Plans For New Lock at Sault Ste. Marie Move Forward

by William F. Keefe

Preliminary construction for a new lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan has begun, according to information from the Detroit office of the U.S. Corps of Engineers. Launched shortly after signature of a $17 million startup contract in September, however, the work on two separate phases of the preparatory operations have come to a standstill because of cold and inclement weather.

The early phases of the project call for construction of a cofferdam and excavation to deepen the channel of the St. Marys River.

Supporters of the massive, $475 million advance projects have been pointing both to the need for the new lock and to the jobs it will create. The Great Lakes Maritime Task Force has estimated that the construction will keep some 250 people employed through the 10 years that the job is expected to last.

Among the members of the maritime community who have supported the project publicly, Glen Nekvasil of the Lake Carriers’ Association characterized the lock construction as a worthy project. “Not only does it meet the criterion that the country needs to boost the economy,” said Nekvasil, “but investing in infrastructure this way is certainly one way to create jobs.”

The practical rationale for a new lock at the Soo is straightforward: the lock would permanently ensure “the free flow of large ships between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes.”

Adds Adolph Ojard, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, “This is a ready-to-go construction project that seems to meet the criteria of the federal stimulus package.” Ojard stressed that “This is definitely the year to push for a new lock at the Soo.”

The planning phases for a new lock have kept supporters busy for years. Newspaper reports indicate the Congress first authorized the project some 20 years ago but never appropriated the necessary funds.

Progress toward addition of another large lock at the Soo has raised hopes that Great Lakes freight traffic might become possible year-round. Currently the Soo locks close for the season on January 15 each year. The Corps of Engineers then uses the winter shutdown for maintenance.

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Plans For New Lock  Continued from Page 1

The Existing Hazard

The possibility that maritime traffic between the lower lakes and Lake Superior could be blocked is real, note project advocates.

The Poe Lock, one of four U.S. locks at the Soo, is the only one large enough to handle many of the longer vessels operating on the Great Lakes. Published statistics show that the Poe, out of necessity, accommodates about 70 percent of the active U.S. lake vessels, as they enter or leave Lake Superior.

The Poe is about 1,200 feet long.

The danger is that the Poe could break down or at some point require repairs over a substantial period of time. The effect would be to cripple the Twin Ports--Duluth and Superior--and other Lake Superior port facilities as well as taconite mines, steel fabricators, and power plants.

Nearly 40 years old, the Poe Lock has attracted increasing concern as it has aged. The histories of the other three U.S. locks at the Soo go much farther back.

An additional clause provided funds for lock construction. “Instead of appropriating funds from the budget, the federal government transferred 750,000 acres of the Upper Peninsula that had been ceded to the United States by the 1842 treaty with the Lake Superior Anishinaabe (Ojibway tribe). This land grant to Michigan, which was equal to 2 percent of the total land area of the state, was to be used to defray construction costs of a canal.”

With such arrangements completed, canal construction could begin. A hastily formed construction company headed by former Connecticut resident Charles T. Harvey entered a $400,000 bid for a contract. The bid was accepted.

Harvey then headed the St. Marys Falls Ship Canal Company. Given unlimited authority to carry out the project, Harvey arrived at the Soo in June 1853 with a shipload of equipment and a $50,000 line of credit at a Detroit bank.

Within a week Harvey had hired 400 laborers to “begin digging and blasting the canal around the falls.” The mission was clear: “to dig a canal a mile long with two accompanying locks, each 350 feet in length and 70 feet wide.”

As the history notes, “The Ship Canal Company
had a two-year state deadline to complete the canal and locks.” Construction continued year-round, even though temperatures at the Falls dropped to 35 degrees below zero during the winter months.”

In the fall of 1854, at a time when Harvey had a work-force numbering about 2,000, cholera struck the construction camp. Harvey “organized burial parties to dispose of the bodies secretly at night to avoid panic.”

**Costs a Problem**

Costs became a problem. “Every bit of foodstuffs, tools and supplies of all kinds had to be shipped to the Sault from Detroit.” Partly because of the mounting expenses, the partners in the Ship Canal Company replaced Harvey. They sent John W. Brooks, a former railroad builder, to finish the construction work.

The projected new lock, according to announced plans, will have the same dimensions as the existing Poe.

A “Power Canal” on both the Canadian and American sides of the St. Marys River serves as an electric power source for both sides. In neither case does the Power Canal affect the operations of the two nations’ locks.

Separately from all the locks, a two-mile International Bridge carries wheeled traffic across the St. Marys River, effectively connecting Sault Ste. Marie, Canada with the Sault Ste. Marie on the American side. The bridge was built in 1962.
LCSO Hoosier STAR 2010 Auditions

Attention all singers! Schedule your audition to become a Hoosier STAR Finalist!

WHAT: Hoosier STAR 2010, a vocal competition sponsored by Horizon Bank to raise funds for the La Porte County Symphony Orchestra. Amateur singers of all musical types will compete for prizes. Auditions determine at least 12 finalists to compete for cash prizes for the winners of the June 19, 2010 event.

WHO: Contestants must be a resident of the state of Indiana or Southwest Michigan.

WHEN: March 13 & 14, 2010

WHERE: La Porte Little Theatre, 218 A St., La Porte, Indiana

HOW: Preregister for a time slot with a $20 audition fee. The deadline for entry is March 6, 2010.

questioN: www.LCSO.net, 219/362-9020, or e-mail Hoosierstar@LCSO.net

On March 13 & 14 a panel of five judges will select 12 finalists, six in the youth division (17 & under) and six in the adult division (18 & over). Vocalists may choose to sing all types of music such as classical, Broadway, country, gospel, pop, rock, jazz, opera, or blues. This contest is open to amateur soloists only; no duets or group performances may enter. For auditions, applicants may provide their own accompanist, use a CD with no lead vocals, or sing a cappella.

These finalists will prepare for the performance of a lifetime. On Sat., June 19, twelve contestants will perform at the La Porte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge Street, La Porte, Indiana. Selected finalists will be accompanied by two talented musical sensations - a quality group of musicians from the La Porte County Symphony Orchestra and their outstanding music director and conductor, Philip Bauman. With this combined talent, anything can happen, and all types of musical performances are possible. Maestro Bauman and the orchestra work diligently to bring out the star qualities of each contestant.

Big prize money sponsored by Kingbury Elevator is awarded to the winners. An interesting twist to this event is that the audience in attendance at the June performance votes to determine the winners. The three top finishers in the Adult Division will receive cash awards - $1,000, 1st place; $750, 2nd place; and $500, 3rd place. The three top winners in the Youth Division will receive cash awards - $500, 1st place; $400, 2nd place; and $300, for 3rd place.

Sign up today. Contestants will receive a time slot for an individual audition on a first-come, first-served basis.
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**THE Bookmarks at MC Public Library**

Fri., Feb. 19, 2 p.m.

The Prodigal Wife by Marcia Willets will be reviewed by LuAnne DePriest at the Michigan City Public Library. In Willett’s latest novel, Jolyon, who had been abandoned by his mother, Maria, is living at the Keep with his father and his stepmother Fliss. Now that Jolyon is a successful television presenter of gardening programs, the recently widowed Maria, lonely and impressed by her son’s fame, reappears and hopes to step back into his life. But Jolyon finds it difficult to trust his mother and forgive the hurt she had inflicted on him.

The program is free and open to the public.

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**Etched In Stone: Scotland To Provence**

The Flying Carpet Travelogue Association and Monty Brown Presents another Travel Adventure “Etched in Stone: Scotland to Provence,” Thurs., Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. at the Elston Performing Arts Theater, Detroit & Spring streets, Michigan City. Single admission tickets are $5 at the door.

Your historic journey will take your from Solway Firth on the Irish Sea in Scotland, to the North Sea coast of England, south through the Midlands, the West Country, and across the Channel to France. From Normandy and Brittany in the north through the redolent French countryside to romantic Provence on the Mediterranean Sea. Everywhere, stories and legends of the glorious past are written in stone: churches, castles, monuments, monoliths and remnants.

Our journey begins in Scotland and Northumberland where Scottish St. Ninian arrived from Rome with a mission to spread the Gospel. A visit to the red stone ruins of Sweetheart Abbey most surely the inspiration for Valentine’s Day. From there visit the Massive Bamburgh Castle and the Fame Islands of the North Sea.

You will explore a typical English village, with its medieval church, castle duck pond; visit Ivanhoe’s Conisborough Castle, view Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral with the tallest spire in Europe.

Across the Channel to Northern France to the beautiful and amazing sites at St. Benedictine Monastery, the Cathedrals at Coutances, St. Tugdual and on to Provence with visits to Lamanoun caves and cliffs and St. Manes de Ia Mer, where Mary Magdalen arrived on the shores of the Mediterranean.

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The program is free and open to the public.

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Michigan City Concert Association

The New Shanghai Circus brings the incredible acrobats of China to Michigan City Friday, February 19, 2010, at 7:30pm in the Michigan City Elston Auditorium under the sponsorship of the Michigan City Concert Association. Tickets are $20 at the door.

This talented troupe of highly acclaimed Chinese athletes continues to WOW audiences of all ages. The show is a beautifully orchestrated presentation of Chinese circus acts dating back to harvest festivals of 2000 years ago. This youthful, handsome and graceful company spends a swift two hours in a range of demanding performances, most of them typifying Chinese circus acts and constituting a refreshing alternative to the Western traditions.

This wonderful modern day performance is enhanced by fabulous choreography, amazing lighting, great scenery and powerful music. Audience members are enthralled by astounding contortionists, masterful acrobats and clever comedians. They see feats of incredible skill and imagination. They gasp at many of the gravity-defying feats and applaud at the super-human displays of power and extraordinary grace.

Timothy Sullivan Condolences

In last week’s rememberance of Timothy Sullivan, a web site to offer the family condolences was entered incorrectly. Our apologies to the family.

The correct way to leave your message for the family is as follows: go to www.CaringBridge.org, and enter the timothysullivan (one word) web page.

Bentwood Tavern Give-Back Dinner

Support The Region of Three Oaks Museum Capital Campaign at a give-back dinner on Tues., Feb. 23 at Bentwood Tavern, New Buffalo. Fifty percent of all food and beverage revenue will be donated to the museum.

Originally founded in 1916, The Region of Three Oaks Museum is dedicated to preserving the history of the region to ensure that present and future generations have a direct connection to the stories of the past. With artifacts and historic records temporarily housed in the Three Oaks Township Library, the museum will move to a permanent location in a new facility on Featherbone Ave. Construction of the museum building is scheduled to begin in March.

The Bentwood Tavern Give-Back Program has donated over $17,000 to valuable community efforts and organizations since September 2008. For more information about the Give-Back Program or Bentwood Tavern, visit www.BentwoodTavern.com

Bentwood Tavern is located on the waterfront in Marina Grand Resort, 600 West Water St., New Buffalo. Phone: 269.469.1699.

Harbor Country Book Club

The selected book for the Tues., Feb. 23 Harbor Country Book Club meeting is Reservation Road by John Burnham Schwartz. Monthly meetings are at 7:30 p.m. MI time on the last Tuesday of the month at the Harbor Grand Hotel in New Buffalo and are open to anyone interested in joining members to discuss the book.

The March book is Waiting for Snow in Havana by Carlos Erie. Copies of both books can be purchased at New Buffalo Books.

N.A.A.C.P. & H.O.P.E. Pancake Breakfast

This fundraiser will be held on Sat., Feb. 20, 8-11 a.m. at H.O.P.E. (the old Park School), 222 McClelland Ave., Michigan City.

This all-you-can-eat breakfast will include sausage, bacon, eggs, pancakes, juice, milk and coffee. Tickets are $5 in advance or $6 at the door. To purchase tickets in advance, phone 219/877-4407, or stop by H.O.P.E., Mon.-Fri (2:30-6 p.m.)
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**2817 Roslyn Trail • Long Beach**
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**206 Tryon Farm Lane • Michigan City**
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Private, wooded & completely enhanced by nature. Huge master suite. Bamboo flooring & many upgraded amenities. Screen porch. For more information on this environmentally planned development, visit www.TryonFarm.com.

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Lubeznik Center Presents “Paris Noir”

International entertainer and vocalist Greta Pope will present “Paris Noir” on Sat., Feb. 27 at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. 2nd St., Michigan City. Pope’s program will be a tribute to the African-American musicians who brought jazz to Paris.

In the 1920s and ‘30s, the “City of Light” attracted many African-American musicians, artists, and writers who traveled to Paris to enjoy the genial racial and cultural environment. Parisians welcomed the unique talents of these new residents especially their music. Pope’s “Paris Noir... American Jazz in Paris” features favorites by Josephine Baker, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Eartha Kitt, Billie Holiday and Nat King Cole. Sultry and sensuous, lively and lyrical, Pope’s performance will warm up the February night.

Enjoy an evening of vintage flavors and French flair amidst “The New Moderns” exhibition in Lubeznik Center’s Hyndman Gallery. Doors will open at 6 p.m. the night of the show, performance begins at 7 p.m. French beverages, cheeses and desserts will be available. Tickets are $20, $15 for LCA members, and will be held at the door. Seating is limited. Phone 219.874.4900 for more information or visit lubeznikcenter.org

Readers Group at Coolspring Library

A Readers Group discussion on Change of Heart by Jodi Picoult will be held at 7:00 p.m., on Tues., Feb. 23 at the Coolspring Branch Library, corner 400N & Johnson Rd., Michigan City.

The novel is about death row inmate Shay Bourne’s last request to donate his heart to his victim’s ailing sister. The situation gets more complicated when Bourne begins performing miracles in full view of witnesses, including his Catholic spiritual advisor. It is available for check-out for those who wish to read it ahead of time in regular and large print and on CD and Playaway.

There is no admittance charge. For more information, phone 879-3272. Phone 219/362-6156 to request signing for the hearing impaired 48 hours in advance of the program.

Monthly Country Western Dance

Amarillo Star C/W Monthly Dance

Held on Sat., February 20, at the American Legion Skwiat Post 451, 121 Skwiat Legion Ave., Michigan City. The dance will take place from 7-10:30 p.m. and is open to the public. Admission is $5/AS members and $7/non-members.

This month’s theme is: Wear Valentine’s Day Red and White. There will be line and couples dancing to DJ music. Bring a dessert to share (optional). For more information, phone Chris, 874-3624.
Listen Up, Ladies!

Women of all ages are invited to participate in this free event.

Women & Heart Disease

Heart disease is the #1 killer of women in the United States.
Women often overlook the signs, dismissing symptoms as common ailments such as heartburn or anxiety.

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9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Doors open at 9 a.m. • Educational presentation at 10 a.m.

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Long Beach Fitness Center invites you to sign up for the next 8-wk. session of Night Pilates with Shari Bohac. Classes begin March 1st on Mon. & Wed. evenings 5-6 p.m. Phone 219-879-1395 or e-mail longbeachfitnesscenter@comcast.net

YOGA classes continue in Room 8 with Certified Yoga Instructor Lauralee Sikorski. Beginners Flow Classes are held on Wed. & Fri. 10-11:15 a.m., and Gentle Intermediate Flow on Tues. nights from 6:15-7:30 p.m. Individual Yoga instruction and Yoga Deep, a fully passive and amazing experience of deep restorative yoga stretches, breathing and deep relaxation is available by appointment. Phone 219-861-7394 or email lauraleesikorski@yahoo.com

Certified Youth Sports Administrator and youth sports coach for 18 years, Ross Balling will bring Sports Endeavors Academy to the Community Center this spring. The program offers a variety of classes in sports related activities with short educational segments incorporated for children ages Pre K – 8th grade. Students are reminded to keep the game fun and alive, they develop confidence in executing the fundamentals in basketball, football, volleyball, and soccer plus they learn math, science, and history along the way. Classes will run on Thurs & Fri., noon-4 p.m., March 25th-May 6th at a cost of $36/ 30 min. and $66/ 60 min. 6-wk. sessions. Register now by contacting Jeremy Kienitz 219-873-1524, Notra Dame School, Karen Breen, 219-872-6216 or fax registration to 1-800-218-5518.

Melissa Kraus is available throughout the week by appointment to teach piano lessons for all ages starting at age 3, and also offers elementary age tutoring at a rate of $10/half-hr. 530-559-1832.

It's not too soon to start thinking spring cleaning for carpeting and upholstery. Quality Carpet Care uses steam cleaning method with eco-friendly, non toxic products, is fully insured, and has been serving the community for 8 years. Phone Ron at 219-608-3145 for winter special pricing.

Lake Shore Group closed AA meeting is held on Mondays. There is an open meeting every 4th Monday. Our Side of the Beach Al-Anon Family Group meeting is held every Wednesday evening. Both groups meet at 7 p.m. in room #10 and use the Fitness Center entrance.

The Long Beach Community Center has space for rent. For a tour of the facility or for more information phone Anne Heywood at the Long Beach Town Hall at 219-874-6616.

---submitted by Susan Vissing & Anne Heywood
Dr. Wynter joins Dr. Basher in providing consultation services, prevention, treatment and management of acute and chronic cardiovascular disease. He has specialized subspecialty training in cardiac imaging. His interests include echocardiography, cardiac stress test and nuclear cardiology.

Dr. Wynter is Board Certified in cardiovascular disease and internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. Further, he is certified in echocardiography and nuclear cardiology. He received his medical degree from Temple University School of Medicine, Pennsylvania and completed his internal medicine internship and residency at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. Dr. Wynter completed his fellowships in cardiology at Henry Ford Hospital, Michigan and cardiac imaging at Massachusetts General Hospital Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts.

Dr. McPherron, a native of Plymouth, is an orthopaedic surgeon. He specializes in both primary (first time) and revision (repeat) joint replacement surgery of the hip, knee and shoulder. Dr. McPherron is an international lecturer and has designed numerous joint replacement instruments and implants used worldwide. Further, he has worked with NHL and NCAA athletes and is the team physician for Plymouth High School.

Dr. McPherron is Board Certified in orthopedic surgery by the American Osteopathic Board of Orthopedic Surgery. He received his medical degree from Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. McPherron completed a fellowship in adult reconstruction/total joint replacement at Florida Orthopedic Institute/Tampa General Hospital and an orthopaedic surgery residency at St. Vincent Medical Center, Ohio.
Haitian Support Ministries
by Rick A. Richards

LA PORTE -- Thanks to television, the scenes of devastation in Haiti have become ingrained in our mind. The crushed buildings, the piles of bodies, the horrible injuries have become frightfully.

It's an awful scene and most of us merely sit and shake our heads.

But not Drs. David and Lovera Miller. Or Dr. Ben Mannix. Or Dr. Laura Hannon. Or Pastor Jay Loucks. Or any of the other dozens of people from LaPorte County who have been involved with Haiti through Haitian Support Ministries (HSM) for the past two decades.

Two weeks ago, the Millers, Mannix, Hannon, Loucks and six others from LaPorte County loaded a private plane full of supplies and delivered them to HSM's orphanage in Jacmel in southern Haiti.

And while they were in the country, they treated hundreds of badly injured people in villages across the southern part of that impoverished country.

The Millers have been going to Haiti for the past 15 years, helping Haitian Support Ministries and the 70 children in its orphanage that is operated by Jean Claude Pierre. In addition to the orphanage (which contains a school and church), HSM also feeds some 500 other children in the area.

"We consider ourselves very small cogs in a big machine," said David Miller, an anesthesiologist, adding that he and his wife (an obstetrician/gynecologist) visit Haiti twice a year, spending a week each time.

"We take medical supplies, sheets, clothes and blankets was used to treat the injured.

In a country barren of infrastructure, Loucks said Haitians have learned that they must live day-to-day. "Strategic, long-term planning just doesn't exist," he said.

But despite the hardships, Loucks said the people are spiritual. "Every night, you can hear them singing.

Loucks estimated that over the years some 140 people from LaPorte County have visited Haiti as part of HSM. And what's remarkable, he said, is that it's all been done without a paid staff.

"The needs are so great there that we can guarantee that every $1 will go to the ministry," said Loucks. "We're very fortunate in that the people we have decide that instead of a vacation, they will go to Haiti to help. I feel privileged to be a part of this."

It's a reputation that helped the Millers when they made a call two weeks ago for medical supplies. After having only 24 hours to organize their trip, Dr. David Miller said that within 12 hours, he had more than $50,000 worth of medical supplies delivered to his garage, all of it donated by St. Anthony Memorial in Michigan City, LaPorte Hospital, Woodland Surgicenter and hospitals in South Bend.

Each person going could take two bags, so that allowed the Millers to carefully pack the medical supplies into 22 bags. Every bit of it made to Haiti and all of it was put to use.

"Unless you've been to Haiti, it's hard to describe what it's like when there isn't a disaster," said Miller. "In Port-au-Prince, there's no trash collection, no reliable source of electricity and the country has no roads to speak of.

"This time, we found sorrow on top of chaos," said Lovera Miller. "It can be discouraging, but we tell ourselves we're helping one kid at a time."

When the Millers arrived in Jacmel, they said the one thing they immediately noticed was the smell of death. "It was everywhere," she said. "And any thing that was being done was being done by hand. It's hard to believe, but there is simply no heavy equipment in Haiti. We have friends who are farmers and they move hay with Bobcats. They're better equipped than cities in Haiti."

Lovera Miller pointed out that was common on this trip but no one got discouraged. "We knew we were being taken care of and God pointed us in the right direction."

Hours later, they hitched a ride with a Canadian military convoy and made it to Grand Goave.

David Miller described their day there this way in this e-mail to friends in LaPorte County: "We started at 7:30 a.m. with an 8 month stillborn and saw tons of injury and disease and ended tonight at 9:30 with the birth of a healthy baby girl. Pretty much sums up the whole of the joy and sorrow in this country and this world. This region (Goave) is bad, probably worse than Jacmel. 12 percent of population dead and 20 percent seriously injured."

But, said the Millers, despite the tragedy they saw everywhere, Haitians remain a spiritual people. "Every night we heard them singing and thanking God," said David Miller.

"I have learned that God has a sustained presence of God as when I'm in Haiti," said Miller. "Any fear you might have, that presence takes the fear right out of it."

See Sidebar on Page 16

**Photos provided by Haitian Support Ministries**

Dr. Lovera Miller of LaPorte tends to a Haitian whose hand was shattered in the earthquake.

After the hospital in Jacmel was destroyed by an earthquake, this makeshift of tarps and blankets was used to treat the injured.

Dr. Lovera Miller of LaPorte administers pain medication to a Haitian who was paralyzed in the earthquake.

Drs. David and Lovera Miller at their home. (Photo by Rick A. Richards)

Members of Haitian Support Ministries prepare to board a Canadian military helicopter for the trip from Jacmel to Grand Goave in Haiti.

Dr. Lovera Miller of LaPorte.

The boys dormitory at Haitian Support Ministries in Jacmel was heavily damaged in the earthquake.
For One Family, the Gift of a New Son

LA PORTE – One of the most heartbreaking stories in Haiti following the devastating earthquake that struck the island was the disruption in the adoption of orphans.

Many of those adoptions had been completed and all that was left was for parents (most of them from the United States) to travel to the country and pick up their child.

The earthquakes, however, destroyed the government building in Port-au-Prince where the paperwork was housed. And even if the paperwork could be recovered, most of the government officials who processed and approved the paperwork were dead.

But for one LaPorte County family, that wasn't the case. When a group from Haitian Support Ministries traveled to Jacmel on the southern coast of Haiti, Erin Mungia, a member of Lamb’s Chapel United Methodist Church in Rolling Prairie, went along to bring 6-year-old Nohadson Jean Fabian home. With the help of HSM’s Haitian director, Jean-Claude Pierre and the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, paperwork was put together so Erin could bring her son home to meet the rest of her family, husband Peter and sons Andrew, Alex and Michael.

Erin first met Nohadson (the family now calls him Watson) last year when she went on a mission to Haiti. She said Watson reminded her of her youngest son because he was always smiling.

He became a resident of the orphanage when he was 3 years old after his father died and his mother could no longer care for him.

During Erin’s visit, the two became nearly inseparable and when it was time to leave, she broke down and cried.

In comments on HSM’s Website, Erin wrote, “When we landed at O'Hare my family was there to meet me. I pulled out my camera and started showing them pictures of Watson and told them I wanted to bring him to live with us.

“To my surprise, my boys started talking over each other saying, ‘Can we get him now? He can sleep in my bed!’”

Erin said her husband wasn’t surprised, and a short time later, Erin and Peter contacted Jean-Claude, who received permission from Watson’s mother for the adoption process to begin.

It all came together on Monday, Jan. 25, when Erin and Watson arrived at South Bend Regional Airport and were embraced by the rest of the family.

For more information on or to donate to Haitian Support Ministries:

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Travels with Charley:

**Kicking Off into the 2010 Ski Season at Little Dipper Farm**

*by Charles McKelvy*

Just when we thought there was no use for all this snow, Dick Rieth called and said: “The trails are groomed. Come on over anytime and ski.”

By “over” he meant his family’s Little Dipper Farm near Three Oaks. The one that was featured in the July 2, 2009 issue of *The Beacher* when Natalie and I gladly attended the party celebrating oldest child Wesley’s graduation from River Valley High School.

Well, things were looking a whole lot whiter at what we like to call the “Little Dipper Farm and Ski Resort” when we reported for our first ski duty of the 2010 season.

Wesley Rieth was still on winter break from Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and so we got to hear all about how he had made the Dean’s List in his first semester as a college student. We heard from second child Evan how he has moved up to the tuba at the River Valley Middle School, and Jessie Rieth showed us how her barn kitten, Twilight, had become a big barn cat since we saw the critter last summer.

Mom Debbie was busy putting all the Christmas decorations away and getting the tree out in the yard for the birds to use all winter, so we shoved off for the trails without her.

Dick said we’d do just fine out there, and, he added, “there are some new twists and turns for you this year.”

There were, and we enjoyed them all, especially the ones that took us back into the woods and out of the eternally blowing lake effect snow.

Sprocket, the family dog, inspected our ancient skis before we headed out, and he gave them his canine paw of approval. But he did not join us on the trails as he had done in the past. Seems he’s more content to patrol the barnyard now that he’s settling into his middle years as a farm dog.

We were a bit worried about being stalked by packs of ravenous wolves, but Sprocket assured us he would come a running should such fabulous fears be realized.

And so, with no further fussing over bindings, we kicked off into the fresh powder on Dick Rieth’s meticulously groomed trails.

They took us across snow-dusted fields and through forests of hearty hardwood trees and—wouldn’t you know it—across a half-frozen creek that gummed up our skis.

Natalie noted that we should have brought some WD-40 oil with which to lubricate our ski bottoms, because that is what our friend and fellow birder, Kip Miller, has advised us to do.

But did we have any rags dipped in WD-40 with which to ungum our skis? Of course not.

So we gimped along way back there on the remotest possible portions of Little Dipper Farm and Ski Resort and may never have returned to civilization.

Sunny the barn cat did not go skiing with us, but she did come out for purr or two.

And the amazing Dick Rieth in action at his Little Dipper Farm and Ski Resort. He has been clocked at 20 mph.

Sprocket gives Natalie’s skis his canine paw of approval.
had Dick Rieth himself not appeared out of the whiteness and guided us back to his family’s cozy farmhouse.

Dick Rieth and his brother Dave, you should know, are excellent “skate skiers” meaning that we do not so much as ski with them at Little Dipper as ski behind them at Little Dipper. More like in their long-settled wakes.

Anyway, we sure got off to a great ski this season at Little Dipper, and we wish you and yours much happy schussing this winter.

There’s more to snow, after all, than just shoveling.
We have survived Groundhog Day, Chinese New Years, Valentines and Presidents Days. The nice thing about living in the depths of winter are the mini-holidays waiting for us to celebrate. Unlike past years, I decided to pass up the usual website reviews dedicated to these holidays. Instead, I found myself wandering all over the map this week.

It began with a quick peek at Woot, where they were offering an 8gb mp3 player, radio tuner, and voice recorder for a bargain. My surfing exploded from there. Here is some proof:

Books Should Be Free (www.booksshouldbefree.com). That 8 gigabyte mp3 deal got me thinking about audiobooks. I still have plenty of music that I downloaded over the years from my paid subscription to Emusic.com. And a need for new bifocals propelled me to do a Google search of free audiobooks. I was not disappointed. I reviewed several sites, and this one came up on top. They say what they mean: free means free. Some other sites will lure you with a free trial, but then they want you to subscribe, or at the least, to register on the site. Keep it simple. Find your picks of classics here.

Education Podcast Network (www.epnweb.org). With the key word being “free,” the offerings are categorized by grades: elementary through adult continuing education. The podcasts can be a tool for teachers or an extra bonus for anyone looking to brush up on a subject. Want to learn a little bit of Russian? You will find a podcast from a native speaker. There are many other choices of sites available, but I did not research them this week.

Local Libraries. The Westchester Public Library in Chesterton offers its library patrons audio-book downloads online via their website (www.wpl.lib.in.us). This is a great way to “read” more current fare than what you will find at Books Should Be Free. I did not see a similar offering from Michigan City’s Public Library. Maybe that will change soon.

Missing Money (www.missingmoney.com). How did I jump from audiobooks into the subject of money? That’s how surfing works for many of us. Anyway, this website provides the yummy potential of telling you if you have unclaimed money lying around somewhere. Like in a bank that has folded, or an old insurance policy, or whatever. It is a database of governmental unclaimed property records. What is superior about this site is the fact that it is free to use. So don’t get trapped by some other website’s promises of riches for a low subscription fee.

Fastweb (www.fastweb.com). Parents of students headed for college need to know about this website, and the sooner, the better. If your school’s career counselor has not heard of it, it’s time to tell him or her about this fabulous resource. Search for
scholarships, internships and more. This is a free service, which is an excellent deal. A login will be required, so you need to sign up to receive the information.

Volunteer Locally (www.nwivolunteer.org). The United Way Regional Volunteer Center works in two ways. If you wish to volunteer for a worthy cause, you can browse the current opportunities posted here. If you are a nonprofit, you can post your needs here. And yes, it’s true—you can receive an extra bonus at many non-profits for a Disney World ticket when you give of yourself. Check it out.

“Boys Next Door” Opens Feb. 19

The next LaPorte Little Theater presentation will be “The Boys Next Door” which runs Feb. 19-21 and also 26-28. Show times are Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.

“The Boys Next Door,” written by Tom Griffin and being directed by Doug Campbell, is a very funny yet very touching play focusing on the lives of four mentally challenged men who live in a communal residence under the watchful eye of a sincere, but increasingly despairing, social worker. Filled with humor, the play is also marked by the compassion and understanding with which it peers into the half-lit world of its handicapped protagonists.

With the direction of theater veteran Doug Campbell and the talent of a seasoned cast “The Boys Next Door” promises to be a great show. The cast consists of:

Kevin Murray, Moe Krentz, Mike McCalment, Jeff Hill, Richard Snyder, Ava Brewer, Rich Valli-cell, Susie Richter, Nancy Fetterer, Miggs Murray, Charles Ponsier, Jode Saylor, and George Hayes.

Tickets will be available through any cast member, online at www.LaporteLittleTheatre.org or by phoning 219-362-5113. Reservations are recommended for all productions and may be made beginning two weeks prior to any performance date. Box office opens 1/2 hour prior to the start of performances. LaPorte Little Theatre is located at 218 “A” St. (corner of “A” & 3rd streets) in LaPorte.

“Let’s Visit the Far East”

Wed., Feb. 24, 6 p.m.

This program will be held at the LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave., downtown LaPorte.

Experience China, Japan and Korea with Suki Cho as she shows traditional oriental clothing and artifacts. There will be delicious food samples and fun trivia about the countries. You can pick up free cookbooks and travel pamphlets while supplies last. If you have your own traditional oriental clothing, you are encouraged to wear it to the program.

More information at 219/362-6156 or www.lapcat.org. Phone 48 hrs. in advance to request signing for the hearing impaired.

Notre Dame Theatre Season

The University of Notre Dame’s Department of Film, Television, and Theatre presents “Natural Selection” by Eric Coble, a 2009-10 Theatre Season Production. (More on the web at ftt.nd.edu)

Directed by Tim Hardy, this ironic comedy depicts a future where technology rules supreme: everything is cooked in a microwave, blogging has replaced conversation, school has become virtual and the coca-cola flavor of the week is vanilla-cherry-lime.

In “Natural Selection” (2006) Henry Carson, a curator at Cultural Fiesta Theme Park is forced to travel the country in order to restock the Native American Pavilion. He soon finds that “native” can no longer be strictly defined. Technology has a decided disadvantage against mythology and, after years spent making the world artificial, the world begins to fight.

Performances are from Tues., Feb. 23rd through Sat., Feb. 27, at 7:30 p.m.; on Sun., Feb. 28, at 2:30 p.m., in the Philbin Studio Theatre of the DeBar-tolo Performing Arts Center on the campus of Notre Dame University, South Bend, IN.

Tickets are $15/general admission, $12/faculty, staff, and seniors, and $10/all students. The tickets are available at 574-631-2800, or by purchasing them online at performingarts.nd.edu
Activities to Explore

In the Local Area:

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ongoing -- Puppet Parlor Theatre presents “The Snow Queen” at Marquette Mall, MC. Performances Wed/11 am & 4:30 pm; Fri/4:30 pm; Sat/11 am, 2 pm & 4:30 pm; Sun/2 pm. Adm. $5. Info: Ralph Kipniss, director, 219/210-3428.

February 17-23--INT’L FRIENDSHIP WEEK

February 18 -- Chess Club at the MC Public Library. 3:30 pm with instructor Roy Quiriconi. For all ages and all skill levels. Free. 873-3045.

February 18 -- Flying Carpet Travelogue presents: “Etched in Stone: Scotland to Provence.” 7 pm at Elston Performing Arts Theatre, Detroit & Spring streets, MC. Tix $5 at the door.


February 18, 19 -- Bookmarks. The Prodigal Wife by Marcia Willets will be reviewed by LuAnne DePriest. 2 pm on Thurs at Westchester Twp History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton; 2 pm on Fri at MC Public Library. Free, open to public. Refreshments will be served.

February 19 -- Save the Tunes Council. 7:30-9 pm at Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center of the IN Dunes Nat. Lakeshore, Hyw. 49, just south of US 20. Free, open to the public. Info: 219-926-7561.

February 19 -- Michigan City Concert Association presents “New Shanghai Circus.” 7:30 pm at Elston Middle School Theatre, 317 Detroit St., MC. Tix at the door $20. www.mccconcerts.org

February 19-21 -- “Closer Than Ever.” Footlight Players musical revue at Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St., MC. Fri/Sat 8 pm; Sun 2 pm. Tix $12; reserve at 874-4035.

February 19-21 -- “Andrews Brothers” - the Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy musical at Memorial Opera House, 104 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso, IN. Fri/Sat 8 pm; Sun 2 pm. Tix $20/adults, $17/seniors & students; 219/548-9137 or www.mohlive.com

February 19-21, 26-28 -- “Boys Next Door” at LaPorte Little Theatre, 218 A St., LaPorte. Curtain Fri/Sat 7:30 pm; Sun 2 pm. Ticket info at 219/362-5113 or visit www.LaporteLittleTheatre.org
February 20 -- LOVE YOUR PET DAY

February 20 -- NAACP & HOPE Pancake Breakfast. 8-11 am at H.O.P.E. (the old Park School), 222 McClelland, Michigan City. Tix $5/in adv. (219/877-4407) or $6/at the door. All you can eat pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, juice, milk, coffee.

February 20 -- “Early Black History of LaPorte Co., IN” presented by LaP. Co. Historian, Fern Eddy Schultz. 1 pm at the LaP. Co. Historical Soc. Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., LaPorte. Program free, but adm. to the museum is charged. 219/324-6767 or www.laportecountyhistory.org

February 20 -- Notre Dame School Taste of Nations. At the school, 1000 Moore Rd., MC. 3 classes of tix: Coach-$25 food only (5-6:30 pm); Business-$65 food, drink, dancing; First Class-$80 (includes 4 raffle tix). Area restaurants, as well as home cooks, provide the food. Reserve at 872-6216.

February 20 -- Amarillo Star Country Western Dance. 7-10:30 pm at Skwiat American Legion Post, MC. Line & couples dancing to DJ music. Adm. $5/AS members, $7/non-members. Chris: 874-3624.

February 20 -- Augustana College Symphonic Band (Augustana College, Rock Island, IL) in concert at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 818 Franklin, MC. 7:30 pm. Freewill offering. 874-7293.

February 21, 25 -- Spring Film Fest: “The Hurt Locker.” About army bomb squad in the Mideast. Rated R. Feb 21, 2 pm at MC Public Library; Feb 25, 6 pm at PNC, LSF Bldg, Rm 002 Assembly Hall. Free, open to public.

FEBRUARY 22 -- GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHDAY

February 23 -- Readers Group at Coolspring Branch Library, 400N & Johnson Rd., MC. Change of Heart by Jodi Picoult will be reviewed and discussed at 7 pm. The book is available for check out in regular and lg. print, CD and Playaway. 879-3272. Public is invited; there is no charge.

February 25 -- NATIONAL CHILI DAY

February 25 -- Books & Coffee series at Valparaiso University. 4 pm in the Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources. Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout will be reviewed by Dr. Edward Uehling, professor of English. Free and open to the public. Info: 219-464-5268.

Farther Afield:

February 20 -- Bob’s Garage (blue grass, rocking boogie, country, blues) in concert at the Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, MI. 8 pm MI time. Tix $8/adults, $6/students and seniors (60+), free/kids under 12 yrs. 269/983-3688 or www.boxfactoryforthearts.org

February 23-28 -- “Natural Selection” play presented by the Notre Dame University Dept. of Theatre, in the Philbin Studio Theatre of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. 7:30 pm except for Sun at 2:30 pm. Tix $15/gen. adm., $12/faculty, staff & seniors, $10/all students. 574-631-2800.
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ANNA MARIA ISLAND (Holmes Beach) 2BR, 2BA Gulf beachfront condo. Beach and poolside decks, heated pool. Monthly rental only. Sam Harnish, 219-879-3265.  

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WONDERFUL DUNELAND BEACH HOME-$335,000.  
Short stroll from beach. Great home, move-in condition & low mainte- 
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Library Arcade at County Library  
Library Arcade for middle school students will be held from 3:00-5:00 p.m., on Wednesdays, February 17, and 24. Everyone will be able to play their favorite X-box 360 and Wii games like Guitar Hero and DDR. There is no registration or fee. For more information, phone 219/362-7128. Phone 219/362-6156 to request signing for the hearing impaired 48 hours in advance.
The Professional by Robert B. Parker

You want spare prose? I'll give you spare prose! Robert B. Parker is the king of spare prose. I reviewed his book Resolution, a Western novel, with about as few words as the author could get away with. Of course, in the wild West a lot of words weren't necessary; it was the action that counted...

Now, in the present time, we have Spenser (no first name given, no first name needed; part of the spare prose, I guess), the witty, wise-cracking private detective that we call a man's man. And, like the wild West, the action is still what counts.

Spenser has been the subject of thirty-six Spenser novels, proving this guy's staying power in the printed word. After reading this book, it's easy to see why he remains so popular. Spenser's the man that women swoon over and men envy. He sees a lot, says very little, and gets results. But sometimes like in this story, and I smile at this, he needs the help of his girlfriend, Susan, who just happens to be a psychotherapist with degrees from Harvard no less. You will see that Spenser needs her kind of expertise when you meet his next clients...

When a lady lawyer enters his office, Spenser is intrigued. A partner in the law firm of Shaw & Cartwright, Elizabeth Shaw is all business and says she has a case he might be qualified to handle. But first she grills him on his girlfriend, his views on love, sex and marriage, and...hey, where is this all going?

Ms. Shaw finally tells Spenser that she has four women clients who all have a case against one Gary Eisenhower. It seems that Gary is quite the ladies' man, having wooed and slept with all four of them. They all agree that the attention and the sex were fabulous, but now it seems our Gary is getting greedy. He has tapes and video of all the aforementioned encounters and he is threatening to go to the husbands (yes, they're all married) and spill all. So the question is, can Spenser convince the conniving con artist to back off without the husbands becoming involved?

Sounds like a pretty straightforward case, right? Wrong. We all know that in life very seldom do things go the way we want them to. First of all, Spenser must find something that all four women have in common that links them to Gary. He finds that link at a health club the women all belong to. No one there wants to talk to Spenser about the elusive Mr. Eisenhower, so Spenser must do what detectives have done for years--follow the clues one step at a time.

Perseverance pays off as Spenser discovers Gary's real name and even gets to meet the man. Scared of a detective, even one as muscular as Spenser? Gary is not. He is open to tell Spenser that he loves sex for the sex and that the husband's money was just an extra perk. Something here just doesn't jell, he's just too complacent. There has to be more to Gary's story than he's told, so our intrepid detective calls in the expertise of his girlfriend, Susan. What she suggests sends Spenser off in search of Gary's background as well as that of one of the wives with a questionable past...

Things heat up when bodies start piling up as fast as the suspects and, well, this story is certainly different! Spare prose and words of wisdom from Spenser (“She was as perky as a chickadee but dumber.”) make this an enjoyable and fast read like no other.

I can see why Spenser has lasted through so many novels!

The prolific Parker is the author of over fifty books. His website is www.robertbparker.net

Chalk by Bill Thomson

Three children walk in the rain and take out some chalk in a mystical bag. They draw a sun, and guess what? The sun comes out! One of the girls start drawing butterflies that turn into beautiful Monarchs that surround them. What a find for the children. But wait till you see what they draw next--it's the old “be careful what you wish for!” brought to a clever conclusion.

This oversize hardback book has full page, full color illustrations that almost look like photographs. It's a fun and exciting book that your children will want to take out over and over again.

Till next time, happy reading!

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Friday at Noon is the deadline for the following week’s issue. (219) 879-0088
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DEEDED BEACH RIGHTS and a beautiful screened porch make this a great Summer home. A wood burning fireplace in the spacious living room make this a great year round home. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths make it comfortable for everyone. $339,000

2811 Elbridge Way

STATELY BUT NOT STUFFY, 4 bedroom, 3 bath home just over 1 block to Stop 28 beach. New kitchen fit for a chef, off street parking for 15+ cars plus 2 garages. New windows, baths, roofs, insulation and all refinished wood floors. Plenty of room for family, friends and guests. Definitely a home for all seasons and a pleasure to entertain in. $699,000

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