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A FANGiRL'S DREAM

Trip to Wizard World Comic Con Surpasses Expectations

by Kayla Weiss



mainstream.

When the first Comic Con was held in a small San

Since 1964, Comic Cons have united those with similar interests so they can swap stories, trade comic books and other novelties...and just have a good time. In recent years, they've exploded in popularity, entering the

Diego meeting hall in July of 1964, it was no more than 100 people and one case of soda. Creator Bernie Bubnis invited Tom Gill, artist for "The Lone Ranger," for a seminar dubbed "Chalk Talk," where comic book fans learned the ins and outs of drawing for comics.



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Beacher correspondent Kayla Weiss stands with James and Oliver Phelps, best known as Fred and George Weasley from the "Harry Potter" films, at the Wizard World Comic Con in Indianapolis.

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FANGIRL'S DREAM

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If You Go

Visit <http://www.wizardworld.com/> for more information on upcoming Wizard World Comic Cons.

The first glimpse inside the Wizard World Comic Con in Indianapolis.

Today, multiple companies host various Comic Cons for all sorts of fans all over the world. Major studios debut footage from upcoming movies and TV shows. Q&A panels feature noted celebrities ranging from William Shatner (“Star Trek”), to Matt Smith (“Doctor Who”) to Norman Reedus (“The Walking Dead”).

Family friendly, there are no age restrictions to attend. Fans range anywhere from 6 months old to 80 — all starry eyed and thrilled to be in the presence of their idols, as well as countless other fans who hold a shared appreciation.

Valentine’s Day weekend, Indianapolis had the honor of hosting its first Wizard World Comic Con, featuring esteemed celebrities such as Shatner, Karen Gillan (best known as travel companion Amy Pond on “Doctor Who”), Michael Rooker (“The Walking Dead”), Lou Ferigno (“The Incredible Hulk”), Carroll Spinney (the voice and life of Big Bird on “Sesame Street”) and James and Oliver Phelps, best known as Fred and George Weasley in all eight “Harry Potter” films.

From the moment I entered the Indianapolis Convention Center at 10 a.m. that Saturday, I was energized, ready to explore new things and meet new people who shared similar interests. I’d already



Just one of the many booths selling Golden Age and recent comic books.



An artist autographs his work for fans.

poured over the Wizard World Indianapolis Comic Con website to chart my course of action. Packed to the breaking point, attendees buzzed through the various booths selling everything from vintage comic books, to figurines, to artwork, to autographs from celebrities in attendance.

I made my way through the aisles, getting my bearings and making notes of places to revisit, but my first object of the day was to redeem my photop ticket with none other than the Phelps brothers. I have been a die-hard "Harry Potter" fan since first discovering the books when I was 10, even winning a "Harry Potter" contest at 12 through The News-Dispatch and organized by Andrew Tallackson. So, the chance to have my photo taken with the Weasley twins was too good to pass up. On the way there, weaving through the rows of booths and salespeople, I couldn't help but stop and admire every costumed person I came across: Princess Leia, Aladdin, Prin-

Continued on Page 4



A local comic book shop owner talks with Erynn Ellsworth about "Iron Man" comics.

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FANGIRL'S DREAM

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cess Jasmine and Genie, Marty McFly from “Back to the Future,” Wraiths from the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy and Gryffindor Quidditch players.

While all my friends crowded outside of Shatner’s autograph booth, waiting to glimpse the legendary Capt. James Tiberius Kirk himself, I was herded into one of 13 lines of people feverishly awaiting their once-in-a-lifetime opportunities: meeting the Weasley twins.



Fans dressed up as “Harry Potter” characters, including (from left) Luna Lovegood, Nymphadora Tonks and Rita Skeeter.

I nervously chatted away with another die-hard Harry Potter fan as the minutes slowly ticked by and more people lined up, all craning their necks for a glimpse of the twins. Time dragged by at a nauseatingly slow rate. I was only in line for 30 minutes, but it felt like half the day had blown by in anticipation. Then, something magical happened. The lines began to move. One by one, they filtered in and out of the photo-op room, bright lights and cameras flashing away. In no time, I was standing just beyond the curtain. Only a thin red barrier remained between me and two actors I have looked up to since the age of 11.

Finally, I was there. It was my turn. They waved me over with warm smiles and friendly hellos. I sandwiched myself between them, feeling like a pint-sized house elf. A sharp “ready?” from the photographer, a quick smile, the flash of lights and it was all over. Quickly, I exited the room, but not before the twins shook my hand, saying, “Have a great day, sweetheart.”

The fangirl inside of me could have melted into a happy little puddle right there, but there was still too much to see and do. After a quick break and refuel, the rest of my group ventured to the ballroom to secure seats for the upcoming Q&A panels with Gil-

lan and Shatner, while I returned to the main convention area, coming across more die-hard “Harry Potter” fans dressed like various characters, including Luna Lovegood, Rita Skeeter and Nymphadora Tonks. There was so much to see and do, between a Lou Ferrigno sighting and Quidditch matches, I couldn’t decide where to go next...until I found it. The DeLorean.



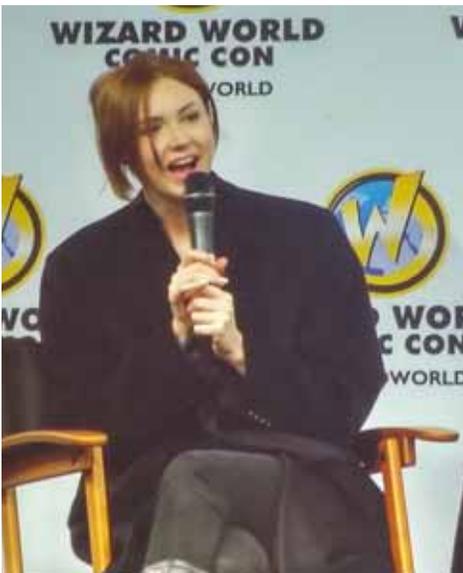
Kayla sits inside the DeLorean used in the “Back to the Future” movies.

The only time-machine vehicle still in perfect working condition from the “Back to the Future” trilogy, it travels to various Comic Cons around the country, raising money for The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research. The chance to sit in the legendary DeLorean, to sit where Marty McFly and Doc Brown sat? How could I pass it up? Granted access to the interior of the vehicle, I was given permission to snap photos of the dashboard, complete with alarm clock and flux capacitor! I didn’t want to give up that spot, but the line waiting for the DeLorean was growing, and it was time to meet up with my friends in the ballroom for the Q&A panel with Gillan, known for “Doctor Who” and as Nebula in “Guardians of the Galaxy.”



Inside the DeLorean, with dates set for time travel.

With her bright, smiling face and thick Scottish accent, she had the room with her first hello. Breezing through fan questions with comedy and grace, she entertained everyone with comedic renderings of “Doctor Who” speeches and funny, behind-the-



Karen Gillan answers a fan's question at Comic Con.

scenes stories. But when a little boy by the name of Liam asked, "Why do you come to these Comic Cons, especially this one in Indianapolis?," the entire room fell silent, waiting for the answer to a question that no doubt was on everyone's minds. Without hesitation, Gillan responded,

"Oh, I love it here. Cold weather and all. I love my fans, and, in the end, that's what I'm doing this for. I'm doing this for my fans, because where would I be without them?"

It was then time for Gillan to say goodbye and for the legendary Shatner to make his appearance. Walking on stage to tremendous applause, Shatner smiled and opened with a joke about the cold weather and the long hike from his autograph booth to the ballroom.

"Bring a map. Bring a compass. Bring supplies. It's quite a hike," Shatner said with a laugh when he spoke of the distance between the ballroom and his autograph booth.

With incredible stage presence, Shatner had no problem talking about himself and his time as Captain Kirk, revealing some entertaining behind-the-scenes stories about a day he would never forget when he and Patrick Stewart were filming on horseback all day for "Star Trek: Generations" (1992). When Stewart complained of chaffing, Shatner revealed a long-held secret to fixing that problem: wearing women's silk stockings under his boots. The next thing he knew, Stewart came out of his dressing room with women's silk stockings over



William Shatner addresses legions of fans.

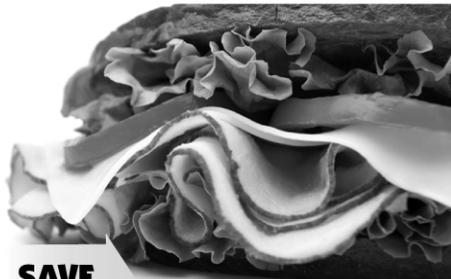
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Continued from Page 5

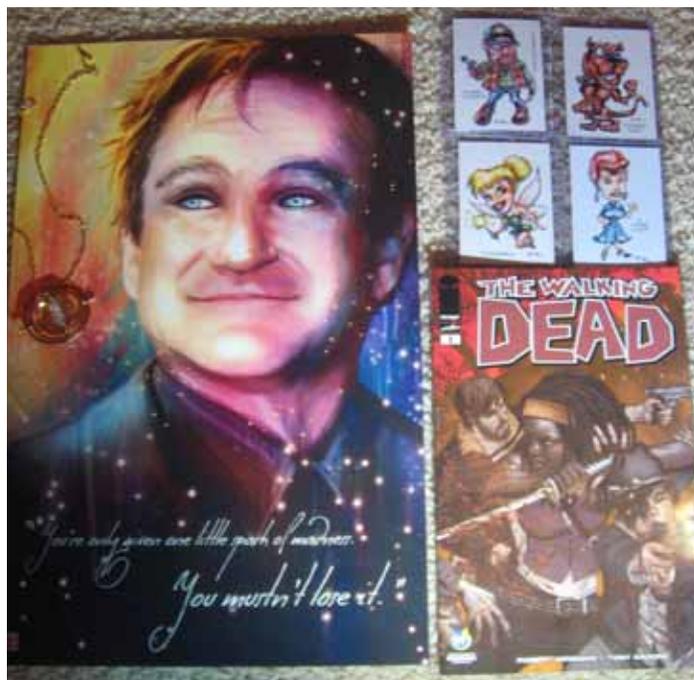


Fans dressed as characters from the cult film "Labyrinth."

his boots, having misunderstood Shatner's advice.

All too soon, however, it was time for Shatner to return to his autograph booth. The lights came on, we stretched and groaned at a terrible thought: Comic Con was almost over. We only had a couple hours left, if that, to take it all in.

My last mission of the day was to find one piece of Harry Potter memorabilia to take home. Sadly, with no wand booths, it was slim pickings. But as fate would have it, with only a few minutes left before the staff would begin herding us out and closing the doors, I stumbled upon a Time Turner – just like the one used by Hermione Granger and Harry Potter in the third installment of the franchise, "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban."



Some of Kayla's spoils from Comic Con, including a fantastic print of Robin Williams, pocket sketches of Tinkerbell, Scooby-Doo and Lucille Ball, my Time Turner from "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" and a complimentary "Walking Dead" comic.

Sadly, and all too soon, the day came to an end. My friends and I shuffled from the convention center, loot in hand, reveling in our exciting day...and already planning our next Comic Con adventure.

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“Collage Concert & Exhibit” Next Program in ArtsBridge Series

ArtsBridge will present “Collage Concert & Exhibit” featuring jazz pianist Ivan Akansiima, All God’s Children Community Choir and functional ceramics by Anthony Schaller and Michelle Witzel at 4 p.m. EST Sunday, March 1, at First Presbyterian Church in Benton Harbor, Mich.



All God’s Children Community Choir.

Akansiima is a self-taught musician (piano, bass, acoustic guitar, drums) from Uganda, East Africa, now living in South Haven, Mich. He began playing music at 7 as a drummer for his church in his hometown of Jinja. His growth and experience as a musician have come from more than 18 years of playing and performing as an accompanist and solo act in churches, concert halls, music festivals, parties, jazz clubs, events, art centers and schools in more than 40 countries. It was during a tour with Kinobe and Soul Beat Africa that he became acquainted with South Haven. He is a music student and band leader of the Tritones jazz trio at Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, where he is earning his music associate’s degree, with plans to pursue advanced studies in jazz performance.

The All God’s Children Community Choir is a multiracial, multicultural group of children and teens — ages 5 to 18 — drawn from different Southwest Michigan communities. Led by a multiethnic team of directors, the choir is in its 15th year. The older members (12-18) are organized into a teen ensemble that performs as a separate group and together with the younger children. Past performances include a special Habitat for Humanity show for former President Jimmy Carter.

Anthony Schaller, owner of Schaller Gallery, St. Joseph, which represents internationally recognized ceramic makers, is considered one of the nation’s top functional ceramic galleries. Schaller obtained a bachelor of science degree in Fine/Studio Arts from Andrews University. In addition to his gallery, he has a studio at The Box Factory for the Arts, St. Joseph. In May, he will travel to Tall Hisban, an archeological site in Jordan where he will develop a pottery workshop and education program.

Witzel, who is married to Schaller, grew up in Berrien Springs, Mich., and went to Andrews University, where she earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in ceramics, a medium she has been working in for nearly 20 years. Her primarily porcelain work is strongly influenced by the Danish and Scandinavian Minimalist Modern Movements. She also has a studio at The Box Factory for the Arts, one next to her husband’s studio.



Ivan Akansiima.

A reception will follow Sunday’s program. The church is located at 475 Green Ave. on Morton Hill. Call (269) 925-7075 or visit facebook at First Presbyterian in Benton Harbor for more information.

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Retired Teachers Group Scholarship

The Indiana Retired Teachers Foundation Scholarship Committee announced upcoming juniors or seniors enrolled in an education program at an Indiana college or university can apply for a \$2,000 scholarship for the 2015 school year.

Ten scholarships will be awarded around the state to a student with a relative who is an Indiana Retired Teachers Association member.

Visit www.retiredteachers.org and go to the IRT Foundation Tab to learn which IRTA district you live in. An online application also is available. Contact the office at (888) 454-9333 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Genealogy Bus Trip

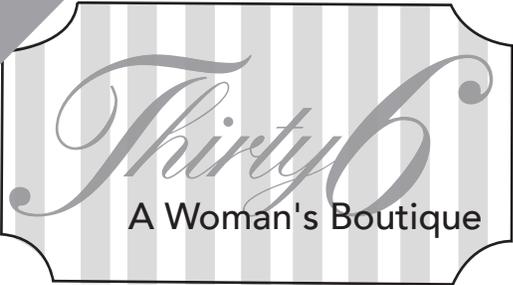
Michigan City Public Library and the La Porte County Genealogical Society are sponsoring a bus trip to Allen County Public Library on Wednesday, April 22.

Reservations are due by April 1. The cost is \$21. Payment can be made to: Patricia Harris, 504 Greenwood Ave., Michigan City, IN 46360. Call (219) 873-3049 for more information.

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“40 Years of Collecting”

Due to hazardous weather conditions, Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., rescheduled “40 Years of Collecting” with Patric McCoy for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26.

“We hope that those who planned to attend will join us,” Education Director Janet Bloch said, adding, “we didn’t want to jeopardize anyone’s safety.”



Patric McCoy discusses works of art with a group of young guests

McCoy is the president of Diasporal Rhythms, a non-profit group of contemporary art collectors from Chicago’s black community. He will discuss the influence collecting has in determining which artists and artworks become significant in art history. Lubeznik Center is hosting the free program in honor of Black History Month.

“The idea of one man collecting so much art by local artists intrigued me and gave me a sense of McCoy’s commitment to contributing to his own spirit and culture,” Bloch said.

McCoy has amassed 1,000 artworks — 90 percent by Chicago artists — over several decades and will share images from his collection, as well as insight about the importance of supporting local artists.

McCoy started Diasporal Rhythms with several others to support artists who are actively producing compelling art within their community.

“Our organization of collectors was formed to be one of the first voices in the community to identify, promote, honor and validate those visual artists that we find, through our collecting activities, are producing works of exceptional artistic merit and of cultural significance,” he said. “The people that ‘acquire’ the art should become ‘collectors of the art’ and act in a manner to promote and preserve the art that has come out of our community.

“Art appreciation is for everyone, but the art as a culturally defining concept belongs to people, in a place, at a specific point in time.”

Call the center at (219) 874-4900 or visit www.lubeznikcenter.org for more information.

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SMSO "Reveal Party"



Vocalist Lana Hoffman and guitarist Steve Kamerling.

Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra will host a beer- and wine-tasting event as part of its "Reveal Party" at 6 p.m. EST Saturday, Feb. 28.

The event serves to unveil the names of people participating in May's "Dancing with the Symphony Stars Season 2." The Benton Harbor, Mich., location of Studio 492, where it will be held, will be revealed on the tickets.

The evening will feature tastings from the region's breweries and wineries, cuisine from area restaurants and live music by vocalist Lana Hoffman and guitarist Steve Kamerling.

Participating breweries include: Hideout Brewing Co.; Saugatuck Brewing Co.; Tapistry; Round Barn; and Perrin. Wineries include: Tabor Hill; Round Barn; 12 Corners; Lehman Fruit Wines; Blake's Hard Cider Co.; and Crane Orchards. Restaurants include: Cravings Bistro; Rays on the Green; and Grand Mere Inn.

Tickets are \$50 and include two tastings. Contact the Symphony office at (269) 982-4030 or visit www.smso.org for more information.

Photographers Sought for Exhibit

Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St., will host a photography exhibit, "The View As We See It," in March and is seeking amateur photographers to submit color photography.

Each artist can take two framed pieces, not exceeding 24" by 30", between Friday, Feb. 27, and Monday, March 2. The cost to apply is \$30 for either one or two submissions. All photographs must be matted, framed and have a wire for hanging. No sawtooth hangers are allowed. Mats must be neutral: white, black, cream or gray. Photographs can be developed in a dark room or digitally and have been taken after January 2010.

Gregg Hertzlieb of Valparaiso University's Brauer Museum of Art will judge the exhibit. Cash awards will be handed out at the opening reception at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 8. The exhibit will run through March 28.

Visit www.chestertonart.com to see the full prospectus for the exhibit.

Free Senior Classes

Taltree Arboretum & Gardens, 450 W. County Road 100 North near Valparaiso, has received a Porter County Community Foundation grant to support its free senior classes.

The programs cover a variety of nature, gardening and recreation topics and are geared towards adults and families. Specific topics include indoor yoga, tree identification, Indiana ecology, cactus and succulent gardening, vegetable and ornamental gardening, fossils, rocks and minerals. Classes are located in the heated greenhouse and classroom.

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Festival Adds "Romeo and Juliet"

The Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival has included a special addition to its latest season: a three-night-only run of "Romeo and Juliet" tied to its 2015 theme: "Love, Loss and Laughter."

Professional actors will perform a 75-minute version of Shakespeare's famous love story while incorporating live acoustic music. Performances are at 7 p.m. EST Thursday through Saturday, March 5-7, at Notre Dame's Philbin Studio Theatre. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for Notre Dame faculty/staff and \$10 for students.

The six-member cast will lead workshops and perform in area schools, including Clay High School (South Bend), Concord High School (Elkhart), Elkhart Central High School, Elkhart Memorial High School, Plymouth County High School and Stanley Clark School (South Bend).

In addition to "Romeo and Juliet," upcoming NDSF productions at Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center include the new comedy "William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)," written and directed by playwrights Reed Martin and Austin Tichenor, beginning Aug. 4, and Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale," directed by Drew Fracher and starting Aug. 18.

During the summer months, the NDSF also stages two free productions: "ShakeScenes" for community actors of all ages, and the annual Young Company production featuring college and university students. The 2015 Young Company includes students from Notre Dame, St. Mary's, the University of Iowa, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the Guthrie Theatre's University of Minnesota-affiliated Bachelor of Fine Arts program. The Young Company will produce the comedy "Love's Labor's Lost," directed by West Hyler in his second summer leading these early career artists. Hyler is best known for his work on Broadway, including "Jersey Boys" and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

Visit shakespeare.nd.edu or call the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center Ticket Office at (574) 631-2800 for tickets or more information.

Campground Hosts Needed

Indiana's state parks and reservoir properties seek volunteers to serve as campground hosts in exchange for free camping during their service.

Hosts work a minimum of 20 hours per week. The volunteer period varies at sites, based on the number of applicants and the amount and type of work required.

A complete list of site availability and detailed information about hosting duties is at stateparks.IN.gov/2404.htm or by contacting specific properties. Completion of a volunteer application is required by downloading a form at stateparks.IN.gov/2443.htm

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Michigan City High School Holds Foreign Language Olympics

Michigan City High School held its annual Foreign Language Olympics at Michigan City High School on Feb. 13, with German students reigning supreme by sweeping six of the 10 events.

Clubs offered at the school (French, German, Japanese and Spanish) create unique events relating to the culture of their language, then field teams to compete against one another. The festivities concluded with a meal.

This year's events were:

- Coaster Flip (German Club) — Students try to flip a coaster hanging partway off a table into the air, catching it before it falls. Won by German Club.
- Soccer Kick (German Club) — Players kick a soccer ball down a hallway into a goal guarded by a trash can. Won by Spanish Club.
- Root Beer Chug (German Club) — No description needed. Won by German Club.
- Tour de France (French Club) — Clubs relay race down hallways on scooters. No hands are allowed. Won by Spanish Club.

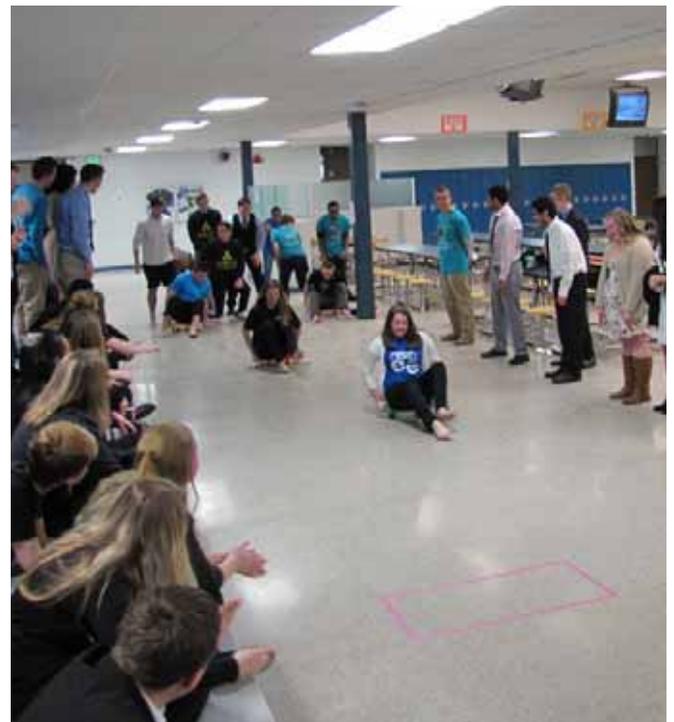


- Dance Citron (French Club) — Teams of two balance a lemon between their foreheads and must dance without dropping it. Won by German Club.
- Tomato Challenge (Spanish Club) — Contestants try to hit one another with a nerf ball while standing in a small box. Won by Spanish Club.
- Tortilla Toss (Spanish Club) — Participants toss tortillas like Frisbees from increasing distances. Won by German Club.
- Kendama (Japanese Club) — Total number of catches on a "kendama" by team members

are added up. Won by Japanese Club.

- Chopstick Race (Japanese Club) — Five participants pass small objects down a row using chopsticks. Won by German Club.
- Table Tennis (Japanese Club) — A quick game of the classic "ping pong." The first to five points wins. Won by German Club.

MCHS foreign language teachers include Dan Ruth, Mike Tsugawa, Jennifer Gracyalny, Shelly McGuire, Cathy Eldridge and Brian Meyers.



Wildlife Habitat Projects

Late winter is the best time to pursue many wildlife habitat projects.

That's according to the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish & Wildlife, which says the ground often is dry or frozen. The timing also prevents conflicts with nesting wildlife in spring, while managing wooded and shrubby areas is easier to do before leaves emerge and sap flows.

Winter habitat management suggestions are:

- Conduct woodland edge enhancement and fencerow rejuvenation. Winter is the best time to cut brush, limbs and trees for "feathering" edges between mature woodlands and grasslands, wetlands or agricultural areas.
- Create forest openings, which benefit numerous wildlife species.
- Make brush piles, which create escape-cover for game birds, songbirds, small mammals and other forms of wildlife. Piles placed close to transitional areas between habitat types provide increased benefits.
- Build and hang nesting boxes. Clean and maintain them as well to prepare them for spring use.
- Frost seed. Common frost-seeding species include introduced legumes such as clovers, alfalfa and birdsfoot trefoil. Frost seeding also can be effective for warm-season grasses, wildflowers and food plots.
- Employ sodium supplementation. Crush salt blocks and distribute the fragments along field borders and habitat edges. Sodium supplementation is not to be confused with using baits, lures or attractants while hunting, which is illegal.

More information on species and habit is at wildlife.IN.gov/2352.htm under "Landowner Assistance." Obtain official information by contacting a district wildlife biologist listed at wildlife.IN.gov/fishwild/2716.htm

Top 'O the morning wee lass

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January R.O.S.E. Winner

Janet Baines was named Visit Michigan City La Porte's January Recognition of Service Excellence winner.

Baines is the inside sales and customer service representative at *The Beacher*, where she has worked for 26 years.



Janet Baines appears with her R.O.S.E. certificate.

"I like the family atmosphere here at *The Beacher*," she said. "I work with a good team."

This is what the nominator wrote about the service people receive from Baines: *"I have worked for this local publication for about a year and a half, and I've come to the conclusion that, when it comes to customer service, she is the heart of this company. Countless people walk in off the street seeking our services, and she is the first person people meet as they enter the building. She always has a smile for customers. I've seen her be involved in the middle of a huge project, a customer arrives and she stops what she's doing and assists him/her, without any sign of being busy with something else. I suspect many customers stop by as well because they enjoy the conversation that comes from working with someone as delightful as her."*

Baines received a framed certificate and a rose corsage with a \$100 bill folded inside. She will be invited to the annual R.O.S.E. luncheon in the spring, when she will be considered for additional awards and be nominated for Indiana's annual Hoosier Hospitality Award.

Westchester Public Library

The following programs are available through Westchester Public Library:

- **Friday Night Movie, "Big Hero 6," at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27, at the Library Service Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.**

The movie, which is rated PG, has a running time of 102 minutes.

- **Battles of the American Civil War from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, and 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 28, in the Bertha Wood meeting room at Thomas Library, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.**

History buff and Civil War enthusiast Thomas Murphy will lead the discussion, which centers on the Battle of Antietam.

- **Knitting Together at the Museum from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 1, at Westchester Township History Museum, located in the Brown Mansion, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.**

Those who crochet or do needlework also are invited to the free program.

- **Celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday as part of Read Across America from 3 to 4 p.m. Monday, March 2, in the Children's Department at Thomas Library.**

The program includes story time, a journey around the library collecting puzzle pieces and Dr. Seuss games.

- **Bits and Bytes series, "Introduction to Web Design," from 1 to 3 p.m. Monday, March 2, and 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 3, in the Serials/Automation Department at Thomas Library.**

Registration for both classes, which are free, is under way. To reserve a spot, visit or call the Serials Department at (219) 926-7696, Ext. 1125, or register online at www.wpl.lib.in.us/. Click on the Bits and Bytes link.

- **Bits and Bytes, "Intro to Minecraft," from 1 to 3 p.m. Monday, March 9, and 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, in the Serials/Automation Department at Thomas Library.**

Registration for both classes, which are free, is under way. To reserve a spot, visit or call the Serials Department at (219) 926-7696, Ext. 1125, or register online at www.wpl.lib.in.us/. Click on the Bits and Bytes link.

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Monarch Butterflies Program

“Attracting and Raising Monarch Butterflies,” presented through Friends of the Library’s Community Forum, is at 7 p.m. EST Tuesday, March 3, at New Buffalo Township Public Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

Award-winning master gardeners Jan Koss and Barb Merton will show ways — simple and complex — to protect and nurture monarch butterflies in backyards. The program comes on the heels of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials announcing a multi-million dollar awareness and conservation campaign after learning about 970 million monarch butterflies have vanished since 1990.

Upcoming programs include (all times Eastern): deer-resistant plants at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 13; the first in a series on the sustainability project involving local farmers, chefs and grocers at 6 p.m. EST Tuesday, March 31; and planning a spring garden at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 21.

Call (269) 469-2933, follow the facebook link at www.newbuffalo.michlibrary.org or email new.buffalo.FOL@gmail.com for more information.

Book Drive & Party

Settlers Place, 3304 Monroe St., La Porte, will celebrate Dr. Seuss’ birthday with a book drive and party from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Monday, March 2.

The free event, open to the public, will include Dr. Seuss stories, games, gift bags for children, cake and refreshments. Guests are encouraged to take donations for United Way of La Porte County’s “United for Children Kindergarten Countdown Camps.” Books should be age appropriate.

Call (219) 326-7283 for more information.



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Montessori School Exhibit

There's still time to view artwork by Chesterton Montessori School students at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.



One of the pieces included in the Chesterton Montessori School exhibit.

Approximately 45 students from grades one through six are participating in the show, which continues through Saturday.

After last year's specific theme-based projects, the program has returned to the nuts and bolts of creating art. This year's theme revolves around the basics of art. Color, shape, design and pattern play a prominent roll in the 2-D and 3-D works.

"The art experience this year has been very inward," instructor Carrie

Coslov said. "They (the students) have been given the freedom to draw from their own imaginations, and to use their sense of direction to guide them through the creative process towards unique final pieces."

Visit www.chestertonart.com for more information.

Energy Academy Partnership Grant

Gov. Mike Pence and the Indiana Regional Works Councils have announced the 2015 Innovative Career and Technical Education Grant recipients, which included a \$223,809 grant to the NIPSCO Energy Academy in Michigan City.

That endeavor is a partnership of the La Porte County Career and Technical Education Program, Michigan City Area Schools and NIPSCO.

The grants, provided by the Indiana General Assembly, support new learning opportunities at the regional level that involve collaborations between local business and education partners. Statewide, eight projects received grants for the 2015 cycle, totaling more than \$1 million. Funds awarded to La Porte County's CTE program will support an expansion of energy related course offerings, energy simulators, lab equipment, a summer internship program, career awareness for early grades and teacher and mentor training.

The NIPSCO Energy Academy launched this past fall, preparing area students for high-demand jobs in the electronics, energy and utility industries. The only initiative of its kind in Indiana, it is open to students from Michigan City High School, La Porte High School, New Prairie High School, South Central High School, La Crosse High School and Westville High School.

Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs are offered through Indiana Dunes State Park:

Saturday, Feb. 28

- **10 a.m. — Snowshoe Shuffle.**

Meet the park interpreter in the Nature Center for an introduction to the mode of winter transportation. Guests then try on a pair for a short walk through the winter woods. A short hike will be offered if there isn't enough snow.

- **2 p.m. — This Walk Stinks.**

Meet at the Nature Center for a special hike to dune wetlands to find the first signs of spring, including a wildflower known for its unique odor.

Sunday, March 1

- **10 a.m. — Feed the Birds.**

Join a naturalist outside the Nature Center for the daily feeding. Get close views of chickadees, cardinals and woodpeckers.

- **2 p.m. — Winter Alive.**

Meet at the Nature Center auditorium for a look at how state park animals survive the winter. Live animals are part of the program.

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.



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Tri-County Jr./Sr. High Exhibit

South Shore Arts is accepting entries for the 41st Annual Tri-County Junior/Senior High School Art Exhibition, which runs April 24 through May 15 at The Center for Visual and Performing Arts, 1040 Ridge Road, Munster.

A reception and awards ceremony are from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, May 3.

Invited to participate in the juried event are junior and senior high schools from Lake, Porter and La Porte counties in Indiana and south suburban Cook County in Illinois. It features original artwork by students in grades six through 12 from public, private and parochial schools.



Juror Billy Pozzo's acrylic on wood piece "Rooster."

Teachers interested in receiving an entry form should contact Laura Cutler at laura@southshoreartsonline.org or (219) 836-1839, Ext. 108. Art teachers will submit a list of student work to be entered in the exhibit. They then can install their student's artwork in the gallery. The show features a wide range of media, including drawings, paintings, ceramics, photography, fiber arts and sculpture. Trophies are awarded for the best overall school display in

the junior and senior high school levels.

More than \$6,000 in prizes were awarded last year, including the \$2,500 Donald H. Berwanger Scholarship Award for a graduating high school senior to attend an accredited college or university to study fine art. Seniors are entered by their teacher and must submit an application, portfolio and letter of recommendation.

The juror for this year's show is Billy Pozzo. A professional freelance artist from Valparaiso, he received his associate's degree from the American Academy of Art, Chicago, and has had numerous exhibits in Northwest Indiana, Chicago, Indianapolis and New York. As juror, he will choose the recipients of awards such as Best in Show, First in Media, Awards of Distinction and Honorable Mention.

Visit www.southshoreartsonline.org for additional information.

Polish Heritage Essay Contest

The Polish Heritage Committee and Polish Business & Professional Club of Michigan City are sponsoring an essay contest where the winners receive college scholarships.

The competition is open to any high school senior living in La Porte County and accepted to college next year. Applicants must present proof of high school registration and acceptance to a college, university or other post-secondary institution.

The essay theme is "Polish Heritage and What It Means to Me." The submitted work, which should be a minimum of 1,000 words, can be based on personal experiences, researched or a combination of the two. Participants are strongly urged to do scholarly research into Polish culture and traditions. Researched material, including information obtained from the Internet, must be properly documented. Any essay containing plagiarized material will be automatically disqualified.

The judges panel is: James Pula, PNC history professor; Janusz Duzinkiewicz, PNC associate professor of history; former educator Rita Fink; and university student Paulina Jagodzinska.

First prize is \$500, second prize \$250 and third prize \$125.

The submission deadline is June 1. A Microsoft Word document is preferred. Unless having written confirmation, don't assume the essay was received.

Submissions must be sent to jduzinkiewicz@pnc.edu or Janusz Duzinkiewicz, Social Studies Department, Purdue University-North Central, Westville, IN 46391.

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WHITEOUT!

Beacher photographer Bob Wellinski braved the extreme weather that marked Valentine's Day, capturing whiteouts caused by intense winds, as well as a few tamer moments, to depict life amid "lake effect" along the city's North End.





What's Cooking

by Jim LaRocco

Sharing Meadows exists today because of Father Dennis Blaney, whose vision took shape in 1991 with the purchase of 185 acres of rolling land in rural La Porte County. It now houses “other-abled” individuals in 15 homes in five villages. The complex includes a community center/camp building, pool, administrative office, a lake stocked with fish and a house for visitors. There also is a ceramics studio, wood shop and computer lab.

The Share Foundation, which operates Sharing Meadows, offers a variety of educational and vocational programs throughout the year, including mini-camps one weekend a month to provide support, enjoyment and encouragement to attendees 18 and older. Summer camp is held for five weeks in June and July, offering activities such as arts and crafts, dancing, barbecues — plenty of opportunities to socialize.

The Share Foundation receives no money from the government, relying solely on the funds it raises through donations and the Leprechaun Hunt held every August. It also sells items made on site by the residents, such as rugs, dish towels and various food items, like Apple Butter.

My family first met Father Blaney when he was the parish priest at Sacred Heart Church in Michigan City. We got to know him well over the years. Through our family business, LaRocco Pest Control, we have gotten to know Kathleen Kelly, the Share Foundation's executive director, and have become even better friends with Father Blaney.

The Share Foundation was the favorite charity of my parents — Joe and Mary — and soon became ours as well.

My wife, Sue, and I were looking for a way to give back, and we came up with the idea of an Italian dinner. It seemed a natural, being I love to cook. Sue and I investigated whether we could give the Share Foundation staff and residents a dinner party. Kathleen said they loved the idea.

So, Sunday, Feb. 15, marked the Second After

Valentine's Day Italian Dinner Party.

Besides Sue and me, our son, Jim, and grandson, Cody, try to provide a little fun for the staff and residents. It has been something we look forward to every year.

The week before starts out with Sue shopping for the red, white and green plates, cups and napkins. She wraps the silverware in a colored napkin and finishes it off with a napkin ring that looks like the Italian flag. The table has to be set just right with alternate red and green plates, napkins and cups. Then, she goes shopping for prizes for winners of the bean bag toss held after dinner and candy for gift bags.

For me, the work usually starts on Wednesday or Thursday when I make 10 gallons of spaghetti sauce. Then, I go shopping for the rest of the ingredients to make the Italian dinner.

The menu is simple: baked ziti, meatballs, salad, garlic bread and dessert. I want to thank Arturo Pozos from Arturo's Baked Goods & More for donating the garlic bread this year. Your donation was greatly appreciated. We also purchased two half sheet cakes for dessert. They were delicious.



One of the dessert cakes.

For the first time this year, I had a helper in the kitchen: my grandson Cody, the budding chef you met in a previous column.

One of the best gifts I have received from my wife is a meat mixer. A thoughtful gift...because I usually make 400 to 500 pounds of Italian sausage a year. It saves wear and tear on these old hands.

I taught Cody how to mix the meat and seasonings, and bored him with the story of how I used to work in a butcher shop and made sausage, not with a mixer, but by hand.

After the meat and seasonings were properly mixed, I taught Cody how to roll the perfect meatball. The trick is to keep your hands moist. He was proud of his first meatball. I informed him we only had to repeat it 119 more times. I have found a large ice cream scoop with the trigger provides the needed amount of meat for a perfect 2.5 ounce meatball.



Jim LaRocco (from right), his wife, Sue, and their grandson, Cody, about 10 minutes before everyone lined up, ready to eat.

Friday night, while 10 gallons of spaghetti sauce were simmering on the stove, we cooked the meatballs. It is so much easier when you have an oven that will hold six pans at a time. It takes only about two hours to complete. When the meatballs cooled, I placed them in the pan from my electric roaster and covered them with sauce, placing foil over the top so they didn't dry out, and placed them in the refrigerator.

The meal included baked ziti, meatballs, garlic bread and salad.



On Saturday morning, we prepared the main dish — baked ziti — by half cooking the noodles, rinsing them in cold water to stop the cooking process, draining them, mixing them in a bowl with the sauce, placing them in the aluminum pans and covering them with mozzarella cheese and spices. We made 13 pans of ziti. Remember, it is a mortal sin for a Sicilian to ever run out of food.

After everything was finished, I had one of the worst ideas in years. Why not take the food out there Saturday to make it easier on us Sunday? Great idea? Not! Remember the weather on Valentine's Day? Then you know it was not the best idea. I decided to take County Road 1000 North to County Road 300 East to get to my destination. An even better idea. I made good use of my vehicle's four-wheel drive technology, plowing through drifts finally arriving at my destination.

I put everything in the refrigerators and headed home. The trip home was not as much fun. It took about two hours and a detour through La Porte.

I like to prepare things ahead of time so that the pots, pans and mess are cleaned up and not waiting for me when I return home. All we have to do is load up the vehicles in the morning. The night before, everything is placed in the laundry room so nothing gets forgotten.

We all go to bed a little earlier the night before the event. I usually have a little more trouble getting to sleep. I am going over in my mind, is everything finished? Did we forget anything? Did I make enough? In the morning, we double and triple check to make sure nothing is forgotten.

We arrived at the Share Foundation at around 11:30 a.m. Sunday. While I was getting the ziti ready for the oven and the food line set up, Sue and Cody set the tables and placed the candy gift bags

on a separate table. It all has to look just right.

The Share Foundation has a great kitchen facility that makes cooking a large meal a breeze. They have a nice convection oven that allows me to cook all the garlic bread at one time. Two huge ovens. A cook's dream. The roaster full of meatballs is turned on, the chafing dishes are ready and lit. Now, it is time to eat.

Jim and Sue place salad and meatballs on the plate of a Sharing Meadows resident.



Cody served the baked ziti, Sue dished out the garlic bread and salad and I handed out the meatballs. The meatballs are always a hit. Seconds, or thirds, are encouraged.

After dessert, there are prizes to win. This year, there were DVDs for those who were able to hit the bull's-eye in the bean bag toss.

All too quickly, it is over. The residents show their appreciation with songs, smiles, hugs and "You are coming back again next year, aren't you"? Throughout the year while doing my pest control rounds, I am told by the residents that they can hardly wait for February.

No one in my family minds the work. The smiles on their faces make it all worthwhile. We have never had a more appreciative group, which makes it that much more fun for us. We say our goodbyes and leave, looking forward to next year.

Until next time, enjoy.

P.S. — Don't forget the Leprechaun Hunt, which is Sunday, Aug. 2. Contact the Share Foundation at (219) 778-2585 for more information.

Contact Jim at jim@jimlarocco.com



Pictured after the meal are (front row, from left) Share Foundation Executive Director Kathleen Kelly and Sue LaRocco. The back row is (from left) Jim LaRocco, Father Dennis Blaney and Cody LaRocco.

“Apple Teacher Monthly Moment”



As part of Scholastic Reading Club’s “Apple Teacher Monthly Moment” sweepstakes, Lake Hills Elementary was one of 10 schools out of 210,000 entrants across the nation to win a free lunch on Feb. 18. Local restaurant JJ’s Pizza Shack provided a full meal and Uptown Cakery a cake honoring second-grade teacher Leanne Rogers.

PNC Again Earns NAIA Status

Purdue University-North Central has been named a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Champions of Character institution for the 2013-2014 academic year.

PNC has earned the award every year since 2002. This year, it was among 168 institutions named as Five-Star Award winners.

Champions of Character’s mission is to raise a generation of students that understands and demonstrates respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship. The program stresses that being a champion is not just about winning, but also making good decisions in daily life.

To be considered a Champions of Character institution, schools must demonstrate how the program is incorporated in athletic contests, public-service projects, established policies related to behavior in practice and game situations, athletic and academic environment and character education.

PNC student-athletes performed many charitable events in surrounding communities. Activities in 2013-2014 included the baseball team assisting with the Boys & Girls Club, Salvation Army soup kitchens and a winter clinic for Little Leaguers with the Valparaiso Parks Department.

The softball team prepared food for the homeless and put together a holiday toy drive with Daniel’s Cause. The basketball and volleyball teams hosted a clinic for The Courts of Northwest Indiana in Valparaiso. The basketball team also read to Hobart grade-school students.

The baseball, basketball and softball teams included a “Give Five” program, with each team member performing five hours of community service. With more than 50 players, and each player exceeding the five-hour minimum, the teams donated more than 200 hours to community service in 2013-2014.

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Indiana Dunes Birding Festival

Celebrate bird migration through the Indiana Dunes region at the inaugural Indiana Dunes Birding Festival on May 7-10.

Organized by the Indiana Audubon Society, the event will highlight the dunes area's biodiversity and bird-watching opportunities. Indiana Dunes State Park and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore will serve as host sites.

Participants can choose from more than 25 guided field trips and carpool tours to view migrating birds and more than 25 bird-related programs. Programs include live raptor presentations and species identification workshops. Evening events include owl and whip-poor-will excursions, and a family-friendly "birds and brew" on multiple nights.

James Currie, of National Geographic's "Birding Adventures" TV show, will give the keynote presentation Saturday night. During "Not Your Grandma's Audubon," he will share his experiences hosting and producing his show. The keynote includes dinner, a silent auction and vendor marketplace.

Registration for priority Indiana Audubon Society members has begun. General early-bird registration opens March 1. The registration cost for the entire festival starts at \$45 for adults and \$30 for youth 18 and younger. Register at indunesbirding-festival.com.

More information is available on the festival website, and at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Those interested also can call the information desk at (219) 926-1390 (state park) or (219) 395-1882 (national lakeshore), or visit stateparks.IN.gov/2980.htm (state park) or nps.gov/indu (national lakeshore).

"Remembering the 844"

The Michigan City Historical Society Inc. and Old Lighthouse Museum will honor the 100th anniversary of the SS Eastland disaster, which occurred July 24, 1915, at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 25.

Tax-deductible donations are being sought to fund the memorial.

The Eastland capsized on its port side in the Chicago River, killing 844 men, women and children headed to Michigan City for the fifth annual Hawthorne Club picnic at Michigan City's lakefront, held by Western Electric Co.'s Hawthorne Works of Cicero, Ill. More than 7,000 tickets were sold for the event. Boarding the Eastland were 2,501 passengers. The tragedy represents the single greatest loss of life in Great Lakes maritime history.

Donations can be sent to Michigan City Historical Society Inc.-SS Eastland Memorial, P.O. Box 512, Michigan City, IN 46360-0512. Call (219) 872-6133 for more information.

Cadet Introduces Visclosky



JROTC Cadet Capt. Alex Wyman introduced State Rep. Pete Visclosky, who spoke at the Feb. 19 Michigan City Rotary Club meeting. Wyman, a Michigan City High School senior, will pursue a degree in aeronautical engineering technology, with a minor in mathematics, at Purdue University.



Michigan City
Chamber Music Festival

Presents **Nic Orbovich & Friends!**

featuring **Robert Auler, piano;**

Zofia Glashauser, violin

Sunday, March 15, 2015, 3:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, 121 W. Ninth Street

Free admission!



Violinist and MCCMF co-founder Nic Orbovich is presenting a free recital which will feature two of his longtime friends and colleagues (and MCCMF audience favorites!) Robert Auler and Zofia Glashauser.

The program will chart the history and development of the French school of violin playing, and promises to be enlightening, educational and fun! Works by Jean Marie LeClaire, Eugene Ysaye and exciting works by Gabriel Pierre and Henri Vieuxtemps, of which Nic has recently discovered, will be performed. Plus, some surprising R&B stylings from "Robbie"!

www.mccmf.org

Volunteers Honored

Volunteers Alex and Jude Rakowski were honored during International Friendship Gardens' annual membership meeting Feb. 15 at Lindo's Restaurant in Michigan City.



Alex and Jude Rakowski appear with their special recognition plaque.

As part of efforts to recognize volunteers, the Rakowskis, referred to as "gardening angels," received a plaque as 17-year volunteers.

Board President Richard Houck conducted the meeting membership. Members elected for 2015-2018 terms were: Mary Fox, John Leinweber, Phil Poznanski and Ron Taylor.

Board member Steve Kahn gave an update

on the changes coming to the Gardens this year. The Gardens will celebrate its 80 anniversary with special events such as Maple Sugar Camp, Lyric in the Gardens, Native American Day, Polish Fest, Butterfly Program, Shakespeare in the Gardens and Turkey Walk. New events and special programs will be announced soon. The new website, www.friendshipgardens.org, has been updated.

The Gardens will be open for Maple Sugar Camp from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 1. The annual event draws many families to watch maple trees being tapped, taste maple sap and watch the cooking sap over open fires.

Friendship Gardens opens its regular season on Mother's Day, May 10, and subsequently will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Two hours have been added to the daily schedule. Dogs on leads are welcome.

Anyone who would like to volunteer at the Gardens may call (219) 878-9885 and leave a message, or visit www.friendshipgardens.org.

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, March 2, 16 and 30, and April 6, 13 and 27 at Red Mill County Park. 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.

Programs are from 6 to 7:15 p.m. at Red Mill 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 lineup is:

- March 11 — "Insect Insight."
- April 1 — "Turtle Talk."
- April 15 — "Spring Has Sprung."

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, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, La Porte. Call at least one week in advance to register. The schedule is:

- March 4 — "Sleep Disorders and Their Effects on Your Health" with Mindi Whittacker.
- April 1 — "Heart Disease Risk Factors — Know Your Numbers" with cardiovascular nurse navigator Nancy Blossom.
- May 6 — "Gardening" with Sacha Burns of Sunk-issed Organics.

Spa Day at the Park

The free event that highlights information, sample services and/or products is from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 14, at Red Mill's Pat Smith Hall.

The first 50 present receive a goodie bag. Vendors will present everything from aromatherapy and facials to massages and make-at-home spa treatments. Those interested in being a vendor should contact Laura Moyer at (219) 324-5855.

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Headmaster Takes New Position



Michael Kennedy is resigning from his position as La Lumiere School headmaster effective June 30 to become Head of School at The Frances Xavier Warde School in Chicago.

Kennedy began his 11-year tenure as La Lumiere headmaster in 2004. During that time, enrollment increased by 97 percent, with a record student body of 232 for the current academic year. The academic program expanded to include 17 new courses and areas of study. Emphasizing faculty development, the number of staff with advanced degrees increased by more than 35 percent over the past decade.

As part of the school's 50th anniversary celebration, Kennedy welcomed Chief Justice John Roberts Jr., a 1973 La Lumiere graduate, to speak at commencement in 2013. He also guided the school through an aspirational Strategic Plan, championed the Courageous Vision capital campaign, resulting in \$5.2 million at its completion in 2010 and spearheaded the school's first Campus Master Plan.

Kennedy graduated from La Lumiere in 1986. He graduated from Boston College in 1990, later earning a master's degree in administration from The University of Notre Dame. After graduating from Boston College, he began his career in secondary education at Georgetown Preparatory School, North Bethesda, Md. He returned to La Lumiere, serving as teacher, coach and administrator from 1992 to 1996. After a year as admissions director at Marmion Academy, Aurora, Ill., he joined The Latin School of Chicago as assistant director of admissions and in 1999 became director of admissions and financial aid until returning to La Lumiere as headmaster.

Michigan City Public Library

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

• **Basket Weaving, 9:15 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 28.**

Margie Warner is the instructor. All materials are provided. Registration and a \$10 deposit are required. Stop by circulation to see the basket and verify the cost.

• **Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss! at 3:30 p.m. Monday, March 2.**

Celebrate the author's birthday with the Read Across America Challenge. Families (or individuals) are encouraged to read together for one hour. A raffle for prizes will follow at 4:30 p.m. for participants 12 and younger who read for one hour.

• **Story Time at 10 a.m. Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18 and 25.**

Children birth to age 5 accompanied by an adult/guardian can participate in stories, songs and crafts. Arrive a few minutes early to receive a name tag.

• **Knitting Club for All Ages at 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18 and 25.**

Take size 9 straight knitting needles, worsted yarn and tape measure (optional). Contact Joanne Hale at joeyAB1971@yahoo.com or (219) 814-4398 for more information.

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

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China Trip Meeting

Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce, 200 E. Michigan Blvd., will host a free informational meeting on its upcoming "Experience China" trip at 5:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 3.

The Chamber is continuing its International Awareness Program by offering trips that depart Oct. 10. The general public is invited to join the nine-day trips, one of which includes a visit to the Terra Cotta Warriors in Xi'an.

Chamber board member Stephanie Oberlie and husband, George, took the trip along with other area travelers.

"The China trip was, for us, a trip of a lifetime," she said. "Experiencing an ancient culture with educated tour guides to some of the most amazing places on earth was truly memorable. When you then factor in the affordable cost of the trip, it is an experience you cannot miss."

Oberlie and other local travelers who have taken the trip will share photos, along with details for those interested in participating this year. Information will include itineraries and travel arrangements, visa applications and procedures.

Reservations for the trip and a \$300 deposit are due by June 22. The overall cost includes English-speaking tour guides, round-trip airfare from JFK to Beijing, four- and five-star hotel accommodations, three full meals a day, Chinese domestic air and ground transportation, admission to all tours and attractions and all tips.

Call the chamber at (219) 874-6221 or visit MichiganCityChamber.com for more information.

Local Teen Nominated for Honor



Local teen Brenda Dukes has been nominated for Boys & Girls Club of America's Youth of the Year award.

The honor recognizes youth between 14 and 18 who participate in their local Boys & Girls Clubs and demonstrate leadership in the community.

The nomination means Dukes will attend the state competition March 12 and 13 in Indianapolis. Judging is based on a written application, interview and speech. If Dukes is selected there, she moves on to the regional level, with a possibility of being one of five candidates sent to the national level.

Dukes was named Youth of the Year by the Boys & Girls Club of Michigan City because of her academic excellence, a healthy lifestyle and service work. She has been a member of the Boys & Girls Club of Michigan City since eighth grade and already has completed 175 volunteer hours this year.

A senior at Michigan City High School, she participates in the Anti-Bullying Club there, as well as Safe Harbor's Lead & Seed, a drug and alcohol abstinence group. She is at corporal level in JROTC, which she has participated in since ninth grade. In January, she received MCHS' Student of the Month award.

Dukes began special education in pre-school. Since then, she has been part of the special education program. She says she worked hard to overcome various obstacles, including a fear of being bullied and her willingness speaking out in public.

"I was 16 when I decided I would not allow these fears to get me down," she said. "I have a strong relationship with my mom, and she encouraged me to always be myself. She worked really hard to always help me and be there for me, especially with school. She is the one who encouraged me never to let my fears get to me."

Dukes now dedicates her time to inspiring others and making sure teens do what is right for them. She will graduate from MCHS this year and plans to attend Ivy Tech Community College in Michigan City, then move on to Purdue University-North Central to earn a degree in special education and teaching at the elementary school level.



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Museum Has First Executive Director

After more than 25 years in existence, New Buffalo Railroad Museum, 530 S. Whittaker St., has hired its first executive director, Kimberlee Beck Wendt.

Since 1989, the museum has been the longest standing local history and cultural site in the greater New Buffalo area. So, The Pokagon Fund Board of Directors recently announced capacity building support with a \$10,000 grant, arriving on the heels of a \$30,000 anonymous donation late last year for the same purpose.

Wendt has served as communications and events manager for Great Lakes Marketing Services Inc., Kalamazoo, Mich. Prior roles have included marketing and logistics manager for Motor Vehicle Prep LLC., Las Vegas; marketing manager of Vacation Village Hotel and Casino, also in Las Vegas; advertising account representative, Artistic Energy Group — News Publications of Three Oaks, Mich.; and retail winery and special events manager of Berrien Vintners Winery, Harbert, Mich. She has a bachelor of arts degree from the College of Communications Arts and Sciences at Michigan State University and is a 1982 graduate of River Valley High School, Three Oaks.

Wendt starts the position March 2. The museum will reopen for the season April 3. It also will host the Fourth Annual Box Car Buffet Celebrity Banquet at Skip's Restaurant on Friday, April 17.



Long Beach Women's Bowling

Feb. 17, 2015

TEAM STANDING	WON	LOST
1. Striking Beauties	21.5	6.5
2. IncrediBowls	18	10
3. Alley Katz	16	12
HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES	SCORE	
1. June Salmon		211
2. Liz Lutterbach		189
3. Tammy Vouri		176
4. Tammy Nelmar		172
5. Jill Mellen		167
6. Pat Shikany		152
Lenore Hadaway		431
STRIKES IN A ROW		
June Salmon		5
Tammy Vouri		4
Liz Lutterbach		3
SPLITS		
1. Nancy Kubath		2-7
2. Mary Lou McFadden		3-10
3. Lenore Hadaway		3-10
4. Barb Macudzinski		5-7
5. Liz Lutterbach		2-7

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Activities to Explore

In the Local Area:

February 26 — "40 Years of Collecting" with Patric McCoy, 7:30 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Free. Info: (219) 874-4900, www.lubeznikcenter.org

February 26 — Read Across America activities, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Westville Public Library, 153 W. Main St.

February 27 — Friday Night Movie, "Big Hero 6," 6:30 p.m., Westchester Public Library Service Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

February 27-March 3 — Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. *Now showing:* "Citizen Four." Rated R. Times: 6 p.m. Fri., Sat. & Mon. *Also:* "Still Alice." Rated PG-13. Times: 9 p.m. Fri. & Sat. and 3:15 p.m. Sat. & Sun. *Also:* "Oscar Nominated Short Films — Documentary." Not rated. Time: 6 p.m. Sun. All times Eastern. Info: vickerstheatre.com

February 28 — Black History Month program, the Underground Railroad in La Porte County, 1 p.m., La Porte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., La Porte. Free. Info: (219) 324-6767.

February 28 — Snowshoe Shuffle, 10 a.m., Nature Center @ Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East (north end of Indiana 49), Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Through February 28 — Vintage valentine display, La Porte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., La Porte. Hours: 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tues.-Sat. Info: (219) 324-6767, www.laportecountyhistory.org

March 1 — Meet-the-artist reception, illustrator/fine artist Mitch Markovitz, 1:30 p.m., Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso. Info: (219) 465-1591.

March 2 — Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss!, 3:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 2 — Dr. Seuss' birthday book drive & party, 5:30-7 p.m., Settlers Place, 3304 Monroe St., La Porte. Info: (219) 326-7283.

March 3 — Free "Experience China" informational meeting, 5:15 p.m., Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce, 200 E. Michigan Blvd. Info: (219) 874-6221, MichiganCityChamber.com

March 3 — "Attracting and Raising Monarch Butterflies," 7 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Township Public Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

March 5-7 — Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival, "Romeo and Juliet," 7 p.m. EST, Notre Dame's Philbin Studio Theatre. Tickets: \$20/adults, \$15/Notre Dame faculty & staff, \$10/students. Info: (574) 631-2800, shakespeare.nd.edu

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:

February 26 — Free gallery talk, Gwen Gutwein of Heritage Barns of Indiana, 12:15 p.m. EST, The Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Info: www.MidwestMuseum.US, (574) 293-6660.

February 27-March 8 — Genesis Guild, "Fiddler on the Roof," First United Methodist Church of Hammond Fellowship Hall, 6635 Hohman Ave. Times: 8 p.m. Fri./Sat, 3 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$15, \$13/students or seniors (62+). Available at door, or call (877) 724-7715.

February 28 — Indoor Flea Market, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. EST, New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road. Vendor spaces: \$10/table. Info: (773) 375-1514, janna@jannariley.com

February 28 — Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra beer/wine tasting "Reveal Party," 6 p.m. EST. Location revealed on tickets. \$50 cost include two tastings. Info: www.smsso.org, (269) 982-4030.

February 28 — Riversong, 7:30 p.m. EST, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Tickets: \$10/general admission, \$8/students and seniors, free/children 12 and younger. Info/reservations: (269) 983-3688, info@boxfactoryforthearts.org, www.boxfactoryforthearts.org

March 1 — ArtsBridge "Collage Concert & Exhibit," 4 p.m. EST, First Presbyterian Church, 475 Green Ave. on Morton Hill. Info: (269) 925-7075.

Dunes Learning Center

Dunes Learning Center is hiring naturalist interns and summer camp counselors for the upcoming summer season and school year.

The residential education facility within Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore provides environmental education and stewardship opportunities to area residents ages 6-17. Interns and counselors are an integral part of center programming.

Interns will instruct children on the area's ecological and historical diversity, especially within the National Lakeshore. Positions are open for summer, June 5-Aug. 8, and the upcoming school year, Aug. 16 through June 4, 2016. Candidates must have a two-year or four-year college degree in biology, education, environmental science or other related field.

Counselors supervise summer camp residents and lead many program activities. Positions are open June 5 through Aug. 8 to college-level students.

Position benefits include weekly stipends, housing, uniforms, some meals, medical training, peer group interactions and professional development opportunities with National Park Service staff.

Call (219) 395-9555 or visit DunesLearningCenter.org for more information or to fill out an application.

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WEEK
IN
HISTORY**



On February 26, 1870, the first New York City subway line was opened to the public.

On February 26, 1919, an act of Congress established Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park.

On February 26, 1951, the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, limiting a president to two terms in office, was ratified.

On February 26, 1979, total solar eclipse cast a moving shadow 175 miles wide from Oregon to North Dakota and into Canada.

On February 27, 1922, in a unanimous decision, the United States Supreme Court guaranteed women the right to vote.

On February 27, 1964, the city of Pisa asked the Italian government to spend in excess of \$1 million to straighten the 184-foot Leaning Tower of Pisa. The world famous tower, at that time, slanted 11-feet from the perpendicular, and engineers predicted that, without immediate correction, it would soon collapse.

On February 27, 1997, divorce became legal in Ireland.

On February 27, 2003, Fred Rogers, star of “Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood” on public television for three decades, died at 74 in Pittsburgh.

On February 28, 1953, scientists James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the double-helix structure of DNA, the molecule that contains the human genes.

On February 28, 1983, the final episode of “M*A*S*H” aired on CBS television.

On February 28, 1993, Lillian Gish, the last of the great silent-film stars, who performed for more than 85 years in movies, as well as on stage and television, died (in New York) at the age of 99.

On March 1, 1781, the American Colonies adopted the “Articles of Confederation,” a prelude to the formation of the federal union.

On March 1, 1864, Rebecca Lee received a medical degree from Boston’s “New England Female Medical College,” becoming the first black woman to be licensed to practice medicine in America.

On March 1, 1872, Congress authorized the creation of Yellowstone National Park.

On March 1, 1932, the infant son of Colonel and Mrs. Charles A. Lindberg was kidnapped from his Hopewell, NJ, bedroom.

On March 1, 1961, President John F. Kennedy authorized the establishment of the Peace Corps.

On March 1, 2002, NASA said its Mars *Odyssey* spacecraft had found evidence that vast regions of Mars may abound in water.

On March 2, 1888, H.G. Wells, reacting to criticism that his poetry lacked meter, responded, "Meters are used to measure gas, not the outpourings of the human heart."

On March 2, 1899, Congress authorized the establishment of Mount Rainier National Park in the state of Washington.

On March 2, 1933, the motion picture "King Kong," starring Fay Wray, premiered in New York.

On March 2, 1949, after the first non-stop flight around the world, *Lucky Lady II*, a United States B-50 Superfortress, landed in Texas.

On March 2, 1965, the movie version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical "The Sound of Music" premiered in New York.

On March 3, 1791, Congress passed the nation's first tax law, which imposed a levy on spirits, distilled in the United States.

On March 3, 1831, Chicago railroad-car magnate George Pullman was born in Brocton, NY.

On March 3, 1875, *Carmen*, Bizet's world famous opera, premiered in Paris.

On March 3, 1879, Belva Ann Bennett Lockwood, of Washington, D.C., was the first woman admitted to practice law before the United States Supreme Court.

On March 3, 1885, the U.S. Post Office began offering special delivery for first-class mail.

On March 3, 1887, Anne Sullivan arrived at the home of Captain and Mrs. Arthur Keller to become the teacher of their blind and deaf 6-year-old daughter, Helen.

On March 3, 1915, David W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, billed as "The world's greatest silent motion picture," premiered in New York.

On March 3, 1923, the first issue of "Time" magazine was published.

On March 4, 1747, Casimir Pulaski, the nobleman who became a hero of the American Revolution, was born in Winiary, Poland.

On March 4, 1851, fire destroyed Chicago's first hotel, the Sauganash, located at the southeast corner of Lake and Market Streets.

On March 4, 1865, Abraham Lincoln, in his inaugural address, uttered these famous words, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right..."

On March 4, 1933, during the depth of the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt, in his inaugural address, said, "So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

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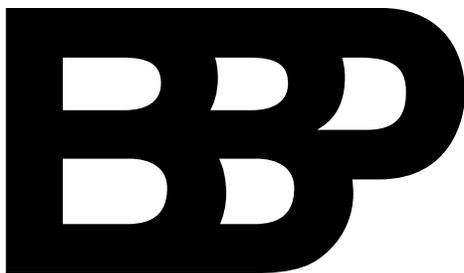
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Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

The following programs are through Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore:

• **Douglas Center Open House from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. every Saturday at the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education.**

Explore the center and view interactive exhibits, a park video and live animal room. If there is enough snow, visitors can borrow cross-country skis or snowshoes to explore the Miller Woods Trail just outside the center. Warm up inside with a snack and hot chocolate or coffee.

Through March, hands-on exhibits feature other national parks with African-American connections, complete with an indoor scavenger hunt for prizes.

• **The free Junior Ranger Program from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at the Visitor Center and Paul H. Douglas Center.**

A variety of Junior Ranger programs exist, from a short Beachcombers Activity Page to an extensive Junior Rangers Booklet. Complete a program and earn a prize. Stop by the Visitor Center or Douglas Center to pick up a free program booklet.

• **“Kid’s Rule” from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday at the 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 north of U.S. 12 in the Miller Beach neighborhood of Gary. Call (219) 395-1882 for more information.

Coping With Canada Geese

If Canada geese have become a problem on your property, information that may help is available through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.

Most goose problems occur March through June, during nesting season when geese can be aggressive, sometimes attacking and nipping at people.

Geese also can cause localized damage if many young are hatched in one area. After hatching, goslings are incapable of flight for about 70 days, so the young birds and their parents will graze near the hatching area for that time. Damage to landscaping can be significant, and large amounts of excrement can render areas unfit for human use.

Information on how property owners can manage Canada geese is at wildlife.IN.gov/2996.htm. Solutions range from habitat modification, to daily goose harassment through noisemaking devices, to supporting goose hunting or obtaining a DNR trapping permit. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service also allows properly registered landowners to destroy resident Canada goose eggs and nests on their property.



The American Red Cross La Porte County Chapter has several bloodmobiles planned in the area.

The schedule is:

- A.K. Smith Career Center, 817 Lafayette St., Michigan City, 7:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25.
- Franciscan St. Anthony Health, Michigan City, 301 W. Homer St., 8 a.m. to noon Friday, Feb. 27.
- St. John’s United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road, Michigan City, noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 3.

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 for more information.

JAG Students Win Regional Honors

Thirteen A.K. Smith Career Center and Michigan City High School Jobs for America’s Graduates students participated in the Region One Career Development Conference at Indiana University-Northwest on Jan. 30.

Several students won awards in a regional competition held in conjunction with the conference.

Students attending included: Zachery Weis, Torri Allison, Shaylah Barron, Shambriel Bryd, Kayla Patrick, Gene Orzech, Yasmine Spicer, April Williams, Shanterria Daniel, LaNeisha Crawford, Loren Crawford, Catherine Torres and Anisa Higginbotham.

The Chapter Service Learning Binder constructed by Cassandra Escamilla and Hannah Fredenburg won first place in the region and will be entered in the state JAG competition. Barron won third place as a Regional JAG Outstanding Senior. Patrick won second place in Critical Thinking Skills. Torres won second place in Writing Skills. Crawford won third place in Public Speaking.

JAG students also are involved in two service projects this month. Through Feb. 13, they will collect jeans as part of a “Teens for Jeans” service project. Anyone with gently used jeans is encouraged to take them to Michigan City High School or the A.K. Smith Center; \$5 coupons for Aéropostale are available for those who donate jeans. The classes also are busy making Valentine’s Day cards to take to local nursing homes.

The JAG program is designed to strengthen high school students’ skills in areas that will lead to success in post-secondary education and careers.

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beach. See VRBO #372192. Call Pat at **708-361-8240**.

SHERIDAN BEACH: Year-round, 1 BR, quiet building,
laundry, off-street parking, no smoking, no pets,
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WATERFRONT APTS for rent in MC. Furnished-utilities, WiFi/TV incl.
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Sheridan Beach 2 bedroom 1 bath unfurnished apt. with washer/dryer.
Lake views from living room & shared rooftop deck. \$750/mo + 1 mo. sec
deposit . 1-yr. lease required. Available for immediate move-in. Must have
references, and employment will be verified. No smoking, no pets.
Call (269) 469-1412.

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One house from beach entrance. Contact nmarkey11@hotmail.com.

DUNESCAPE fourth-floor condo available June & July 2015. Call Cari @
Merrion for details & pricing @ (219) 898-5412

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Reins of Life Honored

The American Youth Horse Council has bestowed
its 2015 Partnership Award to Reins of Life.

The AYHC award recognizes programs or orga-
nized activities that create strong youth leaders
within the equine industry, and in accordance with
AYHC's mission: "connecting kids through horses."

AYHC also has nominated Reins of Life for Adult
Leader of the Year, which recognizes individuals
who best exemplify outstanding leadership to young
people within the horse industry.

In the award letter, AYHC stated the selection
committee was "in awe of the contributions Reins
of Life has made to the youth in its community, the
state and even across the nation; 'impressive' does
not seem to speak loudly enough."

The awards will be presented at the AYHC An-
nual Symposium in March in Redmond, Ore.

Established by breed organizations and special-
ists in the 1970s, the AYHC provides support to all
youth and youth leaders throughout the equine in-
dustry. Reins of Life was founded in 1978 in South
Bend. In 2007, it opened a second location in Michi-
gan City. Riders are from 2 years old to adult and
have physical, developmental, social and/or emo-
tional disabilities.

More than 3,000 hours of therapeutic riding was
provided in 2014 for more than 500 riders. Nearly
300 volunteers assist with class time, horse feed-
ing, maintenance, administrative and event duties,
many of them ages 13-21.

World Day of Prayer

Congregations from 25 Michigan City churches,
and the community itself, are invited to World Day
of Prayer at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 1, in the chapel
at The Salvation Army, 1201 Franklin St.

The focus this year is the Bahamas to promote
justice and equality for women through prayer,
partnerships, service and celebration.

Call The Beacher With Your News
(219) 879-0088



Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Sins of Our Fathers by Shawn Lawrence Otto (hardcover, \$26; available online and in bookstores, 253 pages; also available as an eBook)

Does the end justify the means? That's the quandary that faces John White (JW to most everyone). He is the president of a bank in northern Minnesota and about to lose his job...

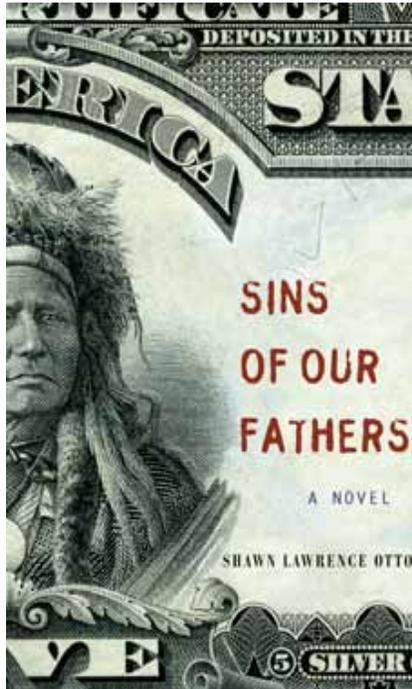
Last year, his son, Chris, died in a car accident. He hasn't been about to pull himself together since the horrendous event. He spiraled into a depression sated only by gambling at the nearby Indian casino. Needless to say, he was soon embezzling money from his bank and is caught by his boss, Frank Jorgenson.

Of course, Jorgenson has to fire JW, but there is an offer on the table:

The local Indian reservation has been building at the end of town, and it looks suspiciously like a bank. Since a lot of reservation financing and their money have been going through Jorgenson's bank, this new Indian venture poses a serious threat. It also could be the end of Jorgenson's bid for CEO of the Greater Minnesota bank association. But, if JW plays along, he could help Jorgenson and get his job back.

After losing more than \$30,000 in his latest gambling binge, JW decides it's time to get straight, give up the booze and gambling and show his family he wants to get back together...especially after seeing his wife with another man. So, JW decides to go along with Jorgenson.

Another factor in the equation is Johnny Eagle who, along with his son, Jacob, have moved to the local Indian reservation from Minneapolis. He's still trying to prove himself to the elders and the rest of the Indians that he didn't sell out to the white man and is back to his roots, to help his people and especially his son, who fell into a bad crowd in the big city. He also needs to get over the death of his beloved wife who worked for — guess who? — Frank



Jorgenson. Her drug overdose death has remained a mystery to Eagle.

Jorgenson sets up JW in a trailer with a view of Eagle's house. He sees Jacob trying to work with a young, headstrong stallion. Since JW grew up working with and training horses, he goes over one day to give the boy some advice. Jacob, of course, resists the white man's help at first, but soon realizes his advice makes sense and makes progress with the horse. Eagle, of course, remembers JW from the bank and also knows he was fired. Reluctantly and slowly, he begins to trust JW as he sees the change in the boy and the horse.

Boy, is that trust misplaced! JW sneaks into Eagle's house one day and plants a bug in his office to find out the Indians' plans for the new bank, or to get some dirt on Eagle

himself. JW is determined to bring this to a close and get back to his family, but finds himself feeling sympathy for the Indians, especially when their new building mysteriously burns one night. JW had his suspicions about Jorgenson, but didn't think a bank president would stoop to arson.

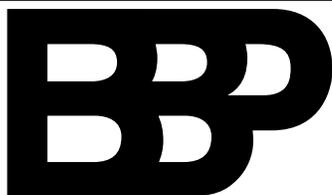
Oh, but arson is only part of the plan! Racism, misunderstandings and hatreds on both sides are clearly shown in this well-written story. Characters are well defined as lines are drawn and both JW and Eagle learn a lot about themselves and their priorities.

Booklist wrote: "Believable characters and a strong sense of place mark this tale of risk and redemption."

Publishers Weekly gave a starred review and called it "a wonderfully vivid debut."

Otto was the co-producer of the Oscar-nominated "House of Sand and Fog." His nonfiction *Fool Me Twice: Fighting the Assault on Science on America* won the Minnesota Book Award. No surprise — he lives in Minnesota.

Till next time, happy reading!



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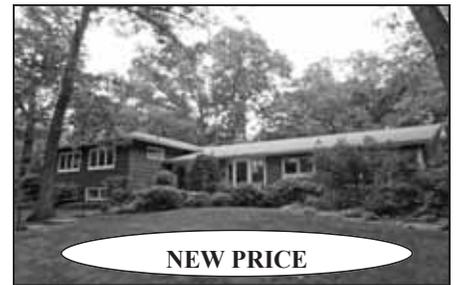
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\$205,000



46 Karwick Glen Drive

Conveniently located near shopping and major thoroughfares and one mile from Lake Michigan, this two-story condo with two bedrooms and two baths is a gem. Private patio with natural, no maintenance surroundings. Updated bathrooms boast slate vanity, plus walk-in shower and soaking tub. One car garage.

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