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Unstoppable

by Andrew Tallackson

When Jeremiah Mellen sings, everyone in the room stops to listen.

Whether it be on stage, in regional productions like “Rent” or “The Hunchback of Notre Dame,” or backed by LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra as its 2013 Hoosier Star winner, there is a purity, a command to his voice that suggests one is in the presence of greatness.

Spend time chatting with Mellen, and you might be surprised to learn he has no formal training. That in 2010, a freak work accident nearly derailed his dreams of performing. That his life has been fraught with upsets that might have destroyed him.

Thing is, he’s still standing. Bolstered by love. His passion for music stronger than ever.

“Music has pulled me through a lot in my life,” he told *The Beacher*. “Whenever I’m sad or down, I know this sounds cliché, but turning on some music can help. It helps me so much.”

Mellen, who turns 35 in September, is like many performers these days who feels a bit stranded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Singing is part of his DNA. Being denied that opportunity is like being deprived of oxygen. However, he will resume duties as Hoosier Star emcee during a virtual version of the annual LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra fundraiser in September, the details of which will be outlined in an upcoming *Beacher* article.

The Porter County native was born Jeremiah Souza (he and husband Kevin Mellen were officially married nearly three



Jeremiah Mellen, appearing as Bert in “Mary Poppins” at Valparaiso’s Memorial Opera House.

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years ago, with Souza taking Mellen's last name). He grew up in Chesterton, in a conservative family with three sisters and one brother. The emphasis within the family was church music. So, Mellen's outlet was a roster of Disney songs and young singers with operatic voices like Josh Groban and Charlotte Church.

"I would try to model how they sang," Mellen said. "My biggest influence was him (Groban). The way he sang and the type of music he sang. He was more of a ballad type guy. 'You Raise Me Up' is my all-time favorite song to sing. I love that song. Absolutely love it."

And pretty early, Mellen caught the performing bug. Starting at age 5 and continuing through high school, he and his sister, Rachel, performed every Saturday at what now is known as the senior care facility Waters of Duneland. Organized through the family's church, he and his sisters performed songs of faith, whether it be in the cafeteria or from room to room.

"My sister and I loved it," he said. "We loved the singing. That was my favorite part. Our repertoire was very limited, but I still enjoyed doing it. You got to know the residents, and you fell in love with them, and they loved seeing us."

"So, it was a nice thing for myself and the residents to have each other as company."

Mellen also was becoming an accomplished trumpet player, winning a fair share of awards and scholarships. He also composed piano duets and arrangements for his school orchestra. Again, all with no formal training.

In the seventh grade, he saw a production of "Phan-

tom" that sparked an interest in theater. Not the Andrew Lloyd Webber version, but one eclipsed by that production's global success. With music and lyrics by Maury Yeston and book by Arthur Kopit, the show did feature a pre-"Wicked" Kristin Chenoweth.

"It was a very good musical, the first musical I ever saw," he recalled. "I was hooked, but there was no way for me to do theater. That wasn't allowed growing up."

He continued singing at the senior care facility, as well as playing the trumpet past high school, until, he says, "someone stole my trumpet and I never got it replaced. It was gorgeous, limited edition. Absolutely beautiful." He pauses, the silence reflective. Mellen then adds, a tinge of sadness in his voice, "I really haven't picked one up since then."

There are moments in a person's life that cut deep, that have the potential to crush them. The days between 2009 and 2010 contained their fair share of them for Mellen.



Jeremiah Mellen appears as Quasimodo in Memorial Opera House's production of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

It was during this time, for instance, that he came to terms with being gay, his decision to “come out of the closet” alienating him from others. And just a few weeks before leaving for the University of Tennessee School of Music, exposure to a chemical spill at a summer job resulted in the loss of 20 percent of his lungs. School now was out of the picture. Keep in mind, he was overjoyed to be pursuing his dream, and having already met his college roommates. Now, a long recovery period awaited. Even so, doctors were not sure Mellen would sing again.

“I was devastated,” Mellen said. “My whole life, ever since seeing ‘Phantom,’ I knew I wanted to sing for a living, and now it was like all those dreams had been taken away. I was emotionally devastated, and it definitely wore on me. It was a very hard time.”

There was hope, though.

“The specialists, they said I was very lucky because my lungs were stronger than the average person because I did soccer and wrestling growing up. Played the trumpet,” he said. “I was used to maximizing my lungs.”

Still, it was difficult for Mellen to keep a positive outlook.

In 2010, and now a Franciscan St. Anthony Health employee, Mellen performed during the hospital’s Christmas “Love Lights” ceremony. After it was over, a guy approached him and said, “Hey, I really enjoyed your music. Have you ever sung with an orchestra before?” Turns out, it was Joe Mellen, master of ceremonies for LCSO’s Hoosier Star fundraiser. Jeremiah had auditioned for it before, and Mellen encouraged him to do so again. “Tell them Joe Mellen sent you,” he said.

The following year, Jeremiah met Kevin Mellen, Joe’s brother. Joe, sadly, passed away at only 52 in August 2011. Kevin was grieving that loss, on what would have been his late brother’s birthday. The relationship between Kevin and Jeremiah deepened from there. The two have been together since. And it was Kevin who in 2013 encouraged Jeremiah to audition for the Dunes Summer Theater production of “Rent.” Jeremiah had already auditioned for Hoosier Star and was chosen as one of the adult contestants.



Jeremiah Mellen, winning Hoosier Star in 2013.

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Kevin came home one day, Jeremiah recalls, and said, “I want you to promise me you’re going to do something for me. I know you always wanted to do theater, and you love music. They are holding auditions for ‘Rent’ with the Dunes.”

Jeremiah had never auditioned for a stage production before. He was terribly nervous. Auditions, which required dance routines, were held with director George Maslankowski at Lubeznik Center for the Arts. His audition piece was “I Am What I Am” from “Rent.” But Jeremiah had never danced before. So, he was convinced he’d failed. Imagine his surprise when Maslankowski called to offer him the role of Angel.



Jeremiah and Kevin, together in the Footlight Players production of “The Odd Couple.”

Jeremiah was speechless.

The Dunes production was a tremendous boost to his confidence, not just through Maslankowski, but also from the support of fellow cast members like Brandon Williams — a Michigan City High School graduate and previous Hoosier Star winner — and LaPorte’s Brandon Hagerman.

And that September, Jeremiah won the adult division of Hoosier Star. His winning song: “This is the Moment” from “Jekyll & Hyde.”

“When I got there, I was so nervous. I never sang before a crowd this big before,” he recalled. “I was the last person to go on. The stage manager, she knew about my connection with Joe and Kevin, and she came up to me and put her arm around me. She said, ‘Jeremiah, I know that you are nervous, and I know that you are scared to go out there. Remember, you are not alone out there.’

“I cannot explain it,” Jeremiah said of what happened next. “I got on stage, and I was so scared, and the music started and the minute I sang my first note, every nerve left my body. I was able to re-

lax and sing the song I wanted to with the emotion I wanted to. And that’s the year I won.

“This huge thing I won, it helped me to believe in myself again, that I could do this. Knowing music could be a big part of my life.”

Appearing in “Rent” and winning Hoosier Star, all in the same year, was a pivotal turning point for Jeremiah. There was nothing stopping him. In 2015, he became the Hoosier

Star emcee. On stage, he has appeared in musical productions throughout the region, including “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” at LaPorte Little Theatre Club, “The Hunchback of Notre Dame” and “Mary Poppins” at Valparaiso’s Memorial Opera House, as the Beast in “Disney’s Beauty and the Beast” at Whiting’s Marian Theater Guild, and three shows with Kevin Mellen at Michigan City’s Footlight Theatre, including “The Odd Couple” and “The Glass Menagerie.”

At Franciscan Health, he is the manager of its guild of volunteers and gift shop. He just graduated with a bachelor’s degree in health-care administration from Indiana Wesleyan University and is working on a Master of Business Administration.

And, he continues to grow through each new production. “Mary Poppins,” for instance, staged shortly before COVID-19 emerged, was another confidence booster.

“With the part of Bert, you expect Bert to dance,” he said. “The choreographer was so patient with me. I learned these dance steps, and I got a little more confident as a performer. I realized, if I put the work in, I can do this. I can build on what I’ve learned.

“Whether it’s nerves or self-doubt, it’s all me being a perfectionist,” he continued. “I want to be as good as I can be. I don’t think I’ll ever be at the level of where I say, ‘I’ve got this in the bag.’ There is always going to be work there.”

Jeremiah, however, doesn’t seem to mind. In fact, he welcomes the challenge.

“As a performer,” he said, “I am the type of person where, I know I have the ability to do something, but I don’t always think I *can* do something. But, every show has taught me something different about myself, and I learn, I *am* capable of more than I think I can.”

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



Jeremiah was cast as the title character, alongside Erin Imer as the narrator, in the 2018 production of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” at LaPorte Little Theatre Club.

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LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra, as part of its a la carte event, will perform from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 23, at Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12.



Guests are asked to socially distance themselves during the performance.

This is the first LSCO concert at the Gardens. Benefitting both groups, it will feature 38 symphony members, along with Chuck Steck, the LSCO interim music director and conductor. The socially distanced program is set at the Celebration Pavilion. Two 2019 Hoosier Star winners, Rebecca Lane and Joe Stewart, will sing their winning songs.

General admission is \$50 for adults and free for children 12 and younger. Advanced tickets are recommended through <https://lcsos.net/friendship-botanic-gardens/> or tinyurl.com/yxtfu25v. They also will be sold the day of the event.

Gates open at 5:30 p.m., with music starting promptly at 6:30 p.m. Beverages will be sold. Chairs will be available for use in the Celebration Meadow; however, guests can take their own lawn chairs or blankets. No outside food or drinks are allowed.

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“Radioactive” Takes Haphazard Approach to Compelling Subject

by Andrew Tallackson



Rosamund Pike and Sam Riley star as Marie and Pierre Curie in Amazon Prime’s “Radioactive.”

“Radioactive” contains two wonderful performances by Rosamund Pike and Sam Riley as Marie and Pierre Curie that get trampled on — in some cases *literally* — by the bizarre, haphazard way in which their story is told.

I suspect director Marjane Satrapi (“Persepolis”) and writer Jack Thorne (HBO’s “His Dark Materials”) didn’t want to create another dusty, stuffy period piece, so they opted to shake things up by bouncing through history. But in doing so, they disrupt the flow of their film, play hard and loose with the facts and, at times, lose sight of the two complicated individuals at the core of their tale.

The first half of “Radioactive,” now streaming on Amazon Prime, is the best because the storytelling is at its simplest. It charts how Marie, a brilliant Polish scientist living and working in France, met her future husband and research partner, Pierre, the two making the breakthrough discovery of radium and polonium.

Pike depicts Marie as a woman whose mind can’t slow down for a second, as if she exists in fast-forward mode: aware of the sexism that threatens to thwart her work, too driven to succeed to let it bother her. Science is her focus, her obvious attraction to Pierre dismissed as an unenviable distraction. And Riley, as Pierre, makes for a tender, soft-spoken suitor, the only man who can slow Marie down to smell the proverbial roses.

Anyone with an eye and ear for history is aware



“Radioactive”

Running time: 109 minutes. Rated PG-13 for thematic elements, disturbing images, brief nudity and a scene of sensuality

of the scientific possibilities, and catastrophic devastation, that ensues from their Nobel-prize winning work. But Thorne’s script doesn’t have enough faith in his audience. He feels the need to show you. So what happens in “Radioactive” — four times — is that it interrupts the narrative, stops the story entirely, to leap forward in time to re-enact key points in history. Marie expresses hope radium can help others, so the film cuts to 1950s Cleveland where brachytherapy, a form of radiotherapy, is used on a sick boy. Marie and Pierre fear others will exploit their research, the film cuts to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, work on the Manhattan Project and, in a most embarrassing display, the Chernobyl disaster. After last year’s monumental HBO miniseries, how “Radioactive” depicts Chernobyl looks and feels cheap. Practically comic book-ish. Why take this awkward approach? Why not stick with Marie and Pierre, then, before the credits roll at the end, offer a thoughtful montage of imagery conveying the triumphs and failures that followed the couple’s discovery?

As “Radioactive” clumsily flip-flops through time, it squeezes in Marie’s affair with a colleague, Paul



The most moving aspect of "Radioactive" is how it depicts the relationship between Marie and her daughter, Irene Curie (Anya Taylor-Joy), during World War I.

Langevin (Aneurin Barnard), after Pierre's death. The way society ostracizes her, and her blatant disregard for such vitriol, is fascinating, and we are moved by the way Marie's daughter, Irene Curie (Anya Taylor-Joy), helps her mother overcome a fear of hospitals to support medical recovery efforts in World War I.

Thorne's screenplay, however, takes curious missteps, inaccurately portraying elements involving the Nobel Prize ceremony and Marie's relationship with her daughter. It also closes on an unnecessarily sappy note.

Pike, however, is dynamite. Ever since scoring an Oscar nomination for "Gone Girl" (2014), she's secured juicier roles, no longer relegated to attractive window dressing in male-dominated pictures. Her best work was 2018's ferocious turn as journalist Marie Colvin in "A Private War." "Radioactive" is further proof she has the acting chops to pull off meatier material.

But the film itself? A mess.

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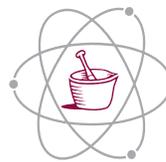
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Historical Society Museum Renovated Paleontology Display, Traveling Exhibit

The LaPorte County Historical Society Museum's renovated paleontology exhibit, which features the bones of prehistoric mastodons and mammoths that once roamed LaPorte County, is now on display.

The exhibit features new cabinets to better showcase the collection, along with new information. The mastodon remains include two mastodon jaws, mastodon and mammoth teeth, mastodon vertebrae and a mammoth bone. These prehistoric artifacts all came from LaPorte County farms. The mastodon jaws came from the Alfred R. Huhnke Sr. farm in Hanna Township (1955) and the Charles M. Dowd farm in Noble Township (circa 1900). Other mastodon and mammoth relics in the exhibit came from other areas in the county.

Today, the remains of more than 300 mammoths and mastodons have been found in Indiana, with remains discovered in almost all 92 counties. Many of the bones from these findings can be found at Indiana State Museum, which houses the state's largest mastodon collection. The mastodon by the name of Fred at Indiana State Museum is from the Gumz farm in LaPorte County.

The new LaPorte County Historical Society Museum exhibit will allow residents to experience locally what exists on a larger scale at the state museums. Mary Phelan, a Purdue intern and LaPorte County resident, handled the renovation. During her tenure with the Historical Society, she also created a binder of information on the birds of Indiana and worked with World War II uniforms.

Internship opportunities are available with the Historical Society for high school and college students. Projects are available for, and can be created, to accommodate students' class requirements. Contact Museum Director Keri Teller-Jakubowski for more information.

The museum is located at 2405 Indiana Ave. in LaPorte. Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. until further notice. Masks are required of all visitors. Call (219) 324-6767 or email info@laportecountyhistory.org for more details.

□

"Indiana Through the Mapmaker's Eye" is on loan from the Indiana Historical Society through Aug. 31.

The exhibit is drawn from IHS's collection of about 1,700 maps and atlases of Indiana and the Midwest dating from the 16th century to the present. It examines four ways people have used maps

through the years: as documentation, tools, political images and art.

Some of the maps include: an 1833 tourist's Indi-



Above: Pictured with the renovated paleontology exhibit are Museum Director Keri Teller-Jakubowski and intern Mary Phelan. **Below:** The Indiana Historical Society exhibit.



ana pocket map; a 1913 Sanborn Co. fire insurance map for Bloomington; Thomas Kitchin's 1747 map of French settlements in North America; an 1881 bird's-eye view of Mount Vernon, Ind.; and a circa 1880 scale-model map of the University of Notre Dame.

The museum also will have local maps and map resources for sale in the gift shop. An IHS hand-out covering mapmaking terms, selected sources on the history of maps and mapmaking at the Indiana Historical Society, and a bibliography of maps exhibited is available.

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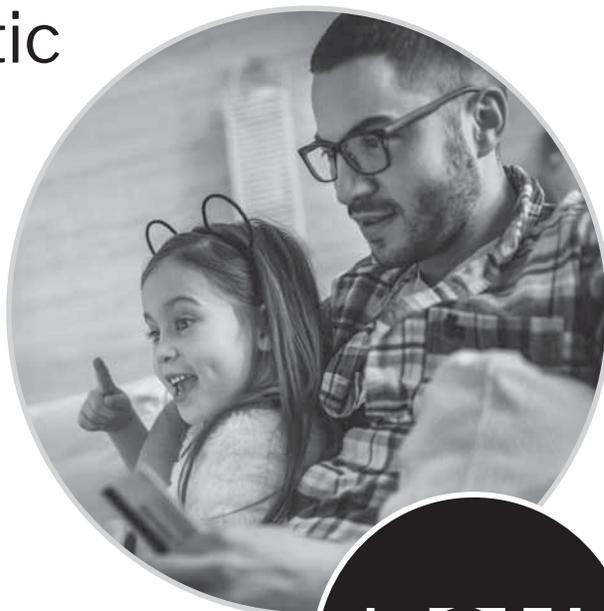
While parked, call the library phone number posted on the numbered space sign, tell staff your library card number and he/she will check out the items and take them to a table at the parking space and walk away. Patrons then can step out of their vehicle to retrieve them. Curbside hours are Monday-Friday (1 to 6 p.m. at Thomas and Hageman) and Saturday (11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Thomas and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Hageman).

For patrons with materials checked out before COVID-19 restrictions were in place, return them to the building drop boxes. Do not return them in bags. Do not return board games; those can be returned at a future date. Return eReaders into the Audio/Visual drop.

Hageman Library (219-926-9080) is located at 100 Francis St., Porter. Thomas Library (219-926-7696) is located at 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton. Westchester Township History Museum (219-983-9715) is located at 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton. The Baugher Center is located at 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

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Chesterton Art Center

Judy Gregurich and Mark Montgomery will offer an eight-week Beginning Stained Glass Class starting from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 18, at Chesterton Art Center.

Students will learn the art of copper foil stained glass invented by Louis Tiffany. Tools and supplies are included. The cost is \$250, with members receiving a \$20 discount. Student must wear a mask and practice social distancing. A minimum of six students, and advance registration, are required.

Gregurich and Montgomery also will offer an eight-week Intermediate Stained Glass Studio. In each session, a new challenge is presented with different techniques, including sandblasting, mosaics, slumping and fusing, overlay and three-dimensional building. The focus this time is learning a unique way to build a mosaic. Students create their own designs and supply their own materials.

Supply lists are included at registration. The cost is \$105, with members receiving a \$20 discount. A minimum of six students is required to hold the class. All students must register and pay in advance.

Hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes will be available for both classes. Registration can be made in person, by phone or on Eventbrite.com.

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



Students create stained glass projects at Chesterton Art Center under the instruction of Judy Gregurich and Mark Montgomery.

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Samberg is Blah, But “Palm Springs” Delivers on its Wild Premise

by Andrew Tallackson



Andy Samberg and Cristin Milioti play two people trapped in a time loop in “Palm Springs.”

“Palm Springs” is another comic riff on the same concept that made “Groundhog Day” a minor classic, and while it doesn’t reach the same comedic heights, it is inventive enough to yield its own twisted delights.

And, apparently, it’s found a sizable audience. At the same time it was shown at drive-in theaters, the movie debuted on Hulu, more people watching it during its first three days than any other film in the streaming platform’s history.

You smile at the cleverness of it all more than you laugh out loud, and I’ll get to why in just a bit.

The premise is clever. Whereas Bill Murray’s cynical weatherman wakes up in a time loop in “Groundhog Day,” Nyles (Andy Samberg) has been trapped in one for some time. And it’s a downer of a day. A wedding he’s been dragged to by his ditz girlfriend, Misty (Meredith Hagner), who is a bridesmaid. The relationship between Nyles and Misty was on the outs beforehand, and it’s even more monotonous now. Resigned to his repetitive fate, Nyles finds ways to amuse himself, like showing up at the wedding reception in shorts and a Hawaiian shirt.

Things get interesting, though, when Nyles turns his focus on Sarah, the bride’s sister and drunk maid-of-honor who ends up stuck in the time loop with him. She’s played by relative newcomer Cris-



“Palm Springs”

Running time: 90 minutes. Rated R for sexual content, language throughout, drug use and some violence

tin Milioti (“How I Met Your Mother”) in a real corker of a performance: the shot of comedic adrenaline “Palm Springs” needs. Her eyes ablaze with mischief, she’s the smartest one in whatever room she enters. You can’t take your eyes off of her, and what gives the movie its juice is the fact that Sarah is hollow inside. So is Nyles, and like “Groundhog Day,” we realize these two need to get their acts together before they can free themselves from reliving the same day over and over again.

“Palm Springs” is the work of two newcomers, director Max Barbakow and writer Andy Siara, and what differentiates their film from “Groundhog Day” is the edgy tone. Not just the periodic raunch, but the idea that we’re entering this universe after it has already begun. Barbakow and Siara ask us to pay close attention, to follow the bread crumbs dropped into our laps so we grasp, step by step, what is going on with these people. Barbakow knows, too, how to earn a laugh by quickly editing scenes together so the repetition of the time loop zips by.



The great J.K. Simmons has several great scenes in "Palm Springs."

He also smartly cast the picture, not just with Milioti, but also the great J.K. Simmons (an Oscar winner for 2014's "Whiplash") as Roy, a family man trapped in the time loop because of Nyles. Roy doesn't take too kindly to his new scenario, chasing after Nyles with a bow and arrow. And he also has a dynamite scene with Nyles in which he introduces him to his family, lamenting at the potential of never seeing his children grow into adults.

Why Barbakow cast Samberg, though, is puzzling. On "Saturday Night Live," the actor was amusing in short comedic bursts, especially when paired with Justin Timberlake. But as the lead in "Palm Springs," he is underwhelming. Zero emotional range. There are funny lines in Siara's script that fizzle with Samberg's touch. Someone like Paul Rudd, who oozes dry wit, could have aced this role. Kicked the laughs up a notch.

Milioti and Simmons, though, they win you over. As does the movie by frequently defying expectations, catching you off guard. If Barbakow and Siara work together again, and if they cast the right male lead, they have comic gold on their hands.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

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Day 13: Leaving Russia

To paraphrase Neil Sedaka’s rock anthem: Leaving Russia was hard to do.

I speak of the 12-day trip my late mother, Hannah McKelvy, and I once took to what we called “Mother’s Russia.” I wrote all about our adventures aboard the Viking *Pakhomov* on the “Waterways of the Czars” between Moscow and St. Petersburg. Now, I would like to share some of those misadventures while leaving Russia.

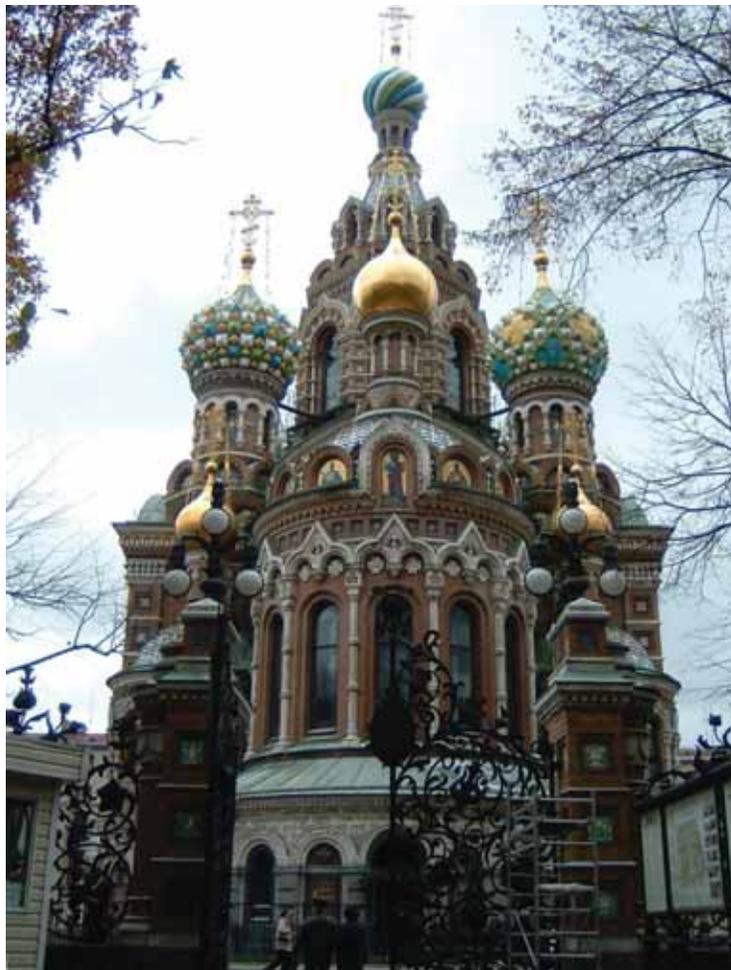
Trip sponsor Viking River Cruises promised that on Day 13 we would be fed an ample breakfast aboard the ship, then disembark to travel to the St. Petersburg airport for our return flights to home and beyond. In our case, that meant a short hop to Copenhagen on SAS (Scandinavian Airlines), then a cross-Atlantic jump to Chicago.

All well and good, right?

What could possibly go wrong?

Well, in the interests of encouraging the lost art of armchair travel, let me tell you:

Day 12, our last full day in Russia, went well. That was when Viking River Cruises promised us “a free day to see the sights that interest you.” The sights that interested me most were the smiling faces of fellow members of an international recovery group. I had reached out to them



Church on the Spilled Blood, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Travels With Charley

by Charles McKelvy



prior to our departure for Russia, and they were waiting to greet me, but nowhere near our ship, which was tied up for the winter on the Neva River far, far from downtown.

So I asked the concierge how one might travel to the center city on St. Petersburg’s subway system. She said the nearest station was a good two miles from the ship. She added that should I survive the walk along the Neva embankment and thread my way through a commercial district to the Metro station, I would then have to board the right train for downtown and, at a key stop, transfer to another line. All without speaking more than a lick or two of Russian.

Well, I pulled it off, thanks largely to the sturdy walking shoes I’d brought for the trip and the intervention of a friendly Russian who found me wandering the commercial district in search of the station. He told me in fluent English

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exactly where to go, and I had myself a delightful day in downtown St. Petersburg in the company of my new best friends. We broke delicious Russian bread together, saw the sights and shared our experience, strength and hope with one another. What could have been better?

Best of all, when I was heading back by train to the station nearest our ship, I looked across the aisle and saw a young Russian couple heading home from a day in the city with their infant, who was sound asleep in her stroller. All I could think was, "How could I have hated or feared these people?"

Such were my thoughts on Day 13, when we shared our last sumptuous breakfast on the Viking *Pakhomov*, then were assisted ashore by the crew, which loaded our luggage into a great big tour bus and bid us a fond *dasvidanya*.

What a great way to end a great trip, I thought. But then we arrived at the old airport (they were building a new and improved one nearby) and were plunged into a chaotic crowd scene that saw me resolutely pushing my wheelchair-bound mother forward toward the first of several checkpoints.

"We'll be through this in no time, Mom," I said.
NOT!

For starters, I had to separate from my mother at the first security station. Things got crazier from there. Mom wanted me to stay with her, but I was not allowed. The Russian authorities wanted to be sure we were not smuggling state secrets or the Czar's crown jewels out of the country. They put us through a clearance process that reminded me of that first day at Navy boot camp.

I looked desperately about for my mother and saw that a friend had her in tow, telling me not to worry. But worry I did, especially when I was patted down at the last checkpoint by a steely-eyed fellow straight out of a James Bond film.

He knows, I thought, that I was in the U.S. Navy, and the Boy Scouts and —

He was finally satisfied I was just another Joe



Hannah McKelvy and me in Russia.

Tourist heading home at the expiration of his visa.

I didn't see Mom when I finally arrived at the departure lounge because she was flying first class and I was in economy, or whatever you want to call those seats in the back of the plane. Presently, we boarded and SAS flew us swiftly and efficiently to Copenhagen, where we were to transfer to our non-stop flight home to Chicago.

That transfer went way better than the high dudgeon we experienced between flights in Frankfurt on our way to Moscow. Presently, I was relaxing in a window seat in economy on a

wide-bodied SAS aircraft. Those good Scandinavians fed me all the tasty vegan food I wanted, and I found an erudite seatmate to pass the air miles with. Yes, we flew in daylight all the way home, so I didn't sleep, which was fine. And I knew all would be fine when we landed at O'Hare on a humid October evening.

Not so much...although all went well at first because I cleared customs with ease and efficiency, taking up a position outside the cleared area to await my first-class mother's arrival, along with some of her friends, who would be sharing a limousine with us back to Mom's Beverly neighborhood.

I waited. And waited. And waited. And waited. And waited. Then, I took stock, figuring: Hey, dude, you have no cellphone. All you have in your pocket and luggage is about 75 cents worth of rubles. What you gonna do?

I didn't hit the panic button, but I was about to when my mother and her friends finally appeared. The customs people had taken more time with them because, of course, my mother was a dead ringer for a desperate terrorist.

All I could do was exhale and watch as my mother's friend called the limousine service on her handy cellphone and let the driver know we were ready to be taken home.

My takeaway from all this?

Visit Russia or any other exotic destination, but do so in the comfort of your own easy chair.

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Michigan City Public Library

The library is open, but with restrictions in place. Until further notice, hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

There is no public seating. The library also will follow the LaPorte County Health Department's Public Health Order Face Covering Mandate by requiring masks inside the building. Every individual must properly wear a face covering over his/her nose and mouth at indoor areas open to the public. The original order statement is available at www.mclib.org and printed out in the library. The circulation and reference desks will have masks available for \$1.

The following services have been temporarily suspended: public seating; public programs and meetings; literacy tutoring; MakerSpace/3-D printing; study rooms; homebound service; interlibrary loan; puppets; puzzles; blocks and children's AWE computers in Youth Services; Ellison die cut machine; public faxing; microfilm use; magazine/book sale; and acceptance of donations.

Writing Out Loud and the Fall Film Series on DVD are canceled.

Access is limited to the computer lab: One session (up to one hour) per person per day is allowed. Due to social-distancing guidelines, only one person at a station at a time. Children are not allowed in the computer lab with parents/guardians.

One computer is reserved for genealogy research, with time limited to one hour per person per day.

Four charging tables allow a limit of 30 minutes per use (no seating is available at these stations).

WiFi is available throughout the building and exterior/parking lot.

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



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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.
5. Consult an ISA Certified Arborist before doing anything to your tree.

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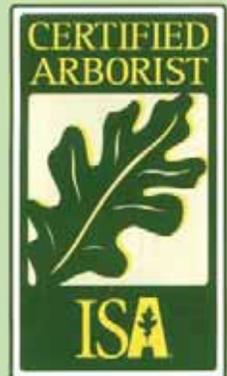
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The Long Beach Town Council has voted unanimously to phase out all garbage bins at beach stops for the following reasons:

1. Beach trash bins are being overfilled on a regular basis with trash from the beach and from private homes.
2. To raise awareness about generating less waste, using more reusable containers, increasing recycling efforts, and taking better care of our stops.
3. To set a good example for our kids regarding taking accountability for our actions.
4. This is the right thing to do to protect our environment.

Phase Out Schedule:

- **Starting Now:** Begin communication regarding the new Carry In/Carry Out policy.
- **Late Fall 2020:** Remove garbage bins and enclosures, replacing them with temporary signage.
- **Early Spring 2021:** Bins will no longer be at the beach stops as we continue to communicate the new rule.



What can you do?

- Voice concerns and give feedback regarding the new rule to The Town Council.
- Voice opinions for how we implement new rules to The Parks and Recreation Board.
- Pass this information along to residents and visitors.



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Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs are offered:

• **Park Plays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13.**

Park Plays, presented through Northwest Indiana Excellence in Theatre Foundation, features local theater groups presenting shows and excerpts from classic Shakespeare, to contemporary musicals, to improv. Take a blanket or beach chair to the west side of the pavilion.

On Aug. 13, the program is “Disney’s Moana Jr.” presented by Seedlings Theatre Company of Hobart. All actors are 18 and younger.

In light of COVID-19, guests are asked to maintain 6 feet of distance between their party and neighboring guests, wear masks, wash hands frequently and use hand sanitizer.

• **Perseid Meteor Shower & Stargaze on Saturday, Aug. 15.**

The best star observations are expected after 9:30 p.m. Naturalists will have a telescope on hand for deep sky viewing and constellation talks. Take a chair or towel. The program is weather-dependent.

• **Beginner Bird Drawing & Painting Workshop from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16.**

Local artist Kristina Knowski will lead the hands-on workshop where participants create their own bird painting. Sign up by visiting Kristina Knowski’s Arts Facebook event and clicking on the Eventbrite page.

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

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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.

Roosevelt Pipe Organ Series



Mark Sudeith

The Roosevelt Pipe Organ Series continues Wednesday, Aug. 19, at Christ Church, 531 Washington St.

All concerts are free and begin at 12:15 p.m., with seating at noon. Local organists, as well as those from the greater Chicago area and even Poland, will perform on the 1891 Roosevelt pipe organ. Those attending are asked to wear face masks and practice social distancing. Safety precautions, along with protocol established by Christ Church for Sunday worship, are in place.

The Aug. 19 recital is by Mark Sudeith, a pianist and organist who performs throughout the Chicago area. He recently performed Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto No. 5" with Northwest Chicago Symphony Orchestra and has performed at the Organ Historical Society's national convention. He received a Master of Music in organ performance from the University of Minnesota and a Doctor of Music in piano performance from Indiana University. He retired July 31 as interim associate provost at Chicago State University, where he joined the music faculty in 1984.

Donations are accepted. The church is air-conditioned. Call Ann or George Dobie at (219) 608-5358 for more information.

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LaPorte County Public Library

LaPorte County Public Library has resumed its curbside pickup service.

Hours for locations in *The Beacher's* readership area include:

- Coolspring Branch: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Main Library: Tuesday/Thursday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

Place holds on materials using an online account or by calling (219) 362-6156, Option 1. Then, select a pickup location. Notifications will come by email, text or phone. There is no limit on the number of requested items at this time.

Two parking spots will be labeled at each location. When arriving, a staff member will greet people outside. If no one arrives, call (219) 362-6156, Option 3, or the direct number for the branch location. A staff member will bring the reserved items to vehicles in a brown paper bag.

Returns can be placed in book drops and checked in within 24 to 72 hours. All library materials are quarantined between customers for 24 to 72 hours, per CDC and IMLS best practices. Materials are cleaned when needed. Library patrons can disinfect materials after arriving home.

Check laportelibrary.org and follow social media for updates.

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.

Beacher Delivery

Any time you do not receive your *Beacher* or have issues with delivery, please contact us immediately so we can take care of the problem.

You can reach us by phone at (219) 879-0088, or visit www.thebeacher.com, then click the "delivery" link on the top black bar. From there, you can let us know any issue or concerns.

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Acorn Singer-Songwriter Competition

The Acorn will host its eighth Singer Songwriter Finals as an outdoor event at 7:30 p.m. EDT Thursday, Aug. 13,

Six finalists, chosen from more than 100 submissions, will perform at a Three Oaks farm. The setting is "Ravinia-style," so individuals can take beverages, snacks, chairs and a blanket.

The finalists are: Andy Baker, Timothy Gray, Dylan Reed Leavitt, Mami Matsuda, Gianna Stansell and Jamie Wagner. The competition features cash prizes totaling \$1,500, future performing gigs, networking opportunities and professionally edited videos for each contestant.

The Acorn's COVID safety plan will be strictly enforced. Masks must be worn at all times while moving about. Six-foot social distancing is required. Tickets are limited to be in compliance with the governor's mandate for outside events.

The event, a fundraiser for The Acorn, allows viewers to help determine the winner. It also will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube. Web viewers and audience members can vote online to determine the winners.

Visit acornlive.org for tickets or more details.

Night Bike Ride

The LaPorte Night Bicycle Rides, hosted by City of LaPorte Park and Recreation Department, is from 9 to 11:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 14, starting and ending at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St.

The event is not a race, but a leisurely 13-mile starlit bike ride of LaPorte. All participants must wear a helmet and have a headlight and taillight on their bike. Participants 10 and younger must be accompanied, and ride with, an adult, either pulled behind or tandem, and register.

The cost for each ride is \$20 per person (\$25 the night of the ride) and includes a T-shirt (while supplies last) and snacks. Printable registration forms are available at www.cityoflaporte.com or at 250 Pine Lake Ave.



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Michigan City Farmer's Market

The Michigan City Farmer's Market is open from 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays through October at Eighth and Washington streets.

Following advice from Gov. Eric Holcomb and health officials, the following restrictions are in place:

- No open food. All items must be pre-packaged and fully labeled.
- No sampling food items.
- Home-based vendors can sell items.
- Social-distancing guidelines must be followed.
- No cooking or food preparation on site.

Everyone, including vendors, is encouraged to wear proper masks. Portable handwashing stations will be available.

Market organizers want to create a craft market on the north side of Eighth Street later this summer or in spring 2021. Surveys are planned to determine what customers would like to see in such a market.

Contact Special Events Coordinator Johnny Stimley for more details, or if interested in becoming a vendor, at (219) 229-1567 or jstimley@emichigancity.com

LaPorte Farmer's Market

The LaPorte Farmer's Market is open Saturdays starting at 8 a.m. through October in the Lincoln-way parking lot next to Mucho Mas.

The event is run by Angela Rose, LaPorte Economic Advancement Partnership downtown director, and Lindsay Jongkind, LEAP marketing and membership director.

Vendors are organized in a straight line on both sides of the area. Customers are asked to stand behind the marked line (3-foot distance) and maintain at least 6 feet between each person in line.

Market managers will be posted at the entrance and limit attendance to 50 people at a time.

All produce and goods will be prepackaged and handed out in bags. Seniors and at-risk individuals are encouraged to shop from 9 to 10 a.m.

More information is available at www.laportepartnership.com or on the Farmer's Market Facebook Page. On Thursdays before the market, a weekly list of vendors and produce is posted on the Facebook page. Call Rose and Jongkind at (219) 324-8584 for more information.

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The Beacher has begun
new office hours

Mon.-Thurs.: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

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American Red Cross

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

- Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1237 E. Coolspring Ave., 3-7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13.
- LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St., LaPorte, noon-5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 14.
- Michigan City Fire Training Center, 2510 E. Michigan Blvd., 12:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19.

Donors through Sept. 3 receive a \$5 Amazon.com gift card by email at rcblood.org/together. 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 red-crossblood.org for more details. Visit rcblood.org/together for more details.

Noon Time Talk Series

The Noon Time Talk Series resumes with “Politics & Religion” at 12:20 p.m. EDT Thursday, Aug. 13, at Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart.

Director/Curator Brian Byrn will discuss the exhibit he spent two years assembling.

Gallery talks are limited to 35 people on a first-come, first-served basis. Masks are required. Doors will be locked at 12:15 p.m. No admittance to the museum by the public is allowed until the talk has concluded and the galleries emptied and sterilized.

The total numbers allowed for gallery talks will be modified as permitted under the governor’s most recent executive order.

Admission is \$5. Members and donors are free. Call (574) 293-6660 for details.

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New Box Factory Online Exhibits

The Box Factory for the Arts continues its online exhibits with Series 3 through Sept. 6.

The exhibit highlight four artists: Biff Vigil, David Criner, Jeanne Fields and Anthony "Scooter" DiMaggio.

Visit the website at www.boxfactoryforthearts.org or the Box Factory for the Arts Facebook page to view the artists' work, which is available for purchase by contacting gallery@boxfactoryforthearts.org. The Box Factory is located at 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. The galleries are closed due to COVID-19. Any schedule change will be announced on the website and Facebook.

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On August 13, 1889, William Gray, Hartford, Conn., received a patent for a coin-operated telephone.

On August 13, 1923, the tune, “Yes, We Have No Bananas” became a No. 1 hit, setting a new record in sales of sheet music.

On August 13, 1934, the satirical comic strip “Li’l Abner,” created by Al Capp, made its debut.

On August 13, 1942, Walt Disney’s animated feature “Bambi” premiered at Radio City Music Hall in New York.

On August 13, 1961, Berlin was permanently divided as the East German-built “Berlin Wall” sealed off the border between the eastern and western sectors.

On August 14, 1511, Michelangelo’s paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel were exhibited for the first time.

On August 14, 1784, the first Russian colony in Alaska was established on Kodiak Island.

On August 14, 1932, the Los Angeles Summer Olympics came to a close, with the United States placing first in total points scored.

On August 14, 1995, Shannon Faulkner became the first female cadet in the history of The Citadel, South Carolina’s state military college. She would quit the school days later.

On August 15, 1859, Charles Comiskey, founder of the Chicago White Sox, was born in Chicago.

On August 15, 1939, the MGM film musical “The Wizard of Oz” premiered at the Grauman’s Chinese Theater in Hollywood.

On August 15, 1967, Mayor Richard Daley unveiled Pablo Picasso’s 162-ton, 50-foot high steel gift “to the people of Chicago,” the Daley Plaza sculpture now known in the city simply as the Picasso.

On August 15, 1969, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair opened in upstate New York.

On August 15, 1987, in Michigan City, Nancy Adams, former award-winning feature writer for *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Chicago Sun Times*, died at 44 in Memorial Hospital.

On August 16, 1776, Horace Walpole is reported to have said, “This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel.”

On August 16, 1828, the original “Siamese twins,” Chang and Eng Bunker, arrived in Boston to be exhibited to the Western world.

On August 16, 1858, a telegraph from Britain’s

Queen Victoria to President James Buchanan was transmitted over the new trans-Atlantic cable.

On August 16, 1896, following the discovery of gold in Alaska's Bonanza Creek, the famous "Klondike Gold Rush" was on.

On August 16, 1923, Carnegie Steel Corp. established an eight-hour workday.

was born in Tennessee's Greene County.

On August 17, 1790, New York lost its role as the nation's capitol when the federal government moved to Philadelphia. The capitol has, at various times, been in New York, Philadelphia, York and Lancaster, Pa; Trenton and Princeton, N.J.; Baltimore and Annapolis, Md.; and the District of Columbia.

On August 17, 1807, Robert Fulton's steamboat, the Clermont, set out from New York on its maiden voyage up the Hudson River to Albany. The 150 mile trip took 32 hours.

On August 17, 1939, Lou Gehrig, of the New York Yankees, playing in his 1,308th game, set a new MLB record for consecutive games played.

On August 17, 1978, three Americans, Maxie Anderson, Ben Abruzzo and Larry Newman, became the first to complete a transatlantic trip by balloon. They left from Maine's Presque Isle on Aug. 11, traveled 3,120 miles, and landed at Miserey, France.

On August 18, 1834, Marshall Field, founder of the Chicago department store that used to bear his name, was born near Conway, Mass.

On August 18, 1838, the first marine expedition sponsored by the U.S. government, whose goal was to explore the Pacific Ocean and South Seas, set sail from Hampton Roads, Va.

On August 18, 1919, the "Anti-Cigarette League of America" formed in Chicago.

On August 18, 1958, *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov was published.

On August 18, 1963, James Meredith became the first black to graduate from the University of Mississippi.

On August 19, 1812, the U.S. frigate Constitution (Old Ironsides) fought a victorious battle with the British frigate Guerriere. The British had ridiculed the Constitution as "a bundle of pine boards sailing under a bit of striped bunting."

On August 19, 1848, *The New York Herald* reported the discovery of gold in California.

On August 19, 1890, the Daughters of the American Revolution was formed. The organization consisted of women with at least one ancestor who aided in American independence.

On August 19, 1960, a three-man court in Moscow convicted Frances Gary Powers of espionage.

On August 19, 1979, Pope John Paul II called for resumption of relations between the Vatican and China's Roman Catholics.

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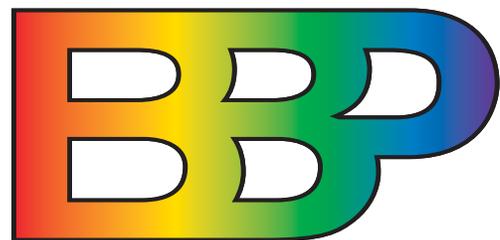
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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

The Last Flight by Julie Clark (hardcover, \$26.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 302 pages)

“The world was full with people who carried secrets. No one was who they seemed to be.”

That’s the theme for this week’s thrilling recommendation. This is Clark’s second novel; her first, The Ones We Choose, has been optioned for television by Lionsgate. Not bad for a fledging author. Chapters flow seamlessly as you read, mouth opened, wondering how things could get any stranger, or deadlier. Let me explain...

Claire Cook should be the happiest woman in the country. She’s married to Rory Cook, son of the late Sen. Marjorie Cook, who was respected for her ability to reach both sides of the aisle in negotiations. And now, Rory has plans to announce his bid for his mother’s vacant seat. The family dynasty has been likened to the Kennedys, with their family foundation doing great works all over the world...no wonder Claire was smitten by the handsome and charismatic Rory.

Soon after the wedding, though, reality sets in. Rory is controlling, verbally abusive to Claire and, finally, physically abusive. She lives a life of hiding bruises and trying to stay out of his way, playing the happy hostess, sometimes giving speeches at some charity event or other.

The huge house is always filled with people, whether it be guests or staff, and certainly doesn’t feel like the cozy home and family of which she always dreamed

So what happens now, Claire? She decides to disappear, but with the Cooks’ far-reaching abilities, it will have to be a well-thought-out and perfectly executed plan...

Her chance arrives when Rory tells her she will be on a flight to Detroit for a meeting. A chance encounter with her old friend, Petra, and her brother, Nico, a Russian “businessman,” leads her to a fake passport and other papers needed for her new life.

Here’s where the story begins to move at the speed of light...

The night before the flight, Claire learns from Rory’s personal assistant that plans have changed and she is not going to Detroit. She is going to Puer-

to Rico for a different event. This ruins everything. Her new identity and \$40K cash are in a package on their way to the hotel she was to stay at in Detroit. What now? Rory is bound to receive the package and figure out what Claire is up to. Time to regroup...and fast.

Sitting in the airport bar the next morning, waiting for her flight, a woman, Eva, sits next to Claire and starts up a conversation. She slowly admits she is running away from a situation she only alludes to, not too many details, just enough to give Claire the happiest thought of her life! Eva obviously longs for a new life, so how about she and Eva exchange tickets and identities — Claire taking Eva’s life in Oakland, Calif., and Eva to a fresh start in Puerto Rico?

I keep telling you — the best laid plans of mice and (wo)men...

Claire makes her flight to California, maybe this will all work out...when a TV monitor at the airport shows photos of a crash...it’s the flight to Puerto Rico she was supposed to be on! And it’s not a search and rescue. All passengers and crew are presumed dead.

What a black day. But is it? Yes, Eva is dead, and Claire feels bad, but this is the perfect opportunity to believe Rory will fake-mourn her death and she can have a life free of him.

Now the story takes a slightly different twist as Claire’s narration turns alternating chapters into a history of the six months

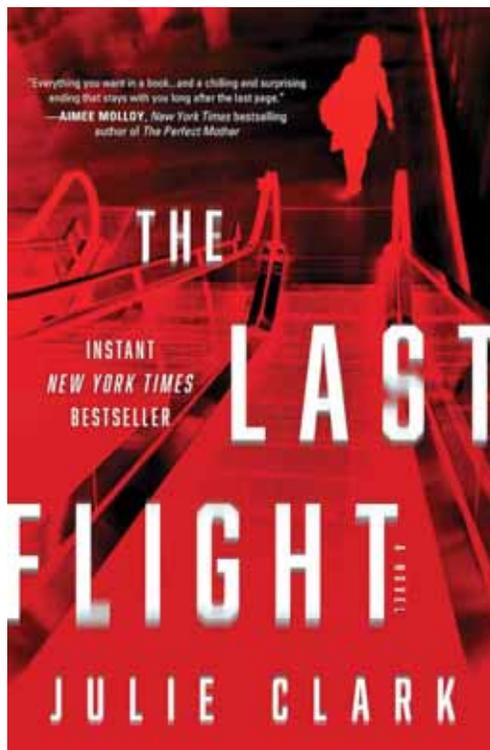
of Eva’s life leading up to the plane crash. It’s an interesting look at Eva’s real life, not the one she spun off to Claire at the airport.

At Eva’s duplex, Claire immediately sees there is no sign of a dearly departed father as she tearily described, nor almost anything that made the place look like a lived-in home. Claire soon suspects Eva was hiding secrets. Has Claire left one dangerous situation and dropped into another? Or is this just paranoia?

Claire is apprehensive as she settles in to Eva’s life and begins to wonder who she is, or maybe, who she has become...

“Identity is a strange thing. Are we who we say we are, or do we become the person others see? Do they define us by what we choose to show them, or what they see despite our best attempts to conceal it?”

Till next time, happy reading!





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