & 9:30 pm; Sun 3:30 & 6:30 pm; Mon 7 pm. Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Michigan. 616/756-3522.

December 9 — Holiday Dance at the MC Senior Center. 7 pm. Featuring the Bob Schilling Band. Tix $2. Info 873-1504.


December 9-10 — Ride Santa’s Candy Cane Express. Noon-5 pm. Hesston Steam Museum. On County Road 1000 N, 3 mi. east of State Rd. 39. www.hesston.org


December 10 — Holiday Sounds with the Duneland Chamber Ensemble directed by Dan McNabb. 3 pm. MC Public Library. Free.


December 12 — Hoosier Prairie Christmas. 4 pm. Make a seasonal ornament with your family using natural materials from our own native prairie. LaPorte Co. Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave., LaPorte. Info 219/362-7128.

December 14 — Holiday Carol Celebration. 6:30 pm. Join guitarist Ron Nielsen and friends for a jolly holiday sing-along and refreshments. LaPorte Co. Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave., LaPorte.

Places to Visit:

Alyce Bartholomew Children’s Museum. 874-8222.

Great Lakes Museum of Military History, 360 Dunes Plaza, Michigan City. Info 872-2702 or on the web at www.militaryhistorymuseum.org

Hesston Steam Museum, County Road 1000 North (east of Indiana 39). Info 872-5055.

LaPorte County Historical Museum, county complex, downtown LaPorte. Tues-Sat, 10 am-4:30 pm. Info 219/326-6808.

New Buffalo Railroad Museum, 530 S. Whittaker St., New Buffalo, MI. Open Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm; Sat-Sun, 10 am-3 pm (MI time). Info 616/469-5409.


Farther Afield:

December 13 — Indoor Cross-country skiing seminar. 7-8:30 pm. $5 fee. Preregister at 219/945-0543. Held at Stoney Run County Park, 142nd & Union, Lowell. (I-65 south to Rt.231 Hebron, east 7 miles and follow signs.

Through February 25 — Tobaggan run at Pokagon State Park. (The only one in Indiana). Fri 5-10 pm; Sat, 10 am-10 pm; Sun, 10 am-5 pm. $4 per hr. for 4 people. Located 6 mi. north of Angola, near the intersection of I-69 and Indiana Toll Road. 800/581-0908.

Continuing:

Through February 4, 2001 — Eric Gill and the Guild of Saint Dominic exhibit at the Snite Museum of Art on the campus of Notre Dame University, South Bend. Tues-Wed, 10 am-4 pm; Thurs-Fri, 10 am-5 pm; Sun, 1-5 pm. Closed Mon & holidays. 219/631-5466. or www.nd.edu/~sniteart

Through May 31, 2001 — “Picturing Lincoln: The Changing Image of America’s 16th President.” Exhibit at the Northern Indiana Center for History, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. 219/235-9664 or www.centerforhistory.org
On December 7, 1787, Delaware, the second smallest state in the Union, was the first to ratify the Constitution.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese warplanes attacked Pearl Harbor, the home port of the United States Pacific Fleet.

On December 7, 1944, the United States announced that all six of the Japanese aircraft carriers that took part in the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor had been sunk.

On December 8, 1765, Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, was born in Westboro, Massachusetts.

On December 8, 1904, humorist James Thurber was born in Columbus, Ohio.

On December 9, 1793, Noah Webster published The American Minerva, New York's first daily newspaper.

On December 9, 1854, Charge of the Light Brigade, Alfred Lord Tennyson’s most famous poem, was published in England.

On December 9, 1884, Chicago’s Levant Richardson received a patent for ball-bearing roller skates.

On December 9, 1904, Life Magazine, after 35-years of publishing, announced that it was folding.

On December 10, 1817, Mississippi became the twentieth state to be admitted to the Union.

On December 10, 1869, the Territory of Wyoming authorized women to vote and hold office.

On December 10, 1931, Jane Addams became the first American woman to become (co-recipient) of the Nobel Peace Prize.

On December 11, 1816, Indiana became the nineteenth state to join the Union.

On December 11, 1972, Apollo 17, carrying astronauts Eugene Cernan, Ronald Evans, and Harrison Schmitt, landed on the surface of the Moon.

On December 12, 1792, in Vienna, Ludwig van Beethoven, aged 22, paid 19 cents for his first music lesson from Franz Joseph Haydn.

On December 12, 1899, Boston’s George F. Grant was granted a patent for a golf tee.

On December 12, 1915, crooner and entertainer Frank Sinatra was born in Hoboken, New Jersey.


On December 13, 1978, the ill-fated “Susan B. Anthony” dollar was issued by the United States Mint.
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**Call The Beacher With Your News (219) 879-0088**
As always, I have tried to find a book that fits with the season. This week’s selection is fast-paced, filled with intrigue and mystery, secrets and lies, hidden doorways and open windows. There’s violence and bloodshed, packages and photographs. What does this have to do with the Christmas season? Apparently, you haven’t been to the mall. Personally, Christmas is one of the furthest things from my mind (at least I’m trying to make it the furthest thing from my mind), because I have two weeks of final exams standing between me and the pecan pie.

Walking back to the school supplies section of the drug store to get yet another package of highlighters, I had to purposefully divert my eyes from the aisle filled with Christmas cards. I knew that once I looked at one package, I would have to look at them all. Then, having spent all that time looking, it wouldn’t make any sense not to buy a couple of boxes. When I got home, I would of course have to quickly write out a list of recipients, checking my list from last year and the cards I received. By that point, since I was already thinking about them, I might as well address the envelopes. And so on and so on and so on. It would just be one giant paper snowball. Needless to say, I grabbed the highlighters and left.

When I went looking for a book at the beginning of the week, I went with two objectives: 1) to find something that had nothing to do with Conflict of Laws or Business Associations, and 2) to find something that was a quick read. I accomplished neither of those two objectives when I walked out of the library with Brad Meltzer’s book, Dead Even. This four hundred page book about a wife who is a newly hired Assistant District Attorney and her husband, who is a defense lawyer and what happens when they face off in court was not a quick read, but a very enjoyable one. Even people with aversions to prosecutors or defense attorneys should find Dead Even a good “right before bed” book. Before you know it, you’ve read thirty pages when you only meant to read ten. So what is the book really about? It’s really about trying to keep a secret from yourself, because as soon as you find out, someone else has the information.

Sara Tate is on the first day of her job with the District Attorney’s Office, when she picks up a case meant for the best D.A. on staff and takes it for herself. It appeared to be a routine burglary, until a millionaire businessman hired Jared Tate, Sara’s husband, to defend this seemingly insignificant thief.

Not only did the millionaire give Jared a retainer when he hired him, but he also gave him a threat. Lose and Sara dies.

While Sara, still trying to hide the fact that she stole the case, is cornered and warned that unless she won, Jared dies.

So, as this once happy couple squares off in the courtroom, they are both thinking, “I have to win.” And you can forget bargaining. It would be like trying to convince the woman, who is clinging tightly to the last scooter on the shelf, to let you have it. No way!

I hope that you find time between shopping and wrapping and mailing to enjoy a little time by yourself with a book.

Remember: Christmas isn’t in a mall or a toy store. It can’t be bought or negotiated. Unlike all the packages, it has no strings. It is salvation in the unexpected. It is Christ, the newborn King.
NO, IT'S NOT FOR SALE! But this 1908 English Tudor is the site for our CHRISTMAS SEASON OPEN HOUSE on Friday, December 8 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. This is our traditional THANK YOU to friends, clients & customers for letting us be of service. Can we be of service to you? Don’t be shy! Drop in and say hello; view Mary Ann (my mom) Merrion’s beautiful Christmas decorations & enjoy wonderful refreshments served by Ed Kis of Great Lakes Catering. Come early! The area’s best smoked salmon never lasts long!

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