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The Patch Players

by Matthew A. Werner



The Elston High School Sectional champions pose for a team photo on March 1, 1952. The front row is (from left) Ken Schreiber, George Gondek, Bill Penfold, Bill Wright, Braelon Donaldson and Wayne Sheblosky. The back row is (from left) Doug Adams, Tom Rux, Dick Korn, Steve Delaney, Bob Brooks, Laymon Fly, Dee Kohlmeier and Milton Dabagia.

Dave Greer and I sat in his basement drinking coffee. Behind him was a wall covered with trophies: bowling trophies won by his wife, Vivian, his son and daughter's awards from Rogers High School, a color silhouette of Greer in a basketball uniform. The largest one recognized Greer as an outstanding scholar-athlete at Elston High School.

Greer remembered the night he became the first area player to shoot a jump shot in a varsity basketball game. It was 1953, and many people considered a one-handed jump shot showboating. It was an away game at an all-white school.

"They called me all kind of negative names," Greer said. "They called me everything but God.

We were the only black thing in there," referring to himself and teammates Bill Wright and Braelon Donaldson. "The word — never heard it so many times in one day."

The racial slurs rolled off Greer like heavy rain. He'd heard it before. The heckling drove him to play even harder. Take that! Keep scoring. Keep rebounding. Keep fouling (he fouled out that night). The Red Devils won by 21 points.

After the game, the boys on the team showered, dressed and waited until everyone was ready. Then, they exited the locker room together, walked out of the school building and boarded the bus as a group. Trouble didn't occur, but they never took chances.

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But all of it — the awards, the basketball, the winning, the education — just as easily might not have happened for a kid from the segregated neighborhood called The Patch. Greer and Bill Wright, his cousin and teammate, were two of the first black men to play varsity basketball in Michigan City.

Their stories extend beyond sports.

In the first half of the 20th century, if you were black and lived in Michigan City, there was a good chance you lived in The Patch. With few exceptions, it was the only housing available to your family. Centered on Fourth Street and locked in by Michigan Boulevard on the west and Trail Creek on the east, 88 families squeezed onto a 5-acre dirt patch crowded with houses and apartment buildings and surrounded by factories.

“It was right near the railroad tracks by Blocksom Manufacturing, which used to bring in cow tails and so on,” Wright said. “There was a big stink back there, and the box cars used to come and pick up stuff or dump some of it off. We constantly heard trains going by, and we constantly had that smell back there behind The Patch.”

Average-sized homes, shanties, apartment build-

ings and large houses carved into smaller apartments packed the area. All of them were wood structures with faded paint, asphalt shingle siding or weather-beaten wood siding. While some houses faced Michigan Boulevard or Fourth Street, most faced one of the alleys that crossed through The Patch. A few feet separated buildings, and a makeshift courtyard

filled the void between houses clustered in close proximity. As one resident descended the stairwell from a second-story apartment, they entered the courtyard and stared directly into their neighbor’s window. With only one city street running through The Patch, addresses were fractioned. One house on an alley had the following address: 418³/₄ Fourth St. When a new house was squeezed between it and the

one to the north, it had to become 418⁷/₈ because there was no more room and no more numbers available.

Due to the volume of foot traffic racing through the cramped quarters, grass struggled to take root. The street was dirt, the alleys were dirt, the courtyards were dirt. On dry days, dust whirled between houses and wafted into open windows. On rainy days, mud caked everything.

For years, residents fought for better conditions and desegregation, but in the 1940s and 1950s, relief hadn’t ar-



Dave Greer holds a cutout of himself in his basketball uniform.
Photo by Andrew Tallackson.



Dave Greer stands by the many family trophies that adorn a wall in his basement. Photo by Andrew Tallackson

rived. Despite the rough exteriors, residents kept their indoor spaces tidy and clean, the common areas free of litter, trash deposited in wooden stalls. It was a proud community that looked out for one another.



This undated photo shows an overview of The Patch. Photo provided by Allen Williams.

“It was a normal life,” Greer said. “We knew our place.”

Knew our place. What did Greer mean by that?

“We knew how much liberty we had,” he explained. “As long as we were in our sector, we were OK. That was the way of life. Segregation. We knew our place and stayed in it.”

Greer recalled going to the movie theater where ushers indicated where he should sit. Two policemen stood near the entrance to ensure moviegoers followed those directions. “They’d tell you, ‘There are better seats up there,’ and you better go there or get put out!”

On the way to the movies and on the way back home, kids from The Patch had to pass through a white neighborhood. You arrived at your destination and you returned to The Patch. The kids knew not to linger.

Washington Park, with its carnival, picnic area and zoo, was open, but squad cars parked behind one section of the Lake Michigan beach. Blacks were cordoned into a separate section where the water was deeper, an absurd arrangement considering many Patch residents hadn’t learned to swim.

“They had a section roped off. A rope. At the beach. And you couldn’t go outside that. Talk about segregation,” Greer said, shaking his head.

“Any time (the police) saw anybody slip away, they went down and straightened that out right away,” Wright said.

It seemed like a waste of time and resources for trivial leisurely activity, I said.

“To them, that wasn’t trivial,” Wright said. “That was the whole point. They thought it was a matter of life or death, so they put up this ring and then enforced it, too.”

Local restaurants were out of the question. The

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On Arbor Day (Saturday, April 29) between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. EDT, C&A Arborists Inc. will host an Arbor Day celebration at Chikaming Township Park and Preserve. Our certified arborist, Christian Siewert, will present a speech to promote tree education to adults and children, a walk to identify local trees and a demonstration on how to properly climb trees. Of course, we also will plant a tree. Extremely kid friendly! The first 50 people will receive a White Pine sapling or Bur Oak acorn seedling.



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The Patch Players

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Hickory Pit with its Southern-inspired food and “chicken in the rough” was popular with Patch residents, but only served blacks at the back door. Carry-out only.

“If you wanted to get a soda or a milkshake, you could go into a place and get it, but you couldn’t sit down and drink it,” Wright said. “You couldn’t go into a restaurant unless it was a black restaurant, and there weren’t many of those. Not back in those days.”

Retailers allowed blacks to shop in stores, but maintained rules that kept Patch residents in their place.

“Department stores. You could buy things, but you couldn’t try on clothes. Not in the store. You could leave and bring them back, but you couldn’t try them on,” Wright said.

Despite the restricted liberties, children in The Patch played like any other kids. Summer mornings, boys played football in the sand dunes. By afternoon, they were playing baseball near the Pullman railyard. But as the sun faded toward the horizon, they knew they had to be back in The Patch before dark.

The Patch had a small grocery store, a barber shop, Sammie’s Tavern, Doc Adams’ bar room, an old hotel, a church and, most importantly, The Elite Youth Center. The Elite (pronounced E – light) sat in the basement beneath the church on Michigan Boulevard. When the center opened its doors each evening, kids filled the basement rooms. There,

they watched a TV someone donated, played ping-pong, shot billiards, socialized and played games. In the back of the church, behind the wall at the back the pulpit, was a small gymnasium. That was where Charlie Westcott taught the boys the game of basketball.

Westcott was born in Virginia and graduated high school in New Jersey. He briefly attended Johnson C. Smith University in North Carolina and served in the Coast Guard during World War II. Westcott moved to Michigan City with his wife, Marie, in 1947 to work in a local factory. When he arrived, he immediately volunteered at The Elite Youth Center.

“He’s the reason for all of us,” Greer said. “Charlie Westcott. He ran the The Elite Center. A place where the kids could go at night for about four hours. It was under the church, and it had a gym in the back and we would faithfully go there every night. Every night. That’s where we learned to play ball. Every kid who went through the system came through him.”

“He was a very fine basketball player himself, very tricky guy, knew the game very well,” Wright said. “We all learned how to play basketball down there, and Charlie taught us all. By the time we left there, we were quite ready to play basketball at the public schools.”

Westcott divided the kids into five age levels: tiny tots, rinky dinks, intermediates, juniors and seniors. Each group eagerly anticipated their chance to play in the tiny gym in back of the church and learn from Charlie. The youngest kids worked on dexterity drills — running forward and backward, cutting side to side, jumping and shooting a basket. The boys were divided into teams and ran through the drills relay-style, tagging the next guy in line to run through his drills and make a basket. The boys quickly learned to shoot because nobody wanted to let down their teammates and be the kid who couldn’t make a basket.

“Oh yeah. He taught us all how to play,” Greer said of Westcott. “He was kind of a trickster, go behind your back and stuff to get around somebody. He was a master. We worshiped him. Everybody loved him.”



Charles Westcott



Youngsters watch TV at the Elite Youth Center on Nov. 15, 1947. Westcott looks on in the back.

Westcott taught the boys the game's finer points. By the time they had the chance to play organized basketball in junior high or as freshmen, they had sound fundamentals and great skills.

Warren Jones coached the Elston freshman basketball team in the 1950s and remembered Westcott well.

"He taught the boys a lot about how to play basketball," Jones said. "When they came out for the (freshman) team, they knew a lot about what to do. He had a part in Elston's basketball success, but we had good coaches in the high school, too."

In the early 1950s, those good coaches included Jones, junior varsity coach Doug Adams and varsity coaches Dee Kohlmeier and Ick Osborne.

"When you have a Kohlmeier, an Osborne, a Warren Jones — those guys were a great fabric," Wright said. "When I was in the ninth grade, I met Warren Jones, and he took me under his wing and taught me basketball, too. He taught me to appreciate the work-hard ethic: You go full steam all the time. He continued to watch me and instruct me. Dee Kohlmeier was the coach then, and he came and watched our practice and he had some instruction to give me, too. He was extremely

good."

Racial inequality frustrated Kohlmeier and Osborne. Talent earned a spot on the team, and everyone received the same coaching attention.

"They were just members of the team," Jones said.

By 1950, the high school graduation rate in Indiana crept toward 60 percent, yet among Michigan City's black community, it was closer to 0 percent. When he arrived in town, Westcott's first mission was to encourage kids from The Patch to value an education, to stay in school and graduate.

While much of society was segregated, Michigan City schools were fully integrated — black kids had the same teachers as everyone else.

"That was an amazing thing," Wright said. "That was the saving grace of that city for anybody who wasn't white because you could get an education there that could send you on if you wanted it.

That's one of the great credits of Michigan City. If you'd been down in several other parts of the country, segregation was the rule and it could hurt you. A lot."

In 1950-1951, five sophomores made the varsity

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Warren Jones. Beacher file photo



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basketball team led by Gene Burrell. Kohlmeier recognized Burrell's ability and cared less about the color of his skin. Burrell's smooth movement and athleticism stunned local basketball fans.

"When Gene (Burrell) came on, they couldn't



Elston plays Valparaiso on Dec. 1, 1950, with Braelon Donaldson at the ball and Gene Burrell (44) nearby.

believe a basketball player could move like that," Wright said.

Burrell learned to play basketball at The Elite Youth Center. He became the first black basketball player to start at Elston High School and was the Red Devil's second-leading scorer. But Burrell quit school after his sophomore year. Braelon Donaldson, his classmate, teammate and fellow The Elite Youth Center player, returned.

"He was the man," Greer said of Donaldson. "He was a state high school pole vaulter. He went to IU and pole vaulted down there. He was a real nice dude. He was fortunate. He lived on the east side and his dad had a little car wash. In his senior year,

his dad got him a car. And there were about 10 of us who got in that car and went to school."

Donaldson was a handsome young man and a gifted athlete. He won the state pole vault competition as a junior. He was the second-leading scorer in 1952 and helped the team win Elston's first Sectional championship in four years. That season, another



Elston plays Culver on Dec. 4, 1953, with Greer making the jump shot.

promising young basketball talent arose from The Patch: Bill Wright.

"Then we had a good coach in Ick Osborne," Wright said of the school's new coach, who replaced Kohlmeier.

"He was an extremely good man; he and his wife. He looked out for us. Back in those days, if you were black, you couldn't even stay in the hotels. When we traveled, we couldn't stay in the motels and hotels with the team. We always had to find a black family that would take us in, and that happened a number of times. There was nothing Ick could do about it. He was always outraged by it, but there was nothing he could do about it because that's the way it was done. They weren't allowing black folks to stay in hotels and motels."

In 1953, Donaldson became the first black basketball player to lead Michigan City Elston in scoring. Wright was a starting guard and finished third in scoring. Michigan City won its second straight Sectional championship and finished the season 14-9.

Greer, a sophomore, moved up to varsity midway through the season and started a few games. That's when he experimented with the jump shot.

"I saw it on TV. Guy from Michigan State. He was the only one (shooting a jump shot)," Greer said. "Nobody else was doing it. Nobody around here had ever seen anything like that."

Greer began practicing his shot in the back of the church in The Patch and during practice in Red Devil gym, with Coach Osborne looking on. Osborne saw the advantage of a jump shot performed by a tall kid with good leaping ability, especially if that



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The Patch Players

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kid made more than he missed.

"He didn't complain," Greer said. "Then I did it in a game and almost got run out of the gym."

That's when opposing fans spat racial slurs at the black kid they perceived as trying to show them up. Their hate-filled yells aimed to put him back in his



Cook

place, but they failed. Greer continued to develop his shot, and teammates and opposing players followed suit as the jump shot became the dominant shooting style.

Another player who developed into a fine jump shooter in The Elite Youth Center was Harlan Hunt. A tall, lanky, athletic kid, he made the varsity basketball team in the 1953-1954 season and provided the punch the Red Devils needed. Now, three young men connected to The Patch started on the team: Wright at guard, Greer at forward and Hunt at center. The team also got a boost from an unexpected The Elite Youth Center player: Dick Cook.

Most families had minimal social interaction with the black community, but Cook and Greer became friends, playing baseball and basketball together. Cook invited Greer to his house for dinner, and his parents gladly set another plate at the table.

"That was far from common," Cook said.

Playing summer baseball, Cook got to know Westcott. When he heard about basketball being played in the back of the church in The Patch, he showed up to play.

Many white kids were afraid to visit the Patch, but not Cook, Greer pointed out.

"He came down (to The Elite Youth Center). He was rough down there on the boards. He came down there and got better. Much better," Greer said with a laugh.

"That was mostly in the dark," Cook said, but "word got out and people began to talk. 'Hey, Cook was down at the The Elite Youth Center.' So what? It was a place to play basketball. It's not like there was a basket on every pole back then."

His family ignored the gossip and rebuffed other peoples' prejudice and fears. Their son was happy, having

fun and staying out of trouble. They had no problem with him spending his evenings at The Patch in The Elite Youth Center.

"That wasn't the norm, that's for sure," Cook said.

Along with seniors Herb Sperling and Blake Waterhouse, the team had a strong nucleus, and they still had Coach Osborne — a positive presence in the kids' lives.

"Let me give you a story about Ick Osborne," Wright said. "He invited us as a team over to his house once and his wife cooked a chicken dinner. Now Ick was a southern boy, southern Indiana, I think, and he had a very nice demeanor, but he understood one thing: if you're going to serve chicken, people might be uncomfortable eating chicken, do I use a fork or a knife or not, so he left all of the silverware off the table and we all ate with our fingers. That's the way he was. He looked out for his people, and he made them as comfortable as he could, and he fought for their interests the best he could."

Osborne fought for his boys and in turn, the boys fought for him.

The team didn't hear much noise about three black kids in the starting lineup. In recent years, the school had struggled to amass wins in a single season. The city was excited to have a winning team, and the boys won game after game in convincing fashion, frequently beating opponents by 20 and 30 points.

"(Dave Greer) had a left-handed jumper," Indiana Basketball Hall of Famer Bill Hahn said. "Great ball player. I can see him shooting that jumper like it was yesterday. Wright was a helluva guard. Bill could really shoot. Those were really good ball players. Fun to watch."

Michigan City residents' love for basketball grew to a fever pitch. To accommodate the growing interest in basketball games, the school lined up rows of folding chairs between the grandstands and the

playing floor. Shortly thereafter, it installed new bleachers in that space.

Tickets became a hot commodity. After winning its first 12 games, the Red Devils would host the 10-1 Elkhart Blue Blazers. The two teams were ranked second and third in the state. Elston gave Elkhart 400 tickets for the game, of which 109 became available to adults. Fans lined up at 4:30 a.m. in



The line for basketball tickets outside Beebe's Sporting Goods on Jan. 9, 1954.
Beacher archive photo



The Elston High School Sectional champs pose for a team photo on Feb. 27, 1954.

Elkhart in zero degree weather to buy a ticket. In Michigan City, residents formed a line a block long outside Beebe's Sporting Goods store (in the same building where *The Beacher's* press area is today) to buy a ticket.

By the time the game started, the auditorium was hot. Every seat was filled. Some fans stood in the corners. The place steamed with anticipation.

Michigan City trailed at halftime, 29-25, but the offense popped in the third quarter as Elston outscored Elkhart, 20-9, in the period. The boys never relinquished the lead. Wright and Greer led the team with 15 points apiece. Cook added 14 more and Elston won, 67-61.

At 10 p.m. that night, the local newspaper received a phone call from Camp Atterbury in Indianapolis. The caller indicated there were five from Michigan City there. They wanted to know the score of the game. Michigan City Red Devils basketball had arrived.

The team improved its perfect record to 13-0 and moved up to No. 2 in the state rankings. Being on a winning basketball team brought some changes.

"We were allowed to go places blacks weren't allowed to go," Greer said. "We could go inside the restaurants. There was one place we'd go after all of the away games — 8th Street Café. They used to feed us there. Beforehand, we didn't go there. No. You had to be a basketball player. No blacks went to any restaurants at that time. Huh-uh. That was the first time I went in, when I started playing basketball."

But that was something Osborne had arranged in advance after the team returned after a late-night away game (as Kohlmeier also had done). Without the rest of the team, the boys from The Patch were still barred from sitting down and eating.

"M&M — a very popular place with the students and people in Eastport," Wright said. "They wouldn't allow any black people to sit down in the restaurant. One night, some of the basketball players, we were trying to tell some of the white students who

were following the team that there was this segregation, or exclusion, in town and they didn't believe it. And there's no reason they would have known it because they never saw black folks around anywhere — that was a normal thing. We took a couple of them out there once just to prove to them so they would understand what that problem was. We went in there and we were told to leave. And then the three people who went with us also left. They didn't go back again for that matter."

The Red Devils lost only two games during the regular season by a combined eight points. They breezed through the Sectional, winning three games by an average margin of 32 points. The team looked poised to win its first Regional championship since 1935, but right before the tournament, Cook got sick.

"The famous mumps," Cook said with a laugh.

The team squeaked into the Regional final without Cook in the lineup, but lost to Hammond High School in the championship game. The team finished the season 22-3. Michigan City would have to wait to win a Regional championship. They lost Wright to graduation — he earned a basketball scholarship at the University of Michigan — but

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The Patch Players

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with Cook, Greer and Hunt returning, fans eagerly anticipated the next season.

In 1955, the Red Devils continued their winning ways as Cook, Greer, Hunt and Wright's younger brother, Jack, led the team. Mid-season, the boys played the all-black high school and basketball powerhouse, Indianapolis Attucks, at home.

"I'll never forget that," Cook said. "During warmups, the band was playing 'Shake, Rattle, and Roll,' and each guy on their team dunked it — even the little guy, the little guard! Well, that shattered our confidence right there."

Attucks won that game.

At the end of the season, Elston won its fourth straight Sectional championship and advanced to the Regional final, where the team lost to Gary Roosevelt — another all-black school — by seven points. Cook became the first player in Red Devil history to score 500 points in a season, and the team finished with a 20-6 record.

Two weeks later, Attucks and Roosevelt played for the State championship in Indianapolis. The contest guaranteed an all-black high school would win the State championship for the first time ever. Thinking about that game, a wide smile passed over Greer's face.

"Oh yeah. That was history. Yes, it was," Greer said. "Should have been us there, but..."

His thought ended. The smile lingered.

O'Neil Simmons grew up in The Patch. He is 11 years younger than Greer. He, too, experienced the segregated section of the movie theater. As time went by, attitudes began to shift. Slowly.

"We didn't have to go through what Dave and Bill had to go through," Simmons said. "Things got a little better."

In 1960, the city tore down The Patch. The Elite Youth Center remained. Simmons' family moved to the east side of town. Whereas his old elementary school enrolled more black kids than white kids, his new classroom had two black kids: him and one girl. When sixth-grade basketball tryouts started, Sim-

mons left school and went to The Elite to play, just as he had always done. Westcott asked him when basketball began at the school.

"Tryouts started tonight," Simmons said.

"What are you doing here then?" Westcott asked.

"I feel out of place. I don't know any of them. I don't want to play there."

Westcott sat him down and explained the importance of moving beyond The Patch.

"Nobody is going to recognize you playing ball here in the The Elite Center against small churches and other centers," Westcott said. "If you want a shot at a college scholarship, you have to play organized basketball in the school."

Simmons went back to school, tried out and made the team. Six years later, as Elston's starting point guard, he helped the school capture its first and only Indiana state basketball championship in 1966. In fact, half of that team learned basketball from Westcott and played at The Elite Youth Center.

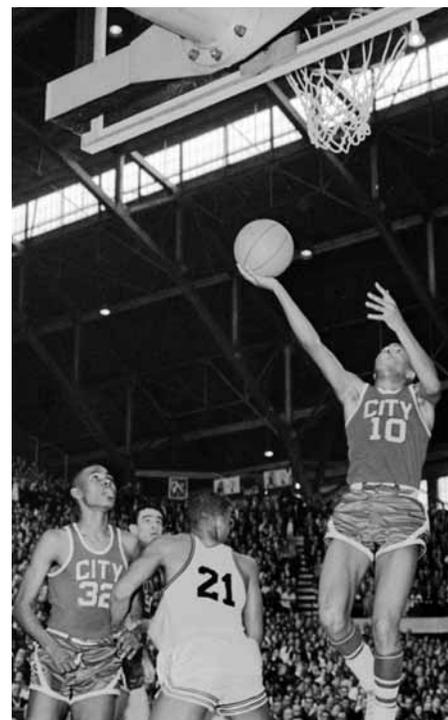
From 1952 to 1975, Michigan City Elston basketball won 24 straight Sectional championships, seven Regional championships, one Semi-state and one State championship. The teams recorded 473 wins against 138 losses during that time. Many good kids and great basketball players made that happen.

Young men from The Patch and The Elite Youth Center were part of that success. They stood behind the rope at the beach, sat in a segregated section at the movie theater, got their food to-go and spent their nights in a separate house when the basketball team traveled.

They endured injustice, yet their photographs graced the sports pages of area newspapers. Sports-writers praised their accomplishments. Michigan City residents stood in line to buy tickets to watch them play.

Their experiences prove that sports are more than just games people play. Sports bring out the best and the worst in us. They are reflections of ourselves.

These men endured, and Michigan City's history is richer because of it.



O'Neil Simmons (10) against East Chicago Washington in 1966.

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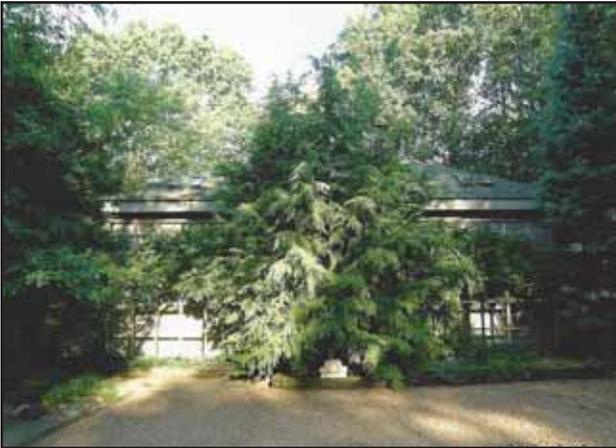


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“Beauty and the Beast” a Smart, Lavish Update of Animated Classic

by Andrew Tallackson

In many respects, Bill Condon’s extravagant re-telling of Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast” improves on the original.

Not that the 1991 Oscar-winning classic needed a spiffy polish. *The New York Times*, in its review at the time, perfectly encapsulated the thrill of the experience by writing, “Sorry, folks, but the best new Broadway musical ain’t on Broadway.”

Indeed, it had been some time since Hollywood treated audiences to an old-school musical. “Beauty and the Beast” boasted witty, sophisticated music by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, a gutsy heroine and deviously conceited villain, and a love story that was all heart.

Even the film’s admirers, though, agree any concept of time, specifically how long Belle remains at the castle, and how quickly she clicks with the Beast, is rather murky.

Condon’s film, propelled by the thoughtful screenplay from Stephen Chbosky (“The Perks of Being a Wallflower”) and Evan Spiliotopoulos (“The Huntsman: Winter’s War”), not only untangles the original’s loose threads, but also deepens the mythology behind these characters. The result is a splashy, big-budget update that, narratively, is more satisfying than the original and almost, and I repeat *almost*, recaptures its magic as well.

Condon, no stranger to movie musicals, having adapted “Chicago” in 2002, then directed “Dreamgirls” in 2006, knows how to open up a stage musical on the big screen. In the pre-title sequence of “Beauty and the Beast,” a ballroom dance is eye-candy opulence: the costumes, makeup, choreography and sets, with Broadway powerhouse Audra McDonald at the center, are unrivaled.

And it is here we are treated to just how snide the prince (Dan Stevens, “Downton Abbey”) can be as he shuns the beggar woman who reveals herself to be an enchantress, one who transforms him into a beast, and all his servants into fantastical creations achieved through stunning CGI, particularly Ewan McGregor’s amorous candle, Lumiere.

Everyone in the castle will remain trapped in their current state, unless the Beast falls in love. True love.

Enter Belle. She’s played by Hermione Granger herself, Emma Watson, and it’s easily her best performance: adorable, plucky, charismatic enough to carry the tale. And this time around, we learn why there is no mother in the picture, with the great Kevin Kline playing her inventor father. Once in the castle, Belle does not submit so quickly to the Beast as she does in the animated version. She attempts to

escape, and her affection for the Beast evolves with greater skill this time, as do the revelations of how everyone in the castle is linked to the townsfolk in the nearby village.

Vocally is where things get iffy. Watson’s voice is fine, but nowhere near the soaring perfection of Paige O’Hara. Emma Thompson, as the affectionately maternal Mrs. Potts, unsuccessfully mimics the cockney flourishes of Angela Lansbury, robbing the character of its spontaneity. Luke

Evans (“The Girl on the Train”), however, is an ideal Gaston, his voice impressively bold and theatrical.

The new songs penned by Menken, however, don’t propel the action, but stall its momentum, and all the fuss over Gaston sidekick LeFou (Josh Gad, Olaf from “Frozen”) being gay collapses amid an unfortunate truth: the character, once giddy comic relief, is now a disposable stereotype.

The big finish, however, is magnificent. Everything that is right about the picture — the performances, the production values — is on grand display. Condon and his team want to wow you, to sweep you away by the love story’s timeless message. By doing so, they offer a reminder that movies, at their best, provide an escape, transporting audiences to magical worlds where life begins anew with happily ever after.

And this version of “Beauty and the Beast,” dear reader, is among the best.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



Emma Watson and Dan Stevens star in “Beauty and the Beast.”



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World War II Veteran Publishes War Memoir...at 93

by Andrew Tallackson

As a World War II veteran, Jack Graham read plenty of books over the years that recounted the exploits of soldiers in battle.

There was just one problem.

Few writers experienced firsthand the horrors of war from the infantryman's perspective.

"Things like artillery or mortar fire, rifle and machine-gun fire that just misses you, but strikes men around you, exploding mines where you just walked," Graham writes. *"The living conditions that, at best, were just a hole in the ground, and your closest neighbor was twenty feet away."*

So, Graham published his own war memoir last November.

At 93.

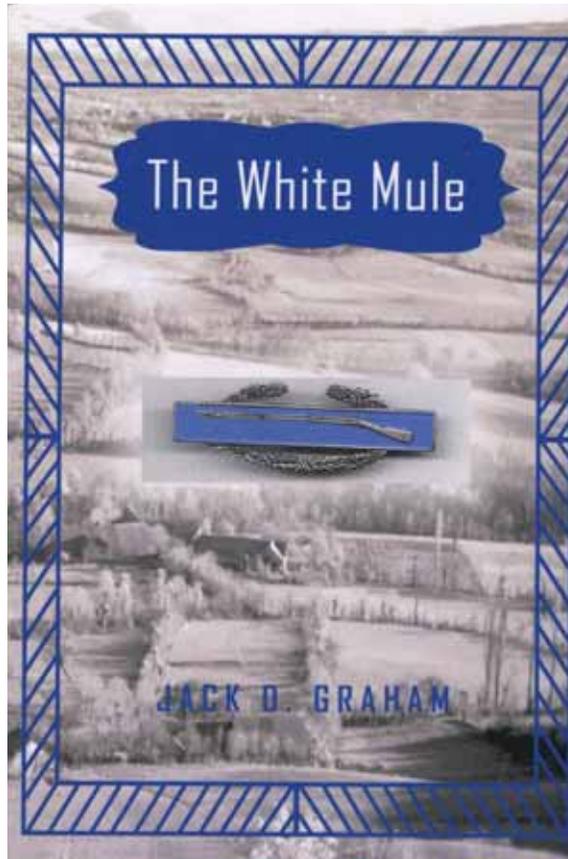
"I wrote everything down during the war. I had two notebooks, and I abbreviated everything. I typed it up about a year later (after his discharge in 1945) into some semblance of a book," he said.

"Then, it sat on the shelf for 70 years, so I decided, if I'm going to write it, I may as well write it now. It's something I always wanted to do."

"The White Mule" is Graham's personal account of enlisting in the U.S. Army during World War II, then surviving the front lines of the "Second Great War." Chapters convey the battlefront in North Africa and Italy in harrowing detail. Other passages strike unusual notes, like the time his division saw a white mule join their attack force.

Graham lives in Sun City, Ariz. He and his wife, Ruth, who grew up in Door Village, lived on Somserset Road near Stop 22 in Long Beach in 1976. Their nephew, Paul Kemiell, is a *Beacher* photographer.

Born in Minneapolis in 1923, Graham grew up hearing stories about World War I from his father, who was wounded while serving with the Thirty-Second Infantry Division. He devoured books that retold of men's exploits in war. In 1941, at 17, he



leapt at the chance to enlist as the fighting intensified abroad during World War II.

"I knew when I was a young boy the things my father experienced were a once-in-a-lifetime adventure," Graham said. "I just plain wanted to be where the war was going on."

"The White Mule" recounts his basic training, to shipping out aboard the Queen Mary, to experiences with the French Foreign Legion in the Sahara, to fighting in Tunisia to participating in a medical study.

Some of Graham's stories make the reader's jaw drop in disbelief. A perfect example: he and his fellow soldiers kept the peace amid guard duty at local brothels, which were viewed as acceptable "recreation," an opportunity for soldiers to unwind and blow off steam.

"I don't think many people knew about that," Graham said.

Another remarkable story involves Graham's chance encounter with a soldier who would become his future son-in-law (Paul Kemiell's father). The two had not met before.

After the war, Graham received a degree in business administration from the University of Minnesota, thanks in large part to the G.I. Bill. He and Ruth were married in 1947. He had about 70 pages of transcribed notes detailing his journey through a world war. It wasn't until about four years ago that he first took a crack at writing his own memoir — a 150-page attempt that saw only a few copies published.

"I never really did anything with those books," Graham said, "because I didn't think it was complete enough."

So, he expanded on his initial work, producing at least seven different versions, each one longer than the previous effort.

"I finally got to the point where I felt I couldn't do any better," Graham said.

The manuscript was accepted by New York-based Page Publishing,



Jack and Ruth Graham, together in a picture taken in July 2007 by Paul Kemiell.



An undated photo of Jack Graham during his service amid World War II.

which helps authors get their works distributed and generate royalties. It also features select authors on its own radio show.

Graham has experienced a mixed reaction to the book. Some people have written him saying how much they enjoyed it. Others have said they didn't care for it.

"I was trying to show what war was really like," Graham said. "Some people may not have wanted to hear about what they were reading, but it's true. The things people did in the book, some people have a hard time believing it, but war can show people's humanity, reveal their true selves. There were a lot of Germans, for example, who were no different from us. They were just fighting for their country, too.

"I didn't pull any punches. I wrote it like it happened. Warts and all, I figured, it's going in the book."

More About the Book

Jack Graham's "The White Mule" is available at amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, iTunes, Google play and kobo.



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PNW's "Odyssey" Opens Up the Door to Adventures

Exploring is the very seed of our Western culture, beginning with the Greek story of Odysseus.

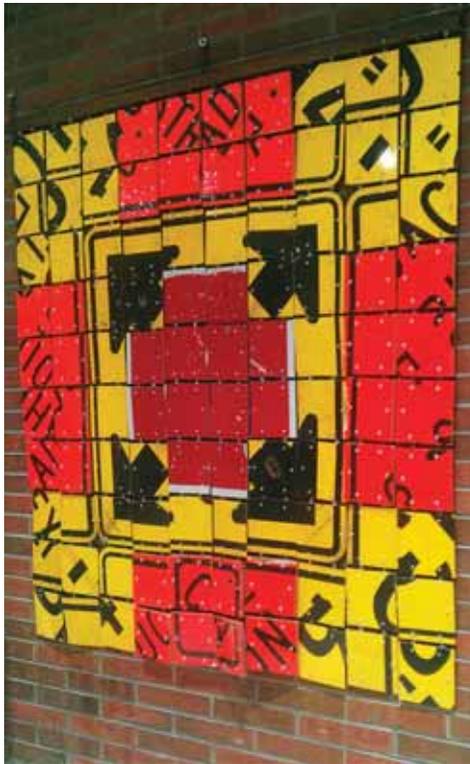
We may no longer face creatures intent on luring us to our deaths, or storms threatening to sink our ships, but we still seek to explore. How fitting, then, that Purdue Northwest has a program named "Odyssey," which sets out adventures to be explored.

The Odyssey series is artistic, curated by Judy Jacobi, assistant vice chancellor of University Art Collections & Special Programs, and includes sculptures, paintings, prints and mixed-media works.

By showing students and local people good art, and giving artists a chance to be seen, Purdue hopes to make the community richer. The art is placed throughout the campus, not just in an isolated gallery. Library, hallways, landings and the grounds have art, making it available to everyone on an informal basis.

A special tour of the new art acquisitions at PNW's Hammond campus, "Building Community Through the Arts," runs through Saturday, March 25. Tours focus on artwork in the Student Union and Library, and the new sculpture path visible from the building. Tour times are from 11 a.m. to noon and 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the large Student Union Library Building off 173rd Street in Hammond. Each is followed by a reception so people can mingle with the artists. All events should be over by 2:45 p.m. Parking is next to the building. Further information can be obtained by contacting Rachel Pollack, College of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences website and event coordinator, at rpollack@pnw.edu

From the internationally famous Christo and Jean Claude, to renowned Chicago artists, to fine artists from La Porte and Porter counties, the viewer communicates with the fresh-



Michelle Wiser's Chicago Street Sign Rescue Project.

ART & ABOUT

Robert Stanley

warn us when driving, colors that are exciting in themselves. Also, we see dark marks, perhaps a

est ideas moving in our world. Oh, some things might look strange. Seeing the Wright brothers' invention overhead for the first time is likely a strange experience. The mind quickens, and a subtle enjoyment spreads.

"Guests should expect to be highly entertained through observation, informal interaction and 'back stories' of the artists and the creative challenges they faced — always compelling," Jacobi said.

Accompanying internationally famous artists are local artists, including: Tom Brand, Pines; John Habela, Chesterton; Tom Olesker, Michiana; Carole Stodder, Pines; Michelle Wiser, Long Beach; and Harold Zisla, South Bend. I have works featured as well.

An example of an adventure, an odyssey to a new experience, is Wiser's Chicago Street Sign Rescue Project. She used fragments of thrown-out and run-over street signs to create a 6-foot square piece that combines found objects with quilting design. What's THAT about? What we see at its most fundamental are very bright colors, colors that warn us when driving, colors that are exciting in themselves. Also, we see dark marks, perhaps a language of some sort? The holes used for attaching the signs to the posts start to clue us in that these were road signs. But, if a warning, why the fairly peaceful, symmetrical composition? And why is "Quilt" in the title? Is this piece a contemporary cultural equivalent to the quilts once made of fabric?

And there we have it, an example of how an art odyssey begins: with a deep look at what's there, not what our mind wants to quickly categorize, followed by a mulling over in the imagination. These pieces shown at Purdue open up the possibility of adventures. This tour offers a chance to discuss them with the artists and others.



Pictured are works by Lialia Kuchma (top) and John Habela.



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Dune Country Attractions: A Stately 1875 Italianate Mansion

Editor's note — This column by Jim Morrow, sponsored by Partners in Preservation, highlights the area's historic structures.

The Josephus Wolf Mansion is a 7,800 square-foot Italianate structure in Porter County built between 1873 and 1875 and once the center of a 4,500-acre farm.

Located at 453 W. County Road 700 North near North County Road 450 West, the property stretched from modern U.S. 6 south to Indiana 130. The construction cost was \$5,000.

The house is featured in the 1876 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana*. Josephus Wolf (1822-1895) moved from Athens, Ohio, to Portage Township in 1834. He remained on his family's farm until he went west, joining the California Gold Rush. He returned to the farm in 1852 and married his childhood sweetheart, Susan M. Young. They had eight children, with only three making it to adulthood.

It is not clear if Josephus struck it rich in California, but after returning, he started buying up land. His 4,500 acres included land in Portage, Union, Liberty and Morgan townships. He devoted his efforts to dairy and livestock raising. He often would use his telescope up in the cupola to keep an eye on his workhands.

Josephus died in 1895. His wife continued living in the house until her death in 1903. The property was inherited by their son, Elmer, who resettled in North Dakota several years earlier. In 1904, he filed for bankruptcy and lost his Porter County holdings. The house passed through tenants over the years, including Franciscan monks in the 1930s.

The house once again is privately owned. It is constructed of brick and contains 17 rooms, including a library, dining room and eight bedrooms. It contains a walnut staircase with bird's-eye maple



The Josephus Wolf Mansion.

and walnut newel post and bannister. The fruit panels of the front doors are believed to have been carved by a Swedish carpenter who worked on the house's construction.

Crowning the structure is a large cupola that adds a regal touch. Cupolas were more than just observation areas. With their opening windows, they more often were used to create a chimney effect that helped refresh the air in the

house during warm months.

The Italianate style was popular from around 1840 to 1885, its origins hailing from England and the architectural Picturesque Movement. It was popularized in America by architect Andrew Jackson Downing. The style was a reaction against the formal, classical ideals in architecture fashionable in Europe and America for the better part of the previous two centuries. Pattern books published from the 1840s to 1880s by architects such as A.J. Downing, Calvert Vaux, Samuel Sloan and A.J. Bicknell bolstered appreciation of the style, which is based on Italian medieval and Renaissance architecture. It strayed away from the simple artistic enhancements applied in the Greek revival style, creating a more complex, picturesque, decorative, adorned structure.

Distinguishing features of the Italianate style include: a low-pitched roof of the hip, multiple-hip or multiple gable variety; prominent heavy scroll brackets supporting wide eaves; a wide entablature; tall, narrow, double-hung windows often arched with full or segmental arched lintels; and a flat-roofed porch.

In 19th century, the Italianate was one of the most popular architectural styles in Indiana.

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

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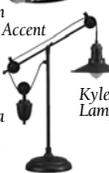
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Sweet Success



It was cause for celebration, with plenty of tasty ice cream, at Pine Elementary School on March 15.

The school is an Hours for Ours site. Select students each week met with community members for lunch and quality time together. To encourage good choices in behavior, a chart was established where students can earn tickets from classroom teachers to place on a "Bubbles" chart.

Successfully meeting their goal as a group resulted in Michigan City's Bubbles Ice Cream Parlor providing ice

cream to the youth and their adult mentors.

Present at the celebration were Brittany Cogdill, Hours for Ours mentoring program site coordinator, Pine Elementary Principal Zach Huber, Zachary Martin from Bubbles, mentors Andy Schmidt, Meg Kanyer, Lenore Jogmen and Jane Neulieb, and students Alexander Johnson, Terrion Wright, Daevon Herron, Nikkolai Sanders, Serenity Brown, Nanah Williams and Jeremiah Allen.

All photos by Paul Kemiell



ArtsBridge Collage Concert and Exhibit

ArtsBridge will present a “Collage Concert and Exhibit” at 4 p.m. EDT Sunday, March 26, at First Presbyterian Church in Benton Harbor, Mich.

The program’s first half features vocalist Andrew Fisher with pianist Gabrielle Smith. In the second half, music students will perform from The Citadel Dance & Music Center under Susan Dietrich-Reed’s direction. Stone sculptures by Sara Shambarger, and wood, glass and fiber art by her husband, George Barfield, will be on display and for sale.

The Citadel Music Program originally started in 1998 through the Arts & Education Program at The Salvation Army Corp Community Center in Benton Harbor. In 2008, the music program affiliated with The Citadel and became The Citadel Dance & Music Center. Its mission is to develop skills and character through performances, and dance and music education. The center has more than 400 students in dance and music. Dietrich-Reed also is director of music, facilitating 30 professional instructors.

Fisher was born in Hinsdale, Ill., and moved with his family to Berrien Springs when he was 7. He began taking piano lessons at 5, sang in churches and played trumpet in band. After studying music at Andrews University and Southwestern Michigan College, he performed and sang with various music organizations in Southwest Michigan. Years later, he did a brief stint singing opera in Florida, then returned to Michigan in 2015, founding the Andrew Fisher Quartet, of which he is the lead vocalist. He also opened for the Grammy-winning R&B group The O’Jays.



Andrew Fisher

Smith is a graduate of Andrews University, with a Bachelor of Science in music and an emphasis in piano. She is director of music for Holy Mater-



Gabrielle Smith

nity of Mary in Dowagiac, Mich., and Sacred Heart of Mary in Sister Lakes. She also is employed at Southwestern Michigan College, accompanying the Vocal Jazz Ensemble and numerous voice students. She sings and has performed in many choruses throughout the area, and sang with Fisher in his Stevie Wonder tribute concert.

Shambarger, former director of Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff and Krasl’s Artisan Market, has a background in weaving and basket making. As a clinical social worker for more than 25 years, balance is a key therapeutic concept in her practice. The “Balance Rocks” are a manifestation of this belief. She gathers her rocks from Lake Michigan’s shores. Each sculpture is created by using various sizes, colors and shapes of rocks, which are glued together.

Barfield studied art at the Tate Gallery in London, where he developed an interest in creating practical art pieces. He also worked to promote art and artists for the past 20 years. His pieces are made of wood, glass and fibers to create artistic and functional pieces. His new interest is upcycling — finding use for discarded materials. His “FISH” series uses discarded lumber from Lake Michigan docks and piers. Using acrylic paint, each piece is intended for use indoors or outdoors.

A reception follows the program at the church, which is located at 475 Green Ave. on Morton Hill. Call (269) 925-7075 or visit firstpresbh.org or facebook for more details.



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Michigan City Public Library

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

• **Author William Hazelgrove: "Madam President" at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 26.**

Hazelgrove's book recounts how Edith Bolling Wilson became acting U.S. president in 1919 after her husband suffered a massive stroke.

• **STEAM Ahead Kids: Ozobots at 4:30 p.m. Monday, March 27.**

Youth can program Ozobot robots using color-coded, block-based coding with the Ozoblocky app. Register at the Youth Services desk. Call 873-3055 or 873-3045 for details.

• **Great Decisions at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 27.**

The foreign policy discussion program meets for the final month of its 18th season. Discussions center on China's Maritime buildup and Saudi Arabia.

• **Story Time at 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 28, and 10 a.m. Wednesday, March 29.**

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

• **Angels Among Us at 3 p.m. Wednesday, March 29.**

Ange Benz leads the discussion on inspiring stories about the presence of angels in everyday lives.

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

Harbor Country Book Club

Harbor Country Book Club will discuss Richard Russo's "Nobody's Fool" at 6:30 p.m. EDT Thursday, March 30, at New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

The April selection is Cynthia D'Apris Sweeney's "The Nest."

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Spring Garden Show

La Porte County Master Gardeners will host a Spring Garden Show from 8 to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 25, at Michigan City High School, 8466 Paha Road.

The main speaker is shade garden expert Gene Bush, who will discuss “No or Low Maintenance Gardening” from 10:15 to 11 a.m. and “Colorful Combinations for Shade Gardens” from 1 to 1:45 p.m.

Other speakers include:

- Marcy Dailey, “Take Thyme to Smell the Herbs.”
- Steve Sass, Northern Indiana Chapter of INPAWS president, “Butterflies and Butterfly Gardening.”
- Linda Strain, children’s workshop, “Backyard Arachnology (Spiders”).
- Jen Kuzdas, children’s workshop, “Fairy Gardening for Kids.”
- Karen Sarver, Alicia Ebaugh and Nicole Messacar.



Dailey



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Vendors, gift bags, door prizes and food are planned.

The event costs \$8 in advance by visiting www.lpmastergardener.com, or \$10 at the door with cash or check only. Children 12 and younger are free.

Call Tina DeWitt at Purdue Extension Office at (219) 324-9407.

Pop Up Fashion Event

A Pop Up Event featuring Alfred Dunner and other fashion brands is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, March 26, at St. Stanislaus Convent Shop, 1501 Franklin St.

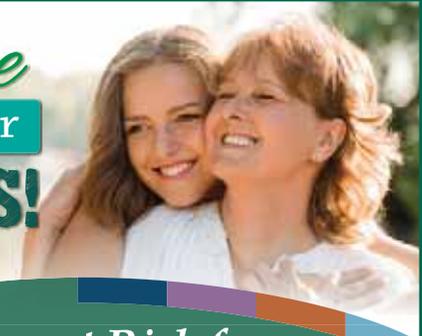
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Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

*The following programs are available at
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore:*

- **A ranger will lead a two-hour tour in one of the park's 16-passenger buses at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday, March 25.**

The tours meet at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center. After a brief introduction, participants board for the tour. Tours are free, but reservations are required by calling (219) 395-1882.

- **Native Plant Talk from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, March 25, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Local plant expert Steve Sass will give an in-depth presentation on the importance of using native plants in landscaping.

- **Backpacking for Fitness 12 to 3 p.m. Sat. March 25, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Park ranger Kip Walton and volunteer T.J. Caraccii will lead a short presentation before heading to Chellberg Farm for a hike. The experience stresses how to get stronger, burn calories, have a healthier heart and improve posture. Dress for the weather, and take a comfortable backpack weighing 10 to 20 pounds, including water.

- **Botanical Treasures of the Indiana Dunes from 1 to 2 p.m. Sunday, March 26, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Nathaneal Pilla, a Save the Dunes regional botanist, will offer a historical and botanical journey through Indiana Dunes flora.

The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is at 100 N. Lake St. in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Call (219) 395-1882 for more information.

Indiana Dunes State Park

*The following program is offered
at Indiana Dunes State Park:*

- **Two 90-minute Dunes Wire Wrapping workshops at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sunday, March 26, at the Nature Center auditorium.**

State park naturalists introduce the art of wire wrapping before participants create beach glass wire-wrapped pendants or necklaces. A \$5 registration fee is payable the day of the workshop. Visit tinyurl.com/hoejjc6 to register.

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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Chili Cookoff & Movie

Friends of New Troy will host the premiere of "Morley Mill: A Brief History," complete with a chili cookoff, on Saturday, March 25, at New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road.

Produced by Terry Hanover, the 30-minute documentary combines photos with interviews, new and old footage and a song about New Troy ("Fish are Bitin'") written by Brett Riggins and performed by Ninth Street Bridge.

The grist mill Ambrose Morley, built along Galien River in 1866, kickstarted the town's development. Hanover's film documents the story of the man who built it, those who worked in it and the townspeople who patronized it until it closed in 1987.

The cookoff starts at 6 p.m. EDT, followed by the movie at 7 p.m. EDT. After the movie, Hanover and other Weesaw Township Historical Society members will participate in an informal discussion. DVDs of the film and three other local history DVDs will be sold for \$15 each.

Advance tickets are recommended because seating is limited. Tickets are \$10 for adults (\$8 for Friends of New Troy members) and \$5 for children 12 and younger. The cost includes chili, dessert, a beverage and the movie. Everyone who enters the cookoff receives free admission (pre-registration is requested).

All proceeds benefit the New Troy Community Center. Tickets are available at the center and Center of the World Woodshop. Email FriendsOfNewTroy@yahoo.com or call Center of the World at (269) 469-5687 to reserve tickets for, or register for, the cookoff.

"Arsenic and Old Lace"

River Valley Drama Club will present "Arsenic and Old Lace" on Thursday through Sunday, March 23-26, at River Valley Middle/High School, 15480 Three Oaks Road, Three Oaks, Mich.

In the classic comedy, Mortimer Brewster lives a happy life. He has a steady job at a prominent New York newspaper, he's just become engaged and he gets to visit his spinster aunts to announce the engagement, only to discover they've been poisoning lonely old men.

Performance are at 7 p.m. EDT Thursday through Saturday and 3 p.m. EDT Sunday. Tickets are \$5 at the door. Family discounts are available.



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Art Festival Deadline Extended

The application deadline has been extended to Friday, March 24, for artists to appear in the Lubeznik Art & Artisan Festival.

Now in its 36th year, the festival was presented off site for many years, but now exists on center grounds, 101 W. Second St., so festivalgoers can immerse themselves in not just the event, but also the center's exhibits. Proceeds are invested back into the community through the center's artistic and educational programs.

Sixty five to 100 exhibitors will be selected and \$3,000 in cash prizes awarded. Jurors are Doug Stapleton, professional artist and associate curator of Illinois State Museum Chicago Gallery, and Frank Connet, professional artist, teacher and owner of Chicago's Textile Restoration Inc.

Visit tinyurl.com/hf8abd5 to apply.

Lend a Hand Day

La Porte County Extension Homemakers will host Lend a Hand Day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, March 29, at the La Porte County Fairgrounds Community Building, 2581 W. Indiana 2, La Porte.

Volunteers will assemble quilts, bags, backpacks, lap robes, wheelchair totes, birthday bags, hats and other items donated to La Porte County residents through local service organizations. Anyone who can sew, cut, stitch, tie, sort, iron, knit, crochet, pack, stack and carry also is invited.

Donations of fabrics, notions, thread, yarn and supplies are welcome. Take a sewing machine or use one provided. A light meal is at noon and 6 p.m. Helpers can stop by for any amount of time.

Contact the La Porte County Purdue Cooperative Extension office at (219) 324-9407 or mwolff@purdue.edu for details.

Dues Payers Banquet

Reservations are due Monday, March 27, for Women of the Moose's annual Dues Payers Banquet on April 3 at Moose Family Lodge 980.

Fellowship is at 5:30 p.m., with dinner at 6 p.m. The \$15 cost includes prime rib or baked chicken, scalloped potatoes, green beans, salad and dessert.

Make reservations by calling Yvonne Baron at (219) 874-7438 or Karen Durnell at (219) 872-6623.

Wake Up The Gardens

Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12, will host a volunteer work day, "Wake Up The Gardens," from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 26.

Volunteers can help with weeding, raking and clearing debris. Visit www.friendshipgardens.org for more details.

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Westchester Public Library

The following programs are available:

• **Knit Wits and Pearls of Wisdom at 9 a.m. Thursdays at Hageman Library, 100 Francis St., Porter.**

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

• **Battles of the American Civil War from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 25, at Thomas Library's Bertha Wood Meeting Room, 200 W. Indiana Ave.**

Civil War enthusiast Thomas Murphy will discuss the Battle of Wilderness/Spotsylvania.

• **The Unnamed Guild of Gamers from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 26, at Thomas Library's Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

Events include a fifth-edition Dungeons & Dragons campaign, "Munchkin," "Ultimate Werewolf," "Settlers of Catan" and "Pandemic."

• **Cupcakes and Canvas from 10 a.m. to noon or 2 to 4 p.m. Monday, March 27, at Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave.**

Children 6-12 can paint step-by-step with an instructor. All supplies are provided. Participants should wear clothes that can get messy. A parent or guardian must accompany each child. Class size is limited to 10 children. Registration is necessary in person or by calling (219) 983-9715.

• **Eating Well for Healthy Living Series from 6 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 28, in the Thomas Library Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

Registered Dietetic Technician Gia DeMartinis will discuss "Holistic Nutrition for Mind, Body & Soul." Register in person or call (219) 926-7696.

• **Bits & Bytes series, Computer Security: Part 1, from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 28, and 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday, March 30, in the Thomas Library Serials/Automation Department.**

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

• **Pokemon League from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Thomas Library.**

The program is aimed at children in first grade and older. Attendees learn to make decks of 60 cards. They don't need to take anything unless wanting to take a starter pack of cards.

• **"Saturday Night Live Trivia" from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 28, at Westchester Township History Museum.**

Teams of one to four people can vie for the prize.

• **Children's Crochet Club from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Wednesdays in the Thomas Library Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

Aimed at children in third grade and older, attendees learn beginning crochet from Sadie Steciuch. Children should take a size G crochet hook and skein of medium weight yarn. Class size is limited, and registration is required by calling (219) 926-7696.



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Indiana Dunes Native Plant Sale

Pre-orders are strongly urged before April 1 for the Friends of Indiana Dunes 21st Annual Native Plant Sale, which is from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 8, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter.

More than 100 native plant species, including woodland flowering plants and ferns, dry, medium and wet prairie flowering plants, grasses, shrubs and trees are featured, along with hard-to-find woodlands and ferns. All varieties come in pots and are native to Northwest Indiana, Northeast Illinois and Southwest Michigan.

The supply of plants the day of the sale is determined by their popularity as pre-orders, which are filled in the order received. Each year, several varieties sell out before the sale because they went to pre-order customers.

Forms are available at the Indiana Dunes State Park Office, Chesterton Feed and Garden Center and Indiana Dunes Visitor Center. Contact Native Plant Sale Chairwoman Zella Olson at (219) 926-3833 to request an application by mail. The deadline is April 1.

At the sale, gardening consultants will be available to answer questions, as well as free leaflets on planting with wildflowers, and the many benefits of going native. All profits support Friends of Indiana Dunes.

Trash & Treasure Sale

More than 40 vendors are planned during the Trash & Treasure Sale from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 25, at Michigan City Senior Center, 2 on the Lake.

Hot coffee, doughnuts, barbecue sandwiches and hot dogs will be sold, while Senior Center members will sell homemade baked goods. The Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department will issue 2017 park stickers.

There is no admission or parking fees. Email Tara Miller at tmiller@emichigancity.com or call (219) 873-1504 for details.

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Wild Women and Wine

To celebrate Women's History Month, "Wild Women and Wine" will highlight unconventional women who shaped Northwest Indiana history at 7 p.m. Friday, March 31, at Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St.

"We are featuring everyone from women doctors at the turn of the century to females who ran the Haskell & Barker Car Company during World War II while the men were away fighting," Heritage Interpreter Jackie Perkins said. "We're also highlighting some women who could be considered very wild, like Diana of the Dunes and Belle Gunness."

The 21-and-older evening begins with wine and light refreshments. Perkins and Director Jessica Rosier will give a slideshow presentation on the featured women in the mansion's drawing room. The evening closes at 9 p.m. after guests have viewed the mansion's three floors.

Advance registration is required through Eventbrite or by calling the mansion at (219) 873-1520. A \$25 ticket includes two glasses of wine, refreshments, a tour and the program.

Visit www.barkermansion.com for details.

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Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps supported numerous events at the school in February and March.

The cadets helped set up for Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress, coming in at 5:45 a.m. the morning of the test.



Staff Sgt. Christian Lepage assists the welcoming table on Parent/Teacher Conference Night.

For the four-day sectional and all-day regional Indiana High School Athletic Association basketball tournaments, cadets provided parking assistance for the estimated 15,000 fans who visited MCHS. They also provided the Color Guards each night, as well as the regional double-header the morning of March 11. On March 15, they provided assistance for parent-teacher conferences.

Cadets will be busy throughout March. Its last scheduled military drill competition was March 18 at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne. They also supported a Barker Middle School dance March 17. They will aid a fundraising dinner March 24 at St. Paul Lutheran Church and a Disabled Veterans of America dinner March 25.

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HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES	SCORE	
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2. Cindy Beck		172
3. Barb Macudzinski		167
4. Sue Luegers		166
5. Tammy Vouri		158
SPLITS		
Ellie Parkerson		4-5
STRIKES		
Sue Luegers (2)		
Tammy Vouri		
Barb Macudzinski		

More bowlers are invited when teams meet at 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays at City Lanes.



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

- La Porte Hospital, 1007 W. Lincoln Way, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday, March 24.
- Sacred Heart Church, 201 Bach St., La Porte, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday, March 26.
- Bethany Lutheran Church, 102 G St., La Porte, 1-6 p.m. Tuesday, March 28.
- Purdue University Northwest, Library Student Faculty Building, Room 144, 1401 S. U.S. 421, Westville, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, March 29.

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

Free Exercise Program

Purdue Extension's Nutrition Education Program will sponsor a free exercise program through April 27.

The class meets at 12:15 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Madeline and George Smrt Center, 301 Grant St. The muscle-toning fitness program is mostly done seated in a chair. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive shoes. Consult a health-care provider before starting the program.

Contact Jody Kutch at (219) 324-9407 for additional information.

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

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

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Activities to Explore

In the Area:

March 23-26 — River Valley Drama Club, "Arsenic and Old Lace," River Valley Middle/High School, 15480 Three Oaks Road, Three Oaks, Mich. Times (Eastern): 7 p.m. Thur.-Sat., 3 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$5.

March 23-27 — Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. *Now showing:* "The Salesman." Rated PG-13. In Farsi with English subtitles. Times: 6 p.m. Fri.-Mon. *Also:* "20th Century Women." Rated R. Times: 9 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 3 p.m. Sat.-Sun. All times Eastern. Info: vickerstheatre.com

March 24 — Singer/songwriter Ellis Paul, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$20. Info: www.acorn-theater.com, (269) 756-3879.

March 24-26 — "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," 4th Street Theater, 125 N. Fourth St., Chesterton. Times: 8 p.m., Sunday/3 p.m. Tickets: \$18. Reservations: 4thstreetncca.org, (219) 926-7875.

March 25 — La Porte County Master Gardeners Spring Garden Show, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Michigan City High School, 8466 Pals Road. Cost: \$8/advance @ www.lpmastergardener.com, \$10 cash/check @ door. Children 12 & younger/free. Info: (219) 324-9407.

March 25 — Trash & Treasure Sale, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Michigan City Senior Center, 2 on the Lake. Info: tmiller@emichigancity.com, (219) 873-1504.

March 25 — Native Plant Talk, 10-11 a.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882.

March 25 — Michiana Humane Society 19th Annual Spring Fling, 5 p.m., Pottawattomie Country Club, 1900 Springland Ave. Tickets: (219) 872-4499, www.michianahumanesociety.org

March 26 — Pop Up fashion event, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., St. Stanislaus Convent Shop, 1501 Franklin St.

March 26 — Dunes Wire Wrapping workshops, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m., Nature Center auditorium @ Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Cost: \$5. Registration: tinyurl.com/hoejjc6

March 26 — Botanical Treasures of the Indiana Dunes, 1-2 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882.

March 26 — Author William Hazelgrove: "Madam President," 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 27 — Cupcakes and Canvas, 10 a.m.-noon or 2-4 p.m., Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton. Registration: (219) 983-9715.

March 27 — STEAM Ahead Kids: Ozobots, 4:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: 873-3055, 873-3045.

March 28 — "Saturday Night Live Trivia," 7-8:30 p.m., Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

Through April 2 — Temporary Exhibit: "The In-

visible Project," Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

Through December — World War I exhibit, La Porte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportecountyhistory.org, (219) 324-6767.

In the Region

March 25 — Chili cookoff/movie premiere ("Morley Mill: A Brief History"), New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road. Times: cookoff/6 p.m. EDT, movie/7 p.m. EDT. Tickets: \$10/adults (\$8/Friends of New Troy members), \$5/children 12 & younger. Reservations/info: (269) 469-5687, FriendsOfNewTroy@yahoo.com

March 26 — ArtsBridge "Collage Concert and Exhibit," 4 p.m. EDT, First Presbyterian Church, 475 Green Ave., Benton Harbor, Mich. Free. Info: (269) 925-7075.

Support Groups

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

Mondays, Fridays — Overeaters Anonymous, 7 p.m. Mon./Franciscan St. Anthony Health, 301 W. Homer St., 9 a.m. Fri./First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Info: https://oa.org, (219) 879-0300.

Wednesdays — Alzheimer's/Dementia Support Group for Caregivers, 2 p.m., third Wednesday of each month, Rittenhouse Senior Living, 4300 Cleveland Ave. Info: (888) 303-0180.

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



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Elks Lodge, 416 E. U.S. 20, is accepting applications for cook, janitor, bartenders, wait staff, busers and dish washer. Openings will be filled as they become available. Apply in person to have your application kept on file.

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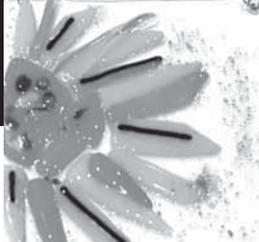
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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Death of a Ghost by M.C. Beaton (hardcover, \$26 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook)

Hamish Macbeth is a police sergeant in the Scottish Highlands he loves so dearly. So much so, even though he's a top-notch crime solver, he gives the credit to someone else. Why? Because he's afraid if he's too good, the force will give him a promotion, sending him to one of the big cities.

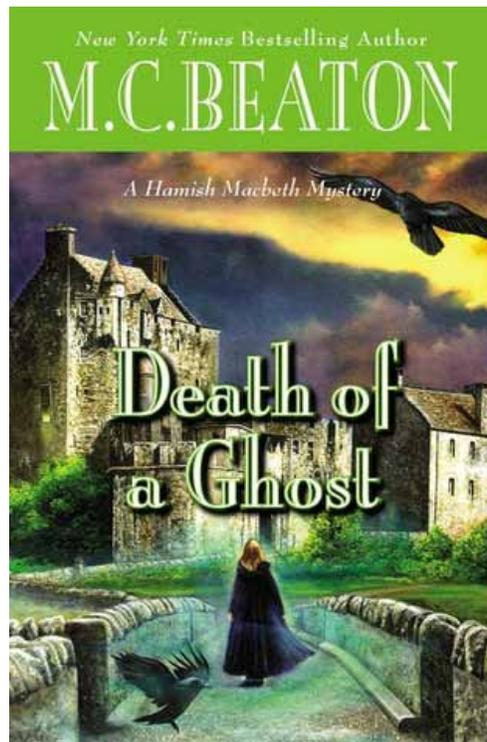
Hamish is a tall, red-headed, good-looking Scotsman. With all that going for him, he's still a total failure with the ladies. At one point in the story he observes — not without some humor — that “*Women didn't seem to understand an unambitious man.*” Hmm. I suppose he's right — he really doesn't understand women at all.

Besides describing the beautiful Scottish Highlands so well — I swear, I could smell the heather growing on the roadside — Beaton does an excellent job describing the people and way of life of this far northern clime.

She also makes her characters real enough to jump off the page at you. In the past 32 Macbeth adventures, she has introduced other interesting characters in Hamish's life, like Det. Chief Inspector Blair, his immediate superior officer who is always trying to get him reassigned far, far away from him. Then there's Blair's supervisor, Superintendent Daviot, who loves having Blair around, even though he's useless, because he's a toady and always sucking up to him. In every Hamish Macbeth story, there is a continuation of these, and other characters from past books — each one is like coming home to familiar people and places. And that's the key to the popularity and enduring power of the series. However, you don't have to read all the books. Each one is a standalone story, providing an enjoyable read under 300 pages; and sometimes, that's all we have time for.

In this latest offering, Hamish is enjoying his simple life in the village of Lochdubh with his partner, Charlie Carter, a giant of a man who's as delicate as a bull in a china shop. They have living quarters in the back of the police station, which they share with Macbeth's two dogs.

A call comes in one day that the owner of the castle at Drim thinks his new home is haunted. The



owner is Hanover Ebrington, a retired police superintendent from Glasgow, which prompts Hamish to note, “*The man's probably a drunk.*” But the fawning Daviot insists on a proper investigation when he finds out who Ebrington is. Grovel, grovel, grovel...

Hamish and Charlie spend the night in the castle tower, where they hear moaning and other strange sounds. Charlie falls into a hole in the tower floor and comes across a very dead body in the cellar. It is professor John Gordon, “*who was fixated on the idea of there being no God.*” Well, maybe now he will find out! There are rumors of smugglers in the area. Maybe he stumbled upon them and paid the price.

Meeting the medical examiner soon after, the group goes down in the tower and finds — nothing.

The body is gone. And that's just the beginning! Hamish will have to hold off on that fishing holiday he was looking forward to...

In the course of the investigation, Hamish meets Selwyn and Olivia Sinclair. He is rich, she is beautiful and bored. She was with the professor the night before he died. But then there's George Douglas, the fire-breathing minister who has a sexual eye for Olivia and an evil eye for the professor.

Then, a murder confession comes from an unexpected source, and Hamish is told to stand down, the investigation is closed. Huh? No way, thinks Hamish, especially when it's not long before the body count starts to rise and more suspects are found in the strangest places...

There's a well-plotted mystery here, as well as a nice touch of Highland humor. Hamish and company will be around for more stories to come, I'm sure of it!

From *The New York Journal of Books*: “Hamish Macbeth is that most unusual character, one to whom the reader returns because of his charming flaws. May he never get promoted.”

From *The Chicago Sun-Times*: “Macbeth is the sort of character who slyly grows on you.”

Beaton has won international acclaim for her Hamish Macbeth series, which has inspired 24 episodes based on the books. She also is the author of the Agatha Raisin series, which airs soon on PBS. Beaton lives in the Cotswolds. Visit her website at MCBeaton.com

Till next time, happy reading!



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2919 Loma Portal Way, Long Beach
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1629 Lake Shore Drive, Sheridan Beach
\$975,000

Large brick home with walkout basement and seasonal views of Lake Michigan. Sets high on dune with 142.5 ft of frontage property. 5 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, great 2nd floor deck for entertaining or relaxing and plenty more.



208 Oriole Trail, Trail Creek • \$129,000

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