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High Hopes

by William Halliar

Editor's note — The Beacher's William Halliar interviewed Michael Leland before the COVID-19 pandemic, before quarantine restrictions were in place.

Michael Leland is a Viking.

The spirit of his ancestors, he says, in particular his Norwegian grandfather, is "in my genetic memory. In my blood."

Leland shares this sentiment with me during an interview in which his boat, "Hope," is docked in the nearby marina. As we chat, I can tell his thoughts are never far from that small "Viking ship," and the next set of adventures he will share within its rounded, weathered hull.

Leland is a deep-thinking, spiritual man. A retired orthopedic surgeon. Hope was named in honor of Romans 5:5 — "*Hope does not disappoint.*" He is philosophical about the relationship between man and the sea.

"The ocean will speak to us not of anger, but of power and majesty," he says.

When he sails, he



Michael Leland, photographed by *The Beacher's* Bill Halliar aboard "Hope" in Michigan City.

keeps in mind advice from an old sailor years ago about never tampering with Mother Nature: "*She will twist your butt, she will kill you.*"

When Leland was first married, he promised his wife, Cindy, he would only sail in the Great Lakes, not in the ocean. The lakes are small enough that if anything untoward happened, he said, "they could always find a body."

However, as a dream of sailing to Norway emerged, then persisted, that promise went out the window. Cindy, thankfully, is an understanding woman.

Leland is not a large man, but he is powerfully built. His hands are large, gnarled and tanned, scarred and used to toil. The hands of his hardworking ancestors. The perfect size and strength to haul in the sheets of a boat caught in a gale,

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or manhandle the tiller as it is torn this way and that in waves that would challenge the most seasoned sailor. Once during a voyage, he broke his leg, but continued to work his boat through the storm until he reached his destination.

"The first time I sailed was 1970. I was a junior in college" Leland says. He thought of his grandfather's birthplace in Norway and of his Viking ancestors, and the idea to sail there in his own boat came to him. He told himself, "I will do it."

"From that time on," he adds, "it was always in the back of my mind."

Cindy Leland is of Dutch descent, and as the oldest child in her family, it fell to her to take care of



Michael Leland displays the "Super Mac" banner for the Overall Clark-DeRoy Trophy.

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Leland purchased his second boat, "Hope," in 2005, wisely chosen for his dream voyage. Hope is a 32' cruising sailboat built by Najad in Orust, Sweden. Najad's boats are designed as "ocean going yachts," capable of being handled by a crew as small as two people. According to a review by *Cruising World*, "*The Najad 332 is so intuitive and logical that you could negotiate it with your eyes closed.*"

Leland modified the boat to his liking, using it the first several years to sail and race in the Great Lakes, all while preparing himself, and his boat, for the great adventure across the ocean. In 2008, he sailed Hope in Chicago Yacht Club's Race to Mackinac, known to sailors as "The Mac," for the first time. It was exhilarating, and he was determined to do it again the following year.



"Hope," photographed on Lake Michigan amid a beautiful, sunny day.

Leland entered that race and sailed in it from 2008 to 2015, winning several awards in his class. In 2015, he raced in the "Super Mac," a grueling test from Chicago to Detroit. During the event, he passed many a boat built for speed. They encountered heavy weather and strong winds. Hope, however, is a cruising yacht built for such conditions. Always in the back of Michael's mind, too, was a trip across the sea to Norway.

So, he spent years getting experience and preparing himself for the journey.

In 2016, Hope was trucked from its home harbor in Michigan City — a former Chesterton resident, Leland now lives in Valparaiso — to Jamestown, R.I. There, he and friends spent the summer testing the metal of the boat, honing their own skills for deep-water ocean sailing. After wintering in an East Coast boatyard, Hope was ready to begin the first leg of her ocean voyage...and the realization of Michael's dream.

That was in May 2017.

Leland and friends Vic Warren and Moose DeBone sailed to Nova Scotia, where Hope would wait until weather conditions, including the threat of ice-

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High Hopes

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bergs, ensured a safe window for the west-to-east leg of a round trip that would take them out across open water. Finally, on Aug. 3, 2017, Michael, Warren and DeBone, along with Bruce Carter and Dave Rearick, raised anchor and set their sails, pointing their helm for the far-off Scandinavian coast.

The crossing, although rough, was an adventure that can only be enjoyed by close friends willing to risk their lives by helping one of their own fulfill a dream. They set up a watch consisting of two-man teams. Each would have four hours on duty and four hours off. Some of the time was quiet, a time for telling stories and sharing dreams. Some of the watches were filled with excitement, with thoughts only of saving life and limb in fierce winds and high waves.

In 2017, the goal was to sail to Sweden after 13 days of being away from any port. On a windy, early morning watch, fighting 15'-20' waves, "the coast of Norway rose out of the mist," Leland says.



"Hope," photographed with storm sails raised.

"It was an otherworldly experience," he continued. "The sun was in my face. I was sailing my own boat, and I was seeing the mountains of my homeland." He told himself, "It doesn't get any better than this. I will always remember this day."

In a crusingworld.com article dated April 18, 2018, Rearick described the moment like this, "*Approaching the coast, I found Michael helming in a teary, joyful, emotional moment with a rainbow behind him and the reflections of the Norwegian headlands in his glasses. He was living the dream he began 40 years ago...I could sense his peace from the spiritual and emotional happiness he was living.*"

Leland was not just captain of the vessel, but also chief cook and bottle washer. He is an avowed gourmet chef who is planning to write a cookbook using the voyage as inspiration: writing about what was cooked, where exactly it was served on the ocean crossing and what the weather was like as it was

eaten. He would prepare meals and play classical music over the boat's sound system, on rare days when the weather was beautiful.

Rearick's account of the fare served aboard Hope says much about Leland's cooking skills. As they battened down the hatches for their ocean crossing, "*skipper Michael Leland...was in a state of Zen, preparing another magical meal in the galley using containers of various ingredients, most of which I had inventoried before leaving Newfoundland and listed as unknown twigs, seeds and floor sweepings. Michael's magic in the galley complemented the spirit of the open sea.*"

The first stop after 13 days on open water was in Dingle, Ireland, where they were hailed and feted as the "Americans who had sailed across the open sea." From there, they sailed to Howth near Dublin around the southern coast of Ireland, and into the Irish Sea and north to the Caledonian Canal and across the north of Scotland. From there, Hope sailed across the North Sea to Mandal, Norway, and across open water to Orust, Sweden, where Hope was built. Hope wintered here while Leland and crew flew back to America to spend time with their families.

Back in Orust the next spring, Leland and crew prepared for the final leg of their journey to the home port of his grandfather.

Leland carries a folding bicycle aboard Hope. After docking in the harbor nearest his grandfather's birthplace of Leland, Norway, he had to cycle eight miles from the coast to the little town in cold, rainy conditions. His only comment about that long final trek was that "it was wonderful."

Leland was surprised by his reaction to achieving his goal. The crew had experienced tough sailing conditions, with waves at times up to 20' high. The final approach to the narrow harbor, lined on both sides with high, intimidating cliffs. The grueling eight-mile bicycle ride in terrible weather. Arriving in Leland, though, was not as emotional as he expected. He was simply drained by the effort.



"Hope," settled in the harbor of the birthplace of Michael Leland's grandfather.

In 2018, Leland and DeBone sailed Hope back to the American coast. The adventure of a lifetime was now behind him.

His logbook from Sept. 5, 2018, reads: "Sun is rising on a new day. Hope has been cleaned and everything that we can carry back on the plane is off. Her sails are off and are being prepared for winter storage. Hope has been stripped of her power. It is time to go home; time to rest."

"It is a new day. We have followed the routes of our ancestors. We have seen and experienced what they have. I have reached the birthplace of my grandfather and his father, and those before. On my own boat. I have kept my promise.

"We may never pass this way again. New adventures await."



Cindy Leland,
photographed in 2018.



Michael Leland and his amazing crew.

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"The Platform" is Bold, Yucky Science-Fiction

by Andrew Tallackson

"The Platform," a new thriller streaming on Netflix, would make for a good double feature with Bong Joon-ho's "Snowpiercer" (2013). Both are allegories about class disguised as science-fiction, where society's castaways, those at the bottom of the food chain, rise up against the comfy, well-fed upper crust.

There's just one difference.

"The Platform" is *not* for the faint of heart. Not by any means. Think "Snowpiercer" by way of 1993's "Alive," that queasy account of the 1972 rugby team plane crash, where survivors cannibalized each other to survive.

If, by that description, "The Platform" sounds way too yucky, then, by all means, skip it. But for the curious — the subtitled Spanish import is giving streaming sensation "Tiger King" a run for its money — it is one of the more original, clever, thought-provoking chillers to emerge in some time.

The premise is deceptively simple. Goreng (Iván Massagué) awakens in a concrete cell, the room identified as No. 48, and with one inmate for a companion, the elderly Trimagasi (Zorion Eguileor). Once each day, a platform drops from the top, making a stop at each level. It is a magnificently symbolic feast. Meat. Fruit. Vegetables. Sumptuous pastries. Inmates have a few minutes to grab whatever they can before the meal drops to the next level. The platform's arrival is signified with a horn-like blast that is comforting at first, but grows ominous with each passing day. The further down the floor, the less food available. And how many floors exist in this concrete tower? That is a mystery that goes unsolved until the end. Making matters worse: Each month, inmates are drugged, then awaken on an entirely different floor. Sometimes, they find themselves closer to the top, with more food at their fingertips. Other times, they end up below, *way* below, where they once were.

Rather ingenious premise, wouldn't you say? Kinda recalls the 1997 Canadian cheapie "Cube" in which strangers awaken in a massive, booby-trapped cell that repeatedly changes dimensions. "The Platform," however, has more on its mind. Director Galder Gaztelu-Urrutia describes his film as a plea for "the fair distribution of wealth," and that symbolism, the movie's message, is pretty easy to decipher. Those at the "top" have the best access to satiating their hunger. Those at the "bottom" scrounge for scraps, sometimes left with nothing.

Those pushed to the brink of hunger will do whatever it takes to "feed."

The claustrophobic tension of "The Platform" comes from Goreng feverishly trying to solve the riddle of his predicament. It isn't easy. Inmates peer from floors above and below as the platform makes its way down the tower. Some pounce on the platform, dropping below to see what or who exists below in terms of "food." Paranoia and hallucinations



Goreng (Iván Massagué) awakens in his cell, unsure how he got there, in "The Platform," now streaming on Netflix.



"The Platform"

Running time: 94 minutes. Rated TV-MA for language, violence and gore

kick in, making Goreng question what is real.

The first instance of cannibalism, I covered my eyes, not ready for the blechy sight of one inmate attempting to "dine" on the other. The violence is shocking; however, Gaztelu-Urruti, as director, doesn't linger on it. In fact, from thereon out, the grisly nature of "The Platform" is carried out off-screen.

Ultimately, the film is about rebellion, about rising up against the oppressor, demanding that everyone receive a fair share of the wealth. And while "The Platform" can be grim, the final image, conveying how our young must be the symbol of change, is one of hope, not despair.

"The Platform" is *not* for everyone. The premise, alone, will turn off some of the streaming populace. But in its own grubby way, the movie has a lot to say. Just know, you've been warned.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



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The Dunes Kicks Off Webcasts Featuring Live Performances

by Andrew Tallackson



Among the musicians lined up to perform during "Hump Day Happy Hour" are Johnny V (left) and Keith Scott.

Any other year, the month of April would find Amy Black and Jeffrey Baumgartner amid a frenzy of activity. As Dunes Arts Foundation president and vice president/artistic director, respectively, the two typically are immersed in preparations for the forthcoming Dunes Summer Theatre season.

But after four weeks of quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic, life, as it is for countless others, is on temporary hold.

"Amy looked at me and said, 'What day is it?' I said, 'Wednesday.' She yelled immediately, 'Ha! Hump Day!'" Baumgartner told *The Beacher* via email. "We both started laughing."

Hence the idea behind "Hump Day Happy Hour," a new webcast through Dunes Arts Foundation/Dunes Summer Theatre in which regional musicians perform live for 45 minutes starting at 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays. First up is Johnny V on April 15 and blues musician Keith Scott on April 22.

"We wanted to remind folks what day of the week it was," Baumgartner said. "Everybody would have a virtual drink together, and we could enlist the tal-

ents of talented friends, pay them to live-stream a 45-minute set in an effort to showcase their musical talents while providing our audience some entertainment while sequestered."

Black told *The Beacher* via email that online programming is one way the Dunes can support local and regional artists.

"Like so many others, artists are among those gig workers who have been particularly hard-hit during this pandemic," she said. "We need to support them, and encourage an appreciative audience to support them as well."

All people have to do at 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays is visit facebook.com/dunesarts. Each musician will perform from home. Johnny V is a singer-songwriter whose sound weaves through genres, including blues, folk, Americana and bluegrass. Influences include Neil Young and Tom Petty. Scott, a Chicago-based blues/rock guitarist, is a favorite on college campuses and Chicago's WXRT radio. He has seven solo CDs to his credit.

Amid these new webcasts, where does the Dunes



Amy Black (left) and Jeffrey Baumgartner.

summer season stand? That is something Black, Baumgartner and the board are monitoring daily.

"Surely, our season will be impacted," Baumgartner said. "We do not know yet to what extent. We will announce plans in the coming weeks.

"Too, we are considering what other organizations and theater companies are doing, and how they are handling the world crisis with regard to programming."

(Visit dunesartsfoundation.org for more details.)

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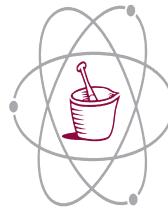
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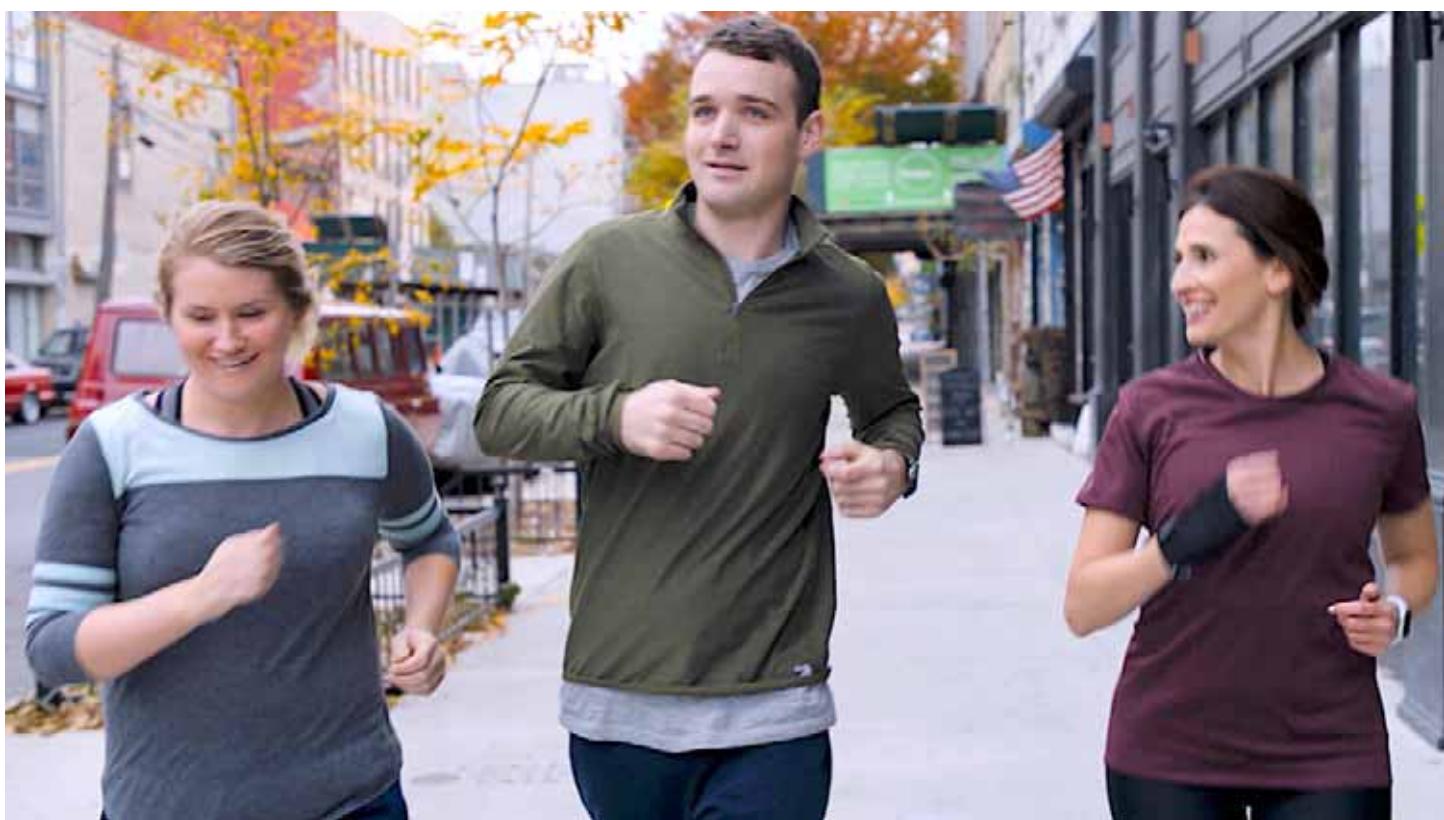
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"Brittany Runs a Marathon" Will Win You Over

by Andrew Tallackson



Brittany (Jillian Bell, left) finds her life transformed, largely through two new friends, Seth (Micah Stock) and Catherine (Michaela Watkins), in "Brittany Runs a Marathon," which is streaming on Amazon Prime.

"Brittany Runs a Marathon" barely caused a ripple in theaters last year, and darn it, it should have.

This movie won my heart. I cannot sing its praises enough. Paul Downs Colaizzo, a playwright making his debut as writer, director and executive producer, transforms a flimsy, feel-good premise inspired by a real person into a story with muscle.

There are laughs, to be sure, and Jillian Bell ("22 Jump Street"), a former "Saturday Night Live" writer, finally sinks her teeth into a role worthy of her self-deprecating talent. But "Brittany Runs a Marathon" forces its heroine to confront a whole host of negligible demons, so when the big event arrives, the payoff is unexpectedly emotional. It packs one heckuva punch. Anyone who says they didn't choke up at the end is a liar. That's how effective this movie is, and we have Amazon Prime to thank for affording it the afterlife it deserves.

Bell plays Brittany, whose life is stuck in neutral. She's nearing 30, barely scraping by financially and terribly overweight. She knows everyone labels her the "fat girl," so humor is her defense mechanism. She beats others to the punch by having the last laugh. And if being funny can't be enough for others, then alcohol and drugs like Adderall introduce the other side to her personality: the always fun, always game for a party girl.

A wellness checkup serves as Brittany's wakeup



"Brittany Runs a Marathon"

Running time: 103 minutes. Rated R for language throughout, sexuality and some drug material

call. She must get healthy and lose weight, or suffer the consequences. At first, she deflects the warning with caustic wit — *"I think you totally missed the point of those Dove ads."* The movie also is wise in showing Brittany's reliance on easy outs — the gym is too expensive, fast food = comfort. But then, it introduces three new people into her life. One is Catherine (Michaela Watkins), a neighbor who makes running her top priority. The next is Seth (Micah Stock), a father out to prove he's no wimpy athlete to his kids. And there is Jern Dahn (Utkarsh Ambudkar), a slacker house-sitting the same apartment as Brittany.

Had this been a lazy, cruddy Lifetime channel movie, "Brittany Runs a Marathon" would have piled on enough warm, sugary fuzzies to induce diabetic coma. The movie, however, is bolder. Daring to be dark, even. Bell actually lost 40 pounds during filming, and when the transformation is complete, the actress places an invisible shield around her character fueled by insecurity. Brittany has been pitied for so long for being overweight, she doesn't

know how to react to genuine kindness. She becomes isolated, downright mean.

The breaking point arrives through a family member who sits Brittany down and tells her, *"This marathon was never about you losing the weight. It was about you taking responsibility for your life."* How Bell softens Brittany from there, allows a smile to emerge, is a beautiful piece of acting.

It helps, too, that the key players in her life are fleshed out by actors who defy convention.

Catherine, as played with brittle precision by Watkins, is no ice queen, but a woman engaged in a bitter divorce, at risk of losing custody of her children. Her friendship with Brittany and Seth is based in part by loneliness, but also a maternal desire to still parent those near her. When it is revealed that Seth is gay and married, you brace for the gay best friend stereotype. Hardly. Stock's cliché-bending performance treats Seth as an average Joe whose personal life is presented so matter-of-factly, it is the starting point for Brittany getting her own personal affairs in order. And with Ambudkar ("Pitch Perfect," TV's "The Mindy Project") going against the grain of male love interests, within Hollywood's limited view of the concept, the circle is now complete.

These people exist in Brittany's life for a reason. When she finally makes it to the New York City Marathon, she is no longer the same person.

Transformed, not just physically, but within, with who see is as a woman. Bell positively glows here. Captured by three simultaneous film crews during the actual 2017 New York City Marathon, the au-



Jillian Bell actually lost 40 pounds while filming "Brittany Runs a Marathon."

thenticity of the big finish strips it of any Hollywood goop. It aims for a crowd-pleasing finish, true, but it earns each and every tear.

I was genuinely moved and inspired by "Brittany Runs a Marathon." You will, too. I guarantee it.

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Keeping Busy Amid COVID-19

by Andrew Tallackson



We asked...and you keep delivering.

The submissions keep pouring in after we issued a call for readers to share photos of how they're keeping busy, and sane, during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this week's edition, this one was our favorite.

Long Beach resident April Fallon, who lives at Stop 25, put up a "Be Positive" whiteboard in front of her home. Walkers, runners, even drivers have

stopped to add words of encouragement.

"It's been fun and heartwarming watching it fill up," she told *The Beacher* via email.

We intentionally ran the photo larger because we wanted readers to see exactly what people wrote while passing by.

Submit your photos to drew@thebeacher.com by noon each Thursday for consideration.



Five Tips for Taking Care of Your Trees

1. Don't "top" your trees. Topping is the removal of large branches to reduce the height of the tree. This causes decay that leads to large branch failures in the future.
2. Don't "spike" your trees. Spiking causes wounds that lead to infection and tree decline. Anyone who spikes trees is causing long-term damage to the trees.
3. Avoid damage to the roots. Large trucks cause soil compaction and digging up roots cause frayed wounds that can't heal and create access points for pathogens (fungi) that start root rot and weaken the trees structural stability. Lawn mowers can also cause damage to the root flares.
4. Protect the roots out to the drip line from any activity other than foot traffic. The drip line is simply the outside edge of the canopy. On a mature open grown oak, it can be a circle of 60 feet in diameter.
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New Historical Book Available

LaPorte County natives Gloria Arndt and Dorothy Palmer have released the new book Michigan City, Indiana: Businesses & The People That Made Them Prosper, 1832-1890.

The self-published book contains more than 400 pages, including photos and more than 6,000 entries about Michigan City businesses and their owners. Section 1, written by Arndt, covers 1832-1860. Section 2, written by Palmer, includes information from 1860-1890. An appendix contains contributions by both authors. The latter includes lists of employees, explanations of street-name changes and other information.

The book, which costs \$50, is available by contacting Palmer at dorothypalmer@mac.com or Arndt at prairiefarm4@gmail.com. Shipping costs \$5. Allow four weeks for delivery. The book will be available at LaPorte County Historical Society Museum when it reopens after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Arndt and Palmer, both LaPorte County Genealogical Society members, have cowritten other historical works. Arndt wrote Canada, The Story of a Neighborhood and cowrote Abandoned Cemeteries in LaPorte County with Patricia Harris. Palmer compiled Naturalization Records, Declaration of Intentions and Final Papers, and joined Harold Henderson and Mary Leahy Wenzel to produce Indiana, Early Probate Records, 1833-1850. Both have collaborated on other efforts to preserve local and county records.

Visit www.laportecountyhistory.org or the Facebook page, or email info@laportecountyhistory.org, for updates.

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I Tried Watching “Cats”...and Barely Made it Out Alive

by Andrew Tallackson

I blame the dancing cockroaches for a restless night of sleep...but before we go there, let's start at the beginning.

My parents took me to see “Cats” when I was 12. At Chicago’s Shubert Theatre, I believe it was. My theatergoing experience before then was confined to family friendly fare. “The Wiz.” Holiday favorites like “The Nutcracker” at McCormick Place and “A Christmas Carol” at Goodman Theatre. My parents must have assumed a play about scrappy cats, singing in a junkpile in hopes of scoring a new life, would appeal to my youthful sensibilities. Wrong. My lasting memory of “Cats” is of repeatedly being shushed by my parents for asking, song after song, what the hell was going on.

History now smiles upon “Cats” as the birth of the megamusical: the first word-of-mouth global sensation. The London production ran for 21 years and the Broadway version for 18. Many a film director tried adapting it, the most notable being Steven Spielberg, who toyed with the idea of an animated version, then scrapped it. That should tell you something, that the most commercially successful director ever could not figure out how to make “Cats” work.

Thing is, “Cats” is unfilmable. The sophisticated 20th century musical, beginning with Rodgers and Hammerstein’s “Oklahoma!”, stopped using songs as pleasant distractions, instead allowing them to advance the story. “Cats,” on the other hand, adapted by Andrew Lloyd Webber from T.S. Eliot’s 1939 poetry collection “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats,” was blissfully ignorant of that approach. His play was shapeless. Endless. No sense it was headed anywhere.

That Oscar-winning director Tom Hooper (“The King’s Speech”) threw himself hook, line and sinker into a film adaptation is admirable. I was one of the few not to consider his 2012 big-screen interpretation of “Les Misérables” a disaster. Purists cried foul that Hooper recorded his cast singing live, his reason being to capture the performers “in the moment.” For me, it worked. On film, you can’t have Jean Valjean singing at full blast when he’s on his deathbed. It’s just not realistic. So maybe, with “Cats,” Hooper could be the one to reinterpret the play on film so it succeeds on its own.

The first sign Hooper had a colossal crapper on his hands was the initial trailer, which dropped last July. The WTH online reaction to all the CGI, or computerized effects, resulted in Hooper and crew rethinking and retooling some of the images.

Then came the December release. The reviews

weren’t just bad. They were “Showgirls”-“Battlefield Earth” bad. Notices so poisonous, the film was cited as a potential career-ender for Hooper.

Then, out of nowhere, a cult-like, “Rocky Horror Picture Show” rebirth. Celebrities posting blogs about smoking weed, or in one case devouring psychedelic mushrooms, before the movie. Restaurant-like theaters promoting the film as a drinking game, where audiences took shots every time a character uttered the word “Jellicle.”



Above: Rebel Wilson's musical number, which includes singing mice and dancing cockroaches, is where “Cats” goes downhill.

Below: Jennifer Hudson's rendition of “Memory” is the film’s sole highlight.



My curiosity was piqued. Could this be one of those so-bad-it’s good spectacles? Over dinner a few weeks back, amid conversations about how eLearning was going with my wife, Alice, and son, Will, I randomly announced, “Hey, ‘Cats’ is available April 7 through Netflix. Let’s get it. Say we saw it.”

Alice and Will paused, then nodded. Reluctantly.

□

There you have it. The backstory.
And so, the DVD of “Cats” arrived from Netflix by

mail on Wednesday, April 8. After dinner, we made ourselves comfortable in the living room, dropped the disc into the DVD player, kept an open mind, but braced for the worst.

Most adaptations of Broadway musicals aim to achieve a fuller sound, orchestrating the score with a larger palate of musicians. Tim Burton’s “Sweeney Todd” (2007) is a perfect example. “Cats,” on the other hand, opens with what sounds like a circus calliope filtered through an ’80s Casio keyboard. *The credits hadn’t started rolling...and the first red flag had already arrived.* Then, individual cast members began leaping into the frame, the set a highly stylized junkyard amid a vision of London decked out in pinks and peaches.

The first big musical number, “Jellicle Songs for Jellicle Cats,” began. The CGI to convey the cats? Yep, pretty bad. Distracting even, diluting the choreography. The singing? Not bad. Solid, in fact, and the performers appeared to be enjoying themselves...although the song, itself, repeats the word “Jellicle” so many times it veers into tedium.

Then, Rebel Wilson crawled into a house to perform “Jennyanydots: The Old Gumbie Cat.” At one point, she peers into the fireplace where there’s a mini-stage with singing mice. CGI cats claw down the walls like velociraptors in “Jurassic Park.” Conga-line cockroaches break out into a Busby Berkeley musical number.

I don’t do bugs, let alone singing and dancing bugs. The scene in “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” where Kate Capshaw sticks her hand into that creepy-crawly hole? Nearly sent me into a catalectic state.

And the cockroach performers of “Cats”? Later that night, they would infest my dreams. This was bizarre on a surreal, hallucinatory level. While watching it, Will was laughing. Hysterically. Alice pulled out her Chromebook, viewing photos she’d saved. “I have no idea what’s going on in this movie,” she uttered.

That’s when I knew, whatever the movie had in store for us next, we were in trouble. *Big* trouble.

□

Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals are tricky to adapt because of the “rock opera” format. They’re all music. Moviegoers, however, prefer breathers between musical numbers. Big-screen Webber adaptations like “Jesus Christ Superstar” (1973) and “The Phantom of the Opera” (2004) succeed because the directors opened up the material so they became more cinematic. Portions of “Evita” (1996) hold up, but there are long stretches, with no breaks be-

Continued on Page 18

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tween songs, where the movie feels like a prolonged MTV music video.

The music in those productions, however, advanced the story. Save for "Memory" and a few other tunes, the songs of "Cats" are the composer's worst. Repetitive. Banal. Pointless. Midway through the film, it struck me the same reaction to the music that plagued me as a child had re-emerged as an adult. You detect movement. The performers appear to be singing, interacting. Meaning should be extrapolated from the images, but none of it registers. A few minutes have passed, and your mind has drifted elsewhere.

Take, for example, late-nite talk-show host James Corden. As Bustopher Jones, he appears thrilled to be in a movie musical, but his song is like monotonous dinner theater. My mind drifted...until Corden's kitty does a CGI somersault and lands where the family jewels are supposed to be. Corden grimaces for comic effect, but it struck me that since Hooper had all signs of the cats' naughty bits digitally removed, Corden should have nothing to scowl about.

Idris Elba, as Macavity the Mystery Cat, scared the willies out of me. For the longest time, I couldn't figure out why. Then, it hit me. Remember that scene in "The Exorcist" (1973) in which Regan is thrashing about in bed, and for one brief moment we see the actual demon's face? That's what Elba, with his light blue contacts, resembles. I could look at his face no longer.

Judi Dench pops up as Old Deuteronomy, not so much singing, but speak-singing: reciting the lyrics in rhythm with the music. Dench is no singer, so she mutters the lyrics in a scratchy, five-packs-a-day voice.

By the time Dench showed up, it was obvious my family was watching with vague interest:

Will (noticing a female white cat): "Is that one Taylor Swift?"

Me: "Not sure."

Alice (looking up from her Chromebook): "No, that's some other girl."

Finally, the cats began their Jellicle Ball. The music perked up, but again, my thoughts drifted. Then, as the dancing amped up, something out of the corner of my eye caught my attention. I paused the movie, then hit rewind:

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Idris Elba as Macavity the Mystery Cat.

Alice: "What are you doing?"

Me: "OK, I'm not being a weirdo...but I'm almost positive the boy cats just sniffed the girl cats' butts."

Dead silence from Alice and Will. The images rewound, then cranked back up. The replay confirmed my unwelcome suspicion.

"Oh my gosh," Will shouted. "They just sniffed each other's butts."

Alice's eyes were wide as saucers. That's when I hit pause, *again*, and said, "OK, I'm willing to call it quits. I have enough to write."

Strangely enough, it was Alice who spoke up.

"Wait, wait, wait," she said. "I want to hear Jennifer Hudson sing 'Memory.' That's all I want to hear. Can you find that?"

So, I pressed fast forward, periodically stopping to assess where we were. A mopey looking Ian McKellen? Nope, that's not it. Victoria the White Cat making goo-goo eyes at a boy cat? No, that's not it. *There's* Taylor Swift. Wait, is she scattering magical catnip?

Finally, Hudson, as Grizabella, stood before Old Deuteronomy, and a whole host of irritable cats, and belted out "Memory," the one song for which the show is memorable. To her credit, Hudson, the Oscar winner for "Dreamgirls," reached the vocal highpoint of the song and belted it out into the stratosphere. Dench's stunned reaction, as Old Deuteronomy, was the one true emotion in the entire piece.

"Man," Alice uttered, seconds after Hudson brought the song to a close. "That woman can sing."

Five minutes later, cue end credits. □

Who is to blame for this fiasco? Broadway purists want Hopper's head on a platter. You can't fault him for trying, though. And the cast, even at its most ludicrous, appears 100 percent committed.

Maybe what Hooper has created is proof of what we suspected: "Cats" cannot be filmed. Leave it on the stage so its fans can savor it best.

But on film? *Whew.* It's the pits.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

Cancellations and Updates

- Art Attack in Harbor Country, originally scheduled for the fourth weekend in April, has been postponed.
- "Brainstorming With Beethoven," scheduled for April 18 at Michigan City Public Library as part of International Creativity Week, has been canceled. The program also involved The Center for Creative Solutions of Michigan City and Michigan City Chamber Music Festival.
- Courtyard Gallery in New Buffalo, Mich., has changed plans for its annual Celebration of Art Show on April 25-26. Instead, it will do a live video of the show on Facebook that weekend. Those interested can friend Courtyard Gallery or Eugene Halun on Facebook. The website is being updated as well so the show can be viewed there.
- Lubeznik Center for the Arts has rescheduled its Third Annual Zine Fest, originally planned for April 25, to Saturday, Oct. 24.
- The Michigan City Public Art Committee will not meet as scheduled on Thursday, April 16. The group hopes to resume meetings in May.
- Michigan City Rotary Club's Rotary Foundation Scholarship committee has extended the submission deadline to April 17. The scholarship application can be mailed to: Rotary Club of Michigan City, P.O. Box 9372, Michigan City, IN 46361-9372. They also can be dropped off at Michigan City Police Department, attention Cpl. Marty Corley. Contact him at mcorley20@hotmail.com or (219) 229-9691 for more information.
- Michigan City Senior Center, in complying with Mayor Duane Parry's executive order, will remain closed in April. May remains undecided. Staff are furloughed, with no newsletters sent out. News of re-opening will be through local newspapers, radio stations and social media.



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A Guide to Area Restaurants Offering Carryout, Delivery Services

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, *The Beacher* looked into which restaurants in our area are still offering carryout.

A few restaurants also are offering delivery or curbside service, and that is noted as well. Please call ahead to confirm what is available.

By no means is this list a complete guide to local restaurants. Any businesses with changes or updates, call us at (219) 879-0088 or email drew@thebeacher.com

Michigan City Area

- A Slice of Heaven. (219) 380-8374.
- Albano's Villa. (219) 872-0571.
- Barker Pub. (219) 873-9306.
- Bartlett's Fish Camp. (219) 879-9544.
- Ben's Soft Pretzels (delivery available). (219) 879-5557.
- Biggby Coffee. (219) 809-9912
- Buffalo Wild Wings (delivery available). (219) 872-9464.
- Carlson's (regular services). (219) 872-0331.
- Chili's Grill & Bar (curbside, delivery available). (219) 872-2266.
- China One. (219) 872-7722.
- Cool Runnings Jamaican Restaurant. (219) 210-3885.
- Creekside Bar & Grill (curbside available). (219) 814-4041.
- Denny's (delivery available). (219) 879-1860.
- Domino's Pizza. (219) 879-8330.
- Dune Billies. Check facebook for details.
- El Cajete. (219) 872-3333.
- El Cantarito (curbside, delivery available). (219) 243-7117.
- Fiddlehead (delivery available). (219) 210-3253.
- FLUID Coffeebar and Roasting Lab (ask about delivery). (219) 878-1800.
- Frosty Boy. (219) 874-3773.
- Galveston Steakhouse. (219) 879-5555.
- Gelsosomo's. (219) 872-3838.
- Hacienda Mexican Restaurants (curbside available). (219) 879-4404.

- Hammer's Restaurant. (219) 879-0760.
- Hokkaido Japanese Restaurant. (219) 814-4226.
- Holly's Restaurant. (219) 879-5124.
- India House Restaurant. (219) 874-5700.
- Jimmy John's. (219) 871-0850.
- Leeds Public House. (219) 814-4530.
- Lighthouse Restaurant (drive-through, curbside available). (219) 872-1900.
- Little Caesar's Pizza. (219) 879-3211.
- Little Giant Pizza. (219) 874-4268.
- Local Option (delivery available). (219) 874-3663.
- Long John Silver's (drive-through). (219) 879-4193.
- Memo's House of Pancakes. (219) 871-1583.
- Miller Pizza by the Beach. (219) 878-9480.
- Mucho Mas Michigan City. (219) 221-6639.
- Olive Garden Italian Restaurant. (219) 879-6830
- Panda Express. (219) 879-1079.
- Panera Bread (drive-through available). (219) 879-5765.
- Panini Panini. (219) 873-1720.
- Papa John's Pizza. (219) 872-7227.
- Patrick's Grille (curbside pickup). (219) 873-9401.
- Pita Express. (219) 210-3512.
- Polish Peasant (curbside). (219) 873-1788.
- Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen (drive-through available). (219) 210-3540.
- Red Lobster (delivery available). (219) 879-1328.
- Roma Pizza Michigan City. (219) 872-9123.
- Royale With Cheese. (219) 243-7106.
- Schoop's. (219) 872-0170.
- Shrimp Max of Michigan City. (219) 221-6485.
- Sophia's House of Pancakes. (219) 879-9999.
- St. Joseph Young Men's Society. (219) 879-9454.
- Stadium Inn. (219) 879-9781.
- Station 801. (219) 872-4976.
- Stop 50. (219) 879-8777.
- Swingbelly's Restaurant. (219) 874-5718.
- Tap House (curbside). (219) 221-6099.
- Taverna Tonelli. (219) 243-7181.
- The Blind Pig (delivery available). (708) 243-



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- The Boathouse Grill (drive-through). (219) 814-4127.
- Three Sheets Bar & Grill. (219) 878-9872.
- Wana Pizza. (219) 873-9262.
- Zorn Brew Works Co. (219) 243-7157.

Fast Food with Drive-Throughs

- Arby's. (219) 879-0500.
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- Dunkin' Donuts. (219) 879-2922.
- Hardee's. (219) 879-8025.
- KFC. (219) 879-0343.
- McDonalds. (219) 874-7772.
- Rally's. (219) 221-6001.
- Sonic. (219) 878-1950.
- Subway. (219) 872-7827.
- Taco Bell. (219) 879-4022.
- Wendy's. (219) 872-0368.
- White Castle. (219) 879-5837.

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- Aurelio's Pizza (delivery, drive-through available). (219) 324-9950.
- Bare Bones Gastropub. (219) 575-7469.
- Ben's Soft Pretzels (inside Walmart). (219) 324-8593.
- Buffalo Wild Wings. (219) 324-9464.
- Burger Bar & Grill (delivery available). (219) 324-1144.
- Cafe Trilogy. (219) 561-3310
- Colima. (219) 324-0355.
- Domino's Pizza. (219) 380-0760.
- Gourmet House Chinese Restaurant (delivery available). (219) 362-1270.
- Great Wall Restaurant (delivery available). (219) 324-4580.
- J&J's Pizza Shack (delivery available). (219) 362-4290.
- Jimmy John's. (219) 324-9600.
- JJ's Sideout Bar & Grill (delivery available). (219) 369-6583
- Little Caesar's Pizza. (219) 326-7725.
- Marco's Pizza (delivery available). (219) 326-1010.
- Mari's Mexican Restaurant. (219) 326-6226.
- Mucho Mas (delivery available). (219) 362-9183.
- Northside BBQ. (219) 324-0952.
- Papa John's Pizza. (219) 362-7272.
- T-berry's Diner (some delivery available). (219)

362-6261.

- Third Base Bar & Grill. (219) 324-0300.
- Trattoria Enzo. (219) 326-8000.
- Wana Pizza. (219) 324-6062.
- Wings ETC. (delivery through Grubhub). (219) 402-3803.

Fast Food with Drive-Throughs

- Arby's. (219) 326-1718.
- Burger King. (219) 325-9000.
- Culver's. (219) 369-6450.
- Dairy Queen Grill & Chill. (219) 325-0400.
- Dairy Queen LTD Brazier. (219) 326-5454.
- Dunkin' Donuts. (219) 369-4957.
- KFC. (219) 326-7433.
- McDonald's (Boyd Boulevard). (219) 362-6717; Pine Lake Avenue. (219) 362-5819.
- Pizza Hut. (219) 324-5180.
- Subway. (219) 326-5818.
- Taco Bell. (219) 324-5180.
- Wendy's. (219) 362-1155.

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- Beer Church Brewing Co. (curbside, delivery available). (269) 586-3864.
- Bentwood Tavern (curbside available). (866) 238-2208.
- Brewster's Italian Cafe (delivery available). (269) 469-3005.
- Casey's New Buffalo (delivery available). (269) 469-6400.
- Ghost Isle Brewery. (269) 469-9069.
- Jackie's Cafe (delivery available). (269) 469-1800.
- Pizza Hut. (269) 469-6900.
- Roma Pizza (delivery available). (269) 469-3698.
- Song Asian Cuisine (delivery available). (269) 586-3699.
- Timothy's Restaurant (curbside available). (269) 469-0900.
- Villa Nova Pizzeria (delivery available). (269) 469-0200.

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- McDonald's. (269) 469-1924.
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- IBEW, 2751 N. Old Indiana 39, LaPorte, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, April 18.
- LaPorte Hospital, 1007 W. Lincolnway, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, April 20.

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. Donors through April 30 receive a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. Visit rcblood.org/together 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.

LaPorte County Public Library

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, LaPorte County Public Library is offering programs through the Internet.

Early Childhood Literacy classes have been adapted, with the virtual classes "Play & Learn" and "Stories & More" available through the calendar of events on Zoom, a video-conferencing software.

On YouTube, Miss Megan has created a series of videos explaining the Every Child Ready to Read program. Videos focus on reading, writing, talking, singing and playing.

Through Kanopy, patrons can use their library card to stream free movies. Click on "kanopy" to get started.

The online eBook club, Big Library Read, will host its next session through Zoom at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 9. The focus is comedian Michael McCreary's memoir Funny, You Don't Look Autistic: A Comedian's Guide to Life on the Spectrum. The title is available through Overdrive in ebook and audio-book formats. Register at <https://bit.ly/3dquqGt>

LaPorte County Public Library is located at 904 Indiana Ave. The Coolspring Branch is located at 6925 W. County Road 400 North.

Visit www.laportelibrary.org for more details.

Michigan City Public Library

E-books, e-audiobooks and digital resources are available on mobile devices through the free Axis 360 app, available in the App Store and Google Play Store.

They also can be streamed from the library's Axis 360 website at mclib.axis360.baker-taylor.com/

Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit www.mclib.org for more details.



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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.

Native Plant Sale is Pre-order Only

The Friends of Indiana Dunes will offer its 24th Annual Native Plant Sale as a pre-order sale only, with no open shopping.

Order forms can be printed out at dunefriends.org, while a link to the form also is available through the group's Facebook page. The submission deadline has been extended to April 18. Include a phone number and email on the form in case additional changes have to be made.

Indiana Dunes Visitor Center remains closed, so the new pickup location is the Friends' new office, which is at the northwest corner of Mineral Springs and Oak Hill roads in Porter. So social distancing guidelines can be observed, individuals will receive a specific pick-up time for Saturday, May 2.

This year's sale includes: more than 110 native plant species, including large selections of woodland flowering plants and ferns; dry, medium and wet prairie flowering plants; grasses; shrubs; and trees. All varieties come in pots, and most species are native to Northwest Indiana, northeast Illinois, and Southwest Michigan.

All profits support the non-profit Friends of Indiana Dunes.

Solid Waste District Update

The Solid Waste District of LaPorte County's compost site, office and electronic waste drop-off will remain closed until further notice.

No illegal dumping is allowed. In addition to its LaPorte site, the waste district has an electronic waste drop-off site in Michigan City.

Curbside recycling is running on schedule, and staff are available by phone, through the website and Facebook, and email.

Drivers are not taking extra items left outside of recycling bins. All items must be inside the bin. Residents can use their own additional containers as long as they are at least similar in size or larger, and marked as "recycling." That's because bins those size can be picked up by robotic arms.

Call (219) 326-0014, visit www.solidwastedistrict.com or www.facebook.com/LPCoRecycling 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.

Art on the Air

Larry Brechner and Ester Golden will host episodes of "Art on the Air" at 11 a.m. Fridays at WVL.org

The show interviews artist and creative contacts, focusing on how they are handling the COVID-19 crisis. Artists include: Steve and Louise Skinner, Jill Chambers, Roger Batton, Jayde McAlloon, John Habela, Annemarie Marti, Laura Marie Panozzo, Mitch Gregory, Dorothy Graden, Krista Bermeo, Josh McClain, Rachelle Roos, Michelle and Marvin Shafer, Ron Chupp, Wendy Costa, Melissa Washburn, Donna Catalano, Wendy Marceniak, Jonathan Root, Tom Byelick and Michelle from Tomfoolery Fun Club, Margie and David Criner, Steve Bensing, Billy and Renee Foster, Caroline Hatch and Lu Hook.

Send questions about COVID-19 issues to artontheairwvlp@gmail.com

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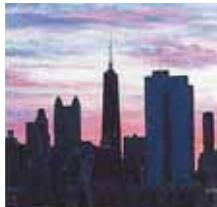
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**National Park Trails Open**

Indiana Dunes National Park's 50 miles of hiking trails remain open, providing safe space for exercise while social distancing and complying with the state's Shelter-in-Place orders.

While all park buildings, including restrooms, are closed until further notice, hiking and biking trails, parking lots and most beaches remain open.

Law-enforcement rangers remain on patrol; however, visitors can help protect park resources. With most maintenance staff under shelter-in-place orders, visitors are asked to practice Leave No Trace principles, including: staying on trails, packing out your own trash and leaving the park as you found it. Violations can be reported at (800) Park-Tip.

The National Park Service is working with federal, state and local authorities to closely monitor COVID-19. The public will be notified when the park resumes full operations. Updates are posted at www.nps.gov/indu, and social media channels such as www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS

Chesterton Art Center

- **"Kids Summer Art Camps" starting June 8.**

Running Monday through Thursday, ages 4-7 meet from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and ages 8 and older from 12 to 2:30 p.m.

The schedule is: Week 1 (June 8-11), "National Lakeshore Week;" Week 2 (June 15-18), "Science Fiction/Stars in the Sky Week;" Week 3 (June 22-25), "Harry Potter/Fairy Tale Magic Week;" Week 4 (July 13-16), "Local Animals Week;" and Week 5 - (July 20-23), "Plein Air Painters Week."

The weekly cost is \$90, with members receiving a \$20 discount. Reservations must be made no later than the Friday before the camp begins.

Chesterton Art Center is located at 115 S. Fourth St. Visit www.chestertonart.com for more details.

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On April 16, 1787, “The Contrast” (by Royal Tyler), the first play written by a U.S. citizen, was produced in New York.

On April 16, 1900, U.S. post offices began selling books of stamps.

On April 16, 1940, Cleveland Indians pitcher Bob Feller pitched an opening day no-hitter against the White Sox in Chicago.

On April 16, 1948, WGN broadcast its first big-league game, with Jack Brickhouse calling the White Sox’s 4-1 win against the Cubs at Wrigley Field.

On April 16, 1962, Walter Cronkite made his debut as anchor of “The CBS Evening News.”

On April 17, 1521, Martin Luther went before the Diet of Worms to face charges stemming from his religious writings.

On April 17, 1897, American novelist Thornton Wilder was born in Madison, Wis.

On April 17, 1964, Ford Motor Co. introduced the Mustang.

On April 17, 1982, Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed a new constitution, making Canada independent from Great Britain.

On April 18, 1775, Paul Revere began his famous ride between the Massachusetts towns of Charlestown and Lexington, warning the American Colonist of the approach of British troops.

On April 18, 1858, rain began falling on the Chicago area for 60 consecutive days.

On April 18, 1923, the first game was played in Yankee Stadium.

On April 18, 1924, Simon and Schuster published the first crossword puzzle book.

On April 18, 1925, Chicago hosted the first Women’s World Fair.

On April 18, 1934, the era of the “Laundromat” began when the first Washateria, with four electric washing machines for rent, opened in Fort Worth.

On April 18, 1977, author Alex Haley won the Pulitzer Prize for his novel “Roots.”

On April 19, 1775, the Revolutionary War began in Massachusetts as British and American forces began fighting at both Lexington and Concord.

On April 19, 1865, the funeral for President Abraham Lincoln was held in the White House.

On April 19, 1897, the first Boston Marathon was run from Ashland, Mass., to Boston. Winner John

McDermott ran the course in 2 hrs., 55 min., 10 sec.

On April 19, 1910, after weeks of being viewed through telescopes, Halley's Comet was reported visible to the naked eye in Curacao.

On April 19, 1945, the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "Carousel" opened on Broadway.

On April 19, 1982, astronauts Sally Ride and Guion Bluford Jr. became the first woman and first African American tapped for U.S. space missions.

On April 19, 2001, the musical "The Producers" opened on Broadway.

On April 20, 1857, Chicago's Mayor John "Long John" Wentworth led a raid on the "Sands," a notorious North Michigan Avenue vice district.

On April 20, 1902, scientists Marie and Pierre Curie succeeded in isolating the radioactive element radium.

On April 20, 1949, Mayo Clinic scientists revealed they had synthesized a hormone to treat rheumatoid arthritis — named "cortisone."

On April 20, 1955, Richard Daley began his first term as mayor of Chicago. He was re-elected five times.

On April 20, 1986, in Moscow, pianist Vladimir Horowitz performed in his homeland for the first time since leaving the Soviet Union, almost six decades earlier.

On April 21, 1843, Chicago passed an ordinance prohibiting pigs from running free on the streets of the city.

On April 21, 1857, New York's Alexander Douglas patented an adjustable bustle.

On April 21, 1925, the Chicago neighborhood of Streeterville got its name when Elmo Streeter was arrested for "squatting" on the land.

On April 21, 1926, England's Queen Elizabeth II was born in London.

On April 21, 1955, the Jerome Lawrence-Robert Lee play "Inherit the Wind," loosely based on the Scopes trial of 1925, opened at the National Theatre in New York.

On April 22, 1864, Congress first authorized the director of the U.S. Mint to use the motto "In God We Trust" on all coins.

On April 22, 1889, the Oklahoma Land Rush began as thousands rushed to stake claims on land that the federal government had not assigned to the Indians. Those claimants who "jumped the gun" (entering the "territory" a little sooner than the rules allowed) were referred to as "Sooners."

On April 22, 1952, the actual explosion of an atomic bomb, for the first time, was shown on TV.

On April 22, 1970, millions of Americans, concerned about the destruction of the environment, observed the first "Earth Day."



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A Temporary Change in Office Hours

During the COVID-19 crisis, The Beacher will limit hours it is open to the public. The new hours are

**10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday
Phone first please (219) 879-0088**

Editor Andrew Tallackson will be in the office regular hours throughout the week and can be reached at (219) 879-0088 or drew@thebeacher.com. The weekly deadline to submit ads for the ensuing week's publication remains the same: noon Thursday. The weekly deadline to submit press releases and community notices is noon Thursday as well.

THE
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We appreciate all of your patience and support, and we will announce in The Beacher and on Facebook when the office resumes regular hours to the public.



Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Devoted by Dean Koontz (hardcover, \$28.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 369 pages)

"Life is about nothing but desire and its fulfillment, hunger and its satisfaction, hatred and the violence that it requires: It's about the power to take what you want by any means necessary."

Certainly not words to live by, unless you're a major megalomaniac with money, power and desire on your mind. Join me this week for a trip down a dark road. Are you up to the challenge?

Dean Koontz puts the thrill in "Thriller" with a capital T. No. Doubt. About. It. *Devoted* follows the phenomenal success of his Jane Hawk series — a trilogy that ended up being five volumes instead. So I was excited, but fearful he would be hard-pressed to top himself, yet here I am about to expound on another megahit for the duke of darkness.

Imagination is one thing writers have in common, but it takes a Dean Koontz to carry the reader far and beyond into areas of science and science-fiction...but with a twist. And that twist is a story that reeks of possibilities. Let me explain...

Meet Woody, an 11-year-old boy who has never spoken one word in his life. He also is autistic and has an I.Q. of 186 — a most unusual boy.

His father, Jason Bookman, was killed in a helicopter accident while working for Refine, "a multibillion-dollar division of a mega-valued conglomerate." It was reported on TV the company was working on a revolutionary cure for cancer. Ridiculous. This is longevity research, seeking to extend human lifespan, focused intently on the effect of archaea, an ancient form of bacteria and one of the three domains of animal life. Its founder calls it "transhumanism"

"An article of the transhumanism faith...is that human beings will soon have the ability to transform themselves physically and intellectually, acquire much stronger bodies, vastly increase our intelligence, gain powers once dreamed of only by the folks at Marvel Comics. This is expected to happen through a melding of man and machine or by breakthroughs in genetic engineering."

Now, three years later, something has gone horribly wrong. An explosion and fire in the labs of Refine at Springville, Utah, have trapped and killed 93 workers. Actually, only 92 because Lee Shacket, CEO of Refine, makes sure he gets out before the

fire, which, incidentally, he didn't know was going to happen. Apparently, someone doesn't want any bodies left intact for a coroner to examine. Wonder why? Maybe Dorian Purcell, chairman of the board, needed a fail-safe in case something went wrong in the lab.

"Dorian fancies himself a visionary, as does nearly everyone in the press who writes about him, and a true visionary knows that progress requires sacrifices, that what matters is not the short-term cost in lives and treasure, but the great benefit to humanity that will be achieved in the long term." Ha. Isn't that what all mad men say?

Question on Shacket's mind is — did his body absorb any of the bio-hazard material the scientists were working on? Koontz knows just how to work up to a slam-bang reveal that will have you biting your fingernails even if you never have!

Shacket remembers he dated Woody's mother, Megan, before she married Bookman. Now, he wants revenge from her and — strange thing — he is evolving as he heads for Megan's house in California. His thoughts become more feral, his need for revenge driving him like ants crawling over his body.

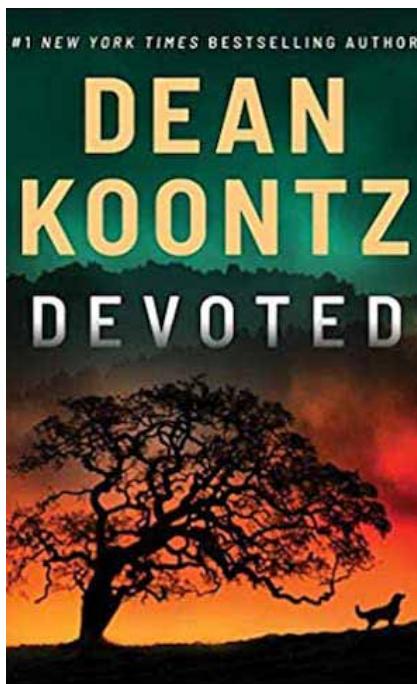
"Neither the law nor any code of morality constrains him, because he knows them to be fantasies of order. In truth, the only rule by which anyone can live successfully, either in the wilds or in civilization, is the sole mandate of cruel Nature: Prey shall submit, and predators shall reign supreme."

Back to Woody. Since his father died, he has been delving into records online, even so far as the Dark Web, to put together a book — *The Son's Revenge: Faithfully Compiled Evidence of Monstrous Evil*. He's positive his father was killed.

He's a very smart boy, but even though he thinks he covered his tracks on the Dark Web, they have discovered him and let him know it — *"You again."* He's ashamed his hacking skills aren't as good as he thought, and now, he's put his mother in danger.

There's a third element to this story that involves man's best friend — in this case a Golden Labrador named Kipp who is much more than the loving protector his owner knows him to be. Kipp's part in this saga is...well...interesting. He will show Woody that dogs, even more intelligent than we give them credit for, will always remain man's best, and forever devoted friend.

Till next time, happy reading!



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10 Ways to Prepare Your Home For The Market

Wanting to list your home this year? Prepare your home with these quick and easy tips to help your home stand out from the rest! Here are some things you can do to prepare your home to list during this time of "self-isolation."

1. **Call your MTM agent** to get a free CMA to know the current value in your area. This will be a good starting guide!
2. **Improve your landscaping.** Trim shrubs, hire a lawn care company, plant flowers or remove weeds.
3. **Clear the yard of clutter.** Put away shovels, bikes/ toys, gardening tools and lawn mowers!
4. **Make minor repairs.** Consider fixing loose knobs, holes or cracks in plaster, scratched floorboards, and changing bulbs.
5. **Consider large repairs.** Electrical work, plumbing, roofing, water damage, septic repairs, and so on can add a lot of value.
6. **Give your home a pleasant odor.** Take out the trash, clean animal beds, or spread baking soda on carpet.
7. **Remove clutter.** Clear countertops, accent chairs, and tables so buyers can see the space more clearly.
8. **Remove personal items.** Photographs, personal drawings, pet items, and toiletries can be distracting!
9. **Prepare the home for photographs.** Check lighting, make beds, clear toys, and wipe surfaces.
10. **Keep your home clean for showings and open houses.** There will be a lot of traffic to the home.

Visit www.makethemovegroup.com/blog/9699/preparing-your-home-for-sale for more info.

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March - Most Transactions



Before starting the real estate business MTM Realty Group, Lisa Moore had been in real estate for 10 years prior. Her passion for helping others find their dream home lead her to be in real estate for another 11 years - totaling over 20 years! Her company has grown to 22 agents today at 4 locations (La Porte, Long Beach, and Chesterton). Lisa enjoys traveling, spending time with friends, and cooking delicious dinners for her 3 children, son-in-law, and 2 step-grandkids!

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