

THE
Beacher™

Weekly Newspaper

911 Franklin Street
Michigan City, IN 46360

Volume 35, Number 50 Thursday, December 19, 2019

Happy Holidays

THE
Beacher

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Published and Printed by
THE BEACHER BUSINESS PRINTERS

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

About the Cover

The Beacher's Paul Kemiell managed to capture this photo of Santa Claus (Tony Drzewiecki) during the annual Snowflake Parade on Dec. 7 in Michigan City's Uptown Arts District. More photos from the parade can be found in this week's edition.

A Christmas Tradition

by William Halliar



At this time of year, our hearts and thoughts turn to family. Memories of holiday traditions, of carols sung with friends, of cold, snowy winter nights and hot cocoa sipped in front of crackling fires.

One memory LaPorte County residents often speak of is gazing with wonder through the tiny windows of a miniature church. Watching a choir with candles processing slowly down the aisles as carols speak of the joyous music of the season.

So much community history, all within the white clapboard walls of a tiny church.

After Otto E. Giese's death at age 90 in October 2002, Beth Boardman wrote in a newspaper article, "*LaPorte has lost someone this week whose name was synonymous with a little church and a big heart.*"

Giese was a visionary who, for love of his family, his country and his community, began a Christmas tradition that lives on and inspires us today. In this miniature church he built with his own hands, a tiny minister stands behind a diminutive podium at the front of the church, speaking wisdom from the past to future generations of LaPorte County residents.

Borrowing the voice of local radio legend Ken Coe to bring life to the tiny figure, we are reminded to "*enjoy the holiday season with all of its many wonders.*" The sermon continues, "*but let us not forget the real meaning of Christmas; be joyous but with thankfulness for our freedom.*"

A dream that was born on the battlefields of World War II Belgium, in the heart of a man who left behind his young wife and infant child to fight for peace and his nation's freedom. The realization of that dream became an inspiration for a community, bringing people together to share his joy of life, and it continues to bring the joy of Christmas to friends and neighbors today — 75 years after the initial inspiration.

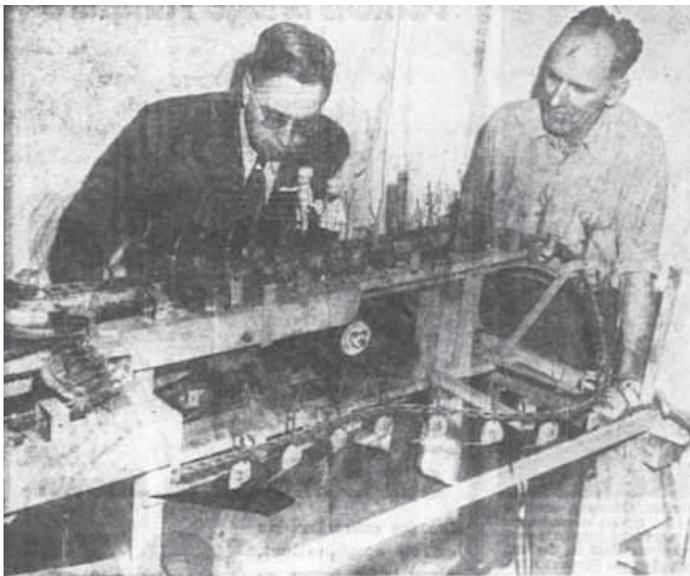
Otto was born to Herman and Pauline Giese on July 12, 1912, in Bloomington, Ind. The family eventually settled in LaPorte, where Otto

The Otto Giese miniature church is located downstairs at LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. All current photos by Bob Wellinski

graduated from high school, then entered the mortuary business.

Otto opened Giese Funeral Home at 1007 Harrison St. in LaPorte in 1938. He and his wife, Cleda, set up housekeeping and had a baby daughter just as World War II broke out in Europe. Dec. 7, 1941, saw the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, and on May 10, 1943, Otto made his way to Indianapolis to volunteer for service, as a medical corpsman.

As a testament to Otto, during his 2 1/2 years of service in Europe, he made friends with a worker at a woolen mill in a town in which he was billeted. Neither man spoke the other's language, so they communicated by using hand signals and pointing to illustrations in a dictionary. As a token of this friendship, the man gave Otto a golden cross he would later share with friends back home.



THE CHOIR WILL MARCH—Otto Giese, left, watches two choir dolls move along the electric conveyor belt built by William Wannemacher, right. The belt will carry a 40 doll choir down the aisle of a miniature church Mr. Giese exhibit is at La Porte, Ind., every Christmas.

An old newspaper clipping reveals Otto Giese (left) and William Wannemacher tinkering with the miniature church.

Otto and his corpsmen were transported to the battlefield in Europe, and as 1944 came to a close, they found themselves in the little town of Huy, Belgium, on the cusp of what would become one of the war's bloodiest conflicts: the "Battle of the Budge," called by Winston Churchill "the greatest American battle of the war."

This battle was Adolf Hitler's last major offensive against the Western Front. Hitler's goal was to split the Allied forces and stop them from driving into Germany. The battle lasted six weeks, from Dec. 16, 1944, until Jan. 25, 1945. The weather was frigid, and the battle line stretched over an 85-mile front through the densely wooded Ardennes Forest of Belgium.

During an interview in the early 1960s, Otto told his story to writer-correspondent Ruth Bachmann Stassel. "We had a meager Christmas dinner in a Belgium home," he said, another testament to his

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A Christmas Tradition Continued from Page 3

character that he would be invited to a private home for a Christmas dinner.

The account continues.

“About the time we were ready for dessert we got orders to move up to Spa (Belgium) at once.” His thoughts immediately went to his young wife and daughter. Years later, he told interviewer Ellen McKinney he promised God, *“Good Lord, if you preserve me, I’ll build something in remembrance.”*

Not long after safely returning from the war, Otto began to make good on his word. He began to plan, then build something that would inspire so many people even to this day: a miniature church to celebrate Christmas, life and the freedom he and his fellow soldiers fought for during those long and dangerous days of World War II.

You have to see Otto’s miraculous creation to appreciate all the thought and design work that went into it. *“I drew the plans, had the parts cut for it, and put it together myself,”* he told McKinney.

On the altar, he placed the golden cross given to him by his friend in Belgium.

Over the years, construction of the church, its amazingly detailed and animated interior, even its presentation and musical accompaniment and eventual preservation has become sort of a community project involving family and many interested friends.

Otto’s enthusiasm for the project, and his story of its inspired birth, must have attracted many helpers, as countless volunteers have contributed to Otto’s legacy.

He told McKinney, *“My wife dressed the dolls in the congregation and about 50 friends and I have built almost everything in the church.”*

The miniature church is built on the scale of 1 inch to the foot. It measure 3’-0” wide, 6’-0” long and 6’-7” from the ground to the top of the cross that rests atop a high-spired steeple. Three thousand hand-painted shingles adorn the roof. It took more than 6,000 nails to put it all together. The building is a white, clapboard structure designed in a New

England Gothic-style modeled, some say, after an old church in Lowell, Ind.

When Otto first displayed his church during the 1947 Christmas season, he thought his creation was complete...until a friendly woman passing by commented he had everything just right, except he forgot the choir. Thus began the quest to animate the little church and bring its occupants to life.

Otto wanted the choir to move up the main aisle, and he needed a minister to come from the back of the church to preach a short, inspiring sermon.



Peering through the front doors reveals the mechanized track that brings parishioners into the church.

For a design that would do all of this, Giese contacted engineers from Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry, even the famous “Imagineers” of Walt Disney Studios. He finally found the man for the job in his birthplace of Bloomington, one William Wannemacher, a successful retired inventor.

Several conveyor systems to create movement were tried over the years. All had problems, and local papers reported their frequent breakdowns.

Wannemacher perfected a conveyor system for the choir and animated preacher. In his version, the pastor walks in, raises and lowers his hands, walks to the altar, turns and makes the sign of the cross, walks back out and gives his sermon, his movements all controlled with cams beneath the floor. Two lines of the choir — all holding flickering candles — move down the church’s main aisle, then cycle beneath the floor, crisscrossing in continuous motion. The entire cycle runs about eight minutes when a small lighted button on the front of the presentation stand is pushed. It actually took more than seven years to perfect the choir’s movement.

The church has had many improvements over the years. Since it was exposed to the winter elements each season, it has had a few paint jobs and at least one new roof. The interior has been redesigned and added to over the years.

As Otto improved his church, he added dolls to the congregation, including figures in costumes from many lands. According to one source, early in the church’s history, *“In the Giese Chapel there are 167 dolls sitting in the congregation, 28 dolls*

marching in the choir, 32 dolls in the choir loft and one doll minister, totaling 228 dolls. The girl dolls are wearing handmade hats and no two are alike.”

The church first went on display in front of Giese Funeral Home in 1947. Each year, the display was updated, and the movements and attraction perfected. Many friends from around the community lent a hand to the project. Early on, music was an important part of the experience. According to Maxine Ford in the Dec. 17, 1960, edition of *The Herald-Argus*, “Special music which will broadcast from the church has been recorded by choirs of the Sacred Heart, St. Joseph’s and St. Peter’s Catholic Schools and the St. John’s Lutheran School.” It is said Otto had recordings of local groups dating back to 1953. All of this adding up to quite a community collaboration, conveying much of the pride friends and neighbors took in the little church each year.



This *Beacher* file photo by William Halliar is of LaPorte County Historian Fern Eddy Schultz, who has fond memories of the miniature church.

The eyes of LaPorte County Historian Fern Eddy Schultz light up as she remembers the church from

her youth. The church “was in front of Giese’s Funeral Home (which was across the street from LaPorte High School on Harrison Street)...a lot of us would gather around the little church and sing Christmas carols regularly during the Christmas season.”

When Otto retired in 1978, the church was donated to LaPorte County Historical Society Museum.

“I was so happy when it was donated to the Historical Society, and then it was on display during the Christmas season indoors (a much warmer climate than earlier),” Schultz said.

At that time, the museum was located in the LaPorte County Courthouse basement, and the little church was brought out only during the Christmas season. When the museum moved to its new quarters — the former Door Prairie Auto Museum — in 2006, the church was put on permanent display.

In 1994, the mechanical systems received a complete upgrade. Many volunteers helped with sprucing up the church. All of the dolls were removed and “fancied up” for their new home.

Tim Barnhart recalls his father taking him as part of family tradition to the little church in front of the funeral home to watch the choir and listen to the Christmas carols. He remembers cold winter’s nights and the lights of the display. In 1994, while working with S&W Electric in LaPorte, he was asked to take a look at the electrical system to see



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SMOKED SALMON PORTIONS

A Christmas Tradition Continued from Page 5
 if anything could make it work again. He felt honored to be part of the restoration team, and after studying the antiquated operating system proclaimed, "I think that we can restore it."

There were no drawings of the complex system to follow, no wiring schematic, so Tim and his team had to start from scratch to design a computer-controlled system that would bring the church back to life and continue Otto's dream.

This year, the community is invited to "A Night with the Giese Church" from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, at the museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. The church will be lit up and decorated for the holiday.

Join museum volunteers to help relive a fond old memory of Christmas past, or take your children and grandchildren to begin a new family tradition. Hot beverages and refreshments will be served. There is a \$1 admission for folks 18 and older, while children are admitted free.

Today, the miniature church is brightly lit by chandeliers, and the little choir marches proudly down the aisles as a tiny preacher exhorts us to embrace the joys of the season. Each holiday season, it comes to life again to inspire a new generation.



A peek inside the church reveals parishioners listening to the sermon.






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“Richard Jewell” Offers Compelling Look at Olympics Bombing Investigation

by Andrew Tallackson

“Richard Jewell” finds Clint Eastwood, at 89 no less, in tip-top form as a director. Does the movie have issues? Yep...but it also has an urgency, a vitality that is too compelling to dismiss.

The docudrama recounts how Jewell, a 33-year-old security guard at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Ga., was first declared a hero in the Centennial Park bombing, then revealed by the media as the FBI’s prime suspect. He was exonerated 88 days later.

Some have politicized Eastwood’s film as a Trump-friendly attack on government and the media. It’s not. Eastwood has crafted a riveting look at the escalating 20th century frenzy, triggered by the O.J. Simpson case, where trials now exist in the court of public opinion.

The script is by Billy Ray, whose “Shattered Glass” (2003) about disgraced journalist Stephen Glass ranks with “All the President’s Men” and “Spotlight” as one of the best newspaper movies ever.

And in a breakthrough performance by Paul Walter Hauser, Jewell is a complex jigsaw puzzle. Physically, the actor bears more than a passing semblance, particularly Jewell’s deliberate way of speaking, as if he’s on two-second time delay. But Jewell’s internal conflicts are where Hauser is astonishing. Jewell knows people think he’s a simpleton: an overweight hick. But Hauser lends him a childlike yearning for respect, an almost Boy Scout willingness to cooperate with the FBI that, in reality, is naive and misguided.

Eastwood stages the Olympic festivities, complete with crowds dancing “Macarena” and a Kenny Rogers concert, with chilling accuracy, a mounting sense of dread. Remember, this was five years before 9/11. The FBI was present, but it was more a formality, as embodied by “Mad Men” star Jon Hamm as Tom Shaw — a composite character of several individuals — who after the tragedy scrambles to save face. The bombing, after all, occurred on FBI watch. A quick investigation and subsequent arrest are the only solution.

Shaw’s path crosses with *Atlanta-Journal Constitution* reporter Kathy Scruggs, who breaks the story that Jewell is under FBI scrutiny. In real life, colleagues described Scruggs as someone who didn’t enter a room. She *consumed* it. That’s how Olivia Wilde plays her, effectively so, but Scruggs

ultimately was a tragic case of rushing to judgment. Tormented by what her reporting did to Jewell, she died of a suicidal drug overdose five years later. What we get in the film, instead, is a tired, insulting trope: the parasitic journalist who sleeps with sources and hides in vehicles. If the film affords Jewell a well-rounded treatment, why limit Scruggs to clichéd cheap shots?



Sam Rockwell (from left), Kathy Bates and Paul Walter Hauser deliver powerful performances in Clint Eastwood’s “Richard Jewell.”

★ ★ ★^{1/2}

“Richard Jewell”

Running time: 129 minutes. Rated R for language, including some sexual references, and brief bloody images

Ultimately, “Richard Jewell” belongs to Sam Rockwell as Watson Bryant, Jewell’s attorney. The relationship between the two is the film’s most beautifully realized, first in 1986 when Richard was an office worker at Watson’s firm, then 10 years later when Richard turns to him for help. Rockwell, an Oscar winner for “Three Billboards in Ebbing, Missouri,” is a restrained marvel, reacting with quiet disbelief and frustration at Jewell’s maddeningly inconsistent behavior.

We also appreciate Oscar-winner Kathy Bates as Jewell’s mother. Her tearful press conference all but assures a Best Supporting Actress nod. The movie is an example of a cast lending conviction to a story that deserved to be told. And told well, it is.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



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in the New Year*



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My Favorite Films of the Decade

by Andrew Tallackson

Another decade gone by.

This marks my third time as a columnist that I have compiled movie highlights from the past decade. The previous two were designed to impress, to convey that I am a man of certain intellect.

Those days are in the past.

What you are about to read is in no way a definitive list of “the best.” It is simply my favorites. Do you agree with these selections? It’s OK if you don’t. That is the beauty of art. It lends itself to interpretation and appreciation.

So, without further ado, here we go:



1. “Hidden Figures” (2016)

I can’t imagine a movie that more beautifully stirs the heart, mind and soul than this tribute to three African-American women in NASA’s space program. The title refers not only to the math and science behind putting men in space, but to women who for too long were denied the credit they deserved. We come to admire these women who not only contend with blatant racism, but also sexism within their profession. The movie ultimately is about courage, determination and why a brilliant mind should be celebrated.

2. “Get Out” (2017)

Did any film better symbolize our turbulent times than Jordan Peele’s Oscar-winning allegory? A young black photographer (Oscar-nominee Daniel Kaluuya) is invited by his white girlfriend (Allison Williams) to meet her “liberal” parents, only to discover they harbor a sinister secret. Peele, whose brilliant screenplay took home an Oscar, walks a fine line, where the horror elements of the story are a metaphor for race relations today. The end result is a sly, chilling movie that stands as a classic.



3. “The Impossible” (2012)

Loosely based on one family’s survival of the 2004 tsunami in Thailand, director J.A. Bayona (“Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom”) achieves a harrowing look at the destruction and disorienting aftermath that ensued. The special effects don’t feel like effects: it is as if Bayona placed his camera amid the actual carnage. Particularly haunting are the fragile moments after, where survivors pick up the pieces of their decimated lives. Jennifer Lawrence took home the Best Actress Oscar that year for “Silver Linings Playbook,” but it was the towering work by Naomi Watts (who did secure a nomination) that deserved the prize. Equally impressive: a pre-“Spider-Man” Tom Holland in his acting debut, a beacon of strength amid the impossible



4. “Megan Leavey” (2017)

What might have been a by-the-books Lifetime channel movie emerges as a powerful look at military PTSD not just in humans, but their canine companions. Kate Mara, in her best work, stars as Leavey, who cleans up her act by joining the Marines, then fights to take ownership of her bomb-sniffing dog after they both return home injured. The film takes a realistic look at military life and combat, and the bond between a woman and her dog, before arriving at the inspirational finale that earns every tear.



5. “Lincoln” (2012)/ “Bridge of Spies” (2015)

A relatively quiet decade for Steven Spielberg, who worked more on smaller canvases. He achieved greatness with these two films. “Lincoln” was a rarity: a portrait of our 16th president not as myth, but as exceedingly human, with an Oscar-winning performance by Daniel-Day Lewis so authentic, it felt as if Spielberg somehow went back in time to capture the man himself. “Bridge of Spies,” his most subdued work, centered on U.S. attempts to return downed pilot Francis Gary Powers to American soil. In the process, the director explored freedoms we take for granted, best embodied by the film’s quietly stirring resolution.

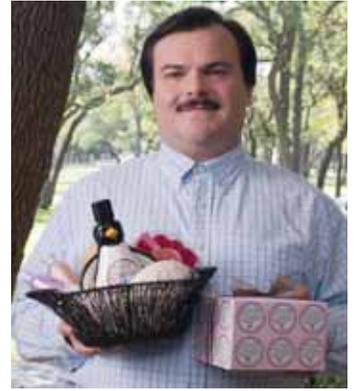


6. “Mad Max: Fury Road” (2015)

A 30-year dry spell might signal a creative drought...but not for George Miller. Having last visited his titular hero in 1985’s “Beyond Thunderdome,” “Fury Road” is his crowning achievement. There’s not much story, but visually — the chases, stunts, costumes, color schemes — it is exhilarating eye candy. The big surprise? That Max (Tom Hardy), himself, is a supporting player to the film’s feminist spirit in which a group of women, led by the unstoppable Charlize Theron, flee a brutally repressive male community. The final scene, in fact, may be the most optimistic for any “Mad Max” picture.

7. “Bernie” (2012)

A comic gem based on an outrageous true story, complete with an uproarious Greek chorus of actual townsfolk. Jack Black is deadpan perfection as Bernie Tiede, a mortician who strikes up a friendship with Marjorie Nugent (a riotous Shirley MacLaine), the richest woman in a small Texas town, then is charged with her murder. There’s just one problem. Bernie is so beloved, and Marjorie so despised, everyone rallies to his defense. Director Richard Linklater finds a delicate balance between small-town whimsy and pitch-black comedy.



8. “Hostiles” (2017)/“True Grit” (2010)

Some would have you believe the western is dead and buried. Look no further than these two films for the exact opposite. “Hostiles” opens like many a western: An Army captain (Christian Bale) in 1892 escorts a dying Cheyenne chief and his family across country to his home territory. Along the way, the captain, his crew and the Cheyennes forge a deeper understanding, and respect, for each other. The film’s second half is one powerful exchange after another. With “True Grit,” the Coen brothers revisited the Charles Portis story that won John Wayne his only Oscar, achieving a more faithful, and satisfying, vision. The story is the same, but the Oscar-nominated performances by Jeff Bridges as Rooster Cogburn and especially Hailee Steinfeld as Mattie Ross venture into more complex territory. The film remains the Coen brothers’ highest-grossing picture.

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9. “The Help” (2011)

I suppose it’s not politically correct to endorse the film, derided as relegating black actresses to roles as domestic service. Those who do, however, miss the point. A near-perfect adaptation of Kathryn Stockett’s novel, the story is about a key turning point: the precise moment when black women decided *enough is enough*. Every performance, from Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer (who won an Oscar) to Jessica Chastain and Emma Stone, is honest and heartfelt.

10. “Three Identical Strangers” (2018)/“Citizen Four” (2014)

The days of dull, “talking heads” documentaries ended through a new generation of filmmakers. “Three Identical Strangers” begins as a life-is-stranger-than-fiction tale, with three young Jewish men separated at birth reconnecting in their early 20s. Their story, however, takes on a darker hue that is astonishing, devastating and heartbreaking. As for “Citizen Four,” the Oscar-winning Edward Snowden documentary, whether you consider what he did treason or heroism, the film is hypnotic: a rare case of watching history unfold before our very eyes.



11. “Life of Pi” (2012)

When I first read Yann Martel’s fantasy, about an Indian boy trapped in a lifeboat with a tiger named Richard Parker, my first thought was, this book

is unfilmable. The complicated structure, the elements of fantasy, ruminations on faith — too tricky. Director Ang Lee, who picked up his second Oscar for the film, made it look effortless. Masterful storytelling and groundbreaking effects created a one-of-a-kind picture best viewed in theaters to savor the ingenuity that went into it.



12. “Wonder” (2017)

Stephen Chbosky’s beautifully rendered adaptation of R.J. Palacio’s story, about a facially deformed boy mainstreamed into public school, issues a gentle plea for tolerance and kindness. In the process, it achieved one of the most moving experiences of any year, with powerful performances by Jacob Tremblay as the boy and Julia Roberts as his mother. “Wonder” is the kind of movie you can watch over and over again, its profound message savored with each viewing.



13. “It” (2017)

The first “chapter” in Andy Muschietti’s two-part take on Stephen King’s epic tale was a rare case where the writer’s imagination survived in tact on screen. Muschietti knows how to unleash a scare, to frame a shot that is beautiful and terrifying at the same time. The young cast delved deep into the characters, creating deeply empathetic teens who combat an age-old evil, Pennywise the Clown, played by Bill Skarsgård in a terrifying performance. Chapter 2, released this year, brought the tale to a satisfying, if uneven close.



14. "Rogue One" (2016)

One of the best "Star Wars" films. Period. The year before saw the franchise rebirth with "The Force Awakens," but "Rogue One" was special: a prelude to "A New Hope" (1977) that revealed how rebel spies stole plans for the dreaded Death Star. In so doing, it introduced a heroine (Felicity Jones' Jyn Erso) who could hold her own with the best of them. The look of the film was sumptuous, the effects breathtaking and the last act a harrowing tribute to courage and sacrifice. Kudos, too, to that final scene: No other "Star Wars" film has depicted Darth Vader in all his venomous glory.



15. "Gravity" (2013)

Alfonso Cuarón achieves moments of breathless awe that hint at the majesty, and terror, of space. An unexpected disaster leaves two astronauts (Sandra Bullock and George Clooney) drifting and tethered together. Only Cuarón could pull off an existential sci-fi hit in which Bullock's character questions her life, and faith, as death stares her in the face. The film won seven Oscars, including a Best Director statue for Cuarón, and rightly so. The film is exhaustively exhilarating.

Coming Soon

Andrew Tallackson will feature his picks for the best films of 2019 in our Jan. 9, 2020, edition.

16. "Wonder Woman" (2017)

Still the best DC film since Christopher Nolan completed his Dark Knight trilogy, thanks in large part to Gal Gadot's career-making turn as the super hero. The actress invested so much conviction, so much heart, into the role, you couldn't take your eyes off of her. Director Patty Jenkins, working from a tight script by Allan Heinberg, achieved a series of stark, dazzling visuals, especially when Wonder Woman swings into action on the front lines of World War I. The payoff to that sequence, like the film itself, was a knockout.



17. "Deadpool" (2016)

In many respects, the decade belonged to Marvel, consistently churning out blockbuster after blockbuster. How to choose one for this list was not easy, from the visual eye candy of "Doctor Strange," to the boldness of "Black Panther," to the playfulness of "Captain Marvel." The one that surprised me, though, was "Deadpool," which flipped all conventional wisdom the bird. R-rated raunchy and uproariously funny, it contains a performance by Ryan Reynolds that is a comic wonder. How he maintains that energy level from start to finish is part of the film's appeal.

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18. "World War Z" (2013)

Years in the making. A troubled shoot. An out-of-control budget. In the end, one wild, scary ride as Brad Pitt's former United Nations employees races across the globe to find a solution to a zombie pandemic. The opening sequence, in which Pitt and his family witness the outbreak amid a Philadelphia traffic jam, is monstrously epic in every sense of the word. The moment when a walled-off Jerusalem falls is like witnessing the collapse of society on a terrifying scale. The disastrous plane trip that ensues, however implausible, inspires a queasy dread rare for horror films. An example of a genre picture done with style and high energy.



19. "The Dark Knight Rises" (2012)

Yes, Tom Hardy's Bane sounds like a constipated Darth Vader. But Christopher Nolan brought his "Dark Knight" trilogy to a thrilling close that forced Batman (Christian Bale) to conquer his demons and do what's right in saving Gotham City. Anne Hathaway defied naysayers by creating a rough-and-tumble Catwoman, and the action sequences reaffirmed Nolan as a master of tightly controlled visuals.



20. "The Wave" (2016)

A Norwegian disaster film that is a masterwork in how to generate suspense on a micro budget. A geologist prepares to move his family out of scenic Geiranger when a fjord collapses, generating an 85-meter high tsunami. The townsfolk have only 10 minutes to reach safety. As the wave inches toward the town, it is the *idea* of it that proves terrifying. When it appears, the effects are awe-inspiring and horrifying. The story is lean, with characters who make sense. A bigger-budgeted sequel, "The Quake," arrived last year and featured more elaborate effects, but little of the humanity of its predecessor.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

 A festive advertisement for Song Asian Cuisine's Merry Christmas Buffet. The background features a red and green diamond pattern with gold and red Christmas ornaments and flowers. The text is centered and framed by a gold border.

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A Voice Among Many

by Kim Nowatzke

Any way you add it up, 50 years is a long time. Yet the commitment, loyalty and love David Schoon has for First Presbyterian Church's production of "Messiah" has sustained him through five decades.

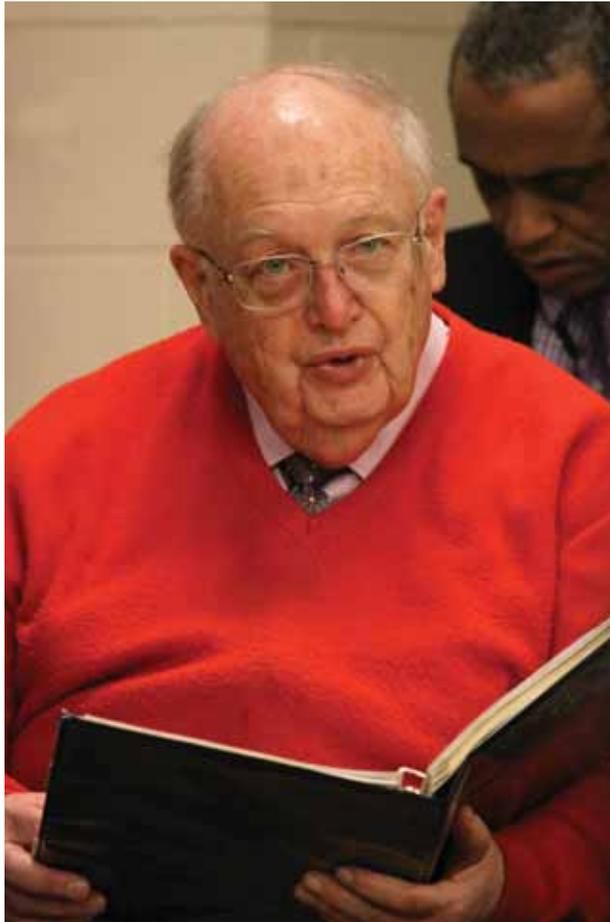
"It's just sort of like breathing," Schoon says. "It's something I need to do."

The 55th annual "Messiah" presentation is at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 22, at the church, 121 W. Ninth St. A preview performance — the dress rehearsal — is at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 21. Soloists this year include: soprano Kim Jones; mezzo-soprano Kristen Gornstein; tenor Matthew Daniel and the debut of Bill McMurray as bass/baritone.

All performances are free, but tickets must be reserved at www.MCMessiah.com or the church office.

For Schoon, a Lowell resident, it was the late Ed Headstrom who introduced him to the annual Christmas tradition here. The two became friends when Schoon was taking the South Shore train to Chicago while taking classes for his master's degree in physics at the Indiana Institute of Technology.

"Headstrom was a motor man for the South Shore and, unofficially, its No. 1 public relations representative, and we were both interested in railroads," Schoon explained.



David Schoon sings with the chorus during the Dec. 5 rehearsal at First Presbyterian Church. All photos by Paul Kemiel.

One day, Headstrom was waiting for Schoon at the Randolph Street station in Chicago. Headstrom was directing the choir for Michigan City's Masonic Lodge and had heard how Schoon played the organ for the Masonic Lodge in Gary. The two struck up a friendship, and eventually Headstrom talked about his involvement in "Messiah."

When Schoon sat in on a "Messiah" rehearsal, he said he knew, "I had to be up there, too."

After attending his first performance as an audience member, the next year, he was among the ensemble.

Schoon's love of music came at an early age when he sang in church choirs. A part of the Indiana University Singing Hoosiers, at 19 he spent nine weeks touring Germany and Italy entertaining troops on a United Service Organization tour.

"I saw a lot of war-time damage," Schoon said. But,

when he visited there 15 years later, "there were no signs."

The 79-year-old retired after 37 years teaching chemistry and physics. He spent 21 years in the Gary Community School Corp. and 16 years in the Crown Point Community School Corp. He currently teaches part time at Calumet Christian School in Griffith. He served as an organist at a Lutheran



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Philip Bauman leads the Dec. 5 rehearsal.

church and a Presbyterian church for 14 years, then continued to do so for the latter an additional seven years. Schoon also played violin in the Valparaiso University Community Orchestra for 20 years before carpal tunnel prevented him from continuing.

However, Schoon still uses his musical talents in other ways. Since his retirement in 2002, he's been a member of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus. And, he now serves as an organist for Lowell Methodist Church and Lake Hills Baptist Church in Schererville, where he is a member.

Schoon, who sings bass, said practices for First

Presbyterian's "Messiah" begin weekly in November, with the exception of Thanksgiving week, and last about 90 minutes.

"There are a lot of repeat performers," he said. "Most of us don't have the problem of learning the music."

And, this isn't the only presentation of "Messiah" in which Schoon has been involved. He also has performed the oratorio with First Christian Church in Bloomington and the Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus.

Continued on Page 18



Members of the chorus lend their talents to the Dec. 5 rehearsal.

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A Voice

Continued from Page 17

His favorite “Messiah” song?

“The one we’re singing right now,” quipped Schoon, who truly enjoys every “Messiah” song.

“It’s a story that never grows old,” he said. “It’s eternally inspiring and may have eternal benefits for the people who attend. The spiritual aspect is far above the physical.”

Schoon spoke highly of Dan McNabb, who retired five years ago after serving as conductor for 50 years. He also said Music Director/Conductor Philip Bauman, who leads First Presbyterian’s rendition of “Messiah” for the fifth time this year, “is the same (as McNabb) – he directs it as a worship service and not as a concert.”



Philip Bauman leads the Dec. 5 rehearsal.

Traveling to Michigan City from Lowell is an hour trip that isn’t always an easy commute, Schoon admitted.

“There are times that driving to Michigan City is not pleasant, especially when that white stuff comes down,” he said.

However, over the years, “Messiah” at First Presbyterian has become a family affair. Schoon’s brother, Kenneth Schoon, and his two sons, Jacob and Robert Schoon, have participated as choir members.

Is retirement from “Messiah” in Schoon’s near future?

“I will take one year at a time,” he said. “At my age, every additional year is a gift. Three scores and 10 years is the standard according to the Bible, and I passed that age nine years ago.”



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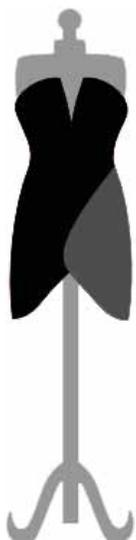
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A Popular Holiday Tradition Returns to The Acorn

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The 2018 "Christmas at The Acorn" ensemble, including Joe the dog and his owner, Charlie.

"Silent Night" is no stranger to any Christmas production.

School plays. Church cantatas. Midnight Mass. Franz Gruber's 1818 carol, a message of widespread hope, is an intangible part of Christmas.

However, the first time Bob Swan heard it performed during Harbor Country Opera's "Christmas at The Acorn," it affected him on an unforeseen level. A lovely soprano, her voice shimmering above the gentle hum of the audience serving as an impromptu chorus.

"I almost started crying," Swan recalls. "It was so moving to me. And that's the same every time. That happens for me every time."

Harbor Country Opera is celebrating 15 years of making memories like that during "Christmas at The Acorn." This year's performance is at 8 p.m. EST Saturday, Dec. 21, at the Three Oaks (Mich.) theater, 107 Generation Drive. As always, the show is a festive celebration of familiar faces, beloved songs, pleasant surprises and warm comfort food.

Swan says he and his fellow performers try not to deviate too far from the show's successful formula.

"There are a few things I have to do every year," he said. "We gotta start with 'O Holy Night' with a tenor and a harp. We gotta do 'Silent Night' with a soprano singing descant over the audience humming. And I have to sing 'The Christmas Song.'"

"Those are the three things we have to have at Christmas time for me."

It is rather extraordinary, when you think about it, the range of talent Swan amasses to join him

If You Go

Tickets for "Christmas at The Acorn" are \$30. Visit acornlive.org or call (269) 756-3879 for reservations or more information.

for "Christmas at The Acorn." A roster of performers whose sterling reputations move an audience to cheers, tears and laughter:

- Soprano Sarah Gartshore.
- Altos Martha Cares and Holly Schroeder.
- Tenor Emanuel Caraman.
- Baritone Warren Moulton.
- Harpist Ramona Kim.
- Guitarist Elliott Delman.
- Pianist Anatoliy Torchinskiy.

The selections range from holiday classics like "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" to new additions such as "Star in the East" and "You're a Mean One Mr. and Mrs. Grinch."

"Star of the East," Swan says, brings the first act to a smashing close.

"It's a rousing song, with everyone stomping," he said. "It's like a great arch. An exultant arch. A triumphant announcement of Christ being born."

When you factor in toasty refreshment of mulled wine or hot-buttered rum, it's easy to see why "Christmas at The Acorn" sells out year after year.

"It's kind of a community experience," Swan says. "Everyone who comes feels part of that intimate setting. We're all sharing this together."



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Indiana Dunes National Park

The following programs are planned:

• **The Save the Tunes Council Holiday Concert from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

The group preserves folk songs in the traditional way, using guitar, autoharp, dulcimer, banjo, harmonica, bagpipe, penny whistle, hurdy gurdy and other obscure instruments.

• **Drop-In Volunteer Program from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 21.**

Projects focus on preserving the park's natural and cultural resources. Dress for the weather, and be prepared to walk off trail. All equipment and protective gear, including gloves and eye protection, will be provided. Meet at The Park Connection volunteer office, which is adjacent to the main Chellberg Farm parking lot.

• **Birdwatching in Miller Woods from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, at Paul H. Douglas Center.**

Jennifer Johnson of Wild Indigo and Audubon Great Lakes leads the beginning birding class.

• **Winter Solstice Hike and Campfire from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, at Kemil Beach.**

Celebrate the shortest day of the year by joining a ranger to catch the sunset and views of the Great Marsh from the top of Dune Ridge Trail. The Kemil Beach parking lot is one mile north of U.S. 12 on East State Park Road.

• **Christmas Bird Count from 10 to 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 27.**

The national bird count invites people to help count bird populations. The Audubon Society and other organizations use the data to assess the health of bird populations and guide conservation action.

On this day, a ranger-led hike is planned at Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk. The event is free, but requires advance registration by Dec. 27. Contact ranger Christine Gerlach at (219) 395-1885 or christine_gerlach@nps.gov.

• **Stargazing Through Telescopes from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 28, at the Kemil Beach parking area.**

Members from Chicago Astronomical Society, Michiana Astronomical Society and Calumet Astronomical Society will attend with telescopes. Dress for the weather. Take binoculars.

• **A snowshoe hike from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 4, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Meet for a quick lesson, then hike through fields and woods surrounding the center. A regular hike will be offered if there is fewer than two inches of snow. A limited amount of equipment is available.

• **Movie Screenings at the Douglas Center from 1 to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 4-5.**

Join a ranger for a screening of a national park or outdoor-related documentary.

• **Miller Woods Hike from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 5, at Paul H. Douglas Center.**

The ranger-led stroll explores a rare black oak savanna, and offers views of Lake Michigan and Chicago.

• **Parents and toddlers can participate in Nature Tots from 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Jan. 8, at the Paul H. Douglas Center.**

Children 2-4 will learn about nature through a ranger-led story time, crafts and outdoor play.

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 programs are offered:

• **Owl Puke from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 21.**

Discover what is coughed up in pellets from an owls' dinners.

• **Happy OWL-idays! from 2 to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21.**

Education Director Nicole Harmon will introduce native owls of the Indiana Dunes and discuss their adaptations and characteristics. The free program is sponsored by the Friends of Indiana Dunes. Meets at the Nature Center Auditorium

• **Cocoa & Crafts from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 22.**

Meet at the Nature Center Auditorium to make an ornament from items in nature.

• **Christmas Eve Morning Stroll from 10 a.m. to noon Monday, Dec. 24.**

Meet naturalists at the Nature Center to explore winter life and dunes beauty, then enjoy a campfire with holiday treats and hot cocoa provided by the Friends of the Indiana Dunes.

• **Reptile Rendezvous from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 28.**

Meet a naturalist at the Nature Center to see live turtles and snakes, the emphasis being how they survive the cold winter months.

• **High Dunes Hike from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 29.**

Meet a naturalist at the nature center for a hike to the summit of the state's highest sand dune. Wear hiking shoes.

• **The Three Dune Challenge First Day Hike from 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Jan. 1.**

After the hike, meet park volunteers with warm drinks, snacks and a campfire provided by Friends of the Indiana Dunes.

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



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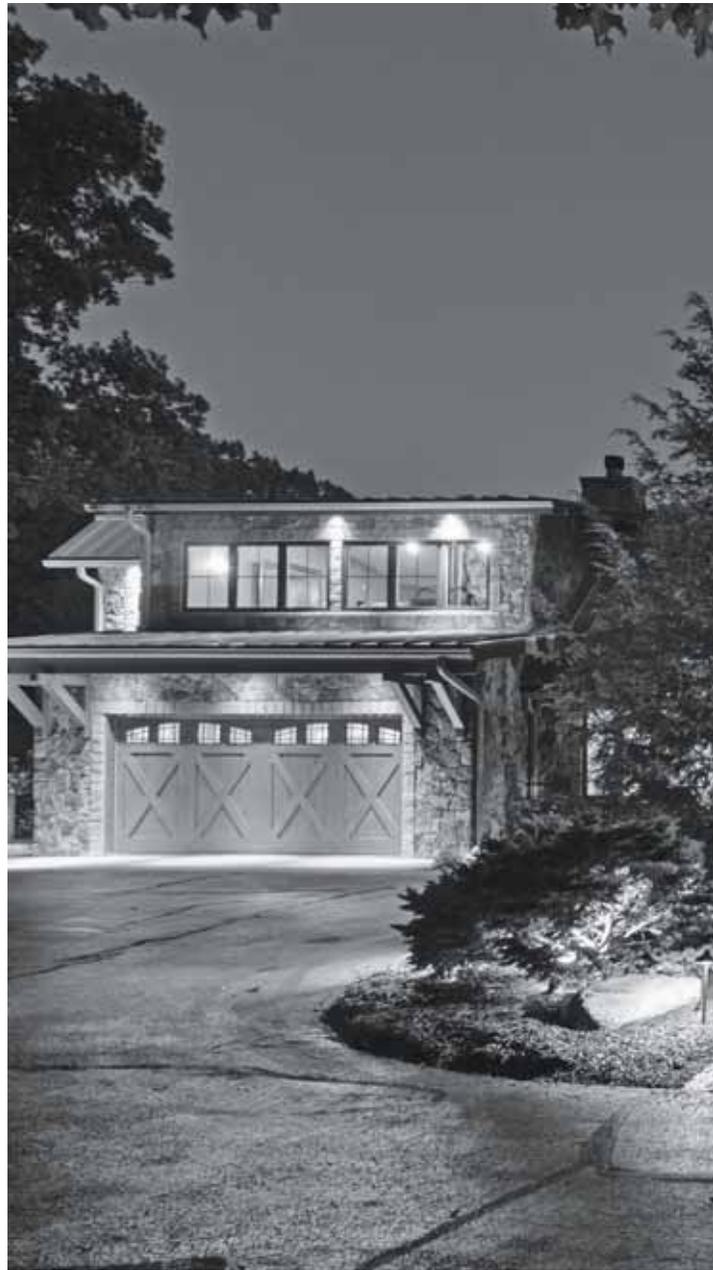
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*Source: MRED, LLC **Based on MRED, LLC from January 1, 2002 - Present

From Our House to Yours...



*The Beacher staff
wishes you and yours
a Holiday Season filled
with joy, peace and love
and a New Year that
promises even more.*

*An Extra Special Thanks to all
the advertisers. 2019 was another great
year!*

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

*The Beacher takes a two week holiday
now and will return on January 9.*

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

----Drew Tallackson

Dear Santa Claus

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



Dear Santa,

I have been good all year. I would like a Lego Polar Express, because I really like the Polar Express. I also would like a Lego Big Boy train because I think it would look good on my Lego train set. Lastly, I would like a Lionel Union Pacific Heritage Unit Southern Pacific #1993. Merry Christmas!

Love, Caleb

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. I want a hover board because I won't have to run and ride my bike. I also want a tablet because I do something when I am bored or sad.

You are so handsome. I will leave you out milk, and is it ok if it is crackers?

*See you later!
Love, Oakland*

Dear Santa,

For Christmas, I would like a Baby Alive, because I would like to practice for when I am a Dad one day. I would like a robot dog for a pet, and I would like to get a boat and a jeep to pull it for my Dad. I hope you get the cookies and milk. Have a great Christmas!

Love, Declan

Dear Santa,

For Christmas, I want a hover board, because you don't have to walk, and you don't have to hold onto anything in front of you. Secondly, I want a pet chinchilla, because they are fluffy and cute. Last thing I want is a robot, because they are cool and do your homework.

Love, Izzy

Dear Santa,

I want a hover board because I don't have to walk to my friend's house. Can it please come with a go cart? I would also like a gift card for Fortnite so I can buy new characters.

*Thank you!
Love, Vinny*

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. I have helped my friends. Now let's get to the presents. (Just trying to be funny.) I want a certificate that says, "Kid in Charge," because I like to boss people around. I would also like a kid car so I don't have to walk a lot. The third thing is an iPad that is in control of the house. It would be cool.

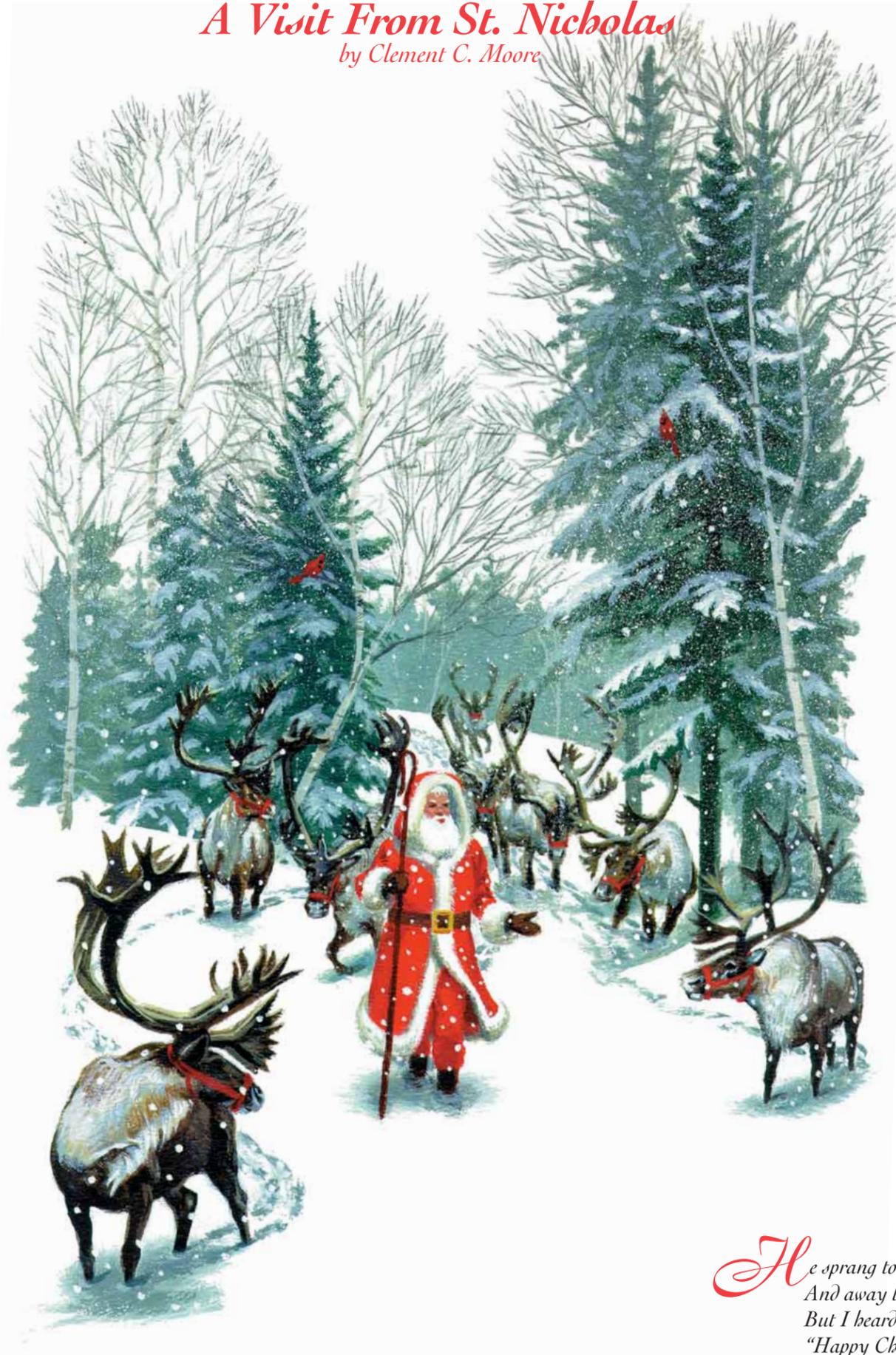
How are you doing? How is Mrs. Claus? Tyrone, my elf, is being tricky. He messed up my Advent calendar!

From, Jack



A Visit From St. Nicholas

by Clement C. Moore



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dear Santa,

I have been pretty good this year. My teacher said I am helpful. I would like nun chucks because I am going to ask my mom if I can be in Kung Fu. I would also like a hover board to go around my neighborhood. I also want a robot because they are cool.

Love, Manolis (Constantine)

Dear St. Nicholas,

I was good and I still go to the beach to see the cool waves. I want a real Jockey silk because I love horses. Tell Ginger and Ginger Joe to stay until New Year, please! Ella and I love our elves!

Love, Evan

Dear Santa,

I have been a wonderful boy. I did my chores. I did the dishwasher.

I want a skate board. Reason one: they are fast. Reason two: you don't have to hold onto handles. Reason three: you can eat and drink on them, unlike bikes. I will leave an extra cookie for you.

Love, Logan

Dear Santa,

I have been good. I have helped friends. I would like a stuffed animal drago because I like dragons. I would like a stuffed Hedwig ow, because I like Harry Potter. I would like a Lego dragon, because I like Legos. Have a jolly Christmas!

Love, Bella

Dear Santa Claus,

I have been good this year. I have been trying to tell my mom and dad to give some money to the poor. I have boots and my house, but I don't want this note for me. I want this letter for the poor this year. I forgot what Christmas was about, but now I do know it is all about loving each other. This year, please give the poor some clothing and shirts and pants that are nice and cozy warm. The second thing I want for the poor is a home for their families to be safe. I love the poor. I want to help them.

I have a present for you, Santa Claus!

Love, Bailey

Dear Santa,

I have been good this year. Can I please have a new Wii sports game disc? Can I also have a kayak? Reason one is because I could play with it. Reason two, I could go to the beach with it. The third reason is because I lost my last one!

Love, Emmett

**Dear Santa,**

You are so cool! You are the best! I have been a very good girl this year. I did my homework every day for Ms. Conn. She is a nice teacher for me.

Can I please have a hover board? They are so fast and you can get any color. You can also get a case for it. The next thing I want is for the poor people to have stuff. It is going to be cold and they need to survive.

Love, Karmin

Dear Santa,

Ho, ho, ho! I have been good. I will give you extra cookies and milk, and I will give carrots to the reindeer. I want a dog for Christmas, because I love animals. I especially love dogs! May I also have a stuffed bear? I love when they are fluffy and cuddly. I also would like clothes because I need them.

Love, Lilly

Dear Santa,

I have been a mix of good and bad. For example, I have been cleaning my room and trying not to argue. I would like a picture of Rudolph to show my friends, a book for my mom because she likes them, a vanity to play with because I have Chap Stick, and a rainbow unicorn. I also would like for my mom to be happy and my dogs to come back, because I miss them. I will give you extra cookies. Hope you have a fun time delivering presents!

Love, Emily

Dear Santa,
I have been good all year. Most of the time. Once and awhile. Never mind, I'll buy my own stuff.

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Please mention “New Year Offer” when you call.

Illuminating Art

by Linda Weigel

Illumination in the visual arts can imply different things.

A work of art can illuminate or provide some sort of insight, understanding or clarity, such as Emilio Rojas' digital video in the "Living Architecture" exhibit at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St.

Paintings, such as David Baker's "Hector," use an artificial light, and the contrast of light and shade, to illuminate the central subject. Bunny Dimke's "Lakeview, Beverly Shores" uses the natural light passing through trees to illuminate, to brighten the scene, bringing a sense of depth and seasonal tones.

In all three examples, the implied or actual illumination enhances the subject matter and when skillfully applied provides the visitor with a positive, satisfying, even educational experience.

□

Thaddeus C Gallery, 822 Lincolnway, LaPorte, celebrated 15 years with a well-packed reception Saturday, Dec. 7.

The range of media included paintings, drawings, prints, glass, fiber art and jewelry. Of special note was the new father-daughter team: Billy Pozzo and daughter Polly, 10. Especially in Polly's case, both artists bring insight, patience, love and a special understanding to their joint collaboration.



"Pink Sunset, Blue Ridge Mountains," an acrylic by Polly Pozzo.

"We actually discovered her work because we were doing a studio visit to Billy (her father) to pick up work for another show we were having," owner Thaddeus Cutler said.



Polly Pozzo.

"When we were in his basement studio, Laura and I both commented to him that, 'We didn't know you did abstracts, Billy. These are beautiful.' He replied, 'These aren't mine. They are my daughter Polly's.' We immediately fell in love.

"So, we've been working with Billy over the past year trying to figure out how

we could incorporate her into a show, and would he be willing to do that. He just jumped at the chance, replying, 'I really want Polly to have gallery exposure. She's never been in a gallery before.' So, we said, 'Let us be the one to host it.' It worked out beautifully this show."

Billy works with his daughter, who has limited arm movement. She began painting in 2013. Her father prepares the canvas and holds it while she dips her fingers into the paint, then begins pushing the color along the primed surface. He simply serves as her easel. She uses no brushes at all and can only get her hands up to shoulder height.



"Blue Woods" by Billy Pozzo.

Even so, the works are remarkable, and Pozzo reports she is continually getting stronger as her work continues to evolve and grow. Afterwards, he stated with enthusiasm, they both get pretty messy and need a good cleanup. Listening to him describe the process of working with Polly, one is struck by his sincerity, pride and love for her and the process it takes to execute her art.

Like the Cutlers, I, too, would never have guessed the abstract paintings were executed by a young girl. They are truly wonderful. Her work "Pink Sunset, Blue Ridge Mountains" is awash in a luminous pink sunset. The mountains and grasses shimmer and sway across the surface, creating a sense of pulsing movement.

Billy, too, has landscapes in the show – delightful small gems. His "Blue Woods" is a nighttime scene lit by the rising moon housed within a still, early winter landscape. Billy continues his own works, creating more small landscapes, photo realistic portraits as well as special sculptural commissions for a private collector.

The Dec. 7 opening was successful: Polly sold nine paintings. This special connection between father and daughter is new to Thaddeus C Gallery, and to this writer. Come check out their work and more. You will not be disappointed.

The exhibit continues through Dec. 24.

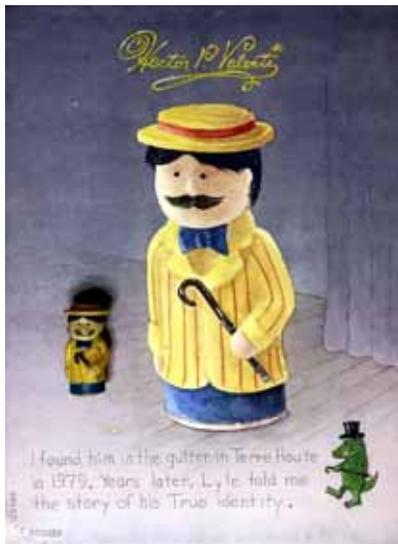
□

Meanwhile, in Michigan City, more fine-art openings with a range of work and techniques create

something for everyone, no matter their personal preferences.

Rising Phoenix Gallery, 2803 Franklin St., finishes the season with the timely "Toys" themed show.

Standout work by David Baker, a former Southwestern Michigan College professor, creates a wonderful touchstone to early childhood toys and books. Based on the children's book Lyle,



"Hector," a watercolor by David Baker.

Lyle Crocodile, the character of impresario Hector P. Valenti, star of stage and screen, presents us with a nostalgic reminder of simpler times.

Years ago while walking in Terre Haute, Baker picked up the small discarded toy and took it home, putting it aside for safe keeping. The toy is a rubberized figurine of Valenti. As presented in this exhibit, in addition to the watercolor of the small toy, Baker has included the actual toy, itself, in a small customized box sitting atop the work. When viewing the painting, notice, too, how Hector P. Valenti is illuminated as if on stage. Nice touch.

The show closes Dec. 29.



SFC Gallery, 607 Franklin St., presents paintings by the artist duo Betty Thomas and Bunny Dimke. The two preview a complementary exhibit with multiple landscapes painted in tandem, each with an individualized viewpoint, sometimes at the same locale.

Both artists are members of Duneland Plein Air Painters, and both often take special excursions to explore sites outside of regular DPAP meetings. The quality of the art is excellent, and the sense of light filtering through trees or reflecting off surfaces



"Lakeview, Beverly Shores," an oil on canvas by Bunny Dimke.

is well-executed.

In "Lakeview, Beverly Shores," Dimke has positioned herself at an angle looking out between two trees to the lake and rising shoreline in the background. A lovely interpretation of a verdant shore, the work is enhanced by the impasto of heavy oil strokes, bringing substance and gravity. Thomas offers "Nature Residency,



"Nature Residency, Industry," a watercolor by Betty Thomas.

Industry," also painted at the same location, however, with an entirely different viewpoint, painting media and an emphasis on the eroding beach below.

Both works tell the story of a single locale, are complementary to the subject and an example of solid composition.

The show closes Dec. 21.

Continued on Page 42

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Illuminating Art Continued from Page 41

The Ellen Firme Gallery, 92 W. U.S. 12, welcomes intriguing oil paintings of David and Liné Tutwiler — works promoting the dunes, New England landscapes and seascapes and historical trains.



“Chase of the Iron Horse,” an oil on canvas by David Tutwiler.

David’s many railroad paintings of historical trains provide a fascinating look back to another place and time. “Chase of the Iron Horse” brings the glory of the old machines to life such that you can almost feel the steam. I was struck by the train, itself, as a remnant of earlier times, yet simultaneously recalled the many fine films featuring such a locomotive. The atmosphere it conveys of speed, tension, power, weight and light makes for a good experience.

The train paintings will be displayed for a short time before traveling to another exhibit. However, many more fine works by these artists will continue until the show closes Dec. 29.



Lubeznik Center for the Arts opened two new exhibitions this month in the downstairs galleries.



“Doodling With Intent” by Laurel Izard.

“Doodling With Intent” features 64 ballpoint drawings mounted on handmade paper “straight from the imagination of Laurel Izard.” The drawings are executed in ink and enhanced with paint, further illuminating the quirkiness of the scene. Each figure is fun, interesting and tells a story — a story whereby the viewer must fill in the blanks.

Also downstairs, “As We See It” showcases works by students in the LCA’s Health Promotion Through the Arts Program. It consists of weekly visual arts instruction for adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities.



“m(Other)s,” a digital video by Emilio Rojas.

The outreach program is an important one, providing participants with the means to create art while, according to the LCA, improving their “self-expression and motor and communication skills, as well as the self-esteem and pride that comes from creating these beautiful works.”

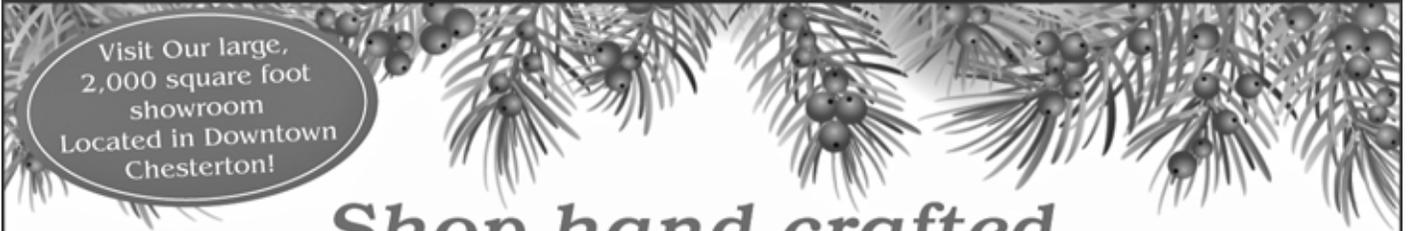
Meanwhile, “Living Architecture,” which continues in the Hyn-dman Gallery, emphasizes the impact and influence of immigrants on art and society. Of particular interest is the digital video by Rojas. His work at first glance is very appealing. A beautiful child is posed for a portrait — such an innocent picture. However, upon closer inspection, the work becomes a bit perplexing. What is he/she sitting on? What is that shape behind the child?

According to the informational card, the work is “inspired by the ‘hidden mother’ photographs common from the advent of photography up until the 1920s, a standard practice requiring the mother to hold the child still while being covered and remaining invisible...”

With the mother covered in a dark, semi translucent cloth with printed stars (reminiscent of the flag), there remains an underlying message to this immigrant mother. Here, she is holding her first-generation baby, the child now captured looking straight out at the viewer, summarizing all the hopes and innocence of the millions who came before to these shores. A powerful statement, it brings a voice, a clarity to the root of the immigration experience, an experience that shaped us as a people.

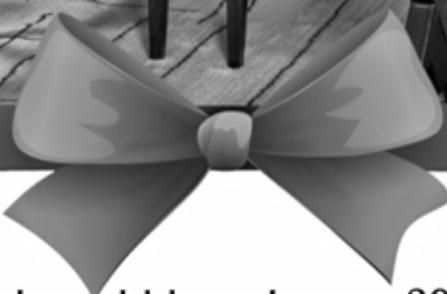
While out and about town, be sure to stop by and see this powerful work in person, as well as the many other fine examples in this exhibit. Be sure, too, to read the accompanying statement/description of the works.

All current LCA exhibits close Jan. 4.



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Santa's New Glasses

Once again, in 2018, I bowed to my time-honored custom of taking the train to downtown Chicago just before Christmas as a Christmas present to myself.

My mother took us downtown from Beverly on the Rock Island Railroad every Christmas Eve to have breakfast under the tree in the Walnut Room in what was then Marshall Field's, and a good habit formed. So, when my wife and I moved to Michigan in 1987, I adapted and took either the South Shore from Michigan City or Amtrak from St. Joseph, Mich., on or before Christmas Eve. "Gotta get downtown on Christmas" has been my mantra, and it certainly was Dec. 23, 2018, when I happily boarded Amtrak's Pere Marquette in St. Joe for a non-stop journey into Chicago along the southern rim of Lake Michigan.



Training for Christmas

I was relaxed and ready for a light-filled day in Chicago when the train arrived, right on time, I might add. All I had to do was scoop up my coat from the overhead luggage rack and I was good to go a-caroling in the Windy City. But as I fetched my coat, I noticed someone left a pair of glasses up there. What to do?

Well, among other things, what I did was write

the first draft of the following story with my Santa Pen from Christmas 2017 on the return trip that evening. I tuned it up on the computer, of course, and now I am ready to present it:

Santa's New Glasses

The man in the Santa suit left his glasses on the seat as he got off the train.

The man behind him, a harried bank executive named Hank, noticed and said, "Hey, Santa, you left your glasses."

Santa turned, smiled and said, "You keep them. Those are my new glasses and they make my eyes hurt. I'll stick with the old ones, despite what Mrs. Claus says. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a rather tight deadline to meet, and—"

"Happy Holidays, Santa," Hank the banker said, in his dull, calculating, bank-executive voice.

"How about Merry Christmas? Just this once."

Hank considered the man in the Santa suit and decided he did look the part, so he said, "All right: Merry Christmas. But it's not politically correct, you know."

"I know. So I repeat: Merry Christmas, even



This passenger found a new pair of glasses at Christmas.

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though it's still two days away. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll be off."

And he was — the man in the Santa suit, that is.

Hank the bankster figured the guy was working one of the last remaining department stores in town and gave him a limp wave. Then he considered Santa's so-called new glasses. Ray-Bans. Nice. And no-lines. Doctor says I should wear no-lines, if I were to wear glasses, that is. But no way in —

The conductor appeared and said, "Problem here, sir?"

"No," Hank said, "just talking to myself. Seems Santa gave me his new pair of glasses, and —"

"Santa?"

Hank pointed. "Yeah, he —" But the man in the Santa suit had slipped away. Didn't seem like he had it in him, but, yes, he had disappeared. Along, Hank supposed, with his eight, tiny reindeer. "Anyway, Happy Holidays."

The conductor smiled tightly and said: "Same to you."

Then, for whatever reason, Hank decided to put on Santa's new pair of glasses. In no time flat, he was rocketed into the fourth dimension of existence and could see clearly into the conductor's soul. He thus saw a man beset by a host of personal problems he never shared with his passengers.

"Did I just wish you Happy Holidays?" Hank asked.

"Yes," the conductor said. "Most people do this time of year."

"Well," Hank said, taking the conductor by the arm, "I meant to wish you the merriest of Christmases, and I mean that from the bottom of my heart, and I pray that you will find the peace of mind and financial stability you are so desperately seeking."

The conductor staggered from the warmth of the normally cold passenger's words. How did he know? All he could say was a hoarse, "You see clearly now, don't you?"

"What?!?"

"Santa's new glasses. You've been given an amazing gift, and right in time for Christmas. Wear them wisely, my friend, and a Merry Christmas to you and all those you hold dear."

Hank shook his head in agreement,

dabbed at the tears running down his cheeks and bounded off the train, ready to see clearly into the soul of whomever appeared in his path.

And the first was that obnoxious pile of rags that camped outside the station every morning and evening and belligerently accosted each and every passenger for money. Hank had, on numerous occasions, wanted to kick in her remaining teeth, but he hadn't wanted to scuff his hand-tooled Italian shoes.

But now he was seeing her through Santa's new glasses, and what he saw was a battered old soul who had been cast off by her family and literally driven out of her chosen profession in the healing arts, and who was barely surviving at the mercy of complete strangers.

Hank stopped.

Hank melted.

Hank stared, deep into her eyes.

She blinked and then she said: "Your arms aren't the same length. Anybody ever tell you that?"

"What?"

"Hold out your arms."

Hank held out his arms, and she took them. "See, this is your taking arm, and it's long and strong and powerful." She shook it for emphasis. "You're a taker, not a giver." Then she took his other arm and said, "And this shriveled-up little stub is your giving arm. It's an alligator arm, all stubby and useless and all. All the years you've been walking right over me, you've never so much as given me a dime, let alone even a smile."

Hank was indicted by her bitter truth. But now that he could see and hear her clearly, he reached into his wallet and gave her more than money. He gave her his doctor's private number. And he told

her his services, which he knew would be considerable, were on him. And then he gave her more than a little walking-around money, and then he did some walking around the big city himself, seeing tender souls at every turn, and seeing, with the aid of Santa's new glasses, that every soul deserves to go to heaven, even before they die.

Yes, he called in sick that day and many days after his Christmas vacation, but he was never ever sick of Christmas again, even in the middle of July.



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.



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Christmas tree lights are the only source of illumination during Barker Mansion's annual "Glowing Lights Nights" from 4 to 6 p.m. Saturdays, Dec. 21 and 28.

The public can take a self-guided tour of all three floors, which local non-profit groups decorated for the holiday season. Guests can vote for their favorite among 11 trees; the winning non-profit receives a cash prize to help further its mission.



Michigan City National Honor Society members set up and take down the trees. This year, trees were decorated by: Marquette Catholic High School; LaCrosse High School Leo Club; Michigan City YMCA Elston Branch; Friendship Botanic Gardens; The Salvation Army; Footlight Theatre; HealthLinc clinic of Michigan City; Tuesdays Together; and OES St. Rose

The cost is \$8 per adult and \$5 per senior or youth ages 15 and younger. Reservations are not required. The mansion is located at 631 Washington St. Visit www.BarkerMansion.com for details.



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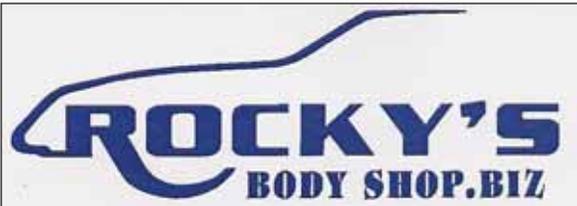
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Winter Wonders

Every year, *The Beacher* sends photographer Paul Kemiell out to the Snowflake Parade, and this year, he outdid himself. Note the expressions of joy and wonderment as children watch parade entries head north through Michigan City's Uptown Arts District on Saturday, Dec. 7. We hope you enjoy the photos as much as we did.





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Michigan City Public Library

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

• **December Craft for Kids at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 19.**

All materials are provided. Children 4 and older must be accompanied by an adult. They also must be present to receive craft supplies.

• **Makerspace: open lab hours from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Thursdays.**

Youth ages 6-18 can create with LEGO WeDo, Micro Bits, paper circuits and Ozobots. Children 12 and younger must have a parent or guardian attend with them.

• **Graphic Novel Club: "Umbrella Academy" at 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 19.**

Stop by Youth Services for more information.

• **Holiday Sounds of the Harp with Debra Sawyer at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 22.**

Sawyer returns for the musical presentation.

• **Holiday closings.**

The library will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 31-Jan. 1, for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

• **Library food and mitten drive.**

The library will collect mittens, gloves, hats and scarves during the holidays to decorate its holiday tree. Donations will be sent to The Salvation Army. Also, the library is collecting non-perishable food items for the local food pantry. A box is near the circulation desk through Jan. 3.

• **Learning Center Volunteers Needed.**

The Learning Center needs volunteer tutors for children and adults. Students need assistance in: reading, math, high school equivalency and English as a Second Language. All supplies and training are provided. All that's required are two hours a week. Contact Jessica Hoffmaster at (219) 873-3043 or stop by the center for more information.

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

Harbor Country Hikers

Harbor Country Hikers will host a family-oriented Christmas hike at 1 p.m. EST Saturday, Dec. 21, at New Buffalo Area Schools' Nature Study Trails.

Adults and children can hike through the trails and enjoy games, prizes, snacks and refreshments. The trails are of moderate difficulty and cover about 1.5 miles. The group will meet in the New Buffalo Elementary School parking lot, 12291 Lubke Road.

HCH events are free to adults and children accompanied by an adult. Dogs are allowed according to destination rules. Membership costs \$20 for individuals or \$30 for families.

Visit harborcountryhikers.com for details.

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Metamorphis Traveling Theatre



Metamorphis Traveling Theatre continues its singing/dancing concert versions of Broadway shows during an appearance at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, at Trail Creek Place, 1400 E. Coolspring Ave. Pictured are Judith Joseph (seated), Helen Williams, Dana Chartier and Doug Moon.

Kiwanis-Rotary Scholarship Benefit

LaPorte's Kiwanis and Rotary clubs aim to raise money for scholarship programs that benefit LaPorte youth with a New Year's Eve party from 8 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 31, at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St.

The event includes a photo booth, wine pull, food vendors, tip boards, games, live entertainment and champagne toast at midnight.

Tickets are \$25, or reserve a table of 10 for \$300. Visit <https://bit.ly/2CEJYFD> for more information or to buy tickets.



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**Prayer to the
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(Never known to fail.)

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.

Chesterton Art Center

The following programs are through Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.:

• **Sarah Fantuzzo will teach Drawing Fundamentals II starting from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 8.**

Building on fundamentals, course content includes drawing hands, portrait drawing and still-life drawing. Special emphasis includes drawing different textures, such as fur, metal and glass. Prior drawing experience is helpful.

The cost is \$200, with members receiving a \$20 discount. A supply list is included when registering.

• **Local painter Mark VanderVinne will host Critique Night at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 8.**

Artists can take a piece at any stage, from conception to the final version, with all ability levels and styles invited.

Guests may simply listen; however, participation is encouraged. While being a safe environment, it is a critique involving advice and insight into the effectiveness of the work or artistic concept.

• **A new five-week session of Monday Night Ceramics starts from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Jan. 13.**

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

Students can try slab-building, pinch-pot hand-building and basic sculptural techniques, including figurine/small statue construction. All pieces will be glazed during the final class.

The cost is \$135, with members receiving a \$25 discount. The cost of clay is an additional \$15, payable to the instructor the first day of class. All other supplies are included.



Call (219) 926-4711 for more details.

LaPorte County Public Library

The following programs are at the main branch of LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave.:

• **Maker Mondays from 3 to 5 p.m. Mondays.**

Each month highlights a different skill and lab equipment. December focuses on circuits.

• **STEAM Sandbox from 3-5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 19.**

Students in third grade and older move up through levels, earning a certificate for each completed. They work independently and chart their progress as they complete hands-on projects that include web literacy, fixer skills, circuitry, game design and coding.



Visit www.laportelibrary.org for more details.

LONG BEACH WOMEN'S BOWLING



Dec. 3, 2019

TEAM STANDING

	WON	LOST
1. Pin Pals <i>(Deb Konicek, Deb Frederick, Kim Stokes)</i>	36	16
2. Bitchin Bowlers <i>(Kathy Osborne, Barb Macudzinski, Jill Jankowski)</i>	35	17
3. Queen Pins <i>(Tammy Nelmar, Margie Midkiff, Dottie Brinckman)</i>	34	18

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES

SCORE

1. Tammy Nelmar	192
2. Sue Labovitz	178
3. Margie Midkiff	175
4. Ann Bogart	172
5. Peg King	164
6. Pat Collado	163
7. Ginny Hogan	162
8. Sue Luegers	161
9. Carolyn Wiggins	160
9. Dottie Brinckman	160
10. Jill Craig	158
10. Sarah Blank	158
11. Kathy Brown	157
12. Polly Fletcher	156
13. Kim Stokes	154
14. Kathy Osborne	153
15. June Salmon (series)	412
16. Barb Macudzinski (series)	419
17. Susan Kieffer (series)	413

SPLITS

Deb Frederick	5-10
Peg King	3-5-8
Sarah Blank	3-10
Jean Bethany	1-2-10

THREE STRIKES

Barb Macudzinski, Tammy Nelmar,
Sue Labovitz (2), Susan Kieffer, Jill Craig



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

Indoor Flea Market

The New Troy (Mich.) Community Center's Indoor Flea Market is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST Saturday, Dec. 21.

Admission is free. The market includes antiques, tools, crafts, books, memorabilia, housewares, furniture and locally made or grown items. Red Brick Cafe will serve lunch.

The center, located at 13372 California Road, is run by the non-profit Friends of New Troy. Contact Donald Heitsch at (773) 803-9773 for details. Visit www.Facebook/NewTroyFleaMarket for a map.

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Westchester Public Library

The following programs are available:

- **An old-fashioned Christmas party for children 3-12 from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, at Brown Mansion, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.**

The open house-style event includes making ornaments and playing games. Registration is not required. A parent or guardian must be present. A special visit from Santa is from 3 to 4 p.m.

- **Cupcakes and Canvas from 10 a.m. to noon or 2 to 4 p.m. Mondays, Dec. 23 or 30, at Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.**

Children 6-12 can paint step-by-step. No art experience is necessary, and all supplies are provided. Participants should wear clothes that can get messy. A parent or guardian must accompany each child.

Registration is necessary because each class size is limited to 12 children. Parents may register by visiting the museum or calling (219) 983-9715 during museum hours.

- **Knitting Together from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 29, at Westchester Township History Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.**

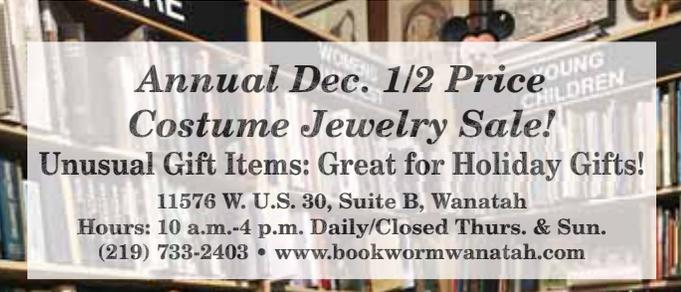
Area knitters, and those who crochet or do needlework, are invited.

- **Chesterton Cubing Club from 1 to 3 p.m. Sundays, Jan. 5 and Feb. 2, at Thomas Library.**

Anyone interested in Rubik's Cube is welcome. Email Eric Malapanes at ebmalapanes@gmail.com for more details.

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Beach Garden Club

The Beach Garden Club ended its year with a holiday luncheon hosted by Donna Hennard and Tina Sonderby at Long Beach Country Club.

Jonas Zimmerman, creative designer at Schultz Florist in Valparaiso, showed members/guests how to "Simplify Creating Holiday Arrangements/Decorations." Members/guests donated \$457 and gift items to the Michigan City Women's Shelter.

The first 2020 meeting is the last Thursday in April at Long Beach Community Center.



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Kids Ride Free Program

South Shore Line has expanded its Kids Ride Free program to all trains and train times Thursday, Dec. 26, through Wednesday, Jan. 1.

Up to three children 13 and younger may ride any train for free when accompanied by a parent or guardian on all weekend, holiday, off-peak or rush hour weekday trains. Quiet car remains in effect on the last car of rush hour trains during this time.

Visit mysouthshoreline.com or download the SSL app (available for iPhone and Android) for details.

Juniors Named "Rising Stars"



Four Michigan City High School juniors are among the Indiana Association of School Principals "Rising Stars of Indiana" Class of 2021. Each Indiana high school could recognize up to four students in the 11th grade based on academic achievement. Representing MCHS are Maya Roberts (from left), Josiah Miller, Fatima Mota, and Aviana Garner. The four have grade-point averages between 4.2 and 4.45.

Fernwood Botanical Garden

The following programs are through Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich.:

• **Breakfast with Santa at 9:30 a.m. EST Saturday, Dec. 21.**

Visit Santa, enjoy a holiday breakfast, make a craft with one of Santa's helpers, view the trains in the conservatory and listen to an interactive holiday music. The breakfast fills quickly, so reservations are encouraged. The cost is: adults, \$15.95; children 6-12, \$9.95; and children 5 and younger, free.

• **Cookies + Creations from 2 to 4 p.m. EST Sunday, Dec. 22.**

Julie Lawrenz Nitz of JLN Studio shows how to create a friendly fox winter scene on 9x12 canvas board, with cookies and cocoa served. Open to adults and children 4 and older, the cost is \$30 per project, or \$24 for members. Register by Dec. 19.

• **Wild Ones meeting from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. EST Sunday, Dec. 29.**

Get involved with restoring native plants, natural landscapes and pollinators to backyards and the community. Visit www.wildones.org or contact Heather Catania at skaarcat@aol.com for details.

Call (269) 695-6491 or visit www.fernwoodbotanical.org for more information and to confirm the status of classes.



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Food for Thought



Caroline Arnett spoke to members of three Philanthropic Education Organization chapters during a Nov. 20 meeting. Arnett is the Community Wellness coordinator at Purdue Extension in the College of Health and Human Sciences. Her program highlighted an existing county-wide network of food-distribution channels, how and why some groups are underserved or malnourished, what impact food-rescue programs are having on the volume of food waste and how they're doing it. Pictured are (from left) Chapter BR President Joyce Dalton, Chapter DF President Linda Pompeii, Chapter BR President Sandy Cipares and Caroline Arnett.

La Porte County Parks



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

Nature's Tiny Tots

Designed for parents and grandparents, explore nature with toddlers and preschoolers. Enjoy music, dancing, storytelling and, weather permitting, hiking.

The free program is from 10 to 11 a.m. Jan. 13 and 27, Feb. 3 and 10, March 2 and 16, and April 6 and 27 at Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Call at least one week in advance to register.

Parent & Child Discovery Days

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

The schedule is:

- Jan. 15: Let it Snow!
- Jan. 29: Who Made That Track?
- Feb. 5: Clouds Overhead.
- Feb. 12: Could You Be a Squirrel?
- March 4: 1 Bird, 2 Bird.
- March 18: Water Everywhere.

PJ Time with Your Stuffed Friend

Wear pajamas and take a stuffed animal to the free program that includes story time and snacks for children 2-11 from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, at Luhr County Park Nature Center.

All children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited, with a requirement of eight people and a maximum of 24. Call at least one week in advance to reserve a spot.

Breakfast with the Birds

Explore birds and sample breakfast treats while watching birds at the feeding station during the free program from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, at Luhr County Park Nature Center.

No pre-registration is required. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Shelter and Hall Reservations

Call (219) 325-8315 to make reservations for one of many picnic shelters at any of the four county parks, or Pat Smith Hall at Red Mill County Park for a family function.



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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

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.

Alinsky Award Nominations

The Michigan City Rotary Club is accepting nominations through January for the Paul J. Alinsky Excellence Award.

The honor pays tribute to the late Paul Alinsky, who was a past chamber board chairman, Rotary Club president and Sentinel Alarm Co. founder. He died in 1997. It goes to a person who exhibits dedication to community service, and excellence, passion and innovation in their vocation/career.

Past recipients include Tom Ringo, Ron Benz, Jerry Karstens, Kathleen Lang, Glen Lubeznik, Duane Mertl, Les Radke, Burton "Bud" Ruby, Emerson Spartz, Jim Welborne, James Dworkin, Lisa Hendricks, Marty Corley and Dion Campbell. In 2016, in honor of the club's 100th anniversary, the award recognized every Rotary Club member over the past century.

A memorial inscribed with the names of past recipients is on display at City Hall, 100 E. Michigan Blvd. The selection committee includes Rotarians and community leaders. A nomination form is available at www.mcr Rotary.org. The deadline is Jan. 24, with the recipient announced Feb. 3. The person receives a replica of the memorial along with a contribution to a charity of his/her choice. The award will be presented at Rotary's Feb. 20 meeting at the Northern Indiana Education Foundation, 402 Franklin St.

Business Training Series

Nora Akins of Strategic Management will present two business training series in January.

"What All Supervisors Should Know," which runs Jan. 7-March 18, is a 12-week series focused on positive employee relations and related laws. The LaPorte program is from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. every other Tuesday at The Blue Heron Inn, 1110 Lakeside St., and the Michigan City one from 8 to 9:45 a.m. every other Wednesday at Patrick's Grille, 4125 Franklin St. The series is approved for 12 LEUs. Tuition is \$500 per person and includes breakfast or lunch.

The second series is the five-week "Drama, Discipline & Documentation." It focuses on stopping negativity, helplessness and drama at work.

The series, which starts Jan. 8, runs from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. five consecutive Wednesdays. Tuition is \$500 per person and includes individual coaching with Akins, lunches and a toolbox.

Contact Akins at www.managepeoplerright.com for details and registration, call (219) 873-1735 or nora@managepeoplerright.com

Public Art Committee

The Michigan City Public Art Committee meets at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 19, in the City Hall Mayor's Conference Room, 100 E. Michigan Blvd.

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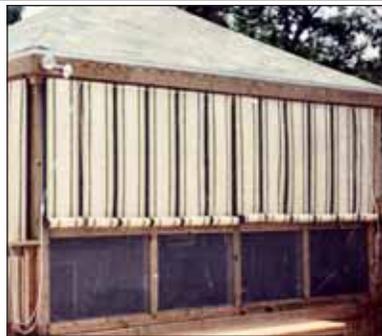
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American Red Cross

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

- LaPorte Hospital, 1007 W. Lincolnway, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 23.
- Franciscan Health Michigan City, 3500 Franciscan Way, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday, Dec. 27.
- Michigan City Fire Training Center, 2510 E. Michigan Blvd., 12:30-5:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30.
- St. John's United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road, noon-6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 7.
- Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1237 E. Coolspring Ave., 3-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 9.

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.

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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

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.

JROTC Earns Awards at Drill Meet

Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps earned awards Saturday, Dec. 7, at the Portage High School military drill competition.

Capt. Thomas Mizer and 2nd Lt. Jessica Wilhelm commanded their units to first-place finishes in the Armed and Unarmed Regulation categories, respectively. Cadet 1st Lt. Bohdan Walker commanded the Armed Exhibition Platoon to a second-place finish.



Cadet Capt. Thomas Mizer reports the Armed Platoon in for competition.

Maj. Tom McGrath, the senior Marine instructor, said the meet was a good indication of where the Wolves need to improve.

“Our focus is now on the sectional meet at the Purdue University Armory in West Lafayette on Feb. 22,” he said in a press release. “We will have to be at the top of our game to win that meet against 21 other schools and earn a spot at the Marine National Championship meet in April.”

Michigan City has qualified the last two years for that meet; this year, it is in Daytona Beach, Fla. The Marine Corps would fully fund the trip.

Cadets also assisted with setup and cleanup for the Dec. 12 “One City, One Sound” concert, providing Color Guards for the home basketball games, and providing bell ringers for The Salvation Army.

Beacher Holiday Hours

The Beacher Weekly Newspaper will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 31-Jan. 1, for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

After this week's Dec. 19 Christmas edition, we will take a two-week break and resume publication Jan. 9.

ENVELOPES



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Activities to Explore

In the Area:

Dec. 19 — December Craft for Kids, 3:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 19 — Graphic Novel Club: “Umbrella Academy,” 5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 20 — “A Night with the Giese Church,” 5-7 p.m., LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Admission: \$1, children/free. Info: www.laportecountyhistory.org

Dec. 20 — The Save the Tunes Council Holiday Concert, 7:30-9 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Dec. 20-26 — Vickers Theatre, 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. *Now showing:* “Harriet.” Rated PG-13. Times: 6 p.m. Fri., 2:45 and 6 p.m. Sat., 6 p.m. Sun.-Mon., 6 p.m. Wed., 3 and 7 p.m. Thur. *Also:* “Parasite.” Rated R. In Korean with English subtitles. Times: 9:15 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2:30 p.m. Sun. All times Eastern. Info: vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

Dec. 21 — Harbor Country Hikers, 1 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Area Schools’ Nature Study Trails. Meet @ New Buffalo Elementary School parking lot, 12291 Lubke Road. Info: harborcountryhikers.com

Dec. 21 — Old-fashioned Christmas party for children 3-12, 2-4 p.m., Brown Mansion, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

Dec. 21 — Winter Solstice Hike and Campfire, 3-5 p.m., Kemil Beach, one mile north of U.S. 12 on East State Park Road. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Dec. 21 — Christmas at The Acorn, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generation Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30. Reservations: acornlive.org

Dec. 21-22 — Old Lighthouse Museum in Washington Park, noon-3 p.m. Admission: \$5/14 & older, \$2/grade-school children. Info: (219) 872-6133.

Dec. 21, 28 — “Glowing Lights Nights,” 4-6 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Cost: \$8/adult, \$5/senior or youth 15 & younger. Info: www.BarkerMansion.com

Dec. 22 — **FIRST NIGHT OF HANUKKAH.**

Dec. 22 — Holiday Sounds of the Harp with Debra Sawyer, 3 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 24 — **CHRISTMAS EVE.**

Dec. 24 — Christmas Eve Morning Stroll, 10 a.m.-noon, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Dec. 25 — **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

Through Dec. 30 — “Christmas at the Mansion,” Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Tours: Tues.-Sun. Cost: \$8/adult, \$5/youth or senior Info: www.barkermansion.com

Dec. 31 — Kiwanis-Rotary New Year’s Eve party,

8 p.m.-12:30 a.m., LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. Tickets: \$25, table of 10/\$300. Tickets/info: <https://bit.ly/2CEJYFD>

Jan. 1 — HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Jan. 1 — The Three Dune Challenge First Day Hike, 10 a.m.-noon, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

In the Region

Dec. 20 — Spaniels Forever “A Doo Wop Christmas Concert,” 7 p.m. EST, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Tickets: \$12/advance, \$15/door. Tickets: (269) 983-3688, www.boxfactoryforthearts.org

Dec. 21 — Indoor Flea Market, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. EST, New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road. Admission: free. Info: (773) 803-9773.

Dec. 22 — Cookies + Creations, 2-4 p.m. EST, Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. Cost: \$30/project, \$24/members. Registration: (269) 695-6491, www.fernwoodbotanical.org

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 Hospital Clair of Assisi Room, 3500 Franciscan Way; 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.

Thursdays — Adult Children of Alcoholics and Dysfunctional Families, 6:15 p.m., Franciscan Health Michigan City, Maria Theresia Conference Room C, 3500 Franciscan Way. Info: (219) 801-1296.

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was organized in the rebellious American colonies.

On December 22, 1864, during the Civil War, Union Gen. William Sherman sent a message to President Lincoln from Georgia, saying, "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah."

On December 22, 1941, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill arrived in Washington for a war-time conference with President Franklin Roosevelt.

On December 22, 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, U.S. Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe reportedly replied "Nuts!" when the Germans demanded the Americans surrender in the World War II conflict.

On December 23, 1823, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," by Clement Clarke Moore was published in *The Troy (New York) Sentinel*.

On December 23, 1928, the National Broadcasting Co. established a permanent coast-to-coast radio hookup.

On December 23, 1975, Congress passed the Metric Conversion Act. The act declared that the International System of Units will be this country's eventual system of measurement, and established the United States Metric Board with responsibility to plan, coordinate and implement the nation's voluntary conversion to metric. (Little or nothing has been heard of it since).

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

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

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

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

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

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

On December 25, 1786, Massachusetts's farmers began their revolt, known as Shays Rebellion, to prevent the Supreme Court from issuing writs for the collection of debts.

On December 25, 1865, Chicago's Union Stock Yards, the world's largest at the time, opened at Halsted and 39th Streets.

On December 25, 1999, space shuttle Discovery's astronauts finished their repair job on the Hubble Space Telescope.

Typesetting Quitting!



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The Girlfriend Sale presents: Little Holiday Winter Solstice Sale
Dec. 20-21, noon-4 p.m.

We just received some super fun holiday decor and gift items, so we're throwing together a Little Holiday Winter Solstice Sale to bring good cheer, offer up unique specialty items just in time for gift giving at a lovely discount, and maybe entice you to indulge in a little treat for yourself at this most festive time of year. We have an entire village of the cutest stuffed Santa gnomes in all sizes, majestic fabric deer, candles, free people metal sculptures lamps, beautiful and unusual jewelry, a rack or two of velvets, sparkle and comfy holiday attire. AND some of our artist friends will be contributing! Look out!!! That's gonna be some way cool stuff. Stop on by...check those hard to buy for people off your list. Have a seat and enjoy a warm and wonderful beverage. Come get your jingle jangle on with us. We love you! Thanks for your support. You make our world go round.

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Drawing Workshops



A sample of hand sketches.

Sarah Fantuzzo will teach a series of drawing workshops, "Drawing Toolbox," at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

Fantuzzo will touch on a different topic each month, providing techniques and tips for how to effectively improve drawing skills. Each session is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, with a 30-minute break for lunch. Students can take a bag lunch or step out. The schedule is:

- Jan. 11 — Drawing Hands. Fantuzzo will focus on structure and multiple gestures. By the workshop's end, participants will have a solid idea of how to create realistic hands in future drawings.
- Feb. 8 — Drawing the Head.
- March 14 — Drawing Facial Features.
- April 11 — Drawing Textures.
- May 9 — Drawing Nature.
- June 13 — Drawing On The Go (Portable Studio).

The cost is \$60 per workshop. Members receive a \$20 discount. A supply list will be provided at registration. Visit www.chestertonart.com for details.

Master Gardener Association Grants

The LaPorte County Master Gardener Association will introduce a new Community Grant Program in 2020.

Each grant will not exceed \$300. They will go to individuals or groups for materials in gardening/horticultural volunteer projects that support LaPorte County. All requests must be in writing using the application at www.lpmastergardener.com

Only one application may be submitted per project. Two projects per organization may be submitted for consideration. Applications must be received no later than March 20.

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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

This being the Christmas issue *and* last edition of the year, I decided to end on a light note with two short novels that provide reading pleasure after the ham and turkey are put away and the kids are in bed, but you're still awake! Both stories take on a murder mystery featuring different writing styles, but both appeal to the broadest audience.

A Christmas Gathering by Anne Perry (*hardcover, \$20 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 193 pages*)

If mysteries are your first choice in reading material, then I'm sure you're familiar with Anne Perry. Her Victorian England settings have been a staple through many novels, and for 16 past novels of Christmas suspense. Here's her latest...

It's nearing Christmas in rural England, and Vespasia and Victor Narraway have been invited to the estate of Lady Amelia and Max Cavendish along with three other couples. It's turn-of-the-20th century time and titles mean everything. Vespasia may be in her 70s, but her beauty and bearing, and aristocratic upbringing, make her competition for any lady in the room. Victor works for Special Branch of the Home Office: spy work, of course.

Vespasia is a little confused as to why they've been invited to this particular Christmas gathering, but her husband knows and is keeping it a secret.

Someone in the government has been passing information about new submarines to the Germans. One guest will hand over doctored documents to Victor, hoping to catch the spy at his own game.

Vespasia knows something is afoot, but keeps her own counsel as Victor sneaks out of the bedroom at midnight to meet...who? Papers are handed over and each goes their separate ways, but the courier is soon missing.

Perry has a wonderful grasp on the etiquette and mores of British aristocracy of the early 1900s. The atmosphere is palpable. Her description of the meals each person must dress accordingly for, and the after-dinner separation of the men from the women is spot on.

This is a great little read, and Perry's knowledge of the place and time adds to the enjoyment.

Dachshund Through the Snow by David Rosenfelt (*hardcover, \$24.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 342 pages*)

This is the first time I have read Rosenfelt and his series about lawyer Andy Carpenter, and I can assure you it won't be the last. He has a magical quality of combining humor with murder mysteries — OK, I know that sounds crazy, but you really have to read him to understand his popularity. And being a dog lover is an added bonus!

In this seasonal read, Andy's wife, Laurie, a former police officer, is now collecting letters to Santa from deserving children and fulfilling their wishes. This Christmas, she has opened a request even Santa might have trouble with...

Danny Trainer wants a new coat for his mother and a sweater for his dachshund, Murphy, and he wants his father home for Christmas. How are you going to swing that one, Laurie? Oh well, two out of three ain't bad...

At the moment, however, Andy is approached by a soon-to-be retired police officer, Sgt. Corey Douglas, and his K-9, Simon. Douglas thought retirement included Simon, but the department is making Simon work one more year before his retirement. Is that fair?

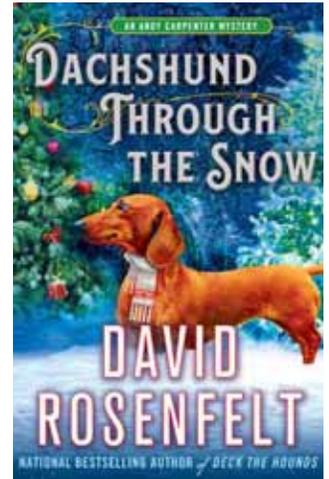
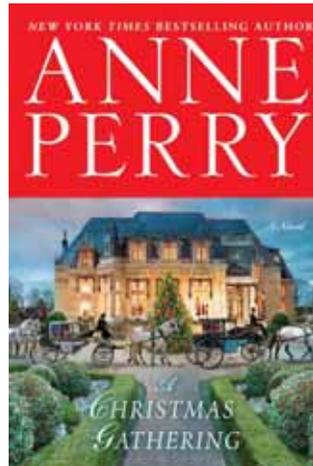
German Shepherds have certain physical problems as they age, and Douglas argues the police are treating Simon differently from any other officer. Will Andy take on Simon's case? Dog lover that he is, Andy agrees. I found his reasoning to the court makes a lot of sense! But what will the judge think?

Back to Danny Trainer...that's a whole 'nother problem. Seems that 14 years ago, a young woman, 18-year-old Kristen McNeil, was found strangled to death. Noah Traynor, Danny's father, was the last one to see her alive and has been keeping it a secret all these years. However, now the police have traced the DNA under Kristen's fingernails to Noah, who still proclaims his innocence.

How can Andy turn down this case? He doesn't, of course, but what kind of a defense can he prepare with no other information? Oh, you'll be surprised at the twists and turns of this story! A thoroughly enjoyable read that gives you great characters and a chance at humor, as well as nail-biting moments.

Best wishes to you and yours — I hope the holiday season brings you much happiness.

Till next time, happy reading and Happy New Year!



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