

THE

Beacher™

Weekly Newspaper

911 Franklin Street
Michigan City, IN 46360

Volume 31, Number 50
Thursday, December 24, 2015

Happy Holidays



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Published and Printed by
THE BEACHER BUSINESS PRINTERS

Delivered weekly, free of charge to Birch Tree Farms, Duneland Beach, Grand Beach, Hidden Shores, Long Beach, Michiana Shores, Michiana MI and Shoreland Hills. The Beacher is also delivered to public places in Michigan City, New Buffalo, LaPorte and Sheridan Beach.

Home Sweet Home

For Golf Pro, Long Beach is Where He Always Wanted to Be

by Kayla Weiss

When Brian Godfrey left Long Beach after finishing college, he didn't quite know where life would take him...nor that it would bring him back to the only place he's truly called home.

Today, the resident PGA Head Golf Professional at Long Beach Country Club for almost 13 years has created a life for himself that not only involves his wife, Julie, and their three children, but also the chance to live, work and play in the community he calls home.

"This is where I always wanted to be," he said, "and not many people can say they are able to do what they want to do at the place where they want to be. I feel pretty blessed."

Originally from Boston, Godfrey's parents moved to the area when he was just 6 weeks old. His father took a flight here from Boston for a job interview in Chesterton, then intended to hop on another flight for a second job interview in California.



Photo by Bob Wellinski

Brian Godfrey, the PGA Head Golf Professional at Long Beach Country Club, poses at the course's tee area.

"When he came to Chesterton for the first interview, he had some extra time to kill, so he decided to drive around the area, to get a feel for the kind of environment he could be bringing his family into...and he just fell in love with the area, so much so that he decided to accept the job in Chesterton without even interviewing out in California," he said. "He told my mom that it was perfect, so we moved to Indiana, where we ended up living at Stop 18 in Long Beach."

Ironically, the house at Stop 18 was right across the street from the original pro shop at Long Beach Country Club. The Godfreys remained there for a few years before moving to Stop 23, where Brian lived through college.

"It was incredible to be able to grow up here. We always loved being outdoors and spending time at the beach," he said. "There was such a different dynamic back then, compared to how it is today. It's still a fan-

tastic place to raise a family. I just notice that there are more seasoners and less full-time residents.”

When he was 12, Brian began working at the country club, where he got his first taste of having a job in the community he loved. He'd started playing golf when he was 11. The county club's golf pro, Jack Seyring, left an indelible mark on him.

“You're pretty impressionable when you're 11, and I was intrigued by the whole golf pro world here,” he said. “These guys here, they loved what they were doing, and they loved where they worked.

“As I got older, it struck me, why wouldn't I love doing that?”

Godfrey worked at the country club every sum-



Brian Godfrey has been the resident PGA Head Golf Professional at Long Beach Country Club since 2003. Photo by Bob Wellinski

mer until he graduated in 1983 from Indiana University-Bloomington at 22, receiving a bachelor of science degree in public affairs. From there, he didn't immediately enter the world of golf. First, he was employed by the state election board, then he sold World's Finest Chocolate for a year. However, he missed being around golf.

Living in Indianapolis would prove to be a turning point. First, and foremost, it was where he met Julie. Celebrating their 28th anniversary Dec. 12, their journey together started with a haircut.

“We actually met when she was working as a hairdresser,” he said. “I went into the salon where she worked one day, and she ended up being the one to cut my hair. I went back once every month to

Continued on Page 4

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Home Sweet Home Continued from Page 3

get my hair cut by her. It was great. Like little pre-dates before I could even get the nerve up to ask her out on a real date.”

Career-wise, his first big break came when he was hired as the assistant golf pro in October 1988 as assistant golf pro at The Hoosier Links. In July 1990, he became the assistant golf professional at The Links Golf Club, an 18-hole champion golf course in New Palestine. He was promoted to head golf professional in May of 1992.



Brian and Julie Godfrey pictured with their three children: Gibson, 11, Wilson, 10, and Dominic, 5.

Life with Julie and at The Links was good, but after some soul searching, he decided to leave the position for one of lesser rank, as assistant to PGA Pro Jim Ferriell Jr., at Crooked Stick Golf Club in Carmel in March 1993.

“I thought that it would be a better place...to get a head pro position at a bigger club,” he said.

Godfrey remained there for the next two years before being offered the head pro position at a new club in South Bend, Blackthorn Golf Club, where he remained for five years. During his time in South Bend, the assistant athletic director at the University of Notre Dame would frequently visit, asking Godfrey what entailed starting and maintaining a successful golf program. After all the inquiries, Godfrey was offered the general manager position at Warren Golf Course at Notre Dame,



Brian's seventh-grade class photo from Notre Dame School (he's in the top right corner). His children now attend the same school.

where he worked for another five years.

“All of this time, moving around through all of these different clubs and golf-related jobs, in the back of my head I always remembered how the Long Beach Country Club had worked and operated,” Godfrey said. “Long Beach is so much of a community – it just has such a different feel from all of these other clubs I had been working at. But I always had it in my head that Long Beach was the place that I wanted to be.

When Tom Sperling, former head golf pro at Long Beach Country Club, retired, Godfrey received a call from someone at the club, asking if he was interested in the job. After more soul searching, Godfrey accepted the job.

“I always loved the size of the community,” Godfrey said of Long Beach. “You don't feel like you're swallowed up by a big city. The people here are really friendly, and we've made so many new friends since moving here.

Today, he couldn't imagine being anywhere else. It's where he and Julie raise their three children: Gibson, 11, Wilson, 10, and Dominic, 5. The country club also affords the opportunity for Julie and him to work together. She serves as the pro shop's merchandise buyer, selecting clothing and accessories for women and overseeing how merchandise is displayed.

“And all three of our kids go to Notre Dame, where my siblings and I all went to grade school. It's



An elementary school photo of Brian.

just so wild to see your kids go to the same grade school you went to. It all still looks the same, but now when I walk through the halls, I feel like a giant. It's the same, but different. Times have changed, but the feeling has not.

“I think that it says a lot that my brother, sister and I all came back to Long Beach in our own time,” Godfrey said. “We have such a tie to the community. There's just no other place that feels like home.”



Peace, and Best Wishes
in the New Year



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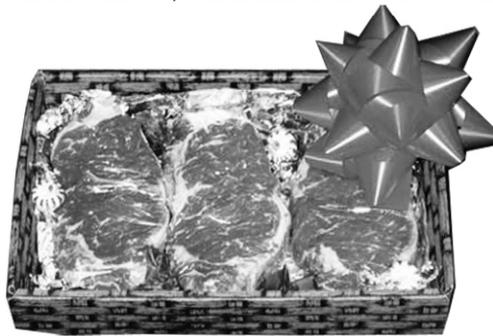
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About the Cover

by Andrew Tallackson

Four years ago, Betty Thomas and her husband, Ron, took their then 2-year-old granddaughter Lilly outside to enjoy a little sledding.

It was a perfect winter's day. Their dog, Maggie, joined in the fun, hopping on board the sled to share the ride with Lilly.



Betty and Ron made sure to capture the day with plenty of photographs. From those images, Betty was able to crystallize the day in the form of a watercolor painting that we at *The Beacher* felt should grace the cover of our Christmas edition.

This isn't the first time Betty's work has appeared on our cover. The Christmas 2013 edition marked her debut with a lush, haunting winter scene that inspired one *Beacher* reader to leave a voicemail for us over the Christmas break, the woman calling Betty's work "gorgeous."

A Michigan City Art League member, Betty and Ron, a wood carver and retired steel worker, have two children: a son, Jason, and a daughter, Holly Beadles, an art teacher at Pine Elementary Magnet School for the Visual and Performing Arts.

As an artist, Betty works in many mediums, but finds great joy in watercolors.

"It's easy to convey the feeling of the picture," she said. "I love the spontaneity of it. There's also the serendipity of the process. I never know how it's going to work out, and that's fun."

Fun, indeed, is what the viewer takes away from Betty's latest work. It is the perfect way to bring 2015 to a close for all of us at *The Beacher*. This is our last edition of the year. We'll take a two-week break before resuming publication Jan. 14.

From all of us at *The Beacher*, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Margaret Sullivan
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"Dear Santa Claus"

A beloved tradition returns to *The Beacher* with letters to Santa Claus from Notre Dame Elementary School second-graders, presented to you just as the children wrote them. Thanks to second-grade teacher Lindsay Jurczak for helping us out. Enjoy!



Dear Santa,

I am being a good boy this year. I am trying to be even better. This Christmas, I would like you to bring me a surprise. I hope you and your reindeer have safe travels this Christmas. I hope everyone gets presents especially my family and the poor people in the world.

Love,
Jack Albano

Dear Santa,

I really want my ipad fixed thank you for puting magic back in elfie and pool toys thank you.

Love,
Nathan Downs

Dear Santa,

For Christmas I would like The horror at Camp Jelly jam Goosebumps book. Merry Christmas!

P.S. Can I have some figgy pudding?

Your friend,
Giannis Fegaras

Dear Santa,

I've been a very good boy this year and will you please bring me a sky viper mini? Have a safe trip!

Your friend,
Julien Hernandez

Dear Santa,

How do you deliver all of the present in one night? Thank for my presents last year. I have tried to be on the good list all year. I tried to be nice to my brother and help my little brother with his homework. I will leave you chocolate chip cookies.

Love,
Olivia Kereszturi

Dear Santa,

I've been really good this year and what I want for Christmas is the pack of regular goosebumps books the pack of horrorland goosebumps books wii u and the splatoon game and the supermario maker game regular size toy b-24 libetor.

Yours sincerely,
Kai Keehn

Dear Santa,

Please let me thank you for your kindness. We really appreciate all the gifts. As you know I have been kind and helpful all year, and the presents are ready I hope, so there should be no reason to ask for any. However please do not forget that even elves are in need of cheer.

Best Wishes,
Sebastian Kozaczka

Dear Santa,

I would please like a Elf. Because I think they are cute. And I heard they hid stuff from Molly. I mostly heard you should never touch them! Because they can lose their power! But I have to keep it in my room because my sister touchis everything. Untill she is bigger then I can bring out my Elf. If it is a boy his name is John. Ella for a girl.

Love,
Leighton Kurtich

Dear Santa,

Thank you for my presents last year. Thank you for the dress it was pretty. This year my mom is making new cookies. Can I have a diary for Christmas please? Is the North Pole cold? Is Mrs. Cluse nice? Did it snow last year at the North Pole? Was it fun in the North Pole? Is it hot in the North Pole? Thank you.

Your Friend,
Claire Leniski



Dear Santa,

How are you doing? Does Rrou-dof aksly have a red nose? Are you magek? How do you eat so many cookes on Cristmas Eve? How do your Ranedeer fly? Can you realy see every thing we do? I have a very small list, a giny pig, a Wild kratts set and a arcitect kit. Thank you very much.
By. :)

Love,
Aedan McKee

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas! Hope you are doing well. Are you excited for Christmas? I am! What are you working on? Am I on the good list? I have been working hard to get on the good list. I am happy with whatever you bring me, but I would really like HotWheels RC please. Thank you very much! I hope you have safe travels and eat lots of cookies.

Love,
Jack McCarthy

Dear Santa,

I have been a good boy this year. I would like a I doo theed cit and lagose and \$40,000,000,000 and a robot and a cinpootir and a rumot citiroll helucoppter and a lageo enjen. If you get that i will luvu you.

Sincerely,
Charlie Meyer

Dear Santa and rudolph,

I want Poke'mon cards, Swich and go dinos, a toy velosoraptor, a toy minion, lego bionicle, a lego velosoraptor, a lego bald eagle, nerf gun, every single toy Poke'mon in the world, a new fishing pole and tackle box, some bate for fishing, a robot that does all my homework for me, and that is all I want for Christmas.

Happy holidays,
Samuel Miltenberger

Dear Santa,

How do you eat all those cookies? Thanks for all thoes presents 2 years ago. Why aren't the elves not at are house? If I've been good can I have a littel life pet, a backpack, shopkins, and clothes?

Happy holidays,
Ella Musial

Dear Santa,

I want a hello kitty diary and Shoppkins. One more thing, how do you fit all those cookies in your belly?

Yours truly,
Julia Musial

Dear Santa,

Is it cold in the North pole? Do you get mountains of letters? What do you like the most? Can you write me a letter? You should by your toys at Walmart. I like Vixen the most and Cupid. I'm trying to be good. Can I have a elf? How old are you and Mrs. Claus?

Love,
Max Olesker

Dear Santa,

For Christmas I want loom stuff and Arts and crafts, I want toys and some gymnastics equipment a socoor ball a ginney pig and some other stuff. I would like to see you on Christmas moring and I hope you have a merry Christmas.

Love,
McKenzie Pitchford

Dear Santa,

I want New games for the PS3, Shopkins, draw on pillows, Zoomer Dog, Drum set, stuffed animal elf, Giant teddy bear, Beginner guitar, mini food set. I want the rest of it to be a secret. Happy holidays.

Love,
Katelynn Schulp

Dear Santa,

I hopfully hope i was good! if i was i whant a dirtbick please whith extra please!

Sincerely,
Jackson Smith

Dear Santa,

I would like Spider-man, Green Lantern, and Hulk shopkins, Magic pens, Highlights, Hidden pictures, Lego Dimesion, Calender, Skylanders super chargers and Disney infinity 3.0. Thank you for the presants last year. And how do you eat all of those cookies?

Love,
Matthew Sperling

Dear Santa,

Hi I want any kind of Little Pet Shop and any kind of Babie's. Also, makeup, Barbie clothes, and shoes. A Barbie car and house too. Thank you for all of my gifts last year. I have tried to be a good listner. I will leave you some chocolate chip cookies and milk.

Happy Holidays,
Jazlyn Tejero

Dear Santa,

I have been a good girl. I want an elephant, a angle topping for a Christmas tree, I want 1,000,000,000,0 dollars. I want to meat you Santa.

Love,
Maya Williams

Dear Santa,

How big is your belly? For Crimas I want a puppy, mini ipad, or Toys 'R' Us gift card! I hope you have a good x-mas!

Happy holidays,
Molly Tinti



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One Less Piece of Chocolate for Christmas

Editor's note — Long Beach resident Marty Riley wrote this tribute to her dog, a beloved fixture in the community that passed away last month.

Mister Charles Wendell Brown. "Charley Brown." "Chocolate." "Charley." "CB." "Wendell Brown." "Wendell."

Whatever you called this chocolate lab, he was there for your ear rubs or nuzzles.

Charley, born July 21, 2007, was adopted by his "human" parents, Mike and Marty Riley of Long Beach, on Sept. 26, 2007.

Charley immediately hit the streets of Long Beach with spirit. He romped at the Long Beach Country Club golf course, always steering clear of the golfers. He walked up and down the streets of Long Beach...on his leash, of course. He ran on the beach and played in the "Big Lake." As he got older, he walked in the lake and drank from it.

Throughout his beach adventures, he was eager to meet up with his dog friends. Fred DeLabarre and Maggie Szczepaniak were two of his closest friends. He saw them daily.

Belle Krueger, Henry Bartlett and Sammy Rakowski also were on his list of Long Beach dog friends. Omen Stupeck and Niko Steele were back-up neighbors and friends.

Often, life sounded like a scene from "One Hundred and One Dalmatians," with the neighborhood dogs passing along their barks. Saturday siren days

encouraged howling. Dog life is, indeed, exciting.

Charley met up with a deer on one of his walks, and they were face to face as though they could become playmates. Lots of deer sightings and squirrel enticements made for awesome walks.

Charley was a beautiful model for more than 8,000 photos on phones and cameras. He posed willingly for all holidays, and cards with his photos were sent out to his closest friends.

Charley shared his spotlight willingly with 13 grandkids and six granddogs, yet he always knew he was the special one.

In February of this year, Charley was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He was a brave dog and went through major surgery at Purdue Veterinary School of Medicine at Purdue University. With the help of Purdue and his loving vets, Dr. Harry Sorenson and Dr. Brian Mack, he was able to enjoy his life for nine more months. He was at the golf course, walking the streets, running the beach and enjoying life until life was taken from him on Thanksgiving Day.

Tears flowed and continue to flow. There is one less piece of chocolate this Christmas, but the memory of our beloved dog will be forever in our hearts.

If you knew "Charley," then you knew one awesome dog who loved life in Long Beach!



Charley, all decked out for Christmas.



Charley as a puppy.



Charley, at peace galloping along the beach.

Ted Perzanowski, M.Div., B.A.

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“ROCKY” SEQUEL A REMARKABLE JOURNEY FOR MICHIGAN CITY NATIVE

by John Moultrie and Kim Ward

Editor’s note — The Beacher continues its partnership with iRock Jazz to provide Art+Times, a bi-weekly column that highlights how art and culture intersect today.

If you’d told Michigan City native Aaron Covington he would co-write the highest-grossing opening in the “Rocky” franchise back when he was in high school, he might not have believed you.

“Creed,” the seventh “Rocky” movie, opened in theaters Nov. 25. The first film in the franchise not written by creator Sylvester Stallone, it is the first to shift the focus from Rocky Balboa to Adonis Johnson, the son of Rocky’s rival and friend, Apollo Creed. The shift was risky, but has paid off at the box office and with critics. The film is scoring awards and nominations, and inching toward the \$100-million mark in terms of grosses.

It is interesting to note that the road to Hollywood success for Covington went through Michigan City.

“Michigan City wasn’t too different,” Covington told Art+Times. “It wasn’t too eventful. Just the usual things like school, sports...I really don’t know how to categorize it. It was a pretty normal upbringing.”

Covington liked sports, but says he was not a good athlete. Even as a 6-foot-tall freshman, he didn’t stand out.

“We had a lot of tall guys. Corn-raised Indiana. I was never a great athlete. I had ‘game’, but I wasn’t fast,” he said.

Knee issues associated with his rapid growth forced him to sit out most of his high school years.

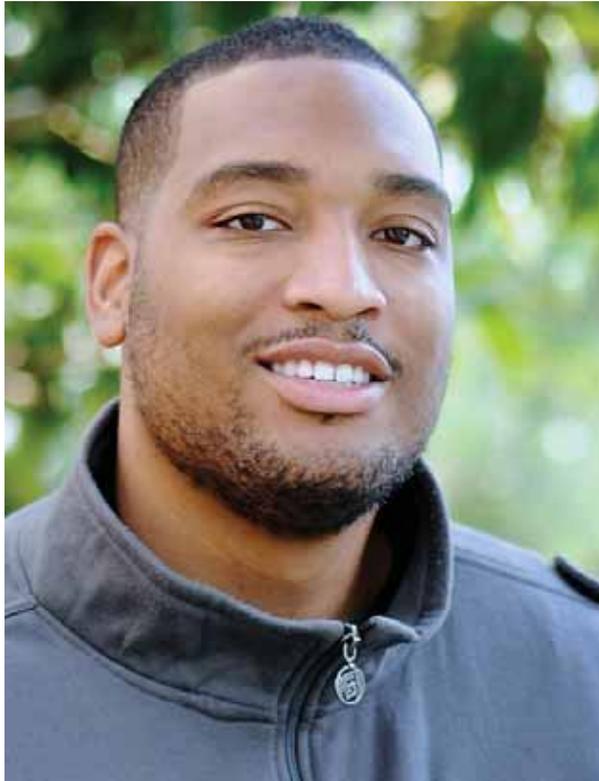
“I didn’t play at all my junior year,” he said. “I just couldn’t get right. They had a good team, too. They didn’t even miss me.”

The moviemaking bug did not bite until college. After graduating from high school in 2002, Covington went to Ohio State University.

“I started with business because that was all that I knew,” he said. “I didn’t get the GPA to make the business school, so I ended up going with communications.”

It was a trip back home that set him on the path to make movies.

“I remember once going home to Michigan City



Aaron Covington

for break my sophomore year. I was trying to narrow down what I wanted to do. So I took a couple weeks to really figure it out. (I thought) ‘I do love to write. I want to write and work on movies.’ I kind of made that decision.

“After I graduated from Ohio State,” he continued, “I applied at (University of Southern California) for graduate school in film production. I came out here to (Los Angeles) in 2008, and I was looking to become a writer and director at that time.”

It was at USC where Aaron met Ryan Coogler (“Fruitvale Station”), the future director and co-writer of “Creed.”

“We actually met first day at orientation. We became fast friends...we had a lot in common. We were both huge sports fans, so we were able

to connect about that and a love for comics and a lot of other things.”

A year later, Coogler approached Covington about teaming up to write “Creed.”

“When Ryan came to me, it was before he had met Stallone or anything. So that was back in 2009 or 2010. He was like, ‘Are you interested in writing this movie with me?’ He told me the basic idea was Apollo Creed’s son...Rock is older and he is sick or struggling with the things that old people struggle with. I thought it was a really cool idea.”

For Coogler, the inspiration to write “Creed” was his own father, who had become ill, and their shared love of “Rocky” movies.

“The idea just clicked with him (to write) a similar situation for Rocky, with him getting old and getting sick and dealing with that,” Covington said of Coogler.

“(We wondered) how would that be relevant to the ‘Rocky’ franchise. We just kept talking back and forth, and that became the basis for what is now ‘Creed.’”

The friends got even closer while writing the script.

“We definitely worked in the same room. I was actually in his guest room when we were actually writing the script,” he said. “The story kind of formed

Art+Times

early, and we just worked around the details.”

The writing team knew “Creed” could never get made without Stallone’s approval. The character of Rocky was first introduced by Stallone in 1976, before either of the writing duo was born. After 2006’s “Rocky Balboa,” Stallone decided that film was the final chapter in the character’s story.

Coogler, who was with the same agency as Stallone, was not easily discouraged. He pitched the idea to his agent, who later reached out to “Rocky” producer Irwin Winkler.

“(This agent), about three years ago, kept calling me and saying, ‘There’s this guy in Oakland...about 25 or 26 years old...that wants to do a Rocky spinoff’ and I kept saying we’ve had it,” Winkler said. “We were very lucky ‘Rocky Balboa’ came out great. It’s time to put it to bed.”

Winkler says the agent was persistent and arranged a meeting with Coogler.

Covington says the process of getting Stallone’s buy-in was a long one.

“Ryan had the idea first, we talked about it a little bit, then he went off to do ‘Fruitvale (Station).’ (His agents) set up a meeting (with Stallone) for him, and he started the long process of constantly meeting with Stallone and talking to him.”

It took several more meetings with Stallone and bringing Michael B. Jordan — Coogler’s “Fruitvale Station” star who would later portray the title role



Michael B. Jordan and Sylvester Stallone star in “Creed.”

in “Creed” — into the conversations to earn the “Rocky” creator’s trust.

“He would call me after and say, ‘Man, I met with Stallone. He might be interested in the movie,’” Covington said. “I was super excited for the opportunity. I knew as long as they were able to keep having meetings, it was a possibility. As long as Stallone was still accepting the meet-

ings...he was not closing the door completely. I knew there was a possibility.”

Art+Times asked Covington about maintaining the devoted fan following of the “Rocky” franchise and the respect for its legacy.

“I think it’s a huge responsibility,” he said. “Anytime you take on a story, you want to pay proper respect to the original material, or if it’s a person, that person’s life. There was a tremendous amount of...not even pressure...it’s like a sense of responsibility. That’s why the great thing is, Stallone is a part of the movie. He created the whole world, and the producers on this movie were the same producers on the original ‘Rocky’ movies. We had a team of people encouraging us, supporting us that created the world. So if there were any missteps, they could immediately be like, ‘Well, you know this isn’t true.’ Not that it happened, but we know we had people in our corner, basically like a coach.”

Covington described Stallone as their coach.

“Somebody’s gotta say, ‘Hey don’t do that!’ So, we

Continued on Page 14

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“ROCKY” SEQUEL Continued from Page 13

had Stallone as our Phil Jackson, making sure that we were running a triangle. You know what I mean? So moving forward, I think it’s about creating something new. We wanted it to have the same kind of heart to carry on the series. We built a foundation here, and I think it is a strong one to build off of.”

Covington says he believes it is just as difficult to write a new movie as it is an adapted screenplay.

“The thing about an existing (franchise) is the characters in the world are already established, so you are kind of jumping into something that exists.

“When you are creating something from scratch, you have more consideration about every kind of character that fits in there. So in that regard, I am not saying that (writing for an existing franchise) is easier, but the foundation is already there. You are building on top of that, so it’s a different kind of work to be done. The work is more focused on paying proper homage and proper respect. When you are creating something new, you have to figure out what that means first.”

It is clear Covington is just getting started.

“I have a lot of things that I am super passionate about. Maybe one or two more sports dramas, kind of like ‘Creed.’ I want to do a basketball related show. Growing up in Indiana... and I am a super tall guy myself...I am close to the game

of basketball. I want to do something with hoops, and I also want to do some comedy stuff. I am really passionate about comedy and stand-up comedy, so I really want to do something that incorporates that love. I really want to do a classic comedy movie.”

Covington gets especially animated when discussing inspiration from his childhood.

“There is a lot of talk about getting some good action (movies). My dad used to take me to all the Bruce Lee movies. Watching Jackie Chan and Wesley Snipes’ old stuff like ‘Passenger 57’...I would love so much to do a movie like that. You know...‘Passenger 58’.”

It is not surprising that Covington has a passion for martial arts films. He holds a black belt in Taekwondo.

“I was Ninja Turtling it up (when I was younger). I was in it for a while. I got some trophies. I was big for my age. No one would hype me up for the fight. They would say ‘Don’t kill this little scrawny kid...We can’t have an incident in the Holiday Inn Convention Center.’ They would calm me down. So

I would get second or third place.”

Following the success of “Creed,” Covington is not worried about future projects being scrutinized or not living up to the success of this film.

“Does it concern me? No,” he said. “That just means I have a next project!”

“*Creed*” is in theatres now. Follow Aaron Covington on Twitter @BearCov)



Director Ryan Coogler on the set with Michael B. Jordan and Sylvester Stallone.



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(pictured from left to right starting back row: Val Pudlo, Tricia Meyer, Jeff Meyer, Cindy Hernandez, Joe Gazarkiewicz, Jane Cooley, Cari Adams Gee; front row: Diana Hirsch, Jane Palella, Betty Sams, Rose Pollock, Denise O'Connor and Gail Mathews; not pictured: Danelcy Patterson, Marge Skwiat-Gloy, JuliAnn Merrion, Gary Mohamed)

Dear Friends and Family,

Another year has passed, and what a year it has been! We are celebrating a banner year of listings and sales, ever thankful for the continued support as we serve our Northwest Indiana neighbors.

This year, four experienced real estate brokers joined our team: Val Pudlo, Gary Mohamed, Betty Sams and Denise O'Connor. Val Pudlo ("My Pal Val") joined our office in February, bringing 20 years of real estate experience and a love of buyers! Gary joined our office in April. He is celebrating 10 years as a trusted real estate broker in Northwest Indiana. Betty returned to real estate this year and recently successfully closed her first transaction with Merrion. In November, Denise joined the team, bringing to it an incredible record of selling hundreds of homes within 3 percent of list price.

Jane Cooley continues to be a force in Northwest Indiana real estate as a multi-million dollar producer. She closed 17 transactions in just one quarter this year! Cari Adams Gee had her best year in real estate (so far) and is a first-time multi-million dollar producer. She also helps grow our business as a support to the office on all things "techy." Diana Hirsch had an exceptional year and is a million dollar producer for 2015. She also is celebrating 15 years as a Realtor in Northwest Indiana. Cindy Hernandez, a million dollar producer for 2015, had a stellar year selling in the beach, town and country.

Rose Pollock, a million dollar producer for 2015, focused her real estate approach as an REO (bank owned) specialist. Her many years of living in the beach area also make her a residential beach expert. Jane Palella's dedication and drive as a real estate agent continues to reflect her successes. Danelcy Patterson is our multi-lingual real estate specialist, speaking fluent Spanish, Dutch and English. She is a valuable resource in our office.

Marge Skwiat-Gloy is like the Energizer Bunny. She keeps going and going. Her extensive experience offers tremendous value to her clients. Gail Mathews has exceptional organizational skills and a passion for real estate. She continues to have an exemplary sales history, all while balancing a full-time career and dedication to her family. Joe Gazarkiewicz has once again shown he can balance his extremely busy life with a successful real estate career. His experience in Northwest Indiana real estate is a true value to our office. Congratulations to JuliAnn Merrion, who accepted a teaching position at Marquette Catholic High School and began teaching in August 2015.

As we reflect on 2015, we are grateful to our growing team of knowledgeable and driven real estate brokers and the community, which has helped us meet and surpass our 2015 goals.

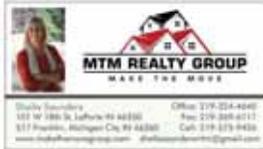
We look forward to serving you in 2016.

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

Wreaths Across America Day

Remembering Our Veterans Inc. placed wreaths at the graves of local veterans as part of a ceremony Dec. 12 at Greenwood Cemetery. The observance was part of Wreaths Across America Day. Photos by M.D. Cunningham





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The Strange, Fun Times of Legendary Gerry Hundt

by M.D. Cunningham

The man shouting was naked.
“Sauna!”

Gerry Hundt had travelled alone to play with a blues band in Finland. He’d made the 13-hour flight earlier in the day and arrived at the “fish cabin” around midnight. Food was cooking. Hundt was hungry. But before falling asleep, he was exposed to an eccentric cultural pastime.

It was time to sauna. The naked man yelling excitedly was his host, Timo.

“I said, OK, can I get a robe, though, at least?”

It wasn’t long before Hundt was standing naked in a pool of icy water cut into a lake, willing himself to submerge his entire body: 1...2...3!

“It feels amazing,” Hundt said of that experience, the professional musician having traveled to every state in the U.S. and 13 different countries. “That first time when you bring yourself back up, you feel reborn. All your nerves are firing. You feel so alive.”

So alive, you sit in the comparatively warm 30-degree air drinking Estonian lager at a picnic table — still naked. But you’re not cold, he said. When you start to shiver, back into the sauna you go. The whole process repeats many times before culminating with a feast.

“I’ve made some really great friends...,” he said. “When you’re out there on the road, things just kind of tend to happen.”

Hundt has called Northwest Indiana home for the last eight years, and while he may occasionally miss southern barbecue or New England seafood fresh from the dock, the “little” (think Finland) trips he makes here and there are enough for the husband and father of three young children.

“As I got more and more into music,” Hundt said, “I enjoyed it so much that I structured my life around being able to play music.”

The Beacher spent a short, fun hour with Hundt before his one-man-band took the stage at a noisy tavern in his adopted hometown of Chesterton. It

was a week before he was slated to appear at the December First Friday event at Michigan City’s Lubeznik Center for the Arts.

The first thing I noticed about Hundt was his movements while setting up. He was calm, deliberate and methodical, although I recall him doing an abrupt turnaround, as if he wanted to recheck something. Later, he’d say that part of being a professional musician is always being prepared.

The Beacher: There’s a Latin phrase for that?

It takes a second, but Hundt comes up with *semper paratus*. He studied Latin, Greek and French at one of the oldest liberal arts schools in the nation: Middlebury College in Vermont. For him, this was a time marked by experimentation, particularly with music. He played gigs in two different bands and regularly as a DJ, along with meeting and studying with great musicians such as Paul Asbell, who taught him jazz theory.

Hundt remembers once saying to Asbell,

who has played with the likes of John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters, that he should have studied more blues. He remembered Asbell say, “We’ve trained your ears, now you can go figure that stuff out for yourself.”

Hundt continued.

“At that time of your life, everybody is trying stuff,” he said. “A lot of it was failing, and you moved onto the next thing.”

The Beacher: What did you fail at?

“I wasn’t very good at salsa. I took one class — you had electives — and I tried salsa dancing. It was fun. You gotta’ keep your upper body still, and everything is going on, and you know, it didn’t really take. What can I say?”

The musician’s laugh alternates from hardy timbre to a giddy chortle.

Hundt has held on to a pure, easy way, clearly evident in his playing style, too. Passion for music sank its hooks into him early. He brings up “Sesame



Street” as his earliest influence. I asked him if he’s serious, and Hundt says he is. He recalls guests like Chicago Bluesman Bo Diddley making appearances on the show in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

“The music was always really good,” Hundt said, pulling decade-old memories from some imaginary record rack in his head. “It was always funky, you know?”

The Beacher: You were 3, 4 years old getting your funk on?

Hundt laughs.

“Well, yeah man.”

Friendships have played a huge role in Hundt’s evolution as a musician. As an adolescent in Rockford, Ill., he was hanging out with guys who listened to Guns N’ Roses and Echo and the Bunnymen. An early turning point, he recalls, was when he heard Jimi Hendrix’s ballad “The Wind Cries Mary.” He was at a school dance. Everything else seemed to stop.

“I was kind of obsessed,” he said, “and I started collecting anything ever recorded by Jimi Hendrix that I could get my hands on.”

The Beacher: When did you start playing?

In college, Hundt began to take music seriously, but he recalls playing with a guitar that his parents had at home on occasion. One Christmas, he asked for a harmonica, but it wasn’t until his junior year of high school that he started playing. A torn MCL combined with six weeks of physical therapy proved to be the impetus. In a short time, he was buying the first CD he could find with a harmonica on the cover, which was an album by blues icons Buddy

Guy and Junior Wells.

“I hadn’t heard any of the songs, but it sounded really familiar to me,” he said. “What Jimi Hendrix was doing was blues filtered through psychedelia, but at heart he was a blues, soul songwriter.”

After he made that connection, he devoured as much blues and jazz as he could. It’s impossible to know, but easy to imagine that Hundt never would have thought he’d play with Buddy Guy some 20 years later.

The Beacher: How did the one-man-band begin?

Not knowing many people in the area initially, Hundt explored local venues. He found a small restaurant that had a burgers and blues night. He persuaded the owner to let him play live. Having just come off the road with a Chicago blues band, Hundt wanted to replicate that sound. His good friend, the late John Alex Mason, inspired him to start his own one-man act.

Hundt says it only took him a few weeks to learn to play four instruments — bass drum, high hat, guitar and harmonica — together. While not perfect, it was the start to a process of constant refinement. The hardest part was coming up with a name. The tradition for one-man-bands is to use some type of hyperbole, which contrasts with Hundt’s visible humility. He kicked ideas around for several weeks with his wife.

“I definitely couldn’t do what I do without her,” Hundt said of his wife. “She taught me some dance steps for swing dancing, and I don’t think I would

Continued on Page 20



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The Strange Continued from Page 19

have picked up on playing music like I do if she hadn't showed me the very rudiments of rhythmic movement."

The Beacher: Tell me about the people you've played with.

"I think all the guys I choose to play with are very talented. The band that I have with Corey Dennison is something special," he said, stressing The Kinsey Report and Steepwater Band as well.

"People don't realize the level of talent here in Northwest Indiana. My buddy, Randy Nelson, who kind of got me started on the scene. There are all these Chicago guys, too: Buddy Guy, Pinetop Perkins, Bob Stroger, Barrelhouse Chuck, Carey and



Lurrie Bell, Nick Moss ..."

Hundt has met thousands of people through his music.

"It's been a good ride, you know," he said. "I'm just looking forward to the next gig."

The next gig at the moment is here in Chesterton. Servers and bartenders are shouting, grabbing and pouring. A flurry of faces glows in the dark light like human lanterns, many glued to screens for a tight Notre Dame football game, but the mood shifts when Hundt begins to play. It's not immediate, but even hard, stoic men gradually shift their eyes toward the man in sunglasses, cuffed overhauls and Chuck Taylors.

"This guy is a really good harmonica player," someone behind me says.

Around the room, heads are bopping, hands clapping, slapping, bodies swaying and shaking. By the second song, it's pretty clear most people here want to dance.

Everything else seemed to stop.

(Follow news for Gerry Hundt's Legendary One-Man-Band and his other work at steadygroove.com)

About the Photos

M.D. Cunningham attended the December First Friday at Lubeznik Center for the Arts to capture the feel of a Gerry Hundt performance.



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A Look Back

Editor's note — Special thanks to Matt Werner for providing The Beacher with these photos that convey Christmas in Michigan City in 1937 and 1945.



Workers put up Christmas decorations on Franklin Street on Dec. 2, 1937.



Santa arrives to celebrate Christmas at The Salvation Army on Dec. 27, 1945.



Santa arrives at The Salvation Army on Dec. 15, 1945.

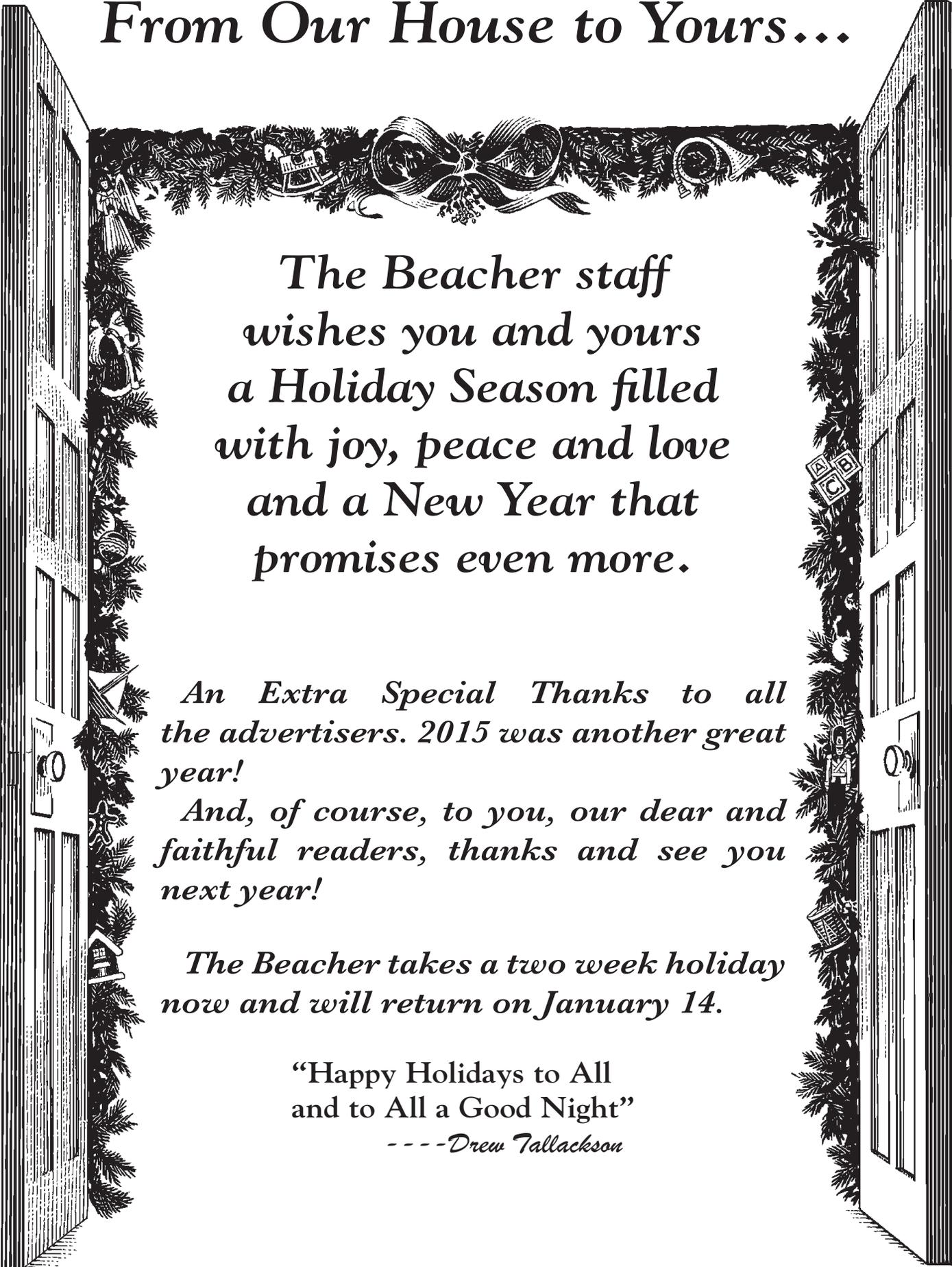


Levin's Market's first batch of trees arrive on Dec. 2, 1937.



Santa attends a Christmas party at Elston School on Dec. 23, 1937.

From Our House to Yours...



*The Beacher staff
wishes you and yours
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and a New Year that
promises even more.*

*An Extra Special Thanks to all
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year!*

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

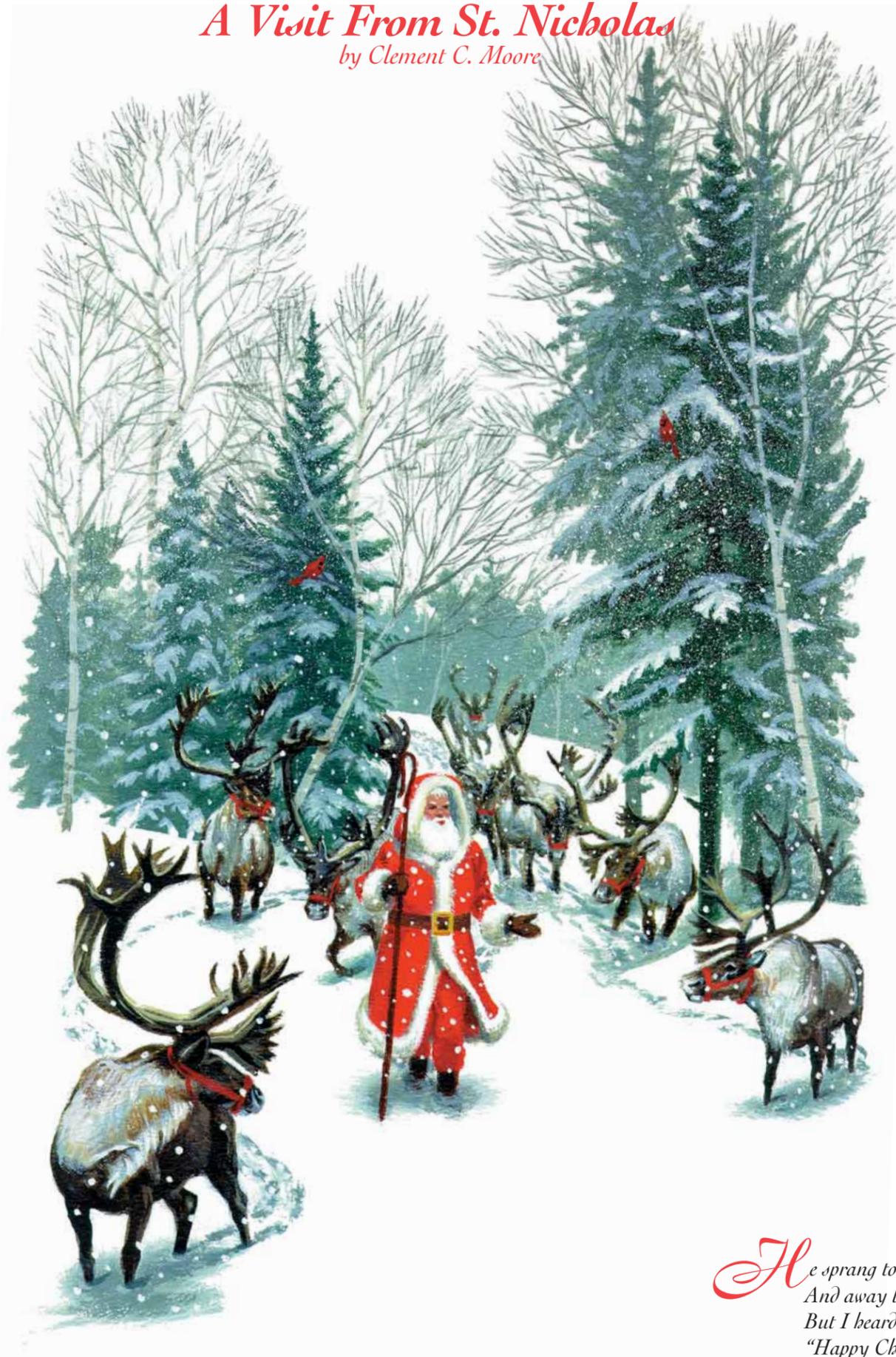
*The Beacher takes a two week holiday
now and will return on January 14.*

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

----Drew Tallackson

A Visit From St. Nicholas

by Clement C. Moore



*T*was the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.

*T*he children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.

*A*way to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

*T*he moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below;
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick..

*M*ore rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!

*A*s dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleighful of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

*A*nd then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

*H*e was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot:
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

*H*is eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.

*H*e had a broad face, and a little round belly
that shook, when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly.

*H*e was chubby and plump - a right jolly old elf -
And I laughed, when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

*H*e spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

*H*e sprang to his sleigh, to the team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew, like the down of a thistle,
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"



What's Cooking

by Jim LaRocco

Christmas once again is upon us, and I remember the excitement and anticipation of Christmas as a youngster.

We knew that after Thanksgiving, we needed to be extra good, just in case, and for some strange reason, we became more helpful around the house. We counted off the days to Christmas vacation, when we would be out of school and bugging our mothers to no end about when Christmas will be here.

There were a few other things that signaled that Christmas was not far away.

There was the arrival of Christmas catalogs from the retail giants. Most came with a toy section; some had a separate toy catalog. Kids would spend hours perusing them, dreaming of what it would be like to get the latest cool thing.

Another sign was the arrival of decorations on Franklin Street and especially Santa's house.

I remember standing out in the cold waiting in line to see Santa. Finally, after what seemed like hours, I'd enter, sit on his lap and give him my list. When I was finished, I was told to be good and handed a candy cane. Be good? Are you kidding? Too dangerous to act up now!

(It is nice, by the way, to see a replica of the original Santa House was built and in use today.)

There were the yearly airings of cartoons about the Christmas elves, Hardrock, Coco and Joe and, of course, Suzy Snowflake. I preferred the Rosemary Clooney version instead of the Norma Zimmer one.

I remember walking downtown and doing my Christmas shopping. It was back when a youngster could walk the streets without being afraid.

I would go into various men's shops to find things for my brothers and dad. We had Herbert's, Fred Stern, Greiger's and my favorite, Stanley and Peck. One of our neighbors owned that store. It was back when store owners knew you, your sizes, even what you liked. You could stop in and tell them, "If anyone comes in and wants to buy something for me, this is what I would like." That kind of service went the way of the Dodo. I remember how warm the buildings were, and how all the floors had spooky squeaks.

To paraphrase the opening of a popular 1950s TV western, "Let's go back to those thrilling days of yesteryear."

Typically, there are accompanying photos with What's Cooking, but not this week. There will be no "breaking up the gray," as it is called in the biz. This week, I want you to rely on your memory. Think back to those "thrilling days of yesteryear," of your grandparents, favorite uncle or aunt, your favorite Christmas. Remember the sights and sounds

of Christmas. See the steam accumulating on the windows from a day of cooking and, of course, those smells coming from the kitchen.

My family always celebrated on Christmas Eve because there were many places we had to go Christmas Day.

My mom always prepared an extra special dinner for Christmas. She set a fantastic table, like something out of a magazine. Everything had to be just right.

I knew Santa was on his way, and that we could not open any presents until he paid us a visit. I would fidget in my chair and repeatedly head to the front door to see if Santa's navy blue, 1950 Studebaker was parked in front of the house. I noticed that the car Santa drove was just like the one owned by the head groundkeeper at Ames Field, Mike Pytinia. When I mentioned that to my parents, they informed me Santa borrowed the car to give the reindeer a rest.

Made perfect sense to me at the time.

After watching and waiting for what seemed like days, I would finally see that bullet-nosed Studebaker pull up in front of our house. I would shout out, "He's here, he's here, Santa is finally here!" He would come in yelling the familiar, "HO, HO, HO, MERRY CHRISTMAS!" I was amazed he knew my name and what everyone in the family was up to. If you were lucky and he was ahead of schedule, he would even stay to have a cup of coffee, some cookies and carry off some carrots for the reindeer.

I remember thinking how cool it was to be able to celebrate Christmas all over again tomorrow. Christmas Day, we loaded up the presents in the car and headed out for a daylong visit with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

I can still smell the food cooking at my grandmother's houses. My Italian grandmother and aunts would make these fantastic Italian cookies. There were like a million of them. My favorite was, and still is, the *cucidati* (fig cookies). They were the best.

We would have a nice meal and visit with my Dad's family, then it was off to my other grandmother's: my mom's mom. We would repeat the process all over. More great food, everything made from scratch: cookies, pies, cakes, the main course. My Aunt Marie always made baked macaroni and cheese, my favorite. I knew I had to fill my plate the first time around because if I didn't, it would be gone.

After Christmas dinner, the teenagers would head off to be on their own, and us youngsters would play together while the adults sipped wine, had coffee, dessert and talked.

The houses were filled with the laughter of the kids playing. Teens playing their latest 45's and the occasional shout from the assembled adults for someone to knock something off.

Time marches on. Family members leave us, and the only thing we have left are the memories of Christmases past. Occasionally, I am asked, wouldn't you like to be young again? My answer is, no! I like my age, not the pains that go with it, but I am glad to have grown up in a time when family was important, when you spent time with family and no one had their nose buried in a smart phone, tablet or other electronic device. You interacted with family and friends.

I have memories that most kids today will never have. Growing up in a town where everyone knew everyone. People were kind, helpful and respectful. Children respected their elders, always offered help and, for the most part, did what their parents told them.

If I could grant a wish for the youngsters of today, it would be for them to experience the magic of what Christmas was like when I was a youngster. In a time before the six-month advertising blitz, constant merchandising, before Black Friday. A time when a child could not take much more than the month-long anticipation of Christmas. Today, with Christmas displays being set out in July, you can almost here a collective groan.

Families talked to one another around the dinner table and, for the most part, enjoyed each other's company. I know those days will never come back, and that is the world's loss.

Christmas is a time for eating cakes, pies, cookies and candy. You know, the stuff you swear off the week after Christmas.

This is the recipe we use for pecan pie, a favorite around here. You can either make your crusts or buy them already made.

Take 1 cup of Karo Dark Syrup, 3 eggs slightly beaten, 1/4 cup sugar, 2 tablespoons of melted butter, 1 teaspoon of vanilla, 1 1/2 cups pecans.

Stir the first five ingredients, mix in the pecans and pour into a deep dish pie crust. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 50-55 minutes. To take away some of the sweetness, you can add two tablespoons of milk or cream to the mixture. We like to garnish the top of the pie with pecan halves. It makes a more attractive pie.

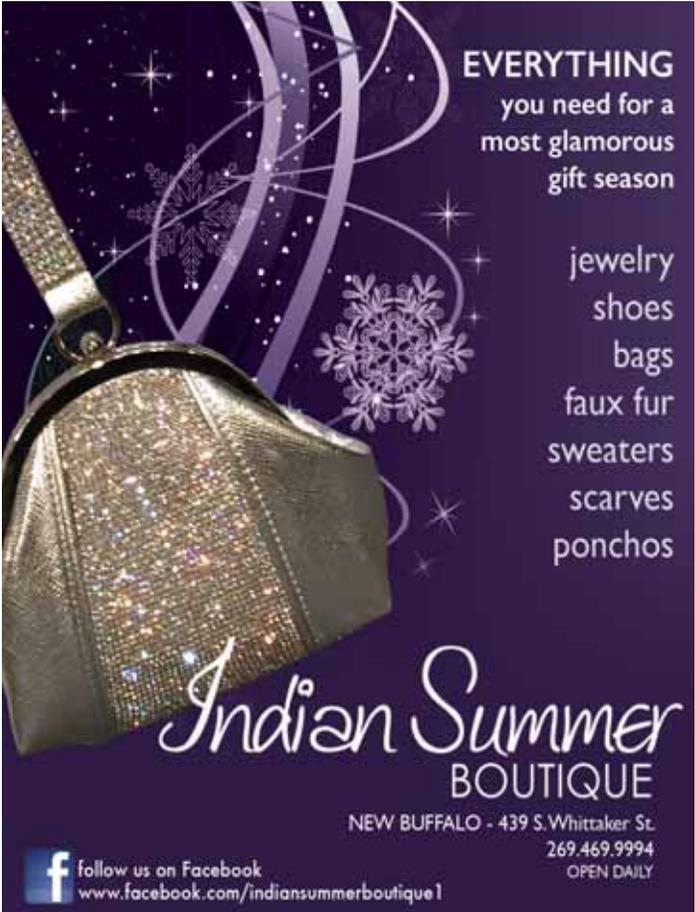
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from my family to yours.

Until next time, enjoy.

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Save the Dunes Makes Major Land Acquisition

Save the Dunes on Dec. 16 acquired nearly 100 acres in Hobart, property on its “wish list,” and that of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, for years.

That’s because 35 acres of the property rest inside the National Lakeshore’s official boundary. This piece is in its Hobart Prairie Grove Unit.

“Most people aren’t aware that the National Park Service has not been able to secure the last 10 percent of the lands within its 15,000-acre boundary,” Save the Dunes Executive Director Nicole Barker said in a press release. “We still have roughly 10 percent of the property left to acquire, and Save the Dunes is working hard to get the best of what’s left.”

While Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was authorized by Congress in 1966 and expanded through four dunes bills in following years, the park did not receive funding to acquire all of the land within the authorized boundary, which is why the National Park Service only owns approximately 90 percent of the land within its boundaries. The National Park Service has been working to secure the parcel for more than a decade, but due to staff limitations and timing complications, saw no success. Thanks to Save the Dunes, the land is finally acquired and will be donated to the National Lakeshore.



A portion of the land in the Hobart Prairie Grove Unit.

The property is considered the last remaining acreage of significant size with high natural resource value left inside the park boundary. The picturesque property encompasses a portion of Deep River and Lake George, including a dramatic overlook at the lake. Approximately 20 acres are upland, and the remainder is lake, floodplain, wetlands and forested ravines. The property is excellent habitat

for waterfowl and migratory birds such as Great Blue Heron, and will be a significant draw for passive recreation such as hiking and birding.

The acquisition comes at an opportune moment because an effort is under way with the City of Hobart, residents, conservation organizations and natural resource-management agencies to collaborate to implement the Hobart Marsh Plan. Together, they plan to set priorities for conservation, collaborate for more effective land management and unified branding and wayfinding.

Save the Dunes plans to apply for grant funding to undertake ecological restoration, add site amenities, then donate the property to the National Lakeshore. The National Park Service plans to expand the National Lakeshore’s boundary to encompass this land in coming months.

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Chesterton Art Center

The following offerings are available at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.:

• **The 18 Artists cooperative will display its work Sunday, Jan. 3, to Tuesday, Feb. 2, with an opening reception from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 3.**



Jan Stewart appears with her sculpture, "Meditating on Meditation," and Sherrill Newman with her painting, "Age is Relative."

18 Artists is a cooperative online gallery. Members must jury into the group, then are included in multiple events throughout the year. The center's exhibit will include work from 17 different artists highlighting pieces in 2-D and 3-D mediums, including painting, sculpture, origami and jewelry.

During the reception, guests will get a first look at the show, along with refreshments and entertainment by local student musicians.

• **Local painter Mark VanderVinne will host Critique Night at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 6.**

Guests are welcome, with no prior registration required. All ability levels and artistic styles are encouraged to attend. While VanderVinne is a painter, he can advise artists in other mediums as well.

Guests may sit and listen; however, participation is encouraged. Artists can take in a piece of work at any stage, from conception to the final version. The

critique unfolds in a safe, friendly environment, but it will involve VanderVinne and others providing advice and insight into the effectiveness of the work or artistic concept.

• **Dick Church will offer a six-week Beginning/Intermediate Watercolor Class starting from 10 a.m. to noon Friday, Jan. 8.**

Church will lead students through watercolor techniques ideal either for the first-time painter or the mildly experienced.

The cost is \$70, with members receiving a \$5 discount. There also is a \$10 board and pattern fee. Other supplies are not included. Church will discuss supplies with all beginners to start the class.

• **A new six-week session of Monday Night Ceramics starts from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Jan. 11.**

Beginning students will develop fundamental wheel-throwing techniques, while returning students will refine techniques to create more complex forms. The instructor, Tom Cernius, will perform short demonstrations while assisting students individually to improve throwing skills. Hand-building and sculpture are encouraged.

Students can try their hand at slab-building, pinch-pot hand-building, as well as basic sculptural techniques, including figurine/small statue construction. All pieces will be glazed during the final class. The cost is \$135, with members receiving a \$25 discount. The cost of clay is \$15. All other supplies are included.

• **Judy Gregurich and Mark Montgomery will teach a six-week Stained Glass Class starting from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12.**

Students will learn how to design and build a 2-D stained glass mosaic pattern using the direct method. The history of mosaics, alternate construction techniques and materials will be discussed. The class is suitable for all skill levels. The cost is \$110 for members and \$125 for non-members.

Call the center at (219) 926-4711 for more information or to register for classes. Visit www.chestertonart.com for additional information.



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Taltree Master Naturalist Program

Taltree Arboretum & Gardens will host its first winter Junior Indiana Master Naturalist program.

The hands-on learning experience and volunteer service opportunity teaches students about the native landscape and local wildlife of Northwest Indiana. It includes sessions on botany, zoology, geology, water ecology and wildlife conservation taught by area experts.

The eight-week course, open to children 9-12, begins Saturday, Jan. 9, and runs through Saturday, March 5. Classes are from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Visitor's Center Depot. The cost is \$115. Participants should dress for the outdoors.

Visit tinyurl.com/o7xf577 for a printable application or call (219) 462-0025. Medical forms and sign-in are required for safety. These forms can be found on the website.

Taltree is located at 450 W. County Road 100 North near Valparaiso.

First Friday Art Walk

The Michigan City First Friday Art Walk will take a winter break, from January through March, and resume in April.

During the break, however, Shelf Ice Brew Fest II is from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20. Visit tinyurl.com/oev7tl7 for more information.

Back to Back Championships



The Queen of All Saints seventh-grade girls volleyball team capped off their undefeated conference season by winning the seventh/eighth grade PAC Conference Tournament, beating Notre Dame eighth grade 25-19 25-13. The win was their second consecutive championship. The front row is: Emily Skivers, Paige Pizarek, Alexa Sparks, Molly Neary and Makaela Gondeck. The back row is: Assistant Coach Beth Skivers, Zeena Frageman, Ryleigh Grott, Ashley Johnson, Samantha Flores, Emily Kroczeck and Head Coach Kevin Sparks.

Museum Closing

Valparaiso University's Brauer Museum of Art will be closed through Jan. 3 for exhibit installation and the university's holiday break.

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Holiday at the Pops

The 21st annual event, held Dec. 12 at La Porte Civic Auditorium, featured La Porte County Symphony Orchestra and many special guests, including Cripple Creek, a trumpet trio featuring Chuck Steck, Matt Burden and John Langford, soprano Jenny Hartson, vocalists Mark and Laura Krentz, instrumentalists Burden and William Wolf Jr.; and vocalist Tim King. Proceeds benefitted the La Porte Hospital Foundation VNA Fund and other philanthropic health-care needs. Photo by Bob Wellinski





Westchester Public Library

• **Saturday Morning Children's Movie: "Frosty the Snowman" at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 26, in the Thomas Library Children's Department, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.**

Take snacks and a pillow or blanket on which to sit. Children 8 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Free popcorn will be available.

• **Cupcakes and Canvas at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2, at Westchester Township History Museum.**

Educator Susan Swarner leads the program aimed at children 6-12. No previous art experience is necessary. All supplies are provided. Participants should wear clothes that can get messy. A parent or guardian must accompany each child.

Registration is necessary by calling (219) 983-9715. The museum is located in the Brown Mansion, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

• **Knitting Together from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 3, at Westchester Township History Museum.**

Area knitters, and those who crochet or do needlework, are invited.

• **Minecraft Meet-up from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 6 and 20, at Thomas Library.**

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

• **Adult Coloring Program from 6 to 7:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month at Hageman Library, 100 Francis St., Porter, and at the same time the third Monday of the month at Thomas Library.**

Registration can be done in person or by phone at (219) 926-7696 for Thomas Library or (219) 926-9080 for Hageman Library.

• **Children's Crochet Club from 3:30 to 4:30**

p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 6-June 29, in the Children's Department at Thomas Library.

Attendees learn beginning crochet from instructor Sadie Steciuch. Children should take a size G crochet hook and skein of medium weight yarn. Register by calling (219) 926-7696.

• **Lego Club from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8, at the Thomas Library Children's Department.**

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

• **Ted Arnold and Fly Guy Storytime from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 13, in the Thomas Library Children's Department.**

Registration is required by calling the children's department at (219) 926-7696.

• **Holiday closings.**

Thomas and Hageman branches, Westchester Public Library Service Center and Westchester Township History Museum will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24-25. All buildings resume regular hours Saturday, Dec. 26.

The Chesterton Adult Learning Center and Westchester Township Trustee office also will be closed.

All library facilities will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 31-Jan. 1, for New Year's Day. Library buildings resume regular hours Saturday, Jan. 2.



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La Porte County Parks



All registrations/questions go through the Red Mill County Park Administrative Office, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, La Porte. Call (219) 325-8315 or visit www.laportecountyparks.org for more information.

Stroller, Baby and You

Aimed at toddlers and preschoolers, programs include music, dance, storytelling and a hike (weather permitting).

The free program is from 10 to 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 11 and 25, Feb. 8 and 22, March 7 and 14, and April 4 and 18 at Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West. Call at least one week in advance to register.

Parent & Child Discovery Days

The program includes arts and crafts, games and snacks. All activities are related to the topic. Programs are appropriate for children 3 to 8, with an adult required to participate. Times are from 6 to 7:15 p.m. at Luhr County Park. The cost is \$5 per child/per program. Pre-registration and payment are required at least one week in advance or until full, whichever comes first. The schedule is:

- Jan. 27 — Deep Freeze.
- Feb. 10 — Hooting Good Time.
- Feb. 24 — A Salamander's Life.
- March 9 — Hello Down There.
- April 6 — Flower Power.
- April 13 — 1 Bird, 2 Birds, 3 Birds.

Senior Lifestyles

Join the free 55+ Club, a social club designed for adults 55 and older to learn and explore various types of nature. Free coffee is served to participants. The group meets from 9 to 10 a.m. at Luhr County Park Nature Center. Call at least one week in advance to register. The schedule is:

- March 2 — "Arthritis and Our Joints," Dr. Sarah Bancroft; also, free bone density testing.
- April 6 — "Birds and How to Attract Them to Your Home," Potawatomi Audubon Society.
- May 4 — Gardening with Sacha Burns of Sunk-issed Organics.

Pinecone Crafts

The free program is from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 29, at Luhr County Park. Children 6 and older must be accompanied by an adult. Call in advance to make a reservation. A minimum of six and a maximum of 24 participants will be allowed.

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Michigan City Public Library

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

- **American Red Cross bloodmobile from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 28.**

Make an appointment by calling (800) GiveLife. Walk-ins are welcome.



Lily James (left) and Cate Blanchett star in "Cinderella."

- **Family Holiday Movie: "Cinderella" (2015) at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 29.**

Light refreshments will be provided. Children 18 and younger have a chance to win a DVD of the movie, which is rated PG.

- **Marble Roller Coasters at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30.**

Children 6 and older can build roller coaster tracks that race marbles through loops, bends and hills.

- **Holiday hours.**

The library will close at noon Wednesday, Dec. 23, It also will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 31-Jan. 1 for the New Year holiday.

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



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American Red Cross

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

- IU Health La Porte Hospital, 1007 W. Lincolnway, La Porte, 8 a.m. to noon Monday, Dec. 28.
- Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St., Michigan City, 12:30 to 4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 28.
- Christ Church, 802 Indiana Ave., La Porte, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2.
- St. John's United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road, Michigan City, noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 5.
- Kingsbury Elementary School, 802 W. County Road 400 South, La Porte, 2 to 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8.
- St. Joseph Church, 101 C St., La Porte, 2 to 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8.
- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, La Porte, noon to 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11.
- Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1237 E. Coolspring Ave., Michigan City, 3 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 14.

Donors must be in good general health and feeling well, at least 17 (16 with parental consent) and weigh at least 110 pounds. Call (800) 733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org for more information.

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Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

The following programs are available:

• **Participate in a Christmas Bird Count on Wednesday, Dec. 30, in the "INDW" birding circle, which is in the northeast part of Lake County and northwest part of Porter County.**

The National Audubon Society and other organizations will use data collected to assess the health of bird populations and guide conservation action.

Contact park ranger Christine Gerlach to register at christine_gerlach@nps.gov or (219) 395-1885. The deadline is Dec. 26.

• **Monthly Stargazing Program at 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2, at the Kemil Beach parking area.**

Chicago Astronomical Society members will take telescopes so visitors can get a closer look at the night sky. In January, the Milky Way crosses the night sky overhead from northwest to southeast. The Quadrantids meteor shower will start up, its peak visible in the early morning of Jan. 4. The Pleiades and Auriga star clusters will be visible. Guests can take binoculars, and should dress appropriately for the weather.

The Kemil Beach parking lot is located at 27 N. East State Park Road, Chesterton.

• **Find Your Park Film Series on Saturdays and Sundays.**

Explore a different National Park Service site through films shown at 2 p.m. Saturdays at the Paul H. Douglas Center and 2 p.m. Sundays at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center. Call the park's information line at (219) 395-1882 for this week's film.

• **"Kid's Rule" from 1 to 3 p.m. Sundays at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Join a ranger in the Visitor Center's activity room for stories and activities. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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

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Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs are offered:

Thursday, Dec. 24

The Nature Center closes at 2 p.m.

• **10 a.m. — Eighth Annual Christmas Eve Shopping Stroll.**

Meet a naturalist at the Nature Center for the traditional one-hour Christmas Eve stroll through dune forests. The hike ends with a warm fire, hot cocoa and other holiday snacks at Wilson Shelter.

Saturday, Dec. 26

• **10 a.m. — After Christmas Trek.**

Meet at the Nature Center for a 60+ minute walk to blowouts and back.

• **2 p.m. — Turtle Time.**

Meet at the Nature Center Auditorium for a look at wintering turtles.

Sunday, Dec. 27

• **10 a.m. — End of the Year Waterfowl Tour.**

Meet at the Nature Center for the annual end-of-the-year car pool tour to find congregations of duck species. Guests likely will drive 10 minutes to the Port of Indiana. Take a driver's license/ID for access to the location.

• **10 a.m. — Snowshoe Shuffle.**

Meet a park interpreter at the Nature Center for an introduction to the mode of winter transportation before trying a pair and taking a short walk through the winter woods. A hike will be offered if there isn't enough snow.

Thursday, Dec. 31

The Nature Center closes at 2 p.m.

• **10 a.m. — Bird Banding Demonstrations.**

Explore the science of bird banding at the Nature Center, including the use of banding nets.

Friday, Jan. 1

The Nature Center is closed.

• **10 a.m. — First Day Hike: 3DC!**

As part of a 50-state initiative, America's State Parks First Day Hikes features the 3 Dune Challenge. Meet Assistant Property Manager Mickey Rea at the Nature Center to explore recent park projects and possible ice shelf formation.

Indiana Dunes State Park is at 1600 N. County Road 25 East (the north end of Indiana 49), Chesterton. Call (219) 926-1390 for more information.

Glowing Lights Night

Glow sticks and Christmas tree lights will be the only source of illumination during Barker Mansion's Glowing Lights Night from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 26.

The public can take a self-guided tour of the mansion, 631 Washington St., which is decorated to the theme "Songs of the Season."

Admission is \$5 per adult and \$2 per child. Reservations are not necessary for the tour. Visit www.BarkerMansion.com for details.

Genealogist of the Year

The La Porte County Genealogical Society presented its 2015 Genealogist of the Year award to Michigan City Library Director Don Glossinger during its annual Christmas dinner Dec. 8.

Nominees are submitted through September, when a committee consisting of Gloria Arndt, Fern Eddy Schultz and Dorothy Palmer made its selection. The winner is chosen for promoting genealogy in La Porte County, giving genealogy related programs and helping others with their research.



Patricia Gruse Harris presents the Genealogist of the Year award to Don Glossinger.

Patricia Gruse Harris made the presentation to Glossinger, who has supported the group's annual genealogy bus trip to Allen County Public Library. The Michigan City library also has a growing genealogy collection that covers the local area, other states and countries, as well as Internet programs.

Anyone wishing to make a nomination for the 2016 award year may visit tinyurl.com/ndooe7s for an application.



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Activities to Explore

In the Local Area:

Dec. 25 — CHRISTMAS DAY.

Dec. 26 — After Christmas Trek, 10 a.m., Nature Center @ Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Dec. 26 — Saturday Morning Children's Movie: "Frosty the Snowman," 10:30 a.m., Westchester Public Library Children's Department, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Dec. 26 — Glowing Lights Night, 5-8 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Admission: \$5/adult, \$2/child. Info: www.BarkerMansion.com

Dec. 26-Jan. 1 — Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. *Now showing:* "Brooklyn." Rated PG-13. Times: 6 p.m. Sat.-Tues & Thur. No Wed. showing. *Also:* "Trumbo." Rated R. Times: 6 p.m. Fri., 2:45 & 9 p.m. Sat., 2:45 p.m. Sun., 9 p.m. Mon.-Tues., 2:45 p.m. Wed. & 9 p.m. Thur. *Also:* Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company Live production, "The Winter's Tale." Not rated. 6 p.m. Dec. 30 & 1 p.m. Jan. 1. All times Eastern. Info: vickerstheatre.com

Dec. 27 — End of the Year Waterfowl Tour, 10 a.m., Nature Center @ Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Dec. 29 — Family Holiday Movie: "Cinderella," 10 a.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 30 — Marble Roller Coasters, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 31 — Greater La Porte Chamber of Commerce New Year's Eve Ball, 8 p.m.-1 a.m., La Porte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. Tickets: \$50. RSVP: www.lpchamber.com, (219) 362-3178.

Jan. 1 — HAPPY NEW YEAR.

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

Jan. 1 — Frances Luke Accord with opener Mike Vial, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$15. Info: www.acorntheater.com, (269) 756-3879.

Jan. 2 — Cupcakes and Canvas, 2 p.m., Westchester Township History Museum, located in Brown Mansion, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

Jan. 2 — Monthly Stargazing Program, 5 p.m., Kemil Beach parking area, 27 N. East State Park Road, Chesterton.

Jan. 3 — Opening reception, 18 Artists cooperative exhibit, 2-4 p.m., Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: (219) 926-4711.

Jan. 8 — Ted Arnold and Fly Guy Storytime, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Westchester Public Library Children's Department, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Jan. 12 — La Porte County Genealogical Society, 7 p.m., La Porte Park Department, 250 Pine Lake Ave., La Porte.

Through December — National Association for the Arts puppet show, “Pinocchio,” Washington Stage Theatre, 111 Roosevelt St., La Porte. Times: 10 a.m. Wednesdays & Fridays, 1 p.m. Saturdays & Sundays. Tickets/info: (219) 814-4502.

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

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

Farther Afield:

Through Feb. 28 — “Wrapped with a Bow: Selected Gifts to the Permanent Collection, 2010-2015,” Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Info: <http://midwestmuseum.us/>

PNC Club Networking Event

Members of the Purdue University-North Central Construction Club will host a networking luncheon at 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 14, in the Library-Student-Faculty Building.

The luncheon will bring general contractors, engineers, architects and builders from Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland to campus to network with students earning degrees in construction engineering management, civil engineering and business management.

This year, the Construction Club is partnering with La Porte County Habitat for Humanity to raise funds for the Building Homes and Strengthening Families challenge, which will help fund the next Habitat home in La Porte County.

The keynote speaker is Bob Long, La Porte County Habitat for Humanity executive director. A 2014 Construction Club networking event raised more than \$2,000 in tax-deductible donations for the club and Habitat. The event brought many professionals to PNC for the first time and provided an ideal opportunity for students and professionals to get together in an informal setting.

Advance registration is required at <http://pnc-constructionclub.weebly.com/>. Admission is free for club members, who must show a student ID at the door. PNC student admission is \$10 with a student ID. Individual admission is \$30 and business sponsors are \$200, which includes a presentation table if requested.

Companies that have confirmed to attend are: Berglund Construction Inc., Chesterton; DA Dodd Inc., Rolling Prairie; Burling Builders, Chicago; NIES Engineering, Hammond; Powers and Sons Construction, Gary, and Ziolkowski Construction Inc., South Bend.

Companies may participate by contacting Construction Club President Robert Kennedy at kenned64@pnc.edu or (219) 878-3249.

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



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

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

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

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

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

On December 25, 1776, General George Washington's troops began crossing the Delaware River for a surprise attack against Hessian forces encamped at Trenton, NJ.

On December 25, 1818, "Silent Night" was performed for the first time at the Church of St. Nikolaus in Oberndorff, Austria.

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

On December 25, 2003, Europe's *Mars Express*, which was supposed to go into orbit around the Red Planet, was lost somewhere in the vastness of space.

On December 25, 2006, James Brown, the "Godfather of Soul," died in Atlanta; he was 73.

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

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

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

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

On December 27, 1903, in New York City, "Sweet Adeline," the all-time favorite with barbershop quartets, was sung for the first time. The song was composed by Henry Armstrong, to words written by

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Richard Gerard. The title was suggested to the composers when they saw the name of the great operatic soprano, Adelina Patti, on a theatre marquee.

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

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

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

On December 28, 1869, the Knights of Labor observed this day as Labor Day, the first such observance in America.

On December 28, 1869, William Semple, of Mount Vernon, OH, obtained a patent for "... the combination of rubber with other articles in any proportions adapted to the formation of an acceptable chewing gum."

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

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

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

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

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

On December 29, 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state, the only sovereign nation to ever apply for admission to the Union.

On December 29, 1848, gaslights were installed in the White House.

On December 29, 1851, the first American YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) was organized in Boston.

On December 29, 1913, the first motion picture serial, "The Adventures of Kathlyn," began a long Chicago run.

On December 30, 1865, British author and poet Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India.

On December 30, 1935, Hall of Fame pitcher Sandy Koufax was born in New York.

On December 30, 1948, Cole Porter's "Kiss Me Kate" opened at New York's New Century Theater.

On December 30, 1968, the Federal Bureau of Prisons announced that (for the first time since 1930) no executions took place in the United States.

On December 30, 1975, golfer Tiger Woods was born in Cypress, CA.

On December 30, 1993, Israel and the Vatican agreed to recognize one another.



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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

A Touch of Stardust by Kate Alcott
(hardcover, \$25 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook)

When I saw this book on the shelf, I thought, what a great title for this wonderful time of the year. And then, I saw the cover photo of Carole Lombard, beautiful and talented comedienne of the '30s and '40s, and I knew this story had to be special.

I wasn't wrong.

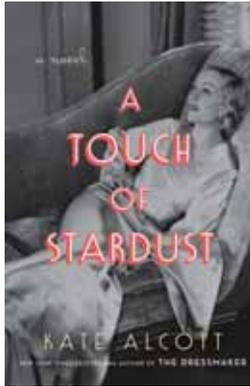
Alcott is the widow of Frank Mankiewicz, son of famous Hollywood screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz ("Citizen Kane"), who recounted to her many tales of Hollywood greats and the movies they made. She also did extensive research to bring to life real people who moved in and around the motion picture industry, along with two fictional characters to make this a holiday treat to read or give to a movie buff friend.

The time frame for the story is late 1938 into most of 1939 and centers around the making of "Gone With the Wind." It was an exciting time in Hollywood: America loved its beautiful and handsome actors of the big screen, their lives were followed by the likes of Luella Parsons, always on the lookout for a sensational byline. Just coming out of the Great Depression, it also was a time of bigotry, fear of war and old-fashioned morality. Clark Gable, star of the Civil War extravaganza, was having an affair with Lombard. She was single, he was still married, locked in a monetary battle with his soon-to-be ex-wife. Producer David O. Selznick was trying to keep it all under cover. Can you imagine today any movie studio caring about a star's marital status? Or who he or she is sleeping with?

Into this scene steps our fictional Julie Crawford, fresh off the train from Fort Wayne, Ind. A graduate of Smith College, she persuades her parents to let her try her wings at becoming a screenwriter in Hollywood. They give her a check and one year to prove herself, or come home and get married like any sensible girl her age.

Julie is happy to get her foot in the door with a job in Selznick's office, which she promptly loses because she is late delivering a message to the great man. The encounter is watched by Selznick's assistant producer, Andy Weinstein. Obviously attracted to Julie, he introduces her to Lombard, who also happens to be from Fort Wayne (true fact). The two hit it off, and Julie learns of Carole's love for Clark as Carole, sensing a bond between her and Julie, becomes more than an employer.

It is fascinating to read about the complexity of working for people who made all the magic happen:



Like the burning of Atlanta in the movie? Happened on a back lot with Selznick burning all the old sets he didn't need anymore! The scene was filmed before the script was even completed. And finding out the mansion Tara was a lot of painted plywood, including the beautiful staircase Scarlett floats down.

Julie's story shows how a single-minded young woman can tread the pitfalls of Hollywood and still remain sane. Her budding romance with Andy doesn't stop her from wanting to be the screenwriter she knows she can be. Of course, Andy's Jewish, and his fear for his grandparents still in Germany becomes real as America, and Hollywood, refuses to accept that anything gruesome is happening in Europe until September 1939, when the Nazis invade Poland.

And what will be the reaction of Julie's very Midwestern parents to their daughter's lifestyle when they unexpectedly come to visit? A Jewish boyfriend? This is 1939, remember.

Lombard balances her own career while buying a ranch for her and Clark and keeping him in focus while he's wearing tight pants he can barely walk in onscreen. Then there's scripts that keep changing, and a mercurial Selznick tossing out directors left and right and having all out fights with father-in-law Louis B. Mayer over details of "Gone With the Wind." The ending of the movie was a big bone of contention and changed many times. Fascinating! I was hooked from page one.

Alcott is a master storyteller, seamlessly blending fictional and real characters in a story that will give you a real look at behind-the-scenes Hollywood.

Yeah—a thoughtful title and a lovely cover. It'll get you every time.

Library Journal (starred review): "Readers of Nancy Horan's Loving Frank and other biographical fiction will love this well-written, thoroughly researched look at Hollywood's glamorous and not-so-glamorous past."

The New York Times Book Review: "If you could time-travel to anywhere in the golden age of Hollywood, it would be hard to imagine a place more exciting than the set of 'Gone with the Wind'...(A) breathtaking novel."

Historical Novel Society: "Well worth reading."

Alcott is the pseudonym of journalist Patricia O'Brien, author of several books of fiction and non-fiction. As Alcott, she is the author of the bestselling books The Dressmaker and The Daring Ladies of Lowell.

Till next time, Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year, and many happy hours of reading to come!

LCA Announces Board President

Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., announced Nick Bridge is the center's new board president.

Bridge was appointed to the board in 2011 and serves as chair of the marketing committee, as well as being a member of the Curatorial Committee.



Outside of serving LCA, Bridge is chairman of the Environment and Energy Commission for the village of Oak Park, Ill., and a member of the Steering Committee of PlanItGreen, a local environmental initiative for the villages of Oak Park and River Forest. He was a commissioner of the Park District of Oak Park and has served for seven years on the board of the Community Chest/United Way for Oak Park, River Forest and Forest Park (serving two years as treasurer). Bridge also was chairman of the Public Arts Commission of Oak Park.

Beyond his work with non-profits, Bridge is an award-winning painter whose focus is primarily on urban landscapes. His work has appeared in several TV shows, including "Chicago PD," "Chicago Fire" and "Sirens." He had a career in communications, working as a news reporter for *The City News Bureau of Chicago*, *The Suburban Trib* and *The Glen Ellyn News*, where he was an editor. He also worked as a public information officer for the Illinois Department of Conservation. Prior to that, he was a senior account executive for Aaron Cushman and Associates, a public-relations firm in Chicago. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in communications and has studied at the American Academy of Art in Chicago.

Bridge was appointed as president on Dec. 1. Other new officer appointments for 2016 include: Suzanne Cohan-Lange, vice president; Rodney D. Lubeznik, treasurer; Sue Bridge, secretary; and John Leinweber, member-at-large. Newly appointed board members include: Georgia Fogelson, La Porte, Chicago and Palm Springs, and Clarence Wood, La Porte.

The outgoing president, Rachel Saxon, will continue on the board in 2016.

Electronics Recycling Sites

La Porte County Solid Waste District has two sites to drop off used electronics.

TVs, DVD players, video-game systems, computers and other electronic devices can be taken to 1027 Hitchcock Road in Michigan City from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and at the district office, 2857 W. Indiana 2, La Porte, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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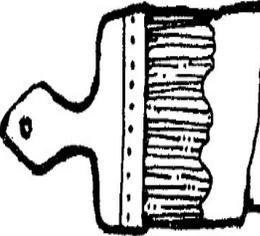
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“Wrapped with a Bow”

The Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart, will present the exhibit “Wrapped with a Bow: Selected Gifts to the Permanent Collection, 2010-2015” through Sunday, Feb. 28.

Nearly 3,600 works of art have been donated to the museum since 2010, doubling its holdings to nearly 6,500 objects. Many temporary exhibits have been created from the MMAA holdings since 2006 and will continue well into 2018.

The current exhibit highlights nearly 100 never-before-seen items from the vaults, including paintings, watercolors, drawings, etchings and sculpture. Some of the artists represented from the 19th and early 20th centuries include Alfred Thompson Bricher, Currier & Ives, Frank Duveneck, Frederick Carl Frieske, William Glackens and T.C. Steele. Late 20th century or contemporary artists include John Buck, Phyllis Branson, Larry Rivers, David Smith, Tuck Langland and Frank Gehry.

The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 4 p.m. EST Saturday and Sunday. Visit <http://midwestmuseum.us/> for more information.



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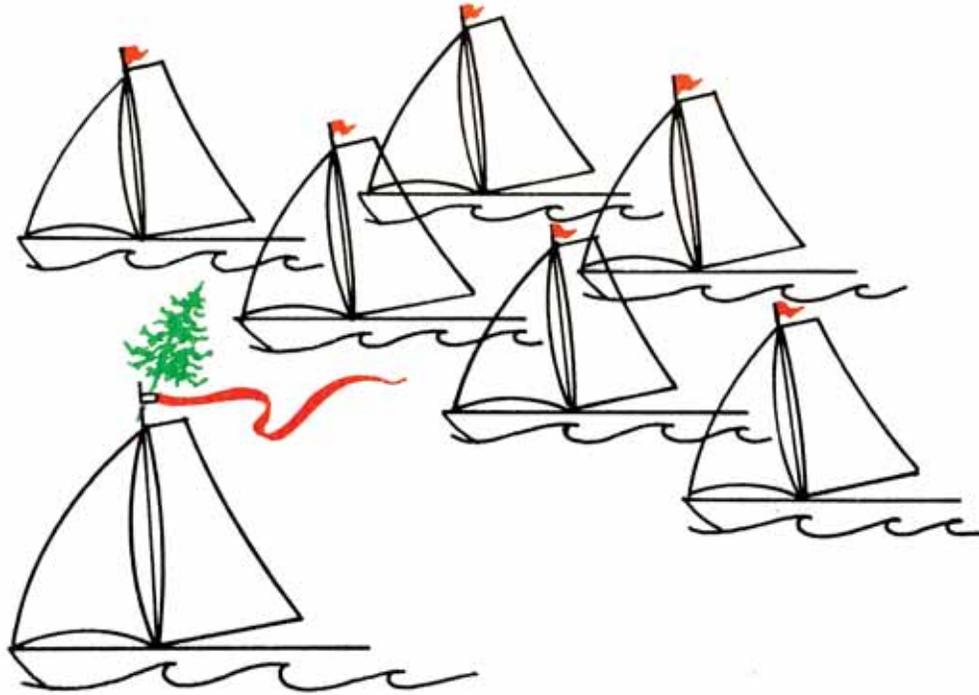
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