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Rising from the Ashes

by Andrew Tallackson

May 5, 2018, began like any other day for Tom Brand and his wife, Carole Stodder. True, Tom typically is the early riser, but on this morning, Carole was first to wake, and as Tom cannot stress enough, he is thankful she did.

At 7 a.m., Carole saw a man emerge from the side door of their garage, smoke trailing behind him. He was running around the backyard of their home in The Pines — shouting, crazed in appearance and behavior — before leaping over their fence.

Carole shouted out, alerting her husband to what she'd witnessed. She began phoning fire and police

units. Tom threw on clothes and headed outdoors. By then, the fire had spread quickly, flames now visible through the garage's windows.

A few hours later, the blaze was extinguished, its casualties sinking in for the husband-and-wife artists. Along with space for two vehicles, which sustained considerable damage, the structure doubled as a studio and storage for their creations. Carole lost some 40 works, Tom about 100. Some pieces, he says, were so badly burned, he could not identify them. In the days that followed, Tom wrestled with anger.

“There goes 20 to 25 years of work,” Tom recalls thinking as the fire ravaged his garage. “They say if you can't change anything, don't let it bother you. But, of course, it always does.”

This, however, is not the story of a tragic end, but one of renewal

Last month, Tom debuted a new exhibit of oil paintings, the appropriately titled “Burnt Offerings,” in the Area Artists Association NIPSCO Gallery at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. The display featured 12



Tom Brand is photographed by *The Beacher's* Bob Wellinski amid his exhibit, “Burnt Offerings,” at Lubeznik Center for the Arts.

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Rising from the Ashes

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pieces fashioned together from the salvageable fragments of works rescued from the fire. The process for Tom was therapeutic, cathartic.

“I was surprised, actually, that I could make acceptable paintings from the survivors,” he says.

Tom sat down for an interview with *The Beacher* late last month, in the comforts of his home in The Pines. Nearby windows reveal the new garage-studio-storage space, completed just a few weeks earlier. At press time, a suspect in the fire, according to Tom, was awaiting trial. And while vestiges of indignation that plagued Tom and Carole in the wake of the fire periodically surface during the interview, Tom appears unbroken, eager to move forward.

Tom and Carole have been active in the Northwest Indiana art scene for a good 20 years. He spent

30 years working as a professional offset printer, with five of those years as the owner and manager of Galaxie Press. Over the years, he’s played active roles in the Chicago Artists’ Coalition, Area Artists Association and Lubeznik Center for the Arts, the latter dating back to when it was the John G. Blank Center for the Arts.

An Indianapolis native, Tom moved to Chicago in the late 1940s, studying art at Chicago’s School of The Art Institute through the G.I. Bill. He and Carole moved to The Pines in 1995. As an artist, he works exclusively in oils on wood panel.

Carole, who grew up in Minneapolis, studied art at Lake Forest College, then focused on advanced painting at the University of Minnesota. Amid teaching at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree through Midway Studios. She and Tom were



Tom Brand and Carole Stodder, photographed in the new studio space of their refinished garage.

founding members of the Chicago Artists' Coalition in 1974. She also was board chairwoman, and editor, of *The Chicago Artist's News*. Like Tom, she has been active with Area Artists Association and the Lubeznik Center.

And like any couple, Tom and Carole have experienced loss of property and personal items over the years. Nothing, of course, to the extent of what transpired last May.



Rescue officials at Tom and Carole's home, the day of the fire.



Works salvaged from the fire that survived the blaze in relatively good shape.



The harsh reality of the fire, works heaped in a pile outside the garage.

The man Carole witnessed at the time of the blaze allegedly broke through a window to gain entry into the garage. Tom stores a gasoline can inside to use with various tools, and it was that can Tom says Carole saw the man carrying on his way out of the garage's side door.

Continued on Page 4

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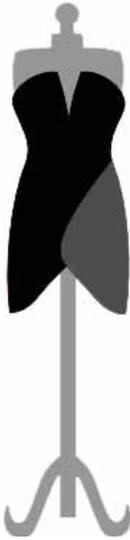
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Rising from the Ashes Continued from Page 3

Three different fire departments arrived to extinguish the blaze, Tom recalls, the street covered with fire engines. The police arrived to take statements from him and his wife.

What was going through Tom's mind at the time? He pauses, then shakes his head.

"It's hard to think what to do next," he says, "when you have a disaster like that."

Thankfully, Tom says, an insurance adjustor stepped in, taking over the ensuing responsibilities.

"It was a great relief," he added. "We were not familiar, of course, with this type of situation."



Tom holds one of his works.

For Tom, the best way to cope with stress and loss is work. So, he and Carole set about the heart-rending task of sifting through the scorched remains of their garage, hopeful that among the many casualties of their works were pieces that somehow survived relatively in tact. Their lawn became the canvas with which to make that assessment. Photos taken in the fire's aftermath, and provided by Tom and Carole, convey harsh realities and promising discoveries. In one photo, two large mounds are visible in the driveway leading to the garage. Many pieces appear blackened by the blaze's unforgiving flames. Frames, equally charred, collapse into themselves, no longer cohesive pieces. Tom, it must be noted, makes all the frames for his creations.

Another picture, however, conveys a more profound sense of hope: the couple's lawn, now littered with artwork: some astonishingly in good shape. Paintings, Tom says, are more resilient than people believe, and having studied the process of art restoration and rescue, the seed of an idea, that some of the damaged pieces could be reborn, fashioned together as new works, was planted.

Indeed, two weeks after the fire, the desire to resume life as it once was, to deny defeat its triumph

and move onward, took hold as Tom and Carole were slated to present a show at the Marshall J. Gardner Center for the Arts in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. The two had 25 works in their home at the time of the fire, enough to transport there by a used van they purchased. The show, Tom says, was fairly successful. The two both sold a few pieces, and overall feedback was positive.

At the same time, Tom realized portions of his paintings ravaged by the fire could be recovered.

"Each painting, I could cut out the good parts and transform them into something else," he said.

The couple purchased a tent to store items rescued from the garage. A workshop of sorts was created underneath an overhang of the house to restore damaged paintings. As a collection took shape, Brand admits to being surprised, that the new works might actually constitute a solid exhibit. In all, some 12 pieces were created for the "Burnt Offerings" effort that debuted during the December First Friday Art Walk at the Lubeznik Center.

In his artist statement for the show, Tom wrote, *"This show reflects my effort at recovery, at least materially, in a small way what could be done. Some works sustained damage around their edges with their central sections still salvageable. Since they were painted on wood panel, it became possible to cut away the bad and keep the good; this required artistic judgment and sometimes additional painting to create new works from the old."*



Tom's storage racks inside their garage.

Linda Weigel, *The Beacher's* art critic and correspondent, lavished high praise on "Burnt Offerings," the review appearing in the Dec. 20 edition.

"The results are stunning," Weigel wrote. "Tom's strong, abstract compositions and intuitive sense of color shine. Viewing the paintings as a group, one senses a unity of rhythm, shape and weight flowing between and across each work, linking them harmoniously, evidence of a true master of the art of abstraction."

The exhibit, which continues through Jan. 12, was proof that Tom, and Carole, would not let tragedy destroy them.

"Carole and I," Tom says, a smile spreading across his face, "we're pretty resilient."

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

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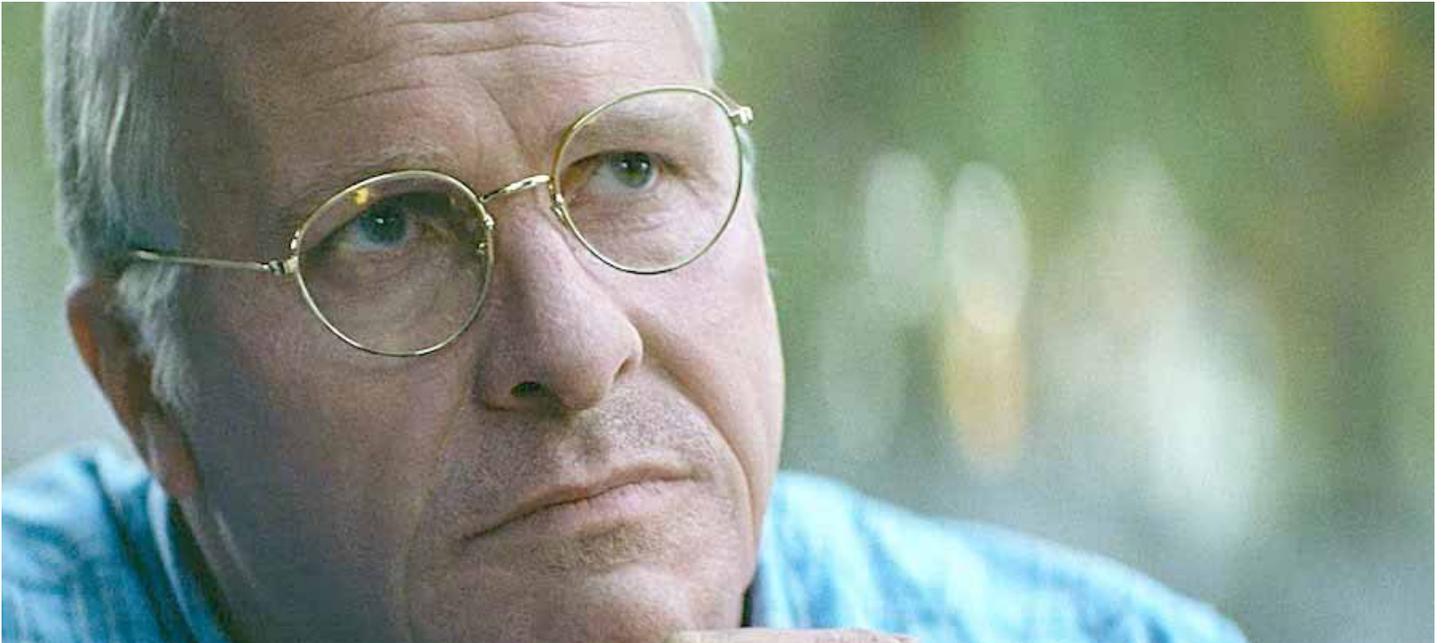
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“Vice” Bites Off More Than it Can Chew

by Andrew Tallackson



Oscar-winner Christian Bale transforms himself into former Vice President Dick Cheney in “Vice.”

“How did you become such a cold son of a b---?”

So says Donald Rumsfeld to his former protégé, Dick Cheney, late in Adam McKay’s scathing, frustratingly scattershot “Vice.”

It is a legitimate question. No other political figure of the past 50 years has been more divisive, and elusive, than the former vice president to George W. Bush. Heck, McKay admits right off the bat, in a hilariously profane confession, that his film is the cinematic equivalent of winging it.

McKay is the right guy for the job. True, he began his career orchestrating fart jokes for many a Will Ferrell comedy (“Anchorman,” “Step Brothers”), but graduated to the rank of underdog Oscar winner with 2015’s “The Big Short,” a wicked dissection of the 2007-2008 economic crisis.

“Vice” starts well, its cast a dream for any director, but McKay bit off more than he can chew. When the events of 9/11 arrive, right at the picture’s midpoint, he feverishly, and sometimes clumsily, zips through way too much material. It’s like watching a circus performer dropping the four or five balls he’s juggling.

There is something fascinating, though, about watching Oscar-winner Christian Bale (“The Fighter”) do his trademark disappearing act as Cheney. This is an actor who never gives the same performance twice. He distorts every fiber in his body to “become” a role, and by the time Cheney is firmly entrenched in the Capitol Hill landscape, the actor’s massive jowls, his balding scalp, the deliberate cadence of every word – the transformation is complete.

McKay’s vision is that Cheney was a ne’er-do-well whose wife, Lynne (Amy Adams, dissecting the role

with cutthroat precision) was a Lady Macbeth in waiting, insisting her husband make something of himself or she’ll leave him. Cheney becomes an intern for Rumsfeld, played by Steve Carell in a showy turn designed to secure an Oscar nomination. Carell is the film’s ace in the hole, treating Rumsfeld as a jaded realist with no time for morality.

His scenes with Bale propel “Vice” along quite agreeably. True, we are not sure what to make of Cheney, but we accept McKay’s notion that he became an adroit student of Washington politics, sacrificing heart – literally – for success, by whatever means necessary.

Then, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 hit, and “Vice” essentially abandons Cheney, obsessively trying to cover, and recreate, more territory than is humanly possible. So many famous faces (Tyler Perry as Colin Powell, Justin Kirk as Scooter Libby, LisaGay Hamilton as Condoleezza Rice, Eddie Marsan as Paul Wolfowitz), extensive archival news footage, Homeland Security meetings, and heavy-handed fishing and chess metaphors. Even Cheney’s notorious “hunting accident” is treated as a rushed afterthought.

We eagerly anticipate the scenes between Cheney and George W. (“Three Billboards” Oscar-winner Sam Rockwell), but that performance is the equivalent of a malnourished “Saturday Night Live” skit.

By the last 20 minutes, “Vice” has become terribly messy, endless. We’ve lost interest. It is not that the film is bad, just disappointing. What started as blazing political satire somehow lost its way and, irrevocably, became a bit of a bore.

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SOMETHING HAPPENED IN LONG BEACH?

I have been trying to figure out if the changes in zoning, and the other issues and lawsuits in Long Beach, have had any impact on the housing market there. So this month, I have compared the marketplace area between Michigan City and the Michigan state line to just Long Beach.

Data is from GNIAR 12 months from Dec. 20th to Dec. 19th of the following year for houses selling for more than 300K

First, the data for the whole area. 2011 was the bottom of market, so I usually include it.

Yr.	#sold	Aver Price	Med Price	\$Volume Millions
11	32	\$574k	\$453k	\$18.4 M
15	62	\$541k	\$434k	\$33.6 M
16	78	\$493k	\$407k	\$38.4 M
17	85	\$560k	\$433k	\$47.6 M
18	89	\$665k	\$455k	\$59.3 M

Total lakefront market looks positive in every way. So let's take a look at Long Beach once I separated it from the rest of the lakefront marketplace.

Yr	#sold	Aver Price	Med Price	\$Volume Millions
11	19	\$432k	\$318k	\$8.2 M
15	33	\$522k	\$409k	\$17.2 M
16	35	\$402k	\$375k	\$14.1 M
17	37	\$483k	\$373k	\$17.9 M
18	27	\$814k	\$467k	\$22.0 M

Certainly different.

The number of sales is not nearly as strong, and 2018 showed a 27% decrease. The average sales price indicates there are a couple of large sales pulling that number up, especially in 2018. Same for \$Volume. The median sale price goes down for two years before recovering in 2018. Lower end not selling.

We have to remember that correlation does not always mean causation. But what else changed only in Long Beach that could have caused these variations from the immediately surrounding marketplace?

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Michigan City Public Library

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

• **Duneland Stamp Club at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 10.**

The club meets the second Thursday of each month. New members are invited.

• **Needle Arts League at 5:30 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 10, 17, 24 and 31.**

Membership to the group, formerly known as the Knit Club, is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome.



A scene from "Alpha."

• **Winter Movie at the Library: "Alpha" at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13.**

The film is Rated PG-13.

• **CoderDojo at 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 14.**

The free coding club for ages 8-18 explores programming such as Ozobots, Spheros, Chibi Chips and 3-D modeling. Coding tools include Scratch, Hopscotch and MakeCode. Children 12 and younger must have a parent attend. Visit the library's CoderDojo page or contact Jonathan at jlovett@mclib.org for details.

• **Story Time at 1 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 15, 22 and 29, and 10 a.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 16, 23 and 30.**

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

• **Art Bots at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15, in the Makerspace.**

Make a motorized art bot that scribbles and draws. Call Youth Services at (219) 873-3045 and ask for Dave for details.

• **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.

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In 2015, the series won a statewide Search for Excellence award for educational service conducted by Purdue Master Gardeners.

The first session is from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 16, at LaPorte County Extension Office, 2857 W. Indiana 2, LaPorte. A panel of local food growers includes:

- A farmer – Damien Appel from Native Roots Farm.
 - Managers of a local farmer’s market – Catherine Mrozinski and Jen Samuelson.
 - A Northwest Indiana Food Council representative – Dominique Edwards.
 - The Pax Center of LaPorte, represented by the Rev. Nate Loucks and Director Jason Clemons.
- Ensuing programs are:
- Wednesday, Feb. 13, 6 to 7 p.m., “Attracting Wildlife,” Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St.
 - Wednesday, March 6, noon to 1 p.m., “Gardening Through Handicaps,” Michigan City Senior Center in Washington Park.
 - Wednesday, April 10, 6 to 7 p.m., “Gardening with Kids,” LaPorte Public Library Meeting Room, 904 Indiana Ave.

Attendees can take a lunch or snack. The cost is \$5 per session and includes informational handouts, or \$15 for all four sessions. No preregistration is required. Call Purdue Extension-LaPorte County at (219) 324-9407 for details, or download a flyer at www.extension.purdue.edu/laporte, click on the “Garden” heading at top of the page or visit www.lpmastergardener.com/

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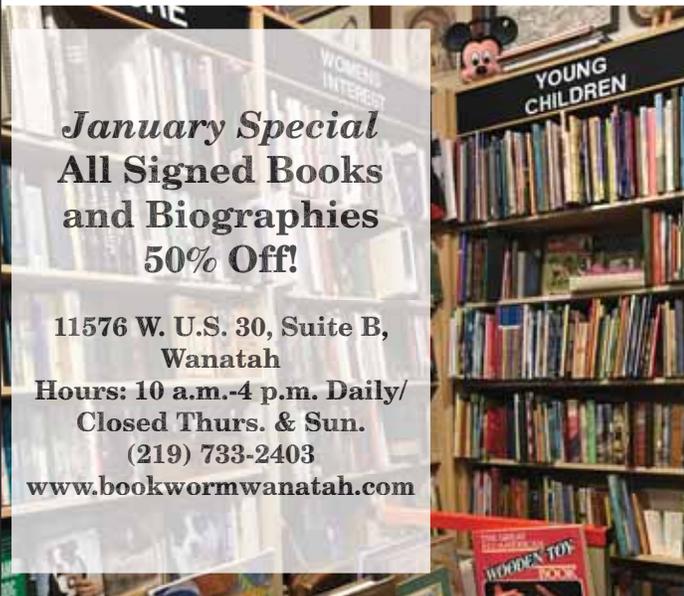
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Four Michigan City High School juniors are among the Indiana Association of School Principals “Rising Stars of Indiana” Class of 2020. Each Indiana high school was invited to recognize up to four students currently in the 11th grade based on academic achievement. Pictured with MCHS Principal Candy Van Buskirk (center) are those students: Megan Steinhiser (from left), Elliot Jasicki, Robert Lemon and Sara Poulin.

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Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

These events were scheduled at press time. In light of the government shutdown, call for updates:

- **Art in the National Lakeshore from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.**

Meet local artists who use the dunes as inspiration to take photos, paint, draw or write. Programs may be inside or outside.

- **Winter Open House 2019 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, at Dunes Learning Center, 700 Howe Road, Chesterton.**

Naturalists lead the afternoon of outdoor activities, and an indoor “campfire” featuring live music, hot cocoa and cookies. Admission is free. Registration is requested. Visit www.duneslearningcenter.org to register or for more details.

- **Miller Woods Hike from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sundays through Feb. 24 at Paul H. Douglas Center.**

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

- **Movie Screenings at the Douglas Center at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13.**

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



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:

- **CSI: Owls! from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 12.**

Meet at the Nature Center to investigate the remains of an owl's meal, after being introduced to owls that call the dunes home.

- **Winter SSSSSnakes from 10 to 10:40 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 12.**

Meet at the Nature Center to view snakes and learn more about them.

- **Snowshoe Shuffle from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 13.**

Meet at the Nature Center. Free snowshoes will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. A winter hike is planned if there isn't enough snow.

- **The J.D. Marshall Shipwreck from 2 to 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13.**

Meet at the Nature Center to learn about the sinking of the J.D. Marshall just offshore of Indiana Dunes State Park.



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

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Gold Bar Found in Salvation Army Red Kettle

A small bar of gold found its way to The Salvation Army of Michigan City during the holidays, slipped into one of the red kettles.

Valued at roughly \$1,260, the bar is one ounce of fine gold. It was found in a kettle stationed at Big R Stores, 4301 Franklin St. The gold was wrapped in a small piece of paper that said, "Love weighs more than gold."

Curtis Lee was the bell ringer on duty when the anonymous donation was made.

"I don't know who it was," Lee said in a press release, "but I want to thank them."

This is the second consecutive year The Salvation Army has received an anonymous gold donation in a red kettle. Last year, two gold coins were found on the same day, but in two separate kettles.

"It's not something that happens every year for every Salvation Army location, but it's definitely something we keep an eye out for," Maj. Becky Simmons said, in a press release, of the mysterious gold donations. "It's kind of tradition among Salvation Army offices because it's almost like something from a movie, so to see it actually happen in our community is truly heartwarming."

Donations helped inch The Salvation Army closer to its \$160,000 goal during the Christmas season.



Bell ringer Curtis Lee is pictured with majors Becky and Dale Simmons.

Funds raised provide for those in need.

Also, Michigan City Mayor Ron Meer won the inaugural "Battle of the Mayors," which pitted him against LaPorte Mayor Mark Krentz in a showdown to support The Salvation Army.

Each mayor manned a kettle for a 10-hour shift: Meer at the Al's in Karwick Plaza and Krentz at the Kroger in La Porte. Meer took the victory by raking in \$3,631.50, compared to the \$2,589.64 in LaPorte.



Majors Becky Simmons (far left) and Dale Simmons (far right) are pictured with Agnes and Ron Meer.

Meer didn't hold back in getting his family and friends involved. He started out the day ringing with his wife, Agnes, mother, Morene, and Police Chief Mark Swistek. He also had representation from the city's fire department, Promise Scholarship office and planning department.

Krentz also had a number of friends pitching in to help his team, including representatives from city government, First Responders and some musical accompaniment.

More information about The Salvation Army is available by calling the Michigan City office at (219) 874-6885 or the LaPorte office at (219) 326-5342.

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New "Wolfie" to Debut Jan. 11

Thanks to a grass-roots fundraiser by alumni and community supporters, Michigan City High School will debut its new and improved Wolfie during half-time of the Jan. 11 varsity boys basketball game.

The Wolves will take on the Valparaiso Vikings at home, with tipoff at 7 p.m.

The identity of the performer inside the mascot suit has not been revealed yet but, according to a press release, is "rumored to be a student-athlete at MCHS."

The original Wolfie costume dated back to the mid-1990s, and it had become dated and unwearable. MCHS alum Katie Eaton, who is now Michigan City Area Chamber of Commerce president, spearheaded a fundraiser this past fall to buy a new, more modern costume. The effort was facilitated by the Unity Foundation, and major donors included the IHSAA Foundation and Michigan City Rotary Club members. Eaton and other representatives will be on hand for Wolfie's first public appearance.

New Troy Indoor Flea Market

The New Troy (Mich.) Community Center will host two Indoor Flea Markets from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST Saturdays, Jan. 12 and 19.

The markets, admission to which is free, include antiques, tools, crafts, books, memorabilia, housewares, toys and locally made or grown foods. For lunch, the chef will serve homemade cottage pie with soda bread.

The markets continue the second and third Saturdays of each month through April. Proceeds from space rentals benefit the center, 13372 California Road, an all-volunteer facility run by the non-profit Friends of New Troy. A map is available on the Facebook page NewTroyFleaMarket. Call Donald at (773) 803-9773 for details or to reserve a table.

Building Barker Architecture Tour

A new interpreter-led tour takes guests through Barker Mansion's design and construction.

"Building Barker Architecture Tour" is from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 18, at the mansion, 631 Washington St.

Using original blueprints and family correspondence with architect Frederick Wainwright Perkins, the tour encompasses the entire mansion, including archives and other behind-the-scenes areas normally closed to the public. Guests can explore all 35,000 square feet from Perkins' perspective, learning how his vision, coupled with Katherine Fitzgerald Barker's ingenuity, built Michigan City's historic home.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth and seniors. Reservations can be made on Eventbrite or by calling (219) 873-1520.

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Ten-best movie lists are contentious beasts. They get readers passionate about film riled up, prompting emails that center around the following:

- What about so and so film?
- What the !\$#@ were you thinking, including so and so movie?

But the older I get, the more age compels me to go with my gut instinct. Select movies that resonate, that forge an emotional connection, that inspire me.

That is what sculpted this compilation of my favorite movies from 2018. Whether you agree with them, or dismiss them as estranged from reality, I'd love to hear from you. Contact me by email at drew@thebeacher.com

Know, too, that over the next few months is my annual "Road to Oscar" coverage, exploring films vying for the gold statue's attention. Academy Award nominations are announced Tuesday, Jan. 22, with our ballot for *The Beacher's* annual "Beat the Editor" contest appearing in the Jan. 31 edition.

So, without further ado, here are my picks for the year's 10 best films, followed by five honorable mentions.

1. "The Hate U Give"



Any literary adaptation arrives in theaters with baggage. We, the readers, have crystallized in our minds how the characters should look and speak, the worlds they inhabit. One false move, and we treat the film as if tallying a mental scorecard of egregious mistakes. "The Hate U Give," based on Angie Thomas' searing 2017 debut novel, opens with a scene of such raw, understated power, we sigh with relief, comforted by the knowledge that we are in good hands. Amandla Stenberg is Oscar worthy as Starr, a young black teen who witnesses her best friend shot and killed by local police, then summons the courage to let her voice be heard as the community erupts with anger. A film of significant relevance that deals with the issue of race today with restraint and maturity. Oscar nods are in order not only for Stenberg, but also for Best Picture, Adapted Screenplay, and especially Supporting Actor for Russell Hornsby, a tower of strength as Starr's father. The film was a modest success in theaters, but deserves a greater audience when it arrives on DVD and Blu-ray on Jan. 22.



2. "Three Identical Strangers"

In a year that saw one dynamite documentary after another ("Won't You Be My Neighbor?" "RBG," "Whitney"), "Three Identical Strangers" is the most extraordinary. Three identical Jewish siblings are separated at birth and reunited by coincidence in 1980. Transformed into *cause célèbres*, the documentary then unveils the disturbing *why* behind their initial separation. Released by CNN Films, the story of these brothers becomes the equivalent of hard-hitting investigative journalism, an exposé of humans treated as guinea pigs, all in the name of an alleged greater good. "Three Identical Strangers" is alternately inspiring and devastating. It should be required viewing for audiences of all ages.

3. "Black Panther"



The year's most all-around entertaining movie, and a game changer with a political edge that argues against countries taking isolationist stands. Everything about "Black Panther" pops: the cutting-edge visuals, Ruth Carter's eye-candy costumes and especially Michael B. Jordan's magnificent foe, whose presence, and past, carry more weight than the fictional country of Wakanda is willing to admit. This is a marvel of a Marvel super hero movie that does not sanitize Africa. It *celebrates* it. A rich experience that improves with each viewing.

The Best Films of 2018

by Andrew Tallackson



4. "Adrift"

This carefully constructed account of Tami Oldham and Richard Sharp — stranded by a hurricane in the Pacific Ocean back in 1983 — relies on a late-in-the-game twist to pack its desired punch. Anyone familiar with the couple's circumstances may view that approach as manipulative. For me, new to their story, the revelation elevated an already gripping journey into powerful, heartbreaking filmmaking. You come to greatly admire Tami for tapping into unfathomable survival instincts, and Shailene Woodley, who portrays her, for giving everything she's got: her finest work to date.



5. "A Star Is Born"

A story told many a time before it, but rarely with this impact. Whereas previous incarnations treated the material as high-gloss soap opera, director-star Bradley Cooper aims for realism, and he succeeds beautifully through deeply empathetic performances by not just him, but also Lady Gaga and the great Sam Elliott. The film is wise about the way the music industry chews up and spits out talent, and the sequence involving sure-bet Best Song Oscar winner "Shallow" is a rare moment when the joy of creating music on stage is thrillingly captured.

6. "The Wife"

Glenn Close is a blazing presence in this skillful



adaptation of Meg Wolitzer's novel about a woman who harbors a secret about her husband, one that now pushes the two of them to the breaking point. Close thrives on playing women careening into the abyss, but with "The Wife," the journey is a slow burn, followed by an eruption of long-simmering resentment that deserves to win her the Oscar that for too long has eluded her. Scene for scene, Jonathan Pryce is her equal as her husband.



7. "Won't You Be My Neighbor?"

A tender hymn of a documentary: a plea for kindness and tolerance in an era of rampant ugliness. Director Morgan Neville, the Oscar winner for the 2013 documentary "20 Feet From Stardom," crafted a loving tribute to children's programming icon Fred Rogers, conveyed through heartfelt interviews and dynamite archival footage. You leave the film admiring an already admirable man for using the turbulent events of his times to rally humanity against hate and prejudice. This is a film that makes your heart soar.

8. "I Can Only Imagine"

The faith-based film came of age in 2018: more inclusive, less preaching to the choir with jackhammer intensity. "Unbroken: Path to Redemption" is

The Best Films of 2018 Continued from Page 17



another fine example, but “I Can Only Imagine” was three-hankie perfection: a story of redemption and forgiveness inspired by Bart Millard, lead singer of the Christian group Mercy Me. The movie charts the turbulent relationship between Millard and his abusive father, unflinchingly played by Dennis Quaid in an all-or-nothing career best. The movie earns its emotional climax: Anyone not moved by the last 10 minutes has a heart of stone.



9. “Cargo”

Just what the world needs: another zombie movie, right? What happens, though, when two Australian women take a crack at it behind the scenes? You get this thoughtful meditation on the primal nature of parenthood that builds to a shattering finale. Martin Freeman (BBC’s “Sherlock”), second fiddle no longer, is a powerhouse as a father, in the wake of a zombie apocalypse in Australia, who is bitten and has 48 hours to deliver his infant daughter to safety before he “turns.” Shown on Netflix, the film is less about monsters and more about a father’s exhaustive love for his child. Freeman’s final scene with an Aboriginal girl — a bottle of perfume serves as merciful closure — lingers long after all the tears have been wiped away.

10. “Creed II”

Yep, a “Rocky” movie. True, the franchise formula promptly clicks into place — domestic downtime,



snarling villains, training montage — but this is the series at its most human. The relationship between Creed (Michael B. Jordan) and Bianca (Tessa Thompson) is deeper, more complex. The bond between Creed and Rocky (Sylvester Stallone) flourishes through the unspoken language of a mentor and his protégé. And in revisiting the plot threads of “Rocky IV,” Ivan Drago (Dolph Lungren) is no longer a monosyllabic ape, but a father living vicariously through his son (Florian Munteanu). Thrilling, moving, satisfying on all levels, with Jordan, in a hospital-bed confrontation between Creed and Rocky, worthy of Oscar’s notice.

Five Honorable Mentions

- **“BlacKkKlansman”** — Spike Lee’s best film in some time: a harrowing, darkly ironic story inspired by fact of a black detective who infiltrated the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. The film is a harrowing depiction of racism at its primal core.

- **“The Children Act”** — The great English novelist Ian McEwan saw two of his works arrive on the big screen in 2018: “On Chesil Beach” and this adaptation of his provocative 2014 work about a judge overwhelmed by her troubled marriage and an exceedingly tricky case. Emma Thompson, as the judge, along with the great Stanley Tucci, carry this engrossing film from start to finish.

- **“The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society”** — Don’t let the title be a turnoff. Based on the popular 2008 book by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, the film is a delicate balance between whimsy and tragic realism: a love story, mystery and World War II tale effectively wrapped in one memorable package.

- **“Isle of Dogs”** — Wes Anderson at his deadpan best: charming, moving and laugh-out-loud weird in this beautifully animated parable about dogs banished to an island because of a dog flu.

- **“Mary Poppins Returns”** — Practically perfect in every way. Director Rob Marshall (“Chicago,” “Into the Woods”), who knows his way around a musical, delivers sumptuous eye candy, with a cast that aims to please. The only demerit: the pleasant, if not exactly memorable songs.

Westchester Public Library

The following programs are available:

- **Music at the Museum from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 10, at Westchester Township Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.**

The Flashbacks will perform. Members are: Suzanne Keldsen, playing guitar, recorders and fiddle; Julietta Raby, playing fiddle, mandolin and guitar; Nancy Cairns on dulcimer and ukulele; Paul Mache playing guitar and banjo; and Marti Pizzini on autoharp, dulcimer and guitar.

- **Bits & Bytes series, Intro to Computers/Windows 10, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 10, in the Thomas Library Serials/Automation Department, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.**

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

- **Lego Club from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 11, at the Thomas Library Children's Department.**

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

- **It's in the Bag: Create a Babysitting Toolkit for Teens from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, in the Thomas Branch computer classroom.**

Teens in grades 6-12 decorate a tote bag of tricks for babysitting jobs. The library fills the bags with early literacy activities to entertain young children. Staff also can create and print business cards for teens to advertise babysitting business. Registration is required by calling (219) 926-7696.

- **Movie, "Mission Impossible: Fallout," at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13, at The Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.**

The film is PG-13, with free popcorn available.

- **NorthShore Health Center free blood-pressure screening from 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Jan. 16, in the Thomas Library Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

Interested patrons also can receive help calculating Body Mass Index.

- **Kids Improv from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 16, in the Thomas Branch Bertha Wood Meeting Room.**

The improvisational games are aimed at youth 8-12. No registration is required.

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Old Lighthouse Museum Donations

Each year, many items are donated to Michigan City Historical Society for inclusion in exhibits and as additions to Old Lighthouse Museum archives.

For years, the Historical Society has preserved the history of the city and LaPorte County, as well as shipping on Lake Michigan, lighthouses and the lives of their keepers. These collected items are then curated and displayed.

A partial list of items donated in 2018 is:

- Historical Michigan City postcards.
- Wiegman-Bruemmer families photo album.
- Cutty Sark ship model.
- Michigan City Scholl Dairy & Merchants Service Book.
- Complete reference and publicity binder for a revised edition of Patricia Gruse Harris' "Great Lakes Submarine."
- Photographs of Haskell-Barker plant workers.
- Antique German China (Bisque) doll with stand.
- Boys black velvet sailor suit circa 1897 belonging to Fred Stone.
- Original and copies of miscellaneous Indiana historical documents.
- Walter K. Greenebaum family collection/photographs, documents and correspondence.
- 1930s Isaac C. Elston yearbook, school guide, commencement and play program.
- 1903 Beeson's Marine Directory.
- 1925 world shipping chart.
- HMS Victory ship model.
- World War II air raid warden helmet, Joe Schenk, David Schenk.
- 1915 Isaac C. Elston "Elstonian" yearbook.
- 1928 Isaac C. Elston framed graduation class photo.

Anyone with artifacts, photos, books or documents that may be of historical interest to the community should contact Jim Retseck, Michigan City Historical Society president, at (219) 872-6133 to discuss a possible donation. All contributions are tax deductible.

Humane Society Seeks Volunteers

Michiana Humane Society is accepting applications for volunteers to help at the shelter and at 2019 events.

Volunteers play a major role by cleaning kennels and blankets, socializing with animals and helping with registration and other activities during events.

Volunteering counts toward hours for students and others who need to fulfill a certain amount of community service. Individuals must be at least 13 and older, and are asked to volunteer in one- to two-hour shifts when convenient to them.

Apply at www.michianahumanesociety.org, in person or call (219) 872-4499. The shelter is located at 722 Indiana 212.

Lilly Scholarship Recipients

Two LaPorte County students have received full-tuition, four-year scholarships as Unity Foundation of LaPorte County 2019 Lilly Endowment Community Scholars.

Lily Carmel and Abigail Roberts will receive tuition to an accredited public or private Indiana college or university of their choice, and an annual \$900 stipend for required books and equipment.



Carmel will graduate with academic honors from New Prairie High School, having taken several advanced placement and honors courses. She is an active member of the National Honor Society, has shown leadership as a camp counselor and played in regional community bands. She is section leader in her high school marching band. She also is a 10-year 4-H member. She aims to pursue a career as a teacher.

Roberts will graduate from LaPorte High School with an academic honors diploma, including having taken several dual credit and advanced placement courses. She has participated in the Mayor's Youth Council and Principal's Advisory Council. She is an active member of National Honor Society, Girls Reserves and Student Council. She also volunteers in a variety of programs. She competes in swimming and dance, and works part time. She plans to pursue a career as a physician's assistant.



Unity received nearly 100 applications for the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship. Applicants were judged on academic achievement, service to others, extracurricular activities and, to a lesser extent, financial need. A committee of LaPorte County residents reviewed the applications, not knowing the applicants' names until after the finalists were selected. The 10 finalists then were interviewed and nominees submitted to the Independent Colleges of Indiana Inc. for the final selection.

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

- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 14.

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Children's Art Classes

Jennifer Martin will host January children's art classes at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

The goal is to introduce children to various artists, their styles and techniques, with projects reflecting what they are learning. Classes meet weekly and are open to all ages and skill levels. Mediums include drawing, painting, papier mache, mosaic, sculpture and collage. The schedule is:

- Monday, 1-2 p.m., preschool, 4- to 5-year-olds.
- Monday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (beginner), 5- to 8-year-olds.
- Tuesday, 1-2 p.m., preschool 3- to 4-year-olds.
- Tuesday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (intermediate), 6- to 9-year-olds.
- Wednesday, 1-2:30 p.m., homeschool, 8- to 15-year-olds.
- Wednesday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (intermediate), 6- to 9-year-olds.
- Thursday, 3:30-5 p.m., after school (advanced), 8- to 12-year-olds.
- Thursday, 5:15-6:45 p.m., after school (advanced painting), 10- to 16-year-olds.

Tuition is \$90 per month for after-school and home-school students (the member rate is \$70), and \$75 for preschool students (the member rate is \$55). Families must be current members to receive the discount. Supplies and a snack are included. Students must be registered and paid for before the start of each month. All payments made after the 15th of the month are subject to a \$20 late fee.

Call the center at (219) 926-4711 or visit www.chestertonart.com for details.

Unity Receives \$1M Grant

The Unity Foundation of LaPorte County has received a \$1 million grant as part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s seventh phase of its Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow initiative.

With GIFT VII, Lily is making up to \$125 million available to help Indiana community foundations strengthen the towns, cities and counties they serve.

Unity Foundation can use the matching-fund grant to build financial assets and support charitable activities. It will designate the funds to support the growth of unrestricted endowments, which over time provide flexibility to help meet community needs. The endowment will provide \$2 for every \$1 contributed to Unity's unrestricted endowments, such as its Power for Good Fund, during the matching period, which is Oct. 1, 2018, through Dec. 31, 2020.

To encourage Unity's board of directors, the endowment will award an additional \$100,000 unrestricted grant if the foundation achieves 100 percent financial support from its board members from Jan. 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

Winter Waterfowl Hike

Shirley Heinze Land Trust kicks off its 2019 educational hike series with a Winter Waterfowl Hike from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Jan. 19, at various Lake County locations.

The hike is led by Matt Kalwasinski, who birds extensively in Northwest Indiana and has led birding trips for Shirley Heinze Land Trust and Indiana Audubon Society.



Matt Kalwasinski's photo highlights Scaup and Goldeneye on Lake Michigan at Hammond.

Participants visit a number of locations in Whiting, East Chicago and Hammond, including Whiting Park, Whihala Beach, Jeorse Park, East Chicago Marina and the Grand Calumet River. The goal is to look for ducks and other overwintering birds. Registrants receive directions, driving or carpooling to each site.

Group size is limited to 15, and advance registration and payment are required. The cost is \$25. Visit www.heinzetrust.org/hike-program.html to register or for more details, or call the office at (219) 242-8558.

Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has protected, restored and maintained Northwest Indiana's natural communities, including tallgrass prairie, high dune, oak savanna, boreal flatwoods, dune-and-swale, woodlands, marshes, swamps, ponds, fens, bogs and riparian habitat. More than 2,400 acres in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and St. Joseph counties have been preserved.

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Activities to Explore

In the Area:

Jan. 10 — Music at the Museum, 2-3:30 p.m., Westchester History Township Museum, 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton.

Jan. 12 — CSI: Owls!, 10-10:45 a.m., Nature Center @ Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Jan. 12 — Art in the National Lakeshore, 2-4 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Jan. 12 — Winter Open House 2019, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Dunes Learning Center, 700 Howe Road, Chesterton. Free. Registration: www.duneslearningcenter.org

Jan. 13 — Snowshoe Shuffle, 10-11:30 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Jan. 13 — Movies in January, “Mission Impossible: Fallout,” 1:30 p.m., The Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Jan. 13 — Winter Movie at the Library: “Alpha,” 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Jan. 14 — CoderDojo, 5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Jan. 15 — Art Bots, 4 p.m., Makerspace @ Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St.

Jan. 16 — Kids Improv, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Westchester Public Library, 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Jan. 16 — Brown Bag Gardening Series, 1 p.m., LaPorte County Extension Office, 2857 W. Indiana 2, LaPorte. Cost: \$5. Info: (219) 324-9407.

Through January — Duneland Plein Air Painters exhibit, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: www.chestertonart.com

In the Region

Jan. 12, 19 — Indoor Flea Markets, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. EST, New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road. Admission: free. Info: (773) 803-9773.

Jan. 13 — Movie Screenings at the Douglas Center, 2 p.m., The Paul H. Douglas Center, 100 N. Lake St., Miller Beach. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Support Groups

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

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

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

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

Stained Glass Classes

Judy Gregurich and Mark Montgomery will host two eight-week stained glass classes beginning from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 22, at Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St.

In "Beginning Stained Glass," students learn the art of copper foil stained glass, originally invented by Louis Tiffany. Tools and supplies are included. Class size is limited to four students. The cost is \$260, with members receiving a \$30 discount.

"Stained Glass Open Studio" is for students who have taken a stained glass class at the center. They will experiment with different types of textured clear glass, copper foil overlay and sand blasting (etching). They also may work on their own projects at their own pace, with assistance as needed.

Students are expected to provide tools and supplies. Class size is limited to eight students. The cost is \$105, with members receiving a \$30 discount.

All students must register and pay prior to the first class. Visit www.chestertonart.com for details.

SoulCore Exercise

The community is invited to participate in SoulCore, a free exercise class, at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, in the Queen of All Saints Legacy Center, 1719 E. Barker Ave.

SoulCore pairs core strengthening, stretching and functional movement with prayers of the rosary. The sensory experience combines candlelight, music, scripture and movement. The class is led by Amy O'Donnell, the only certified SoulCore instructor in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gary. She teaches weekly classes at St. Mary in Crown Point.

People of all fitness abilities are invited, and exercises even can be done from a chair if needed. Participants should take an exercise mat. If needing to borrow one, contact Bruce Garwood, Health and Wellness Ministry co-chair, at bgarwood2@hotmail.com

Credit Union College Scholarships

Members Advantage Credit Union is accepting applications for its annual Gail Walker and Leona Bruno scholarships.

In 2010, MACU established the \$1,000 Gail Walker Memorial Scholarship to honor the former board member's years of service. It is awarded annually to a graduating high school senior, college freshman or sophomore with strong academic achievement.

The \$1,000 Leona Bruno Scholarship was established in 1994 in memory of MACU's first manager. It goes to a graduating high school senior.

The submission deadline is Monday, Feb. 11. Call (219) 874-6943 or (877) 874-6943 with questions. Visit www.macuonline.org/college-scholarships for more details.

ENVELOPES



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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On January 10, 1776, Thomas Paine published his influential pamphlet “Common Sense.” In his call for American independence from England, he wrote; *“Everything that is right or reasonable pleads for separation.”*

On January 10, 1843, Virginia’s Representative John Botts introduced the first impeachment resolution against a president, charging John Tyler with corruption, malconduct in office and high crimes and misdemeanors. (The House rejected the motion 127-83.)

On January 10, 1863, London’s Metropolitan, the world’s first underground passenger railway, opened.

On January 10, 1971, “Masterpiece Theatre” premiered on PBS.

On January 10, 1982, Chicago residents tried in vain to stay warm as a record low temperature of minus 26 degrees settled on the city.

On January 11, 1805, the Michigan Territory was created.

On January 11, 1913, patrons of the National Automobile Show in New York City saw a new type of luxury car—the four-door sedan. It was a Hudson.

On January 11, 1935, aviator Amelia Earhart took off from Honolulu bound for Oakland on the last leg of a flight that made her the first woman to fly solo across the Pacific.

On January 11, 1982, Chicago’s schools were closed the day after a record-breaking cold, when mercury dropped to 26 degrees below zero. At 11 a.m. the temperature climbed to zero for the first time in two days.

On January 11, 2000, Carlton Fisk, star catcher for the White Sox for 13 years and for the Boston Red Sox for 11, was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

On January 12, 1896, Dr. H.L. Smith, a professor of astronomy at Davidson College, made the first X-ray photograph in the United States.

On January 12, 1927, the City of Chicago dedicated Midway Airport.

On January 12, 1971, the long-running “All in the Family,” a soap opera comedy, made its debut on CBS television.

On January 12, 1999, Mark McGwire’s 70th home run ball was sold at auction for \$3 million.

On January 12, 2005, a NASA spacecraft, Deep Impact, blasted off on a mission to smash a hole in a

comet and give scientists a glimpse of the frozen primordial ingredients of the solar system. (The probe smashed into Comet Tempel 1 on July 3.)

On January 13, 1906, the first advertisement for a radio, a Telimco selling for \$7.50, appeared in Scientific American magazine.

On January 13, 1966, Robert Weaver became the first black Cabinet member when President Lyndon Johnson appointed him Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

On January 13, 1976, Sarah Caldwell became the first woman to conduct at New York's Metropolitan Opera House as she led a performance of "La Traviata."

On January 14, 1559, Elizabeth I was crowned Queen of England.

On January 14, 1870, in a cartoon by Thomas Nast in *Harper's Weekly*, the Democratic Party was represented for the first time by a donkey.

On January 14, 1900, Puccini's "Tosca" received a mixed reception at its world premiere in Rome.

On January 14, 1914, Henry Ford started the assembly line that reduced the time of putting together a car from over 12 hours to 93 minutes. This contributed to lowered automobile prices, smog, energy shortages, traffic jams, fast food restaurants, and Arab dominance of the oil market.

On January 15, 1559, England's Queen Elizabeth I was crowned in Westminster Abby.

On January 15, 1844, the University of Notre Dame received its charter from Indiana.

On January 15, 1967, the Green Bay Packers of the NFL defeated the Kansas City Chiefs of the AFL in the first Super Bowl, 35-10.

On January 15, 1974, "Happy Days" (that was to become one of the longest-running sitcoms on TV) premiered on ABC.

On January 15, 1987, Ray Bolger, best remembered for his role as the scarecrow in the 1939 MGM musical "The Wizard of Oz," died at 83.

On January 16, 1547, "Ivan the Terrible" was crowned czar of Russia.

On January 16, 1920, America went "dry" (so to speak) as the 18th Amendment to the Constitution took effect (one year after ratification), and Prohibition became the law of the land.

On January 16, 1964, the stage show "Hello Dolly," starring Carol Channing, began a run of 2,844 performances.

On January 16, 1967, a fire destroyed Chicago's McCormick Place.

On January 16, 2006, "Brokeback Mountain" won four Golden Globes, including best motion picture drama; "Lost" won best dramatic television series while "Desperate Housewives" won for best musical or comedy series.

NEWSLETTERS

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Krasl Winter Classes, Workshops

Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich., has announced winter classes for members and non-members.

After-school youth classes (ages 5-12), available in ceramics, mixed media, drawing and painting, begin Tuesday, Jan. 22.

Classes for adults/teens (13 and older) include “Drawing from Observation,” “Introduction to Acrylics,” “Saturday Photography Excursions” and “Carve Your Own Barn Swallow.” Intermediate and advanced students can apply to work independently in the 2-D or Clay Artist Guild, or register for a visiting artist workshop such as “Portrait Photography: Lighting and Techniques, Mixed Media and Collage” or “Image Transfers on Clay.”

Free “Family Nights” are from 5 to 6:30 p.m. EST the second Wednesday of each month at Benton Harbor Public Library, 213 E. Wall St., while “Family Days” are from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. EST the second Saturday of each month at KAC.

KAC also will serve as a venue for the Coastline Children’s Film Festival for 10 days, beginning March 8 and including the Opening Night Costume Party and Grand Finale Silent Film Screening.

Students must register 10 days before class begins. Visit krasl.org or call (269) 983-0271 to register or for more details.

Winter Open House

Join naturalists for a winter open house from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12, at Dunes Learning Center, 700 Howe Road, Chesterton.

The event includes outdoor activities, and an indoor “campfire” featuring live music, hot cocoa and cookies.

Admission is free, with registration requested at eventbrite.com

Yoga at the Civic

“Yoga at the Civic” returns at 8 a.m. Mondays and Fridays at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. The walk-in class, which costs \$5, runs through June 7, before “Yoga on the Beach” starts. Visit www.cityoflaporte.com for details.

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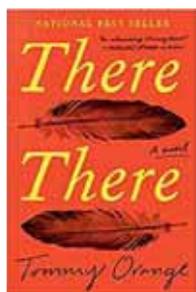
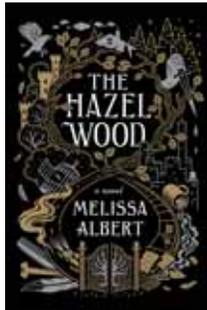
Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Welcome to the new year! It seems like yesterday it was New Year's Eve 1999 and everyone was worried about Y2K. So here we are, 20 years later, with a whole new year of books to explore, but I'm feeling nostalgic, so here's a recap of 10 of the best books I reviewed last year.

In the *non-fiction category*, I was fascinated by **The White Darkness** by David Grann. British ex-Army officer Henry Worsley was so taken with Shackleton's explorations, he decided to make the trip to the South Pole, of which Shackleton fell 97 miles short. Worsley finished the trek and could have considered his dream complete. However, he decided to also go the trans-Antartica route some years later — by himself. I found myself considering how we can let dreams and ambitions win over common sense. Amazing photos accompany the text.

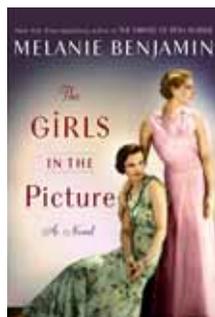
The Hazel Wood by Melissa Albert is my pick for the *Young Adult category*, as well as *fantasy*. It won a number of awards last year and, like Harry Potter, has a story that appeals to adults and teens. Seventeen-year-old Alice lives a hippie life with her mother until she sets off on a journey to find her roots. There's no mistake why her name is Alice.



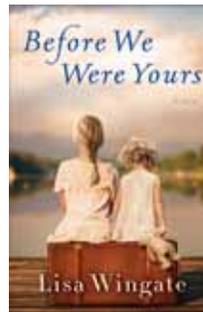
Moving to the *Humanities*, there is the novel **There, There** by Tommy Orange, exploring the modern Native American, and the trials of living in a modern world while still trying to honor their lost heritage. The lives of several Indians are followed as they prepare for a big powwow. Not always pretty stories, but always keeping it real.

In *Historical Fiction*, I found two books extremely well-researched. **he** by John Connolly tells the friendship of comedians Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. Told from the perspective of Laurel in an almost poetic style covering their lives and loves, highs and lows. It's also a back-door look at the history of the film industry.

The second *Historical Fiction* gave me **The Girls in the Picture** by Melanie Benjamin, which covers the lifelong friendship and struggles of Mary Pickford and Frances Marion. A fascinating look at two female pioneers in the film industry, how they fought to take charge of their careers in a man's world.



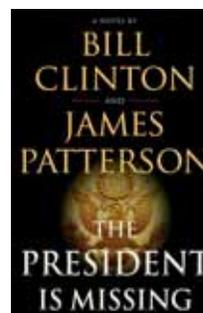
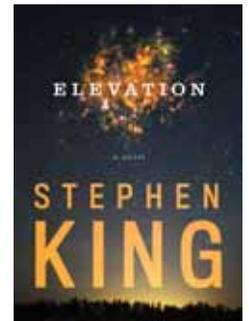
A third *Historical Fiction* took me on an emotion-



al roller-coaster: **Before We Were Yours** by Lisa Wingate. This story follows the Tennessee Children's Home Society in Memphis, which flourished from the 1930s to 1950. Its story is told through the lives of two fictional women: one from the 1930s and one from the present whose lives intersect in the most unusual way. No one can read this book and not be moved. The lesson:

our children should never become commodities.

Science Fiction provided several titles, but the one that left me thinking was **Elevation** by Stephen King. This was a love-it-or-leave-it selection. I found it to be a humanitarian look at today's political and social environment. While the elevation in the story is physical, between the lines is a hidden message that elevation is a process, not just physical, but philosophical. A moving lesson, indeed, by the king of storytelling.



In the *thriller category*, I found **The President is Missing** by James Patterson and Bill Clinton to be a major thriller with a capital T. It's not a political statement, just a page turner about what would happen if the president suddenly disappeared. It's a question mark to the last page. Told in the first person by the president, you see that it's easy to be an armchair quarterback when you haven't played the game.

Also in *thrillers*, I couldn't put down **Force of Nature** by Jane Harper. If you never bit your fingernails, you might start while reading this one. Alice Russell disappears in the woods during a corporate retreat. Her four companions know nothing. Really? And why have federal agents shown up? What's their interest in Alice?

The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah was an emotional read for me. It's 1974 and Ernt returns from Vietnam a changed man — an angry man. He thinks taking his wife and daughter to Alaska for a fresh start will help him. Ernt's moods are challenged by the unforgiving landscape of Alaska, and his PTSD worsens as days go by. The effect on a family in crisis is written in the tears and blood of these three people...a climax that had me reaching for the tissues.

Till next time, happy reading, and Happy New Year!



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2br/2ba / \$319,000
Brian Volckmann • 219.561.1505
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