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# From the Heart

by Connie Kuzydym



In the winter of 1971, John Bennett, a young LaPorte music teacher, seized the opportunity to unite a 16-member chamber group and area wind musicians to form LaPorte Symphony Orchestra. By doing so, he fulfilled his dream to conduct a community symphony.

At their premiere performance in December the following year, 50 musicians' signatures were recorded, their names listed as charter members on a proclamation bearing the LaPorte mayor's seal.

Today, JoFran Bendix, the symphony's principal horn, is the sole charter member still performing with the orchestra.

The first concert featured selections by Rossini, Handel, Schubert and Gershwin. Over the years, the number of performances each season has varied. Conductors, musicians, board members and executive directors have come and gone. There even was a name change, the year prior to the 25th anniversary, to LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra.

Through 48 years, Bendix still gives her time and talent because she loves playing the horn.

Growing up in a family of horn players, Bendix wanted to play

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JoFran Bendix (front) is photographed at a concert in New Buffalo, Mich., on July 3, 2019. Seated with her are horn musicians Kathleen Lang, Bill Browne and Dana Chartier.

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Delivery*From the Heart* Continued from Page 1

professionally, but her mother discouraged her. Being a female musician was not considered an acceptable way of life. Instead, she pursued another love by becoming an art teacher.

When Bendix and Bennett, then a couple, came to the area after college, a need existed for art and string program teachers in Michigan City. The string program eventually was cut, so Bennett took the orchestra position at LaPorte High School. Bendix remained with Michigan City Area Schools for nearly 30 years until she retired, teaching elementary art.

Bendix grew up in the LaPorte music scene, at a time when Michigan City and especially LaPorte boasted exceptional school music programs, producing an abundance of talented musicians. Areas like Elkhart and South Bend were meccas for musicians as well. Bendix had close ties with Guy Foreman, who was her band director at LaPorte High School and with Michigan City Municipal Band.

Returning to the area, Bendix already knew many musicians here, so it was only a matter of time for Bennett to meet everyone and understand the potential for a community symphony orchestra here.

Bendix was excited by the opportunity to be part of a musical endeavor from its infancy.

At the beginning, the orchestra did not have a budget. Musicians volunteered their time. Expenses came out of their pocket or from a community member. Approaching the second season, a drive was coordinated to raise \$5,000 for music and operating costs. The emphasis was not obtaining grants and other dollars. It was practicing and performing.

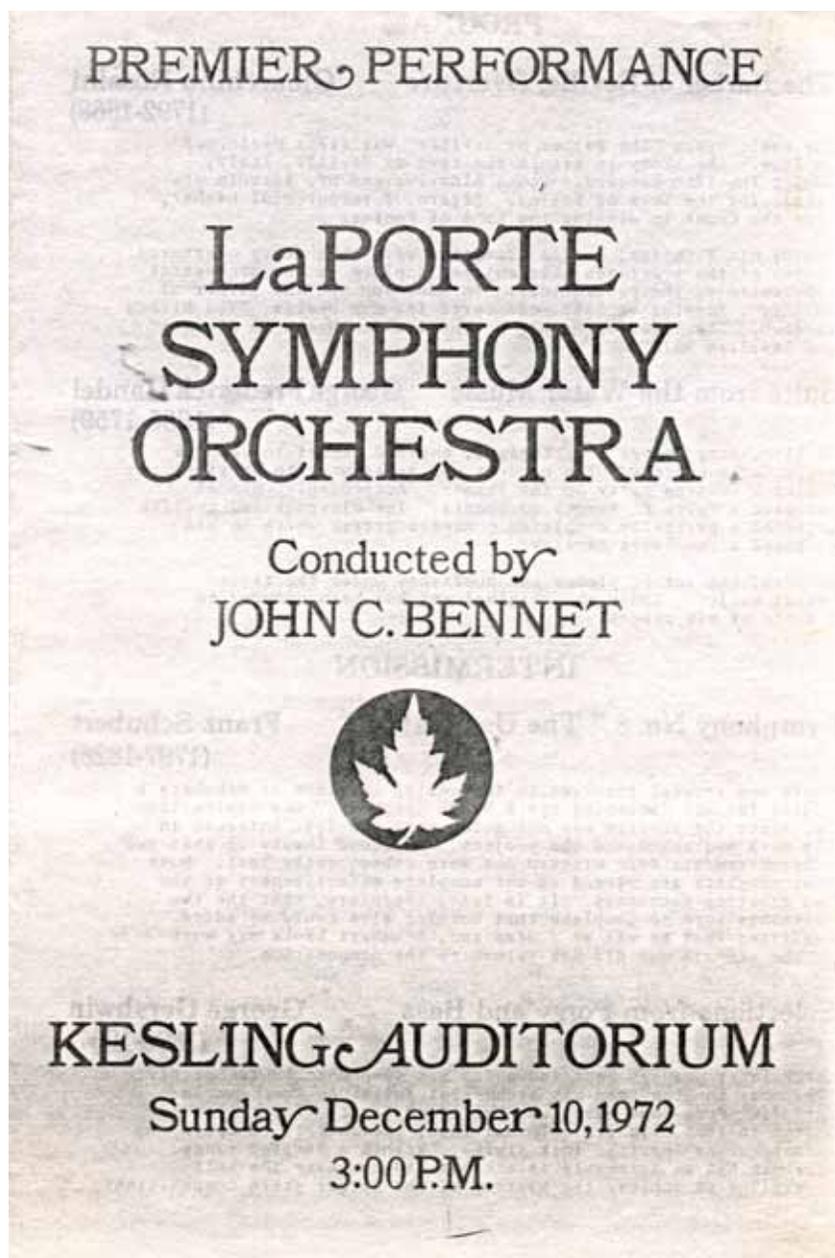
"This little group didn't do that. It kind of grew," Bendix said. "It helped us understand just who we were and what we could do as a small group. It's up to those who have faith in us to go for the rest of it."

And go they did. The community and

orchestra board understood the rare gem they had created for LaPorte County.

With each passing year, the orchestra evolved. Musicians received stipends to compensate them for their time and signed yearly contracts. They then auditioned for their position. Being a charter member did not exempt Bendix from this process.

Receiving money and having to audition, Bendix



The cover for the first LaPorte Symphony Orchestra concert. Provided by JoFran Bendix.

feels, changed the overall flavor. Many musicians were community members who played simply because they enjoyed doing so.

“To pay us for something we loved to do is kind of hard to accept,” she said, “because no one has to pay you for what you love to do...It’s not a competition. You play together. It shouldn’t be a competition.”

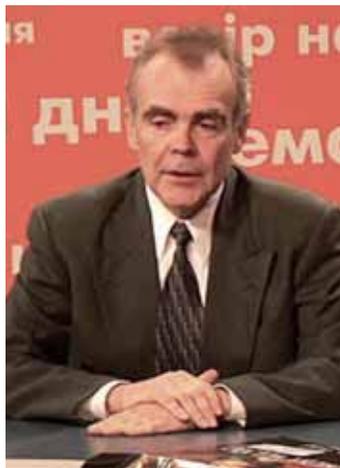
Bendix used the horn section as an example. The French horns require four parts to produce the melodious sounds of soprano, alto, tenor and bass. The principal plays solo and higher notes. Second horn mostly collaborates with the first. Third horn is similar to first, but not as high. The fourth horn complements the second.

Bendix has been one of two musicians representatives on the LCSO board for 29 years. Her non-voting position helps inform the board of matters concerning musicians. The board listens, and most welcome the input.

“I don’t think the general board person would understand that this is all from a love,” Bendix said. “It’s not a business. It’s from the heart. We do this because we enjoy each other’s company, and we respect each other’s abilities.”

Bendix has seen various programs come, go and return. The children’s concert, in existence for 31 years, is one of them. Speaking about it, in fact, brought a sparkle to her eyes. The basic format has stayed the same. There is a central theme, and each section is featured so students learn about the strings, percussion, brass and woodwinds. Today, the concerts provide more than 5,800 elementary students an opportunity to experience a orchestra.

Bendix has played for numerous conductors over the years. Each has brought his own flair and challenging pieces. The musicians each time have risen to the occasion on pieces that may sound simple, but are truly difficult.



JoFran credits Adrian Bryttan with taking the orchestra in its current direction.



JoFran says Dave Burris helped keep the momentum going started by Adrian Bryttan.

She credits Adrian Bryttan, a South Bend Symphony Orchestra concertmaster who taught at The University of Notre Dame, for taking the orchestra

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in its current direction. He brought a depth of knowledge and numerous outside contacts, and had tremendous board support. He brought excitement to the program. When Bryttan accepted a fellowship in Europe, David Burris picked up the reins, eventually becoming the conductor.

Burris, Bendix says, kept the momentum going, adding more musicians and imparting his love of performing on the group. His goal was to become a large regional orchestra.

Bendix also credits former music director Phillip Bauman, the group's longest-serving conductor, with helping it continue to grow.

Bendix feels Burris' goal for the symphony to emerge as a regional orchestra are being accomplished. However, she says many people still are unaware of the caliber of talent and quality of sound.

The search for a new conductor, affectionately titled "Bravo, Maestro," has seen the musicians reach new highs through each candidate's impressive resumes.

"With the caliber of these people that have offered to direct us, I have no idea what the future is going to do," Bendix said. "I think they are eager to be a part of something that has grown like we have. Apparently, we sound really good to them. That is adding to the excitement."

Indeed, there is a genuine enthusiasm among the candidates, especially after working with the orchestra, to become the next music director. And the musicians are excited as well.

"Yea, that's kind of magical. I don't know how to explain that," Bendix said. "I think we are especially

aware and ready to do what they are asking us to do. We want to know as much about them as I think they do about us. So, it's kind of a reciprocal feeling."

When Russell Ger directed, Bendix continued. "If you just sat there like a lump in the seat, something's wrong with you, 'cause he was energized. If he touched you, you would be energized. He was that kind of a man."

Even though Bendix did not perform with guest conductor Mercedes Diaz, she watched the performance.

"She really had a sensitive aspect to her," Bendix said. "Not every conductor asks for that kind of response. That was very interesting."

As for Alexander Platt, he clearly knew what he was doing, she said, adding that that confidence is exciting.

Today, the orchestra continues its evolution. On many occasions, it sounds more like a professional group, even though it is considered semi-professional.

Despite all the changes and challenges throughout the years, Bendix focuses on wonderful memories. The most heartwarming was playing with her son during a concert.

"I was unaware of what it might be like when I saw Christopher standing beside me playing the bass and I was sitting there playing horn," Bendix said. "I never in my life would have expected my son to be playing alongside of me in the symphony. So that was pretty special. I thought, woohoo, this is from another world."

Bendix recalls a few crazy moments over the years, like the trombonist who was in a fender-bender before the concert. So he wouldn't be late for the concert, he told those at the scene he would be back and left. The police arrived at the concert ready to arrest him. They ended up waiting in the wings until the end of the concert.

At a patriotic concert, she recalls it was extremely hot at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. A request was made to open the louvers, which apparently had not been opened for years. "All kinds of gross stuff" came raining down on the musicians.

Despite the hours of practice, mishaps and chang-



Phillip Bauman, the symphony's longest-serving conductor, helped the orchestra grow even further, JoFran says.



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es, at the end of every performance, Bendix walks away with a great feeling.

“You feel like you’ve done a good job and the others that are around you feel good, too,” she said. “I don’t recall any concert from that group that we felt down...I think we’re humble enough that we could always improve. That’s what rehearsals are about, to improve, to learn how to perform together, and what the director wants, how he’s interpreting the composer...I think we’re all aware of that. We all love to perform. We love to be there, and it’s wonderful when we have an audience that’s receptive.”

Listening to her speak about her orchestra family, her own family — her husband, Gary, her son

and his family — with pride and love, one senses a quiet, determined strength. In her calm, relaxed voice, one can see how she was able to balance work with a love of playing the horn, and a passion for weaving, which is an entirely different story. Her woven pieces are unique and breathtaking, existing in permanent exhibits in business and private collections not only in Michigan City, but also throughout the state, in Illinois and Honolulu, Hawaii.

As for the orchestra, Bendix plans to continue playing for as long as her lip holds out. On that note, she is counting on her husband to notice if she is making mistakes. Then, she says with a smile, she knows it will be time to retire.



JoFran Bendix, photographed by *The Beacher's* Bob Wellinski, also has a passion for weaving.



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## “Extraction” is Never Dull, But Not Quite Memorable Either

by Andrew Tallackson



Chris Hemsworth stars as a mercenary protecting a kidnapped boy (Rudhraksh Jaiswal) in “Extraction.”

As an action-packed shoot-'em-up, “Extraction” delivers. It’s relentless, squeezing hand-to-hand combat and elaborate stunts into a story that’s essentially one long chase.

But if Chris Hemsworth wants a career beyond Thor, he’ll have to do better than this. Despite two gonzo action sequences, “Extraction” feels like Chuck Norris reflux. The story is generic x 10. You’ve seen this. A zillion times.

In the film, now streaming on Netflix, Hemsworth plays Tyler Rake, an Australian mercenary hired to rescue Ovi Mahajan Jr. (Rudhraksh Jaiswal), the kidnapped son of India’s biggest drug lord. That the setting is Dhaka, Bangladesh, not South America — that go-to continent for B-movie battles — is a welcome twist, exploring how criminals exploit orphaned youth to do their dirty work.

And like any B-movie rescue mission, what starts out as routine quickly goes south. Tyler and Ovi find themselves trapped in Dhaka, every escape route thwarted by black-clad assassins.

“Extraction” is sort of a mini-“Avengers” reunion. In addition to Hemsworth, the director is Sam Hargrave, who was the stuntman for Chris Evans’ Captain America. The screenplay is by Joe Russo, who produced the film with his brother, Anthony, the two having directed four Marvel movies, including “Avengers: Endgame.” The movie looks good: sleek, tightly edited.

Midway through the film, the first of two extrava-

★ ★ 1/2

### “Extraction”

*Running time: 116 minutes. Rated R for strong bloody violence throughout, language and brief drug use*

gant set pieces arrives. It’s a breathless foot chase within Dhaka’s slums largely captured in one take, much like Sam Mendes’ “1917.” With little editing, you marvel at how they pulled it off, especially when Tyler and Ovi leap from one building to the next.

Then there’s the finale on a bridge checkpoint, attackers appearing from all directions. The tension is queasy, claustrophobic, Tyler and Ovi weaving through vehicles. Hargrave’s background in stunt work pays off here. You want an explosive finish? This movie gives you an explosive finish.

But Joe Russo’s screenplay does not offer the actors much beyond firing guns and cracking skulls. In fact, there is way too much gunplay, where at times all people do is shoot at each other. As for the pauses, a tender moment between Tyler and Ovi does hint at Tyler’s tragic past, but the appearance of “Stranger Things” star David Harbour amounts to a head-scratching, paycheck-cashing cameo.

For “Extraction” to register, we need to care about the characters. Was I entertained? Sure. Will I remember it in a week or two? Probably not.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [drew@thebeacher.com](mailto:drew@thebeacher.com)



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## Community Rallies to House Michiana Humane Society Pets Amid Pandemic

by Andrew Tallackson

In times of uncertainty, stories emerge that reaffirm your faith in the bonds of community.

Back in March, when Gov. Eric Holcomb issued a stay-at-home order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff at Michiana Humane Society knew they had to move quickly. Only a limited number of employees now could be in the building at the same time. And, adoptions were not possible. Simply not enough time. The animals under their care would flourish better in homes where they would receive far more attention than the present situation could dictate.

So, MHS staff turned to social media, seeking individuals or families to provide temporary “foster care” for its roster of animals that included not only dogs and cats, but also rabbits and guinea pigs.

Within a week, the staff moved 55 animals into “foster” homes. At press time, that number had jumped to 70.

“We were truly overwhelmed with the response,” Executive Director Johanna Humbert told *The Beacher*. “It was remarkable.”

Who was welcoming these animals into their homes? The response, Humbert said, came from all walks of life.

“Some didn’t have any pets in their home because they felt they worked too much, but because they would be home now could spend time with an animal,” she said. “There were people who had been thinking about adding a pet to a family and could



Abigail Schmidt is photographed with Jesse, her family’s COVID-19 foster. They plan to adopt her.

now give it a try. People who had lost a pet, and they had been thinking at some point they would pick up a new pet.”

To limit the number of staff present at one time at the shelter, employees are divided up into morning and afternoon shifts. The shelter continues to take in animals under certain circumstances, Humbert said. If, for instance, the animal is basically healthy, or if it is well-behaved. At press time, MHS had five dogs and 20 cats at the shelter.

The staff are in touch with the foster “families” through a private facebook page, providing updates and other key information. The individuals, in turn, share photos of the animals in their new digs.

In terms of donations, Humbert asks that people refrain from bringing items such as blankets and pet toys to the shelter, holding onto them until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Monetary donations can be made through the website at [michianahumanesociety.org](http://michianahumanesociety.org)

For Humbert, the icing on the cake is the attachment some foster families now have to the animals.

“I sent out an email to the ‘fosters,’ and we offered them a special COVID-19 adoption fee: Let us know if you want us to email you a contract and make it official,” she said. “So far, I’ve had 10 responses from people who want to keep the pet.”

(Email [contact@michianahumanesociety.org](mailto:contact@michianahumanesociety.org) for more details.)



The Chandler family fostered Mitzi. They subsequently wrote Humbert, “We would like to adopt Mitzi. She has come such a long way, returning her is not an option.”

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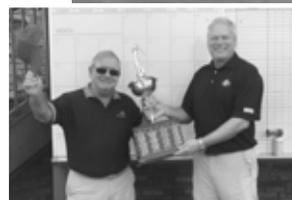
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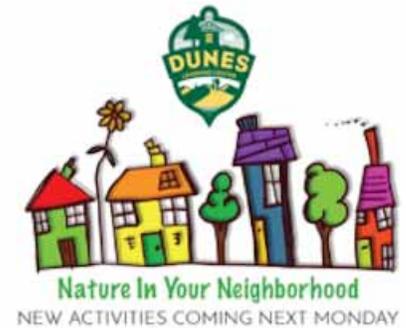
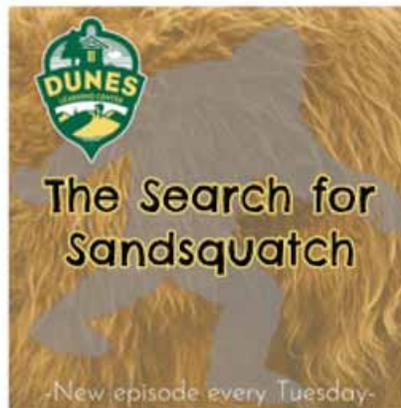
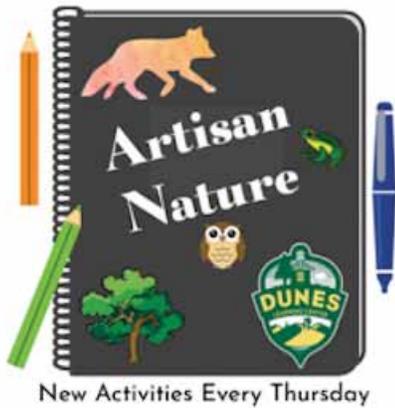
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## Dunes Learning Center Kicks Off “Distance Learning Collection”

by Andrew Tallackson



These two screenshots show a few of the links available through the Distance Learning Collection.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff at Dunes Learning Center has been hard at work on what they call the Distance Learning Collection.

What they’ve achieved is a dynamic blend of fun, educational family activities. By heading to [www.duneslearningcenter.org](http://www.duneslearningcenter.org), then clicking on the Distance Learning Collection link, a slew of options become available.

Take, for instance, last week’s activities. One naturalist, Kayla, revealed how to create a nature journal. Another, Anthony, headed “The Search for Sandsquatch,” which included practical nature exploration advice. A third naturalist, Nate, helped shed light on micro-habitats.

Downloadable crafts and instructional material ranged from ways to create shadow puppets to scavenger hunts and lily pad crafts.

Also available are a number of videos through partners like Bowdoin College, National Science Teachers Association, Harpswell Heritage Land Trust and North Cascades Institute. The subjects



range from a “Polar Bear Virtual Trip” to “Live Animal Cams.” The videos are lively and informative.

As for updates on the center’s summer camp, Geof Benson, the center’s executive director, said in an email, “At this point, we’re not sure what the summer will be like. We plan to make a decision by May 15, following the guidance of the CDC and other public health officials.”

*The center is located at 700 Howe Road, Chesterton. Email [curious@duneslearningcenter.org](mailto:curious@duneslearningcenter.org) for additional details.*

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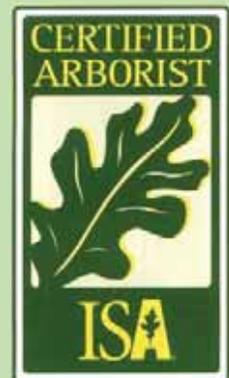
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### LaLu Seniors Receive Scholarships

La Lumiere School seniors Christian Clark and Juliana Maberry have received the Chick Evans Scholarship.

Now, five seniors have received the scholarship during the last four years. The program provides full tuition and housing scholarships for high-achieving caddies. To be eligible, students must demonstrate an excellent academic record, in addition to a strong record as a caddie.

Clark, New Buffalo, Mich., is set to attend the University of Notre Dame in the fall. He caddied at Long Beach Country Club every summer since his sophomore year.

In a press release, Clark said he encourages other students to “cherish every second of the time at school with your classmates because, especially this year, you never know when your time is already up.”

Maberry, Chicago, is set to attend Indiana University in the fall. She caddied at Beverly Country Club for three summers.

“The sense of community that is felt among the student body and faculty is very present and noticeable,” she said in a press release. “Because this aspect of La Lu is so unique, many students appreciate the small things about our school ten times more.”

Eighteen universities participate in the Evans Scholars Program. The scholars live and work together in a community at the Evans Scholars House or a specified dormitory on campus. The program was established in 1930 by the Western Golf Association and Charles “Chick” Evans Jr., an early 20th century golfer. Since the program’s inception, more than 11,000 students have graduated as Evans Scholars.



Clark



Maberry

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# Remarkable Israeli Actress Propels

by Andrew Tallackson

Consider the premise: A woman flees a toxic marriage, carefully plotting beforehand the means for her escape. She begins anew, reinvigorated by the fresh start...until the husband arrives, the past catching up with her.

A compelling formula, to be sure. It worked for Elisabeth Moss two months ago in “The Invisible Man,” gave Jennifer Lopez a boost in 2002 with “Enough” and confirmed Julia Roberts’ box-office muscle in 1991 with “Sleeping With the Enemy.” We love a good, pulpy story where an oppressive spouse has the rug pulled out from beneath him.

Now, consider the formula within the context of an Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in New York, one loosely inspired by fact, and you have the far more powerful “Unorthodox.” The four-part miniseries on Netflix is fascinating, unsettling, inspiring and ultimately deeply moving, boasting a performance for the ages by Israeli actress Shira Haas.

The first Netflix effort primarily in Yiddish, the miniseries uses as its launching pad Deborah Feldman’s 2012 memoir Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots. It is not a direct adaptation, but lifts key themes to tell a story more dramatically suited to television. Having said that, it is consistently unsentimental. It does not necessarily pass judgment, instead allowing the audience to react however it chooses.

“Unorthodox” carefully weaves through past and present to create a complete portrait of its heroine. That would be Esther “Esty” Shapiro (Haas). Just 19, her entire world has been shaped by her Ultra-Orthodox community in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Ushered into an arranged marriage with the painfully shy Yanky Shapiro (Amit Rahav), she quickly realizes what tradition requires of her as his wife — emotionally, spiritually, sexually — is something she cannot embrace. She tries. With every ounce of her being. Her inability to connect with Yanky, though, makes conceiving a child the source of a bit-

ter feud. He threatens divorce. She beats him to the punch by leaving without warning him.

Present-day scenes reveal how Esty, with help from her music teacher, sneaks off to Berlin, where her estranged mother lives with another woman. It is also where she strikes up friendships with students at the local music conservatory. Flashbacks to about 12-18 months earlier reveal how her marriage to Yanky steadily deteriorated, forcing her to

consider not just leaving, but rejecting the only way of life she’s known.

Directed by Maria Schrader and written by Anna Winger, Alexa Karolinski and Daniel Hendler, “Unorthodox” does not necessarily thumb its nose at the Ultra-Orthodox’s strict observance of Jewish law and values. The series conveys a genuine sense of community, and the wedding ceremony for Yanky and Esty captures the joys tradition brings to the union of man and woman.

But if, as the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child, what “Unorthodox” argues is that, if those bound to such strict practices ever do enter the modern world, they are ill-equipped to navigate through it. Yanky, in particular, is a socially awkward, woefully immature momma’s boy. Moishe Lefkovitch (Jeff Wilbusch),

Yanky’s cousin who heads with him to Berlin, is worse: a thug hiding behind tradition as an excuse to behave reprehensibly.

Esty, however, is trickier. At one point in “Unorthodox,” she’s asked why she fled her past. Her response is that “they” asked more from her than she could give. That is a most telling observation. What Esty wants is not so much to reject being a Jew, but the freedom to choose the kind of woman she wants to be. By finding the Ultra-Orthodox stance on women repressive, Esty is denied a proper journey into womanhood. Her sexual “education,” for instance, involves instruction on what pleases the husband, not in terms of what is satisfying to her. When Yanky admonishes her for quoting the Talmud, or for wanting music lessons, she realizes he will never view her as an intellectual equal.

A series as complicated, and potentially alienat-



Shira Haas is astonishing in the Netflix miniseries “Unorthodox.”

# Netflix's Absorbing "Unorthodox"



The marriage between Esther "Esty" Shapiro (Shira Haas) and Yanky Shapiro (Amit Rahav) starts to crumble almost immediately in "Unorthodox."

ing, as this sinks or swims on the shoulders of its star. Haas is this tiny little thing: the face of an old soul trapped in a doll-sized body, one just on the cusp of womanhood. The actress, before this, has appeared mostly in Israeli films and television. This is my introduction to her, and however docile she may be in stature, she more than compensates with ferocious intensity.

Take, for instance the moment soon after Esty is married. Her head is shaved amid a practice linked to modesty. Esty sobs, but the way Haas conveys a feverish attempt to smile is heartbreaking. When Esty lashes out at her new friends, when they make flippant asides about her, Haas unleashes a conversation-halting mix of shame *and* defensiveness.

By devoting adequate time to Esty's past and present, we witness her birth into the modern world. The finale of "Unorthodox" involves Esty's audition at a Berlin music conservatory. Everyone central to her is there. Rather than play piano, which has been her passion, she sings, a second song requested by the judges to better gauge her talent. I had to look the piece up. It is "*Mi Bon Siach*," which is heard at weddings. Performed in Hebrew, it becomes a

final symbolic act of rebellion for Esty. She sings in what performers call the "chest voice," but that is just a technical term. What we witness is Esty digging down deep to who she once was, discarding it and announcing to the world with force who she is now. It is an astonishing piece of acting. Haas' performance here: I "felt" it, moved beyond words. Schrader, as director, cuts to a shot of one of the judges, so affected, she's in tears, and the emotion is earned.

"Unorthodox" has given Haas a remarkable showcase. I was blown away by her. For this actress, great things await.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [drew@thebeacher.com](mailto:drew@thebeacher.com)



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*“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”*

Pericles

In the case of Ellen Firme, lifelong Hoosier, businesswoman, social activist, wife and mother, her legacy was recognizable through a resounding support of the arts and artists in Michiana.

Ellen's impact on the lives of others — her support of youth and art, her enthusiastic backing of artists' works, as well as her social and environmental actions — continues to this day. The Ellen Firme Gallery, in fact, remains a visual testament in Beverly Shores to her love of art and artists.

Ellen was born in Gary in 1925, the eldest of four to Myra Belle Abbot and Charles Halpin. She grew up there, attending Horace Mann High School. She was a strong personality and social activist beginning in college.

One of her sons, Leo Firme, relayed a particular story.

“While attending Mary Manse College in Toledo, her good friend was Hawaiian, darker skinned and restricted from restaurants,” he said. Influenced by Dorothy Day, a then-prominent Catholic social activist in New York City during the 1940s and founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, Ellen pursued a course of action. However, Day's protégé, Catherine Doherty, a social-justice pioneer, wrote Ellen a letter cautioning her “not to get in the way of fundraising while working to integrate restaurants.”

Ellen did the best she could to heed such advice and still go forward.

This call to social activism was a side of Ellen that took future root when lobbying to create Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

Leo states, “She went to Washington, D.C., and visited congress people involved with the issue from all over the country to present their case,” Leo recalled. “She attended a lot of local, congressional and senatorial hearings.”

She also served 20 years as a member of the Beverly Shores Town Board, was active in the Demo-



Ellen, photographed in 1974 teaching to future medical laboratory technologists.

cratic Club of Porter County and served on the Committee for Coastal Zone Management. She received numerous awards, including the Athena Award (2006), the Douglas Award and Faculty Honor Awards, Indiana University-Northwest Class of 1974.

After graduating with a degree in biology, Ellen worked at Abbot Laboratories. Later, she worked as a medical technologist at St. Margaret Hospital in Hammond and at Ingalls Memorial Hospital in Harvey, Ill., eventually arriving at St. Anthony Hospital in Michigan City. It was there she wrote and coordinated its Certified Laboratory Assistants Program. She developed and published workbooks, training manuals and textbooks disseminated to students and teachers across the country.

On Sept. 2, 1950, she married Glenn Firme at Holy Angels Cathedral on Tyler Street in Gary. They lived in Gary for awhile before moving to Harvey. Glenn was working at the Ford plant and Ellen was at Ingalls Memorial. They were starting a family, too, eventually welcoming four sons: Leo, Ted, Kevin and Dennis.

By 1960, the family had moved to Beverly Shores, where Glenn began building a home with “help” from his four sons. Sometime in the mid-1960s Glenn began a new career: Glenn Firme & Associates was founded in 1966.

“Dad was selling mimeograph machines in the area to a lot of churches for their Sunday bulletins and was working out of our garage,” Kevin Firme recalled. “That was going well, so around '68, we rented a place in the Beverly Shores post office, which had an extra room and began selling office supplies and machines. In 1972, we built a place on Highway 12 a block east of the post office. We stayed there until 1982, when we bought the building we currently occupy, as we had outgrown our earlier location.”

Glenn Firme passed away in 1982. Ellen subsequently took over operations.

Why then, was Ellen such a strong supporter of the visual arts in the region, and how did that develop?

“She was a huge supporter of everything that the

## A Legacy in Art and Social Activism

by Linda Weigel



Ellen Firme.

family did,” Leo said. “It didn't matter what it was. Kevin's involvement in the arts was a motivator for her.”

Kevin said he started selling art materials to students and teachers while in college, buying from wholesalers and distributors in the Chicago area.

“The printmaking professor was looking for black Arches paper and couldn't get it. Dad and I decided to find it and get the paper, so we went to a supplier in New York and came back with a load,” he said. “I started selling paper to other artists and printmakers in the Chicago area. We then started selling art supplies, as well as office machines and office supplies, in 1972. I would keep the supplies at the store and take them in to artists.”

Kevin began entering all local and regional art competitions.

“She liked going to the openings and became acquainted with the directors and other artists as they would come into the store,” he said. “She decided to do purchase awards and offer gift certificates to some of the competitions. She had a collection of local artists' works from these purchase awards. She was supportive of my work as well as her sister's.”

Connie Kassal, an early member of the local art center and Area Artists Association, called Ellen a welcoming, generous spirit.

“Her name was the first one suggested when we brainstormed awards during the creation of the Area Artists Association's Juried Exhibits,” she said. “And, she was kind enough to invite us back to her home for visits with famous artists such as Don Baum after the Blank Center for the Arts receptions.”

Ellen was able to enjoy the official opening of the Ellen Firme Gallery in 2013 before she died on July 8, 2013. For Kevin, the gallery “reminds me of her welcoming and supportive spirit. We have a featured artist every month, and I like to think it gives them support and encouragement to continue. It's a lot of fun meeting new people and hosting a gathering each month.

“She (Ellen) liked to dress up and go to openings. She liked handing out the gift certificates from our store. She was happy to meet the award winners. I



Glenn and Ellen Firme, cutting the cake at their wedding on Sept. 2, 1950.

think that is what I remember best.”

In recent years, the gallery has featured artists such as Gwen Jones, J. Boldenow, Holly Jackson, Peggy Carter, Father Michael Enright, Duneland Photography Club, Dave Larson, Studio 18 artists, Roger Smith, Janko Constantinov, David Tutwiler, Matt Kubik and the Rebound artist group.

I remember Ellen as a force for joy and positivity. She was always welcoming and engaging whenever I saw her, whether it was at the store, summer art fairs or at art center events. It was obvious how much she enjoyed being a part of something she truly loved.

For all the artists she supported, for all the children's art competitions she supported, for her work on behalf of social causes, Ellen left a legacy of how to champion and encourage the best in everyone.



Ellen and Dennis (seated), surrounded by Leo, Ted and Kevin.

## 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](mailto: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.
- Bubbles Ice Cream Parlor. (219) 872-1024.
- 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.
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- 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.
- Knuckleheads Sports Bar-Grill. (219) 221-6763.
- 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. (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.
- Sake Asian Fusion. (219) 809-0111.
- 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.
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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.
- Burger King. (219) 879-0509.
- Culver's. (219) 872-5065.
- Dunkin Donuts. (219) 879-2922.
- Hardee's. (219) 879-8025.
- KFC. (219) 879-0343.
- McDonald's, Michigan Boulevard. (219) 874-7772.
- McDonald's, Franklin Street. (219) 872-0411.
- McDonald's, near I-94. (219) 878-2642.
- 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). (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.
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- 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.

**New Buffalo**

- 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.

**Fast Food With Drive-Through**

- McDonald's. (269) 469-1924.
- Subway. (269) 469-5055.

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Thank you.

No better way exists to state our gratitude. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, your continued support leaves us moved and humbled.

Our advertisers, many of whom have been with us for a long time, remain loyal. That is something we do not take lightly. Readers have emailed encouraging thoughts, with one Long Beach resident stating, *"The Beacher is more relevant and needed now in this crisis more than it has ever been in my 63 year lifetime."*

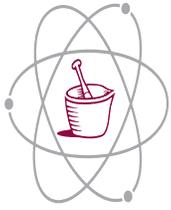
Again, we are moved by your words.

## Membership

For more than 35 years, The Beacher has existed as a **free** newspaper, and it will **continue** to do so. Amid the pandemic, however, small newspapers across the country are finding additional ways to financially support themselves. So, we've created a page where you can support us by becoming a Beacher member. We'll thank you with a weekly ad in The Beacher. If you prefer to remain anonymous, we can list you as such.



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## Purdue Offers Family Support Effort

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Purdue University's College of Health and Human Sciences is providing a set of resources for families.

"Families Tackling Tough Times Together" is a 10-week initiative that provides materials on family and child resilience.

"We also are inviting families to share their experiences and messages of support," said Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth, a project coordinator and professor of human development and family studies, in a press release. "We are inviting both civilian and military families to participate together, since they are experiencing many similar challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic."

The free resource launched via a Facebook group.

MacDermid Wadsworth, who is also director of the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute, brought together more than 60 faculty, staff and students from Purdue's College of Health and Human Sciences, Purdue Extension – Health and Human Sciences, and colleagues from across Purdue and around the country to rapidly build the "pop-up" initiative.

Email [shelley@purdue.edu](mailto:shelley@purdue.edu) for more details.

## School of American Music

In the April 23 edition, we listed ways readers could support local non-profits, asking they also submit recommendations of groups not listed.

We received the following suggestion:

- School of American Music, Three Oaks, Mich., which provides free and reduced-rate online lessons. Make donations at [www.schoolofamericanmusic.org](http://www.schoolofamericanmusic.org), and send inquiries to [schoolofamericanmusic@gmail.com](mailto:schoolofamericanmusic@gmail.com)



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## 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 audiobook 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](http://www.laportelibrary.org) for more details.*



## American Red Cross

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

- LaPorte Hospital, 1007 W. Lincolnway, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday, May 1.
- St. John’s United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road, noon-6 p.m. Tuesday, May 5.

*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](http://redcrossblood.org) for more details. Donors through April 30 receive a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. Visit [rcblood.org](http://rcblood.org) /together for more details.*

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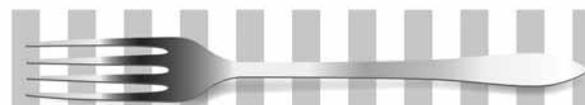
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### National Park Trails Open

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](http://www.nps.gov/indu), and social media channels such as [www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS](http://www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS)

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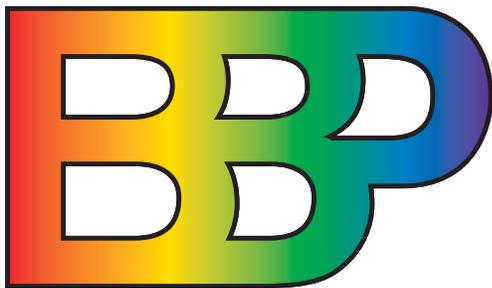
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**On April 30, 1789**, George Washington was inaugurated as the first U.S. president.

**On April 30, 1889**, America celebrated its first national holiday, marking the centennial of George Washington's inauguration as U.S. president.

**On April 30, 1939**, television was first publicly broadcast from New York's Empire State Building.

**On April 30, 1993**, top-ranked women's tennis player Monica Seles was stabbed in the back during a match in Hamburg, Germany, by a man who described himself as a fan of German star Steffi Graf.

**On April 30, 1997**, ABC aired the "coming out" episode of "Ellen," in which the title character, played by Ellen DeGeneres, admitted she is a lesbian.

**On May 1, 1786**, "The Marriage of Figaro," an opera by Mozart, premiered in Vienna.

**On May 1, 1863**, Illinois issued a charter to the First National Bank of Chicago, with capital just in excess of \$100,000.

**On May 1, 1873**, U.S. post offices began selling the first penny postcards.

**On May 1, 1884**, construction began in Chicago on the first "skyscraper." It was a 10-story structure (at La Salle and Adams streets) built by New York's Home Insurance Co.

**On May 1, 1941**, Orson Welles' "Citizen Kane" opened in New York.

**On May 1, 1971**, Amtrak, the first national rail service, began operating.

**On May 2, 1865**, the body of President Abraham Lincoln arrived in Chicago to lie in state.

**On May 2, 1885**, *Good Housekeeping*, published by Clark W. Bryan, made its first appearance in Holyoke, Mass.

**On May 2, 1917**, in a baseball game in Chicago, pitchers Jim "Hippo" Vaughn of the Chicago Cubs and Fred Toney of the Cincinnati Reds each pitched nine no-hit innings. The Reds scored a run in the top of the 10th inning, winning 1-0. Toney held the Cubs hitless in the bottom of the 10th.

**On May 2, 1936**, "Peter and the Wolf," a symphonic tale for children by Sergei Prokofiev, had its world premiere in Moscow.

**On May 2, 1965**, the "Early Bird" satellite was used to transmit TV pictures across the Atlantic.

**On May 2, 1994**, Nelson Mandela claimed victory in the wake of South Africa's first democratic elec-

tions; President F.W. de Klerk acknowledged defeat.

**On May 3, 1765**, the first recognized American medical school opened at the College of Philadelphia, now the University of Pennsylvania.

**On May 3, 1802**, the District of Columbia was incorporated as the City of Washington, with the mayor to be appointed by the president, and the council elected by the property owners.

**On May 3, 1933**, Nellie Taylor Ross was sworn in as the first female director of the U.S. mint.

**On May 3, 1937**, Margaret Mitchell won a Pulitzer Prize for her Civil War novel, Gone With The Wind.

**On May 3, 1979**, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party won the British general election, making her Britain's first female prime minister.

**On May 4, 1855**, "Women's Hospital," the first hospital designated exclusively for women, opened in New York City.

**On May 4, 1927**, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was founded.

**On May 4, 1932**, mobster Al Capone, convicted of income-tax evasion, entered Atlanta's federal penitentiary.

**On May 4, 1961**, the first group of "freedom riders" left Washington, heading for Birmingham, Ala., to challenge racial segregation on interstate buses and bus terminals.

**On May 5, 1891**, the opening night in New York's Carnegie Hall featured a concert conducted by Peter Tchaikovsky and Walter Damrosch.

**On May 5, 1904**, pitcher Cy Young hurled the American League's first perfect game as the Boston Red Sox defeated the Philadelphia Athletics 3-0.

**On May 5, 1955**, the baseball musical "Damn Yankees" opened on Broadway.

**On May 5, 1961**, Alan Shepherd became the first American in space. He made a brief suborbital flight in a capsule launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

**On May 6, 1840**, the world's first postage stamp, "The Penny Black," was introduced in England.

**On May 6, 1889**, the Paris Exposition formally opened featuring the just-completed Eiffel Tower.

**On May 6, 1915**, Herman "Babe" Ruth, pitching for the Boston Red Sox, hit his first major league home run.

**On May 6, 1935**, the Works Progress Administration was established to provide work during the Depression.

**On May 6, 1937**, while attempting a landing in Lakehurst, N.J., the hydrogen-filled German dirigible Hindenburg exploded, killing 35 of the 97 people on board, and a Navy crewman on the ground.

**On May 6, 2004**, an estimated 51.1 million people tuned in for the final first-run episode of "Friends" on NBC.

# BROCHURES



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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](mailto: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.*



*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

**Masked Prey** by John Sandford (hardcover, \$29 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 406 pages)

Blog, blog, blog. Everyone has a blog. But what if a blog sends the wrong message? What if it intentionally, or not, suggests something horrendous must happen to make the government sit up and pay attention?

Audrey Coil, 17, has her own blog, mostly about girly things — makeup, clothes and such — not to mention provocative shots of herself in see-through lingerie. She's on a number of social media outlets and calls it "Young'nHot'nDC. Cute, huh? She has four sponsors, probably because her mother is Sen. Roberta Coil of Georgia.

Her classmate, Blake Winston, does her filming. His father is a rich hedge fund manager, so helping Audrey is just for fun, not profit.

One day, Audrey asks Blake to see if her photos appear on any other blog — egotist that she is. One photo sticks out: Audrey walking out of school with a friend. Who took the picture? It wasn't Blake. A link takes the pair to a website called 1919. Other photos show children of U.S. politicians walking along a street or standing outside schools. There is a column of type that runs down the side of the screen ranting about politics.

When Senator Coil comes home, Audrey and Blake show her the website. Audrey also tells her mother about her blog and, well, hang on, it's about to hit the fan...

Meanwhile, a loser named Randy Stokes — mean, ornery, gun-loving racist — meets his boss, Elias Dunn, a civil engineer and fellow racist, in a bar after work. Dunn had written a website on a napkin for him to look at — Randy's sister has a computer — probably some neo-Nazi or white supremacist crap — but the napkin gets ketchup on it and they read the address wrong. It takes them to a site called 1919. Dunn says he knows nothing about it, but is curious enough to go home and look it up. It uses the Nazi SS motto — "*Thy Honor is Thy Loyalty*" — and the words and kids' photos don't make sense at first. Dunn isn't a Nazi, but he is a fascist. And then it hits him: it was a message sent out to whomever would find it — and act on it.

*"There could be only one reason for the message. Somebody...was looking for political leverage and wanted an anonymous sympathizer to deliver it... That would be a step toward a renewed America."*

Now that Dunn has a calling, he knows Stokes

has to be dealt with...and probably his sister, too. He doesn't need any witnesses...to what? Does he really have to kill a politician's kid? Or maybe just try to kill him to get their attention? Dunn wonders if he can really kill? Or maybe get someone else to do the deed? Dunn has no problem with the concept of violence, no, he's just smart enough to not want to get caught.

Time to start planning...

Dunn first makes three copies of a letter he writes about the 1919 website and his beliefs about it. He sends these copies to three different men he thinks would be interested in taking action.

Senator Coil reaches out to fellow senators Porter Smalls and Elmer Henderson about the website. The FBI can't help them because no crime has occurred, and it's impossible to track down the origin of the website. Time for another approach. They decide to call in Lucas Davenport. He's had a far-reaching career starting with the Minneapolis police, followed by a stint as an agent in the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. He owes his current job as a U.S. marshal to these senators.

They know Lucas can think and work outside the box. He had proven himself before to be a thorough investigator with great instincts...and no compunction in bending the rules when necessary. After all, the senators and Lucas don't want any children to die before they can find out who set up the blog.

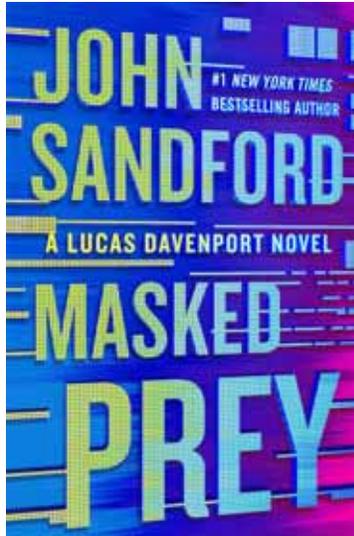
To this end, Lucas starts by meeting with Charles Lang, who calls himself an expert on these militant anti-political groups. Along with his assistant, Stephen Gibson, the pair compile a list of where Lucas might start looking. What Lucas finds is that every one in these groups has issues, and a gun or 20, and not afraid to explain either, or both, to him.

Lang sends Gibson to reach out to one group whose head honcho could possibly lead Lucas to a training camp used by these groups, but someone is not happy with this intrusion and Gibson is killed. Lucas knows he finally has something to go on, and it becomes a game of cat and mouse.

Meanwhile, Dunn moves on with plans of his own...plans that will surely have long-ranging repercussions and the death of innocent children. The climax will have you holding your breath.

A fascinating plot and enough motley characters to go around. Certainly a theme for today, Masked Prey is Book 30 in Sandford's "Prey" series, and I don't think it will be his last.

Till next time, happy reading!



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