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Honoring a Local Legend

by Kim Nowatzke

“When you say the name of Charlie Westcott, that brings a smile to my face.”

That’s how Larry Gipson, and so many others, feel about the man who was a friend, mentor, coach and so much more to Michigan City youth.

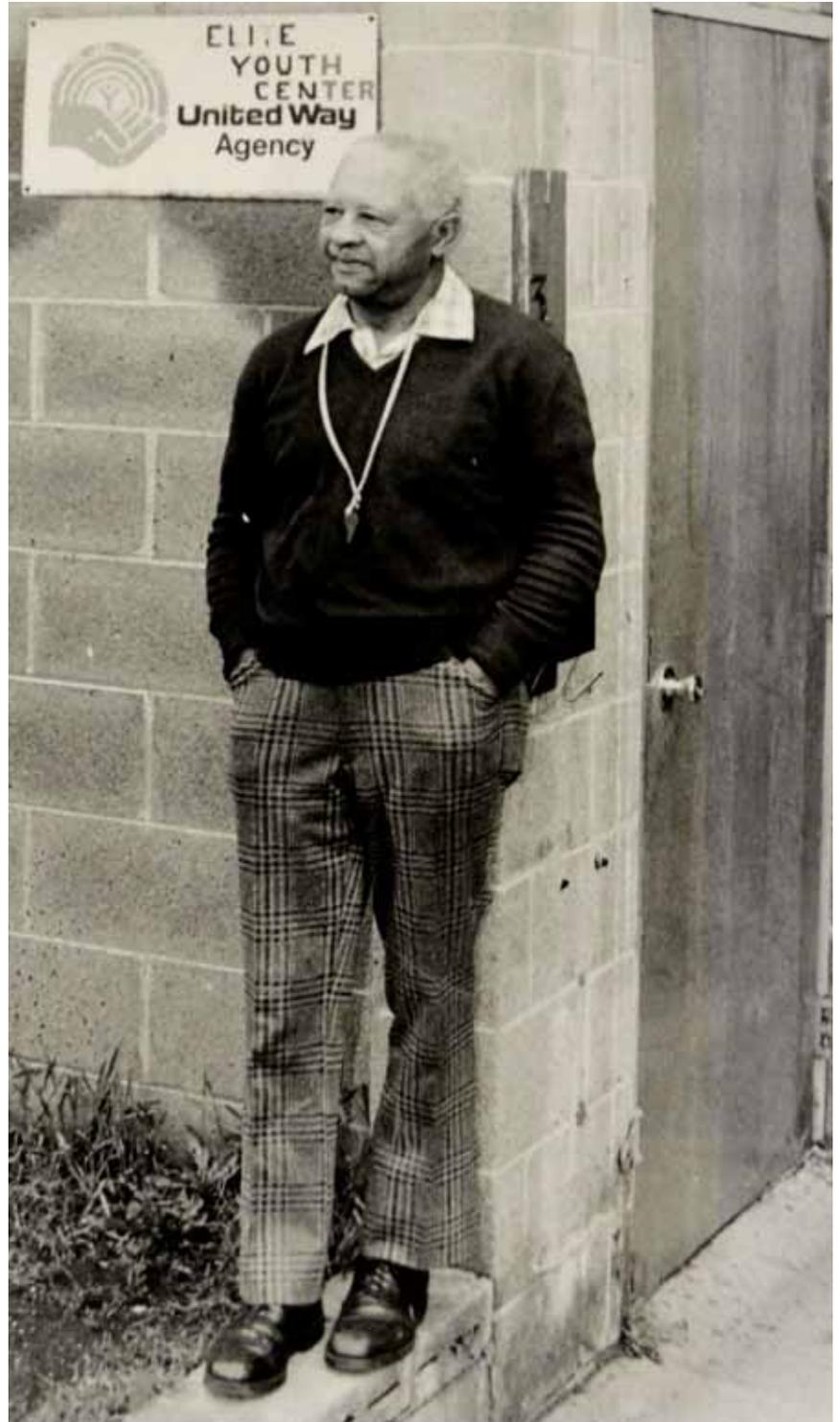
Gipson was one of “Charlie’s Kids,” a nickname bestowed upon those under the late Charles Ricardo Westcott’s tutelage as he served as director of Elite Youth Center, located first on East Fourth Street, then at 318 E. Michigan Blvd., for 37 years.

Born on Feb. 15, 1920, in Overton, Va., Westcott would have celebrated his 100th birthday this month. The community may have lost its local legend when the 84-year-old died on Aug. 27, 2004, but those who knew and loved him still plan to celebrate his day of birth with a Charles R. Westcott Birthday Celebration from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 15. It will be held at the Charles R. Westcott location at 321 Detroit St., the site of the Boys & Girls Club of Michigan City. During the event, entertainment and refreshments are planned, while attendees can share plenty of special “Charlie” memories.

“Its purpose is a community-wide recognition and celebration of Charles Westcott,” Allen Williams, another

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Charles R. Westcott stands in front of Elite Youth Center.



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“Charlie’s Kid,” said. He first met his hero around 1953, when he was about 6. As time went on, “Wes,” as Westcott was called, took on different roles for Williams, from being a mentor to a “friend on a peer level.”

The Boys & Girls Club’s role in the celebration is considered an honor, the club’s board president, Mike Johnstone, said.

“Because of Mr. Westcott’s profound impact on our Michigan City youth, in 2005 we named our main location the Charles R. Westcott Center,” he said. “We wanted to honor and carry on the legacy and example set by Mr. Westcott as we continue our mission to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible individuals.”

Coming from Connecticut, Westcott first arrived in Michigan City at the request of his uncle and aunt, Tenola and Anna Graves, who had a vision for a recreational center to serve the city’s youth.

“He touched each and every person that came



This photo, taken in June 1958, features Charles R. Westcott with local youth at Elite Youth Center.

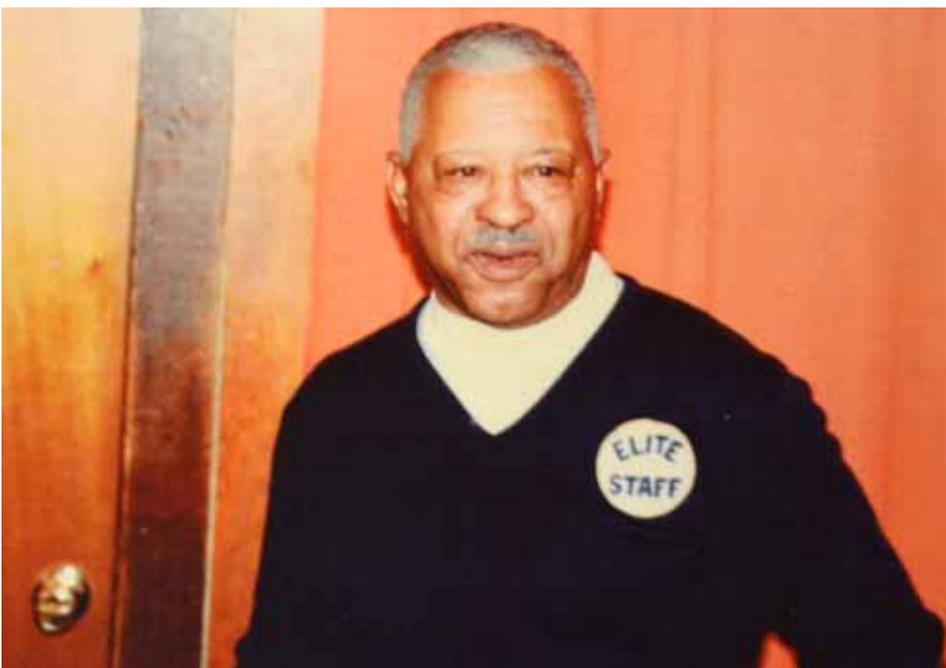
through those doors,” said Charles Ricardo Westcott Jr., fondly known as “Ricky.” “The doors were opened and everyone was invited to participate.”

For more than 30 years, Albertine Allen served alongside Westcott at Elite Youth Center as assistant director. A former Michigan City Area Schools board member, she now is a consultant with the Michigan City Health Coalition.

“Every child was special to him,” she said. “He could see good in every child. He taught the children life skills such as persistence and to finish what you started. He taught the importance of grades and social skills.”

Both Allen and Gene Simmons, another former “Charlie’s Kid,” recalled Westcott’s requirement that boys remove their hats upon entering Elite Youth Center.

Allen recalled Westcott showing older kids at the center how to fill out applications, as well as his famous quotes: “If you can’t read,



Charles Westcott was revered for the impact he had on so many “Charlie’s Kids” in Michigan City.



Albertine Allen

you can't succeed," and "You are only a stranger here once."

"We all considered Charlie our surrogate father," said Simmons, a 34-year veteran of the Michigan City Police Department and its first black police chief from 1996-2004. "He was all about teaching life lessons. He introduced us to the world as we know it today. Charlie taught

us how to win – and lose with grace. He taught us how to coexist together."

"My brother, O'Neil Simmons, and I grew up under Charlie's tutelage," Gene Simmons said. "We lived at the Elite Youth Center. It was a safe harbor for us. Whatever you got at home, Charlie solidified it. He taught us how to win and how to lose with grace."

Westcott had plenty of opportunities to teach about winning and losing, as basketball was a major part of center activities, serving as a feeder system to the Elston High School basketball team. He also served as basketball coach at Queen of All Saints Catholic School.

"Even while playing basketball at Elston High School, I went back to Charlie to get help with my shooting," Gene Simmons said. "He was a problem solver to me. I always depended on Charlie. Everyone had Charlie to fall back on."

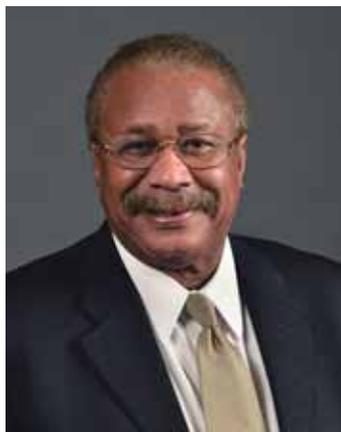
O'Neil Simmons went on to become captain of the 1966 state championship basketball team at Elston



Gene Simmons.

High School. Gibson also was on that team, later playing basketball at Indiana University.

These two were, by far, not the only "Charlie's Kids" to excel in the game. Vernon Payne, for instance, was featured in an April 1964 *Ebony* article that featured five black high school senior basketball players who together received "500



Vernon Payne.

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FEMA Insurance to the Rescue???

Maybe I was not paying attention to the water levels and storms during the last high-water period of 1986-1987, but I am of the opinion (shared by others) that the current high water, little ice (yes, there is some ice along the beach, but it appears to be melting) and constant storms have not happened before – at least not since 1978.

FEMA has been hosting programs about flood insurance for beachfront owners. They are completing a redo of the flood zone areas using wind, wave and water-level history from 1960 to 2009. Flood zones on Lake Michigan are delineated based on winds and waves: not just by water level, as on rivers and streams.

Until this year, I thought FEMA Flood Insurance was no longer available for owners on the lake. Then, I began to hear about people living on the lake being required to purchase flood insurance. The FEMA folks assured me flood insurance is required if your property is in the Flood Zone. They had the new maps at the presentation. Google: FEMA Flood Maps Lake Michigan. You can even search by address.

The most interesting news for me at the FEMA presentation was that the FEMA engineer assured me "revetments" (huge boulders stacked to form a 1 to 3 slope facing the water) appear to be the best way to protect structures on the lake. The revetments break the water force and do not push the sand back so far into the water.

Seawalls, as consultants hired by Long Beach indicated previously, can be quickly compromised by the water action that digs out the bottom of the wall and pushes the sand far out into the lake. The walls fail, and the sand pushed further out into the lake is not accreted back to reform a beach when water levels drop. Fewer beaches come back.

Final comment by FEMA depressed me. Flood insurance only covers damage to the house/structure. "Why buy flood insurance?" is my question. I need money to replace the revetment before I lose the house.

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firm offers of athletic grants-in-aid to attend almost every major college in the country.” He ended up playing at Indiana University on a full scholarship, then played pro basketball for the Denver Rockets (now the Denver Nuggets). He spent 18 years coaching basketball at Indiana University, Michigan State University, Western Michigan University, Wayne State University and the University of Denver. He was inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 2004 and currently is associate dean



A photo from the late 1970s of Charles R. Westcott while coaching.

of student affairs at Western Michigan University.

“None of this would have been possible had it not been for Charlie Westcott,” Payne shared. “It all began with Charlie. He created within me the love of the game.”

Payne said he began frequenting the Elite Youth Center at the tender age of 6.

“It was one of the most significant things in my life and in so many other youngsters’ lives to have Charlie as a man in our lives,” Payne continued. “He took the opportunity to mold us with basketball and teach us discipline, and the importance of doing what we said we would do, do it as well as you can and do that all of the time.”

Williams said Wes instilled in youth how to be competitive and fair, and to demonstrate sportsmanship, regardless of the outcome.

“We played hard, we played fast, but we played within the rules,” Williams said. “We didn’t cheat or cut corners. He taught that if you are prepared, organized and disciplined, there is a good chance you’ll be successful in whatever you do.

“Basketball got them there. Once they got there, Charles Westcott was able to teach them other things.”

This included classes in subjects such as etiquette and manners, cooking and crafts, as well as homework help and tutoring.

“He would discipline us and teach us that the rules applied to us,” Payne said. “I give him a lot of credit for keeping me on the right course. A lot of the things I believe in are because of his selflessness and his love for kids. He was an amazing human being. Charlie demanded a lot from us, and he gave a lot to us. I love the man – and I miss him. I’ve tried to live my life in a way that would have made Wes proud of me...if not for him...”

Gipson recalled Westcott’s discipline.

“He would ban us from the youth center,” Gipson said, and that’s the last thing you wanted.”

That was a lesson Williams never forgot.

“I learned my lesson because I was disrespectful to an adult. He prevented me from going to the Elite Center – and it was during basketball season,” he said. “You had to behave in a certain way and do different things to play basketball. He taught that there are consequences for your actions. He never raised his voice or yelled.”

Gipson added, “My parents trusted Charlie Westcott with me, including all the things that we did together. He had permission to punish me, and then my parents did more when I got home.”

Gipson pointed out how Westcott served as Elite Youth Center director while also holding a full-time job as a supervisor at Hayes Corp.

“He was the guy that covered a lot of bases,” Gipson said. “I don’t know how he did it.”

Ricky Westcott Jr. said his father was always in motion.

“He was infected with getting it done and getting it done correctly,” he shared, adding his father and mother, Marie Reed Westcott, were active in many city organizations.

Williams said youth who came to Elite Youth Center were divided into four age groups: Tiny Tots, Rinky Dinks, Intermediate and Seniors.

Allen spoke about the many places where Westcott would take “Charlie’s Kids” on trips, including Indiana Dunes State Park; Chicago’s Field Museum and Art Institute; Silver Beach in St. Joseph, Mich.; White Sox games; Door Village; and Riverview Amusement Park in Chicago.



Elite Youth Center, when it was located at 318 Michigan Blvd., in the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church building.

Williams recalled taking trips to play basketball in Michigan and Westcott telling him, “You know what you’re supposed to do – now do it.

“He encouraged us to always do the best that we could,” Williams continued. “That was his mindset and his approach in all types of endeavors – not just athletics. Wes would say in his own quiet way, ‘You can do it; believe in yourself; be prepared; stay focused. Don’t let others hold you back, and don’t limit yourself or put yourself down.’”

Gipson said Westcott stressed the importance of having dignity and being presentable, to be the best person possible.

“He was a big influence for a lot of people,” he said. “He was a person you could talk to or strive to be like. There aren’t a lot of ‘Charlie’s Kids’ around here anymore, but we will always remember the Elite Center.”

Westcott also is remembered for the many awards he received, including being the first recipient of the Michigan City Human Rights Commission Humanitarian of the Year Award. He also received the Michigan City Exchange Club Book of Golden Deeds Award, Essence Rare Youth Service and Community Award, Jaycees Merit Award and Bar Association Liberty Bell Award, among others.

“Wes was the epitome of the attitude that ‘Every one of us can make a difference in that world,’” Williams said. “He always treated everyone the same.



In 2011, the Charles R. Westcott Park opened at U.S. 12 and East Michigan Boulevard.

Your economic status, family background or where you lived didn’t matter. He was blind to racial color, but he understood the realities of the era and worked without fanfare to bring about harmony and attitudinal change...He touched so many lives and in so many ways.”

In 2011, the Charles R. Westcott Park opened at U.S. 12 and East Michigan Boulevard, the site of the former Elite Youth Center and Harborside Homes “Patch” area. As explained at www.mymichigancity.com, the three-acre property is “dedicated to Mr. Westcott’s memory and leadership in the community.”

Williams said, “Charlie once told me, ‘People think kids are different now than they used to be. They really aren’t. All kids really need is somewhere to go, something to do and, most of all, someone who cares.’”



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Makers, Crafters and Performers Sought for South Shore Maker Faire

Established and emerging local “makers” are invited to participate in the second South Shore Maker Faire from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 20, at Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St.

The free family event, planned indoors and outdoors, is inspired by its enormous parent event, Maker Faire, that originated in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2006. The purpose is to celebrate invention, creativity and resourcefulness.

The local event will showcase rockets and robots, DIY science and technology, urban farming and sustainability, alternative energy, bicycles, craftwork, handcrafted food and drink, educational presentations and performances.

An open call is through May 29. Individuals, businesses or groups interested in participating should visit www.southshore.makerfaire.com to complete the application. Accepted makers and creators will be listed and featured on the website. Updates will appear on Twitter @southshoremakers and the Facebook page.

Organizing sponsors include the Michigan City Mainstreet Association, Unity Foundation of LaPorte County, Michigan City Chamber of Commerce, Michigan City Area Schools, Economic Development Corp. of Michigan City, LaPorte County Career and Technical Education, LaPorte County Public Library, Michigan City Public Library, Michigan City Boys and Girls Club, Safe Harbor and Lu-beznik Center for the Arts.



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40 Years and Counting: Local at LCA

by Linda Weigel

"Art is something that makes you breathe with a different kind of happiness."

Anni Albers



Art by Connie Kassal (from left), Carol Estes, Carole Stodder, Stephanie Carnell and Susan Henshaw.

To celebrate the Area Artists Association's 40th anniversary, Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., opened a major showing of members' works Jan. 25 in the Hyndman Gallery.

Artists include: Nathan Biancardi, Carol Block, Tom Brand, Larry Brechner, Joel Brussell, Stephanie Carnell, Laurie Schirmer Carpenter, Kei Constantinov, Jane Cowley, Anneke Dekker, Carol Estes, Kevin Firme, Dorothy Graden, Diane Grams, Susan Henshaw, Gregg Hertzlieb, Hal Higdon, Julia Holmaas, Laurel Izard, Larry Jensen, Connie Kassal, George Kassal, Tim Lace, Patty Mershon-Schaefer, Kelly Tokoly-Rothermel, Robert Rothermel, Sara Scherberg, Ginny Scott, Edwin Shelton, Joan Spohrer, Carole Stodder, Susy Vance and Linda Weigel.



The foreground features steel and glass works by Kevin Firme. The background offers works by Carnell, Henshaw and Gregg Hertzlieb.

A juried organization, the group formed to provide a means for serious artists to exchange ideas, provide critiques, offer mutual support and foster opportunities. Exhibition Director Lora Fosberg has created a striking show paying particular attention to placement, spacing, quality and balance amid the wide variety of styles, colors and sizes of original works.



An overview of the Box Project.

Founded in 1979, the group held its first member show at the John G. Blank Center for the Arts on East Eighth Street in December 1980. Over the years, invitational, juried, group and individual exhibits provided opportunities for AAA members to showcase their work, receive valuable feedback and experience personal/professional growth.



Some of the detail in the Box Project.

Over the years, the group has been active in sponsoring specialized art events, including the 2004 Box Project “Sand Steel Spirit, A Treasure Box of Art” and the 2010 North End exhibition.

A pamphlet available in the gallery states, “The artists in this group remain dedicated to exhibiting their works in individual and group exhibitions throughout the region. As this organization continues to grow, we look forward to another 40 years of artistic expression in our region.”



“October 10,” an oil on panel by Brand.

One of the joys of viewing such a group show is the variety of media, styles, colors and individual voices.

Artists working in acrylics, for example, might explore bright, strong colors versus more neutral tones, or even work with flat surfaces versus highly textured. In the case of Tom Brand, Stodder and Hal Higdon, their colors are strong and applied smoothly with a flat finish. By contrast, Dekker has three works, more neutral in tonality and with a higher degree of textured surface.



A hand-colored linocut by Hertzlieb.

Other 2-D works highlight the individual artist’s unique approach to representational forms, shapes and media.

Hertzlieb, for instance, uses symbols such as the fish, fossil, water and sky in a recognizable form: highly stylized, colorful and flat. Spohrer works in watercolors, but hers are a looser interpretation of form and color, very fitting for the subject matter – a jazz musician. Izard is a textile artist working relatively flat with textured stitching and colorful



Acrylics on canvas by Anneke Dekker.



“Jazz in the Park,” a watercolor by Joan Spohrer.



“Deep Sea,” a textile by Laurel Izard.

creatures against a black background.

All three examples produce a shallow sense of space, yet the shapes and colors make the works pop.

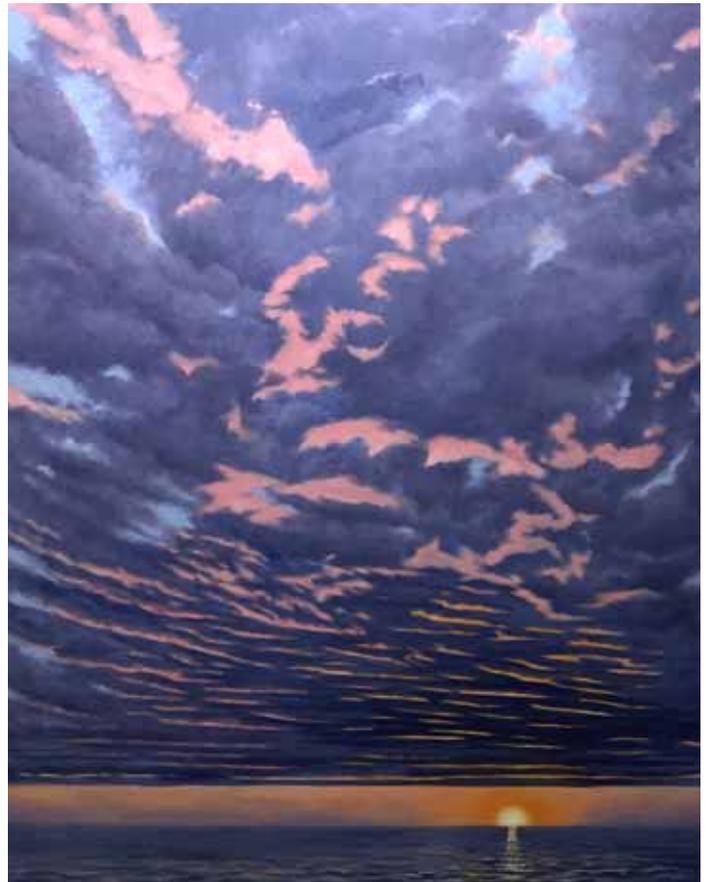


“Bell Arch,” box elder by Larry Jensen

The majority of art in the show is 2-D. However, Larry Jensen offers 3-D works in birch, box elder and compressed sassafras. His “Bell Arch” made of box elder is created in a simple post and lintel form with suspended bell. Each wood piece is intimate in scale, projecting a lightness of form, yet sophisticated design.

With so much more to see and experience, I urge everyone to explore the diversity of works. Discover for yourself a new favorite artwork. Every artist/participant in this anniversary exhibit shines.

“I am thrilled with the ‘Local at LCA’ exhibition,” LCA Executive Director Janet Bloch says. “Our exhibitions director, Lora Fosberg, met with each artist to guide/help them select their strongest pieces.



“Lake Sunset,” an oil on canvas by Laurie Schirmer Carpenter.



“Tropical House” and “Depot at Dusk,” digital photos on canvas by Larry Brechner.



“Big Bend Aloe,” prismacolor and ink by Sara Scherberg.

The artists brought their best, too! The result is an eclectic, yet excellent show.”



Local artists Kristina Knowski and Cathy Feeman are featured in the upstairs Brinka/Cross and Susan Block galleries. Knowski is a watercolorist specializing in extinct and living bird species. In her exhibit, Feeman showcases abstract works executed in wax and acrylics.

Knowski is an experienced watercolorist. A 2012 graduate of the American Academy of Arts in Chicago, she began her studies in illustration, later

switching to fine-art watercolors. Her interest in birds began in 2011. She started bird watching, then started painting birds. She prefers to work from life, spending considerable time sketching and researching while outdoors. She also has explored extinct species through her visits to bird collections of the Chicago Field Museum and Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.



Kristina Knowski's watercolors of gulls on paper.

Her acute attention to detail relays a sense of the importance of birds in our world, their variety and beauty. Captivating, her work is meticulous, accurate and endearing.

Feeman presents her latest body of work, "Moor-ing + Undercurrents: Voices of Southeast Chicago's Immigrant Women" in the Brinka/Cross gallery.

Her oil and wax paintings on panel evoke a poetic, subtle statement. Her use of scraped, scored and parallel lines running along the surface, in varying directions, are evocative of undercurrents, of contour and the movement of water or, perhaps, metaphors for the movement of individuals. Small beads of wax create the outlines similar to stitching. Spend some time looking carefully, and enjoy the construction, color and nuanced works.



Close-up detail of "Free to be Mary," an oil and wax on panel by Cathy Feeman.

Be sure, too, to head downstairs in the NIPSCO gallery to check out "Absorbing the Abstract: Student Works from the LCA."

The opening reception for these exhibits is 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7. They close Feb. 29. Call the LCA at (219) 874-4900 for additional information or visit www.lubeznikcenter.org

For additional information on the Area Artists Association, visit areaartistsassociation.org

For Kristina Knowski, visit kristinaknowski.com

For Cathy Feeman, visit cathyfeeman.com



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P.E.O. Scholarship Recipient



Philanthropic Educational Organization Chapter BA has awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to Cassandra Willis. A Rittenhouse Village in Michigan City employee for 10 years, she has worked there as a certified nurse assistant and qualified medication assistant. She currently is assistant to the director of health and wellness. The scholarship will help her achieve a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing, specializing in dementia/memory care. Amelia Wilson (left) presented the check on behalf of the P.E.O. Continuing Education Committee comprised of Karen Vander Wagen (chair), Connie Griffin, Jan O'Leary and Wilson. P.E.O. is a woman's philanthropic group that supports women pursuing educational opportunities.

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Indiana Dunes National Park

• Snowshoe hike from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturdays at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.

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

• Movie Screenings at the Douglas Center from 1 to 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

Join a ranger for a screening of a national park or outdoor-related documentary. Feb. 8-9 include two 30-minute films on scientist-inventor George Washington Carver: "Man of Vision" and "Seeds of Success."

• Art in the National Park from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.

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

• Miller Woods Hike from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sundays at Paul H. Douglas Center.

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

• Parents and toddlers can participate in the Nature Tots program from 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Feb. 12, at the Paul H. Douglas Center.

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

The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is at 100 N. Lake St. in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Call (219) 395-1882 for more information.

Indiana Dunes State Park

• Winter Tracks & Scat from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8.

The interactive program meets at the Nature Center.

• Full Moon Hike from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8.

Meet at the Nature Center for a short presentation about the moon, followed by a hike to Lake Michigan and back.

• Snowshoe Shuffle at 10 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 9.

The free naturalist-led snowshoe hike, which meets at the Nature Center, includes the history and techniques of snowshoeing. Free snowshoes will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. A winter hike is planned if there isn't enough snow.

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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Now Streaming: Two

The way it's been marketed, "Troop Zero" looks like one of Whoopi Goldberg's leftovers, where a tough-talking southerner presides over a Girl Scout troop of ragtag misfits.

The pleasure of "Troop Zero" is that it's not what you think. In fact, it delights in *not* being what you expect. The formula is there, true, but the execution — largely unsentimental — and the performances steer it in an entirely different and ultimately satisfying direction.

The movie, now streaming on Amazon Prime, was written by Lucy Alibar and based on her 2010 play, "Christmas and Jubilee Behold The Meteor Shower." Alibar co-wrote the darker "Beasts of the Southern Wild" (2012), and like that Oscar-nominated picture, "Troop Zero" unfolds in a corner of the South where the issue is not race, but the downtrodden.

Set in 1977 rural Georgia, it introduces McKenna Grace ("Gifted," "I, Tonya") as Christmas Flint, who doesn't fit in because she adores science, specifically astronomy. Her mind, you could say, is in the proverbial clouds. Much of it has to do with her mother having passed. Her father, Ramsey (the great Jim Gaffigan), is a local attorney with a penchant for accepting gifts, rather than money, for his services.

The "plot" kicks in when Christmas learns the winners of a talent show will have their voices included with the Voyager Golden Record aboard the famed spacecraft. So, she rallies a few oddballs to form a Birdie Scout troop, thus qualifying for the talent show.

Their "leader" is Ramsey's legal assistant, Miss Rayleen, played by Viola Davis in a performance that, like the film itself, defies formula. The role is meatier than you assume. Rayleen doesn't have children, nor many maternal instincts. Her childhood was disappointing, so she believes these Scouts warrant a lesson on life's unjust truths.

Equally complicated is Allison Janney's Miss Massey. Technically, she's the "competition," presiding over a rival troop, but she and Rayleen were friends who somehow drifted apart, and these two have a dynamite scene where Miss Massey confronts Miss Rayleen about her criminal past. The actresses dive into the scene as only Oscar winners

can, revealing a world of hurt that links *and* divides them.

The kids, by the way, are distinct individuals. Each has their issues, most centered on being bullied, but what they crave is purpose.

Then again, so do the adults, and what makes the last half of "Troop Zero" effective is how winning the



Viola Davis (right) and Allison Janney are absolutely wonderful together in "Troop Zero."

★ ★ ★ 1/2

"Troop Zero"

Running time: 94 minutes. Rated PG for thematic elements, language and smoking throughout

talent show becomes less crucial with each passing day. What everyone desires is friendship and, more to the point, a sense that life is headed somewhere. The climactic talent show, in fact, evolves in surprising ways, speaking to the power of friends standing by friends. And that applies to Miss Massey and Miss Rayleen. Their final exchange is an example of two wonderful actresses doing what they do best: playing women smarter than everyone else in the room.

There are plenty of laughs in "Troop Zero" — Gaffigan's exchange with the talent show director over nearby lavatories is *really* funny — but by the end, I was touched. The characters aren't the same people they were at the start of their journey. We believe, no, we hope, great things are in store for them. All the film asks is that we care about these folk. We do. We *definitely* do.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

Amazing Family Films

Both Reviews
by Andrew Tallackson

The end of “Togo” prompted an unforeseen reaction — one I’ll get to later — that elevates the experience of it into the extraordinary.

Brilliantly cinematic, with visuals that often boggle the mind, the film centers on the first dog-sled team in the “Great Race of Mercy,” the 1925 serum run in which dog-sled teams delivered the diphthe-



William Dafoe stars as Norwegian musher Leonhard Seppala in “Togo.”

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“Togo”

Running time: 113 minutes. Rated PG for some peril, thematic elements and mild language

ria antitoxin amid unfathomable conditions to children in Nome, Alaska. Due to a reporter’s error, a dog name Balto was the resulting celebrity, but it was a 12-year-old Siberian Husky named Togo and his owner, Norwegian musher Leonhard Seppala, who made the initial precarious trek.

Streaming on Disney+, “Togo” was directed by Ericson Core, a former cinematographer who directed the 2006 Mark Wahlberg football drama “Invincible.” The first half is a bit choppy as it alternates between present and past, between the serum run and 1913, when Togo first came into the picture. That backstory is key to establishing the bond between Togo and Leonhard — rocky, then indestructible — but the flashbacks have a way of disrupting the action so the thrust of the tale ebbs and flows.

The flashbacks, however, reveal how no one could

have played Leonhard and his Belgian wife Constance but Willem Dafoe and Julianne Nicholson. These two, with their weathered faces, inhabit the roles with grit. They have the look and feel of salt-of-the-earth folk.

When the diphtheria outbreak confines Nome’s children to the local hospital, Constance expresses her displeasure not just with Leonhard making the trip, but at having the 12-year-old Togo lead the dog-sled team. But with extreme weather preventing the serum from being flown into town, Leonhard and Togo are the only solutions.

Core does double duty as director and cinematographer, and his film is stunning. The Alaskan landscape is ominous and threatening: the skies dark, the terrain a flurry of drifting snow. A near fatal incident on a mountain cliff is a superb combination of special effects and Dafoe’s feral calm under pressure.

By the time Leonhard has the serum in hand, the next step is the trip back, first across a frozen lake. We’ve seen risky travels across ice

before...but *never* like this. As the icy surface begins to crack, pockets of air shoot up like geysers, islands of ice tilting as if it’s a Roland Emmerich disaster picture. That incident is based on fact. Whether the voyage was this explosive...doubtful, but as cinema, the effects achieve jaw-dropping awe.

Now, let’s get to that ending, which, by the way, features an aching score by the great film composer Mark Isham. There is no unbearably prolonged “Marley & Me” death; instead, something far more profound. The remarkable survival instincts of Leonhard and Togo, Leonhard’s concern for Togo’s health and the dog’s allegiance to his owner honor the bond between human and animal in ways few films have. All of it hit me like a tsunami. I sobbed through the entire last 10 minutes. I don’t know if I was tired, or if, as a dog owner, the movie struck a nerve, but the end of “Togo” floored me.

It’d be interesting to see if Disney plans to release “Togo” on the big screen, where it deserves to be seen. I would catch it again. It’s magnificent.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

TATC Kicks Off 30th Anniversary With Chicago-Area Premiere

A musical tribute to John Denver kicks off the 30th anniversary season of Munster's Theatre at the Center.

"Almost Heaven: John Denver's America," written and adapted by Peter Glazer and directed by Linda Fortunato, pays tribute to Denver's life and career. That encompasses growing up in a military family, to his emergence on the 1960s folk scene, the climb to 1970s stardom and his later career in the 1980s and 1990s. It includes hits such as "Country Roads," "Rocky Mountain High," "Annie's Song" and "Sunshine on My Shoulders."

Fortunato, the TATC artistic director, cast Shannon McEldowney, Steven Romero Schaeffer,



Steven Romero Schaeffer (from left), Tommy Malouf and Sara Geist appear in "Almost Heaven: John Denver's America."

Andrew Mueller, Sara Geist and Tommy Malouf. They are joined by musicians William Underwood (doing double duty as music director), Malcolm Ruhl and Alison Tatum. Previews start Feb. 13, with opening night on Feb. 16 and a continued run through March 22.

Performances are: 2 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday; 7:30 p.m. Friday; 3 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday; and 2:30 p.m. Sunday. Individual tickets range from \$42 to \$46. Student tickets are available, as are group discounts for 11 or more.

Visit www.TheatreAtTheCenter.com or call the box office at (219) 836-325 for tickets. The theater is located at 1040 Ridge Road.

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Fernwood Botanical Garden

• Plant Women Presentation from 1 to 2 p.m. EST Saturday, Feb. 8.

Fernwood Executive Director Carol Line will recognize women who have advanced the fields of plant science. The program kicks off Fernwood's celebration of the United Nations International Day of Women and Girls in Science (Feb. 11). Drop-in activities are planned through Feb. 20 in the Sims Education Center.

The program is free with paid admission.

Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve is located at 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. Call (269) 695-6491 or visit www.fernwoodbotanical.org for more information and to confirm the status of classes.

Thoughtful Thursday

The next installment of "Thoughtful Thursday + Art History" is at 7 p.m. EST Thursday, Feb. 13, at Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich.

The program considers artwork on view within the context of the era in which it was made. The Feb. 13 focus is the exhibit "Lines with Power and Purpose: Editorial Cartoons."

Visit krasl.org or call (269) 983-0271 for details.

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Lunch with the League

Lynda Lancaster, Indiana Dunes National Park ranger, will speak during Lunch with the League at noon Tuesday, Feb. 11, at Patrick's Grille, 4125 Franklin St.

The program is hosted by The League of Women Voters LaPorte County.

Lancaster has been a park ranger for 20 years at 11 different national parks ranging from Alaska to Florida, including several times at Indiana Dunes National Park. She will discuss important park sites associated with ratification of the 19th amendment: places where women made history.

The public is invited, and reservations are not required. A donation is requested from non-members. Attendees should arrive at 11:30 a.m. to buy lunch from the menu.

Visit lwvlaporte.org, follow the Facebook page or email lwvlaporte@gmail.com for details.

History on Tap

"History on Tap," the monthly lecture series featuring local historians, academics and scholars, is at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6, at Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St.

Each lecture dives into the social history of the area. Visit www.barkermansion.com for details.

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And the Oscar Goes to...



by Andrew Tallackson

Consider half the contest a safe bet.

Four actors have swept awards season, their shelves lined with shiny new trophies. Oscar awaits. Beyond that, anything goes...so that's where the fun begins.

For our annual Best the Editor Contest, I foresee correctly predicting five of the eight categories. Best Picture, Original Screenplay and Adapted Screenplay are the wild cards.

In terms of Best Picture, a month ago, the odds-on favorite was Sam Mendes' searing World War I epic "1917." Reviews were practically love letters, followed by Golden Globe wins for Best Picture and Director. Sentiment for Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite," however, is mounting, having topped more 10-Best Lists than any other picture in 2019. Consider this, though. Only five previous pictures secured nominations for Best Picture *and* Best Foreign Film: 1969's "Z," 1998's "Life Is Beautiful," 2000's "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," 2012's "Amour" and 2018's "Roma." Each won Best Foreign Film. None took Best Picture. If "Parasite" takes the Foreign Film honor, history has repeated itself. If it *doesn't*, then, for the first time in Oscar history, all bets are off.

What ensues are my predictions noted in **bold** and, in some cases, personal preferences as noted by "Who I'd Pick." We'd like to thank everyone who submitted ballots in our contest, along with Fiddlehead restaurant for sponsoring it. The Academy Awards air Sunday, Feb. 9, on ABC. We will announce our contest winner in the Feb. 20 *Beacher*.

So, without further ado, let's do this:

BEST PICTURE

"Ford v Ferrari"; "The Irishman"; "Jojo Rabbit"; "Joker"; "Little Women"; "Marriage Story"; "1917"; "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"; "Parasite."

Who will win: Anything's possible. These days, a film sweeps the preceding categories, then the underdog blindsides us. That means "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" or "Parasite" could triumph. But "1917" is a rare war film that struck a chord with critics and audiences: a masterwork of carefully orchestrated storytelling. I would be satisfied if it secures Best Picture.

BEST DIRECTOR

Bong Joon Ho, "Parasite"; Sam Mendes, "1917"; Todd Phillips, "Joker"; Martin Scorsese, "The Irishman"; Quentin Tarantino, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood."

Who Will Win: Mendes. It's *his* film. A war picture seemingly captured with no editing, requiring every shot be meticulously planned so his camera



Sam Mendes likely will take home his second Oscar for directing "1917." Will the film take the evening's top prize?

can roam freely. Few filmmakers have achieved this feat as fluidly, and powerfully, as Mendes has.

BEST ACTOR

Antonio Banderas, "Pain and Glory"; Leonardo DiCaprio, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"; Adam Driver, "Marriage Story"; Joaquin Phoenix, "Joker"; Jonathan Pryce, "The Two Popes."

Who Will Win: No contest. **Phoenix.** The entire picture rested on his shoulders, the actor achieving a shattering descent into madness. Phoenix will mark the second actor to score an Oscar for playing the character, the first being the posthumous honor afforded the late Heath Ledger in 2008 for "The Dark Knight."

BEST ACTRESS

Cynthia Erivo, "Harriet"; Scarlett Johansson, "Marriage Story"; Saoirse Ronan, "Little Women"; Charlize Theron, "Bombshell"; Renee Zellweger, "Judy."

Who Will Win: Like Phoenix, Zellweger had this one in the bag from the start. The actress went beyond mimicry to dig deep, portraying Garland as

a performer who only felt alive while performing. It is towering work.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Tom Hanks, "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood"; Anthony Hopkins, "The Two Popes"; Al Pacino, "The Irishman"; Joe Pesci, "The Irishman"; Brad Pitt, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood."

Who Will Win: Pitt was the epitome of cool in Tarantino's ode to aging actors, and the Academy likes to reward performers who've paid their dues, yet never won.

Who I'd Pick: Hanks achieved a pitch-perfect tribute to the gentle soul of Fred Rogers, while Pesci and Pacino flexed their acting muscles as only pros can in "The Irishman." Either of these three wins, and I'd be perfectly satisfied.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Kathy Bates, "Richard Jewell"; Laura Dern, "Marriage Story"; Scarlett Johansson, "Jojo Rabbit"; Florence Pugh, "Little Women"; Margot Robbie, "Bombshell."

Who Will Win: When Dern slips into "Renata

Mode" ("Big Little Lies"), there is nothing better. As Johansson's divorce attorney in "Marriage Story," Dern is a steamroller who never backs down from a legal battle. She's ferocious and hilarious, often at the same time.

Who I'd Pick: Dern...however an agreeable upset is **Pugh**, who after a stellar year ended 2019 with a career-making turn as Amy, the March sister living in Jo's shadow. The character is a thankless one, but Pugh imbued her with an aching drive for validation that made her crackle with life.

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

"Knives Out," Rian Johnson; "Marriage Story," Noah Baumbach; "1917," Sam Mendes and Krysty Wilson-Cairns; "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood," Quentin Tarantino; "Parasite," Bong Joon-ho, Jin Won Han.

Who Will Win: The past dictates **Tarantino** as the winner. He *owns* this category. His films don't take Best Picture, so the screenplay trophy is his perpetual consolation prize.

Who I'd Pick: "Knives Out" was the year's most all-around entertaining film. Sly, devious, with a final shot that sent you from the theater with a giddy smile on your face.

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

"The Irishman," Steven Zaillian; "Jojo Rabbit," Taika Waititi; "Joker," Todd Phillips, Scott Silver; "Little Women," Greta Gerwig; "The Two Popes," Anthony McCarten.

Who Will Win: Uh...wow, no clue. The safest best? **Zaillian**, a past winner for "Schindler's List." His sprawling script propelled Scorsese's picture with, for me at least, few lulls.

Who Should Win: Waititi, whose "Jojo Rabbit" achieved whimsy, broad slapstick and shattering heartbreak without losing its footing.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

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STEM Fair Round 2 Winners



Barker Middle School on Jan. 23 held Round 2 of its STEM Fair. Pictured are (from left): Biological Division — Nathan Groszek, Roberto Smiertelny, Juliana Williams; Chemical Division — Lynda Pratt, Abigail Sobus, Bailey Chavis; Physical Division: Kyle Cogdill, Dominic Joseph, Arriana Pytynia; Creative Research Award: Ashley McKinney (Physical Division); and Grand Champion: Madison Gresham (Physical Division).

Spring Birding Bus Tour

Limited seating is available for the March 7 Spring Birding Bus Tour, presented in conjunction with Dunes Learning Center.

The tour, which lasts from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., focuses on Kankakee River Valley waterfowl in early spring, including many species of geese, ducks and swans. The guide is Matt Beatty, who serves on the Indiana Audubon Society board and is a conservation practitioner for The Nature Conservancy.

The bus tour, which costs \$75 per person, includes lunch. Visit dlc.simpletix.com and search for Spring Birding Bus Tour for reservations.

Noon Time Talk Series

The Noon Time Talk Series continues with the 30-minute film “Kehinde Wiley: Economy of Grace” at 12:20 p.m. EDT Thursday, Feb. 6, at Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart.

The movie follows Wiley as he steps out of his comfort zone to create a series of paintings of women. He casts his models on the streets of New York, then enlists Riccardo Tisci of Givenchy to create couture gowns for each woman.

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



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Brown Bag Gardening Series

Master Gardener Kitty Knoll will discuss how to draw helpful pollinators to plantings during the next Brown Bag Gardening Series program.

The presentation through LaPorte County Master Gardeners is from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, at Star Center, 422 Franklin St.

Knoll will cover which plants most benefit pollinators, and bring beauty and healthy growth to a home garden.

Attendees can take lunch. The \$5 cost includes informational handouts. No preregistration is required. Call (219) 324-9407, visit www.extension.purdue.edu/laporte, then click on the "Garden" heading at the top, or visit www.lpmastergardener.com for more details.

Ensuing programs include:

- Wednesday, March 11, noon-1 p.m., "Landscape Design for People Living with Dementia," Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte.
- Wednesday, April 15, noon-1 p.m., The Potager Garden, LaPorte County Extension Office, 2857 W. Indiana 2, LaPorte.

New Troy Indoor Flea Market

Two indoor flea markets are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST Saturdays, Feb. 8 and 15, at New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road.

The market includes tools, crafts, books, memorabilia, housewares, antiques, furniture and locally made and grown foods. Red Brick Cafe will serve lunch and snacks.

The market continues the second and third Saturdays of each month through April. A map is available on the Facebook page [NewTroyFleaMarket](https://www.facebook.com/NewTroyFleaMarket).

Contact Donald at (773) 803-9773 for information or to reserve a table. Proceeds from space rentals benefit the Community Center, an all-volunteer facility run by the non-profit Friends of New Troy.

FUMC Valentine Tea

The 70th annual Valentine Tea is at 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8, at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

The theme is "Pretty in Pink." The tea features music, sweets, tea and fellowship.

Friday Hours

The Beacher Weekly Newspaper, 911 Franklin St., closes at 2 p.m. Friday

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Barker History Buffs



Barker Middle School students recently participated in a school-wide history fair, presenting projects on a variety of topics. Twenty five of the 117 projects were selected as school winners, advancing to the National History Day Northwest Regional competition Feb. 22 at John Young Middle School in Mishawaka. Pictured are (seated, from left) Bailey Chavis, Brielle Jones and Hannah Parker, whose project on the “Lost Girls of Sudan” was among the 25 winners, and (standing, from left) seventh-grade social studies teachers Mariah Pol and Michael Eldridge.

Michigan City Public Library

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

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

• **History of Sheridan Beach at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6.**

Geologist Harvey Pokorny will illustrate geographic and developmental history through La-Porte County plat maps, artist renditions and photographs.

• **Great Decisions at 6:30 p.m. Mon., Feb. 10.**

The foreign-policy discussion program returns for its 22nd season. The discussion is Climate Change and the Global Order. Reading material is available at the circulation desk.

• **Story Time at 1 p.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 11, 18 and 25, and 10 a.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 12, 19 and 26.**

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

• **We Heart Angels Among Us at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11.**

Angie Benz leads the discussion on inspiring stories about angels in everyday lives.

• **Learning Center Volunteers Needed.**

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

Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Contact Robin Kohn at (219) 873-3049 for more information on library programming.

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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

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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.

Healthcare Foundation Scholarships

The Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte will award \$100,000 in scholarships this year.

Applications must be submitted through HFL's online grant portal prior to midnight March 20 at www.hflaporte.org/scholarships

Students must pursue a degree in a health or wellness field, and enrolled at an accredited university, college or similar higher-learning institute.

Available scholarships and additional requirements include:

Healthcare Foundation Scholarships

Students must:

- Be residents or actively employed within the city of LaPorte and surrounding areas.
- Be enrolled in their third year (junior) or higher, or in a post-graduate health-care program.
- Have a 3.0 grade point average or higher.

Healthcare Foundation Radiologic/Medical Imaging

Students must:

- Be residents or actively employed within the city of LaPorte and surrounding areas.
- Be enrolled in Associate of Applied Science-Radiologic Technology, Associate of Science-Radiography or Bachelor of Science-Medical Imaging Technology.
- Have a 3.0 GPA.

LaPorte Hospital Auxiliary Scholarships

Students must:

- Be enrolled in their freshman or sophomore year of college.
- Be a graduate of a high school in LaPorte County or employed by LaPorte Hospital or LaPorte Physicians.

Footlight Seeking Show Directors

Footlight Players is seeking directors for shows in its 71st season.

The play selection committee has begun considering five productions, including 25 scripts of plays and musicals. They include: "August, Osage County," "Chicago," "4 Old Broads," "Grease," "An Inspector Calls," "Into the Woods," "The King and I," "Laura," "The Music Man" and "Wait Until Dark."

The theater is located at 1705 Franklin St. Call the box office at (219) 874-4035 or visit www.footlightplayers.org to download an application. Anyone interested in serving as a director should include his/her name, address, phone numbers, months available, shows he/she might like to direct and any past history of theatrical experiences. Suggestions of shows are welcome.

The volunteer organization also needs set builders, costumers, choreographers, lighting and sound operators, designers and musicians.

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Chesterton Art Center



A sample of the pieces children will follow during Cookies & Canvas.

- **The February Cookies and Canvas on Friday, Feb. 7.**

Children ages 3-7 attend from 5 to 6:30 p.m. and 8 and older from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The focus is an 8x10 giraffe-themed stretched-canvas painting, as well as cookies and juice.

The cost is \$10 per child, or \$5 for members. All interested students must register and pay no later than Thursday, Feb. 6.

- **A new five-week session of Monday Night Ceramics starts from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Feb. 24.**

Beginning students develop fundamental wheel-throwing techniques, while returning students refine techniques to create more complex forms.

Instructor Tom Cernius will perform short demonstrations while assisting students to improve throwing skills. Hand-building and sculpture are encouraged. Students also can try slab-building, pinch-pot hand-building and basic sculptural techniques. All pieces are glazed during the final class.

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

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

Westchester Public Library

- **NorthShore Health Center free blood-pressure screenings from 10 to 11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 6, at Thomas Library and 10 a.m. to noon Thursday, Feb. 13, at Hageman Library.**

Interested patrons also can receive help calculating Body Mass Index.

- **Bits & Bytes series, "Android Phones and Tablets," from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6, at the Thomas Library Serials/Automation Department.**

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

- **Lego Club, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7, at the Thomas Library Children's Department.**

Children build around a different theme using the library's Legos. Registration is required.

- **Toddler Prom from 10 to 10:45 a.m. or 11 to 11:45 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8 at The Baugher Center.**

The event is for toddlers ages 1-4 and their caregivers. Refreshments will be served. A free ticket required for admittance can be picked up in the Thomas Branch Children's Department or at Hageman Library.

- **Tinker and Create from 4 to 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10, at Hageman Library.**

Classes revolve around science, design, engineering and art through project-based work. Space is limited to 12 children, and registration is required.

- **Inquiring Minds: Fall Prevention and Balance Workshop from 1 to 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at Hageman Library.**

Chesterton Physical Therapy will host the workshop that includes free fall-prevention screenings. Registration is required.

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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La Porte County Parks



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

Nature's Tiny Tots

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

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

Parent & Child Discovery Days

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

The schedule is:

- Feb. 12: Could You Be a Squirrel?
- March 4: 1 Bird, 2 Bird.
- March 18: Water Everywhere.

Nature Center Open House

A variety of crafts are planned during the free, all-ages open house from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, at Luhr County Park.

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

Healthy Lifestyles

The free social club that emphasizes quality of life meets from 9 to 10 a.m. Wednesdays at Luhr County Park Nature Center.

Programs focus on health trends, gardening, medical information and balancing active lifestyles. Call at least one week in advance to sign up (the maximum allowed is 30). The schedule is:

- March 4 — "Recycling: What Can I Recycle and Where It Goes" by Sacha Gee-Burns, LaPorte County Solid Waste District. The program includes a plastic bag exchange.
- April 1 — Foot and ankle care, Dr. Grandfield, podiatrist.

Shelter and Hall Reservations

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



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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the 'Sea, help me and show me, herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth! I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in

this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3x). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in Eternal Glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. After 3 days, the request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor is granted.

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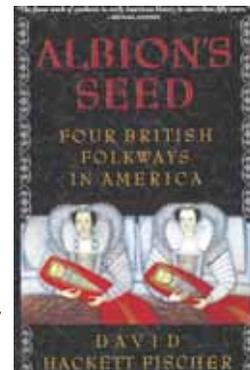
Genealogical Society

Cindy Blicher will share insights she gained from David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed* during the next LaPorte County Genealogical Society meeting.

The program is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at LaPorte City Park Department, 250 Pine Lake Ave.

The book examines the consequences of different periods of English colonization and immigration to North America.

Visit www.sites.rootsweb.com/~inlcigs/ for more information.



LaPorte County Public Library

• **Baby and Me Yoga with Sarah Hott from 11 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 8.**

Hott demonstrates yoga moves parents can do with children ages 0-3.

• **STEAM Sandbox from 3 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.**

Students in grades 3 and older can move through levels, earning a certificate for each completed level. They work independently and chart their progress while completing hands-on, interactive projects.

• **MAKE a Difference from 3 to 5 p.m. Mondays in February.**

The focus is fidget sleeves for Golden Living residents.



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.

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3. Deb Frederick
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6. Cindy Kalember
7. Margie Midkiff
8. Sue Labovitz
9. Ginny Hogan
10. Tammy Nelmar (series)
11. Dottie Brinckman (series)

SCORE
170
168
167
166
163
156
156
155
154
152
418
412

SPLITS

Carolyn Wiggins	5-10
Holly Dres	5-10
Margie Midkiff	2-10
Debbie Novak	5-6, 5-10
June Salmon	3-8, 3-10

STRIKES

Sarah Blank	5
Deb Frederick	3



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



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

- South Central Junior-Senior High School, 9808 S. County Road 600 West, Union Mills, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7.
- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10.
- Horizon Bank, 710 Indiana Ave., LaPorte, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12.

Donors must be in good general health and feeling well, at least 17 (16 with parental consent) and weigh at least 110 pounds. Call (800) 733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org for more details.

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Activities to Explore

In the Area:

Feb. 6 — History of Sheridan Beach, 6:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Feb. 6 — “History on Tap,” 6 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Info: www.barkermansion.com

Feb. 7 — First Friday in the Chapel, noon, La Porte Hospital Chapel, 1007 Lincolnway. Performer: LaPorte High School Mixed Chorale. Free. Info: (219) 325-7633.

Feb. 7 — First Friday @ Old Lighthouse Museum, Washington Park, 5-8 p.m.

Feb. 7 — Opening reception, “Local at LCA,” 5-8 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Free. Info: www.lubeznikcenter.org

Feb. 7 — February Cookies and Canvas, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Times: ages 3-7/5-6:30 p.m., 8 & older/7-8:30 p.m. Cost: \$10/child, \$5/members. Info: www.chestertonart.com

Feb. 8 — Worship Open Mic Night with host Marcus and Marketo!, noon EST, The Acorn, 107 Generation Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$25. Reservations: acornlive.org

Feb. 8 — Toddler Prom, 10-10:45 a.m./11-11:45 a.m., The Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton. Registration: (219) 926-7696.

Feb. 8 — Baby and Me Yoga with Sarah Hott, 11 a.m.-noon, LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Feb. 8 — 70th annual Valentine Tea, 1 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

Feb. 8 — Full Moon Hike, 7:30-9 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Feb. 10 — Great Decisions, 6:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Feb. 11 — Lunch with the League, noon, Patrick’s Grille, 4125 Franklin St. Speaker: park ranger Lynda Lancaster. Info: lwvlaporte@gmail.com, lwvlaporte.org

Feb. 11 — LaPorte County Genealogical Society, 7 p.m., LaPorte City Park Department, 250 Pine Lake Ave. Discussion: David Hackett Fischer’s Albion’s Seed. Info: www.sites.rootsweb.com/~inlcigs/

Feb. 12 — Brown Bag Gardening Series, noon-1 p.m., Star Center, 422 Franklin St. Cost: \$5. Info: (219) 324-9407, www.lpmastergardener.com

Feb. 12 — Nature Center Open House, 1-3:30 p.m., Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Free. Info: www.laportecountyparks.org, (219) 325-8315.

In the Region

Feb. 8 — Plant Women Presentation, 1-2 p.m. EST, Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. Free.

Info: (269) 695-6491, www.fernwoodbotanical.org

Feb. 8-9 — Movie Screenings at the Douglas Center, 1-2 p.m., The Paul H. Douglas Center, 100 N. Lake St., Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Info: (219) 395-1882.

Feb. 8, 15 — Indoor flea market, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. EST, New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road. Info: (773) 803-9773. Map: Facebook page NewTroyFleaMarket

Wednesdays — Musician jam sessions, 6-9 p.m. EST, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Performer signup: Nicole Pierard @ anso91@yahoo.com. Audience donation: \$5.

Support Groups

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

Mondays, Fridays — Overeaters Anonymous, 7 p.m. Mon./Franciscan Hospital Clair of Assisi Room, 3500 Franciscan Way; 9 a.m. Fri./First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Info: <https://oa.org>, (219) 879-0300.

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

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

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

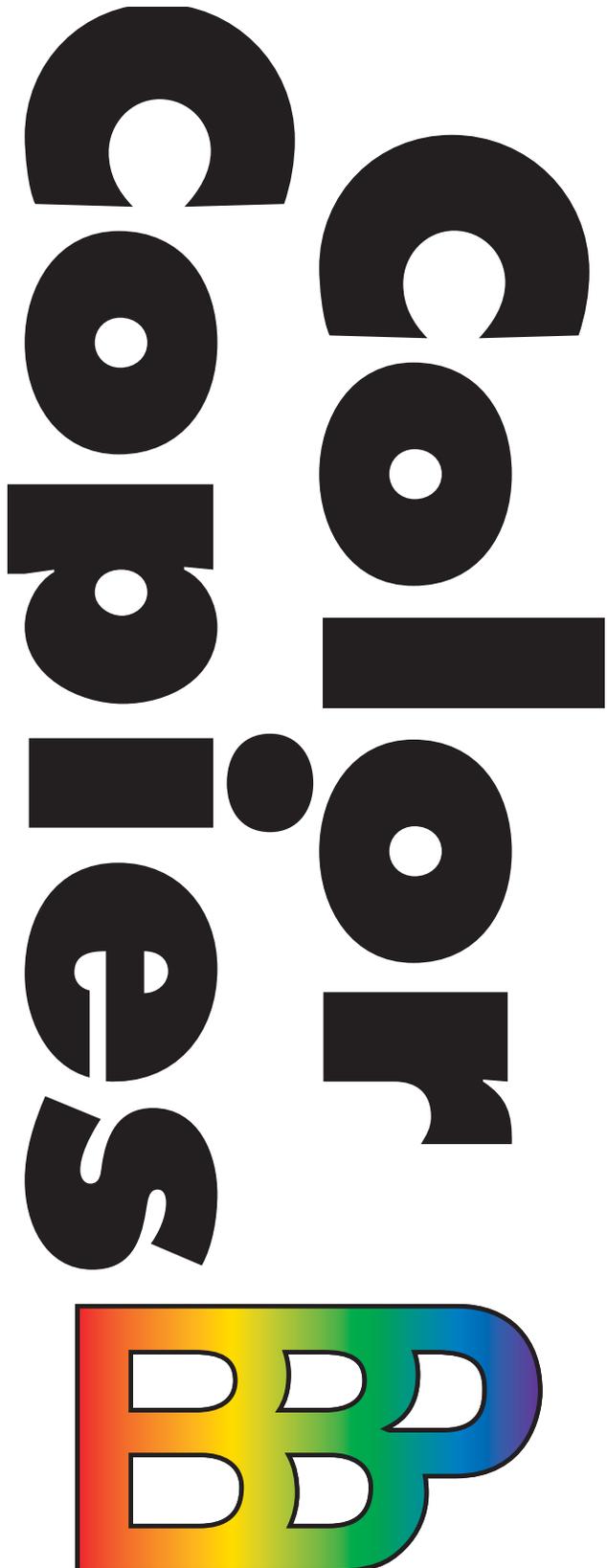
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Heart Health Program

A four-part "Be Heart Smart" series is from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Feb. 11, 18, 25 and March 3, at HealthLinc Michigan City, 710 Franklin St.

Presented with the Imogene L. Dahl Purdue Extension-LaPorte County Endowment Fund Grant, the speaker is Allison Goshorn, LaPorte County health and wellness educator. Discussion includes identifying and understanding risk factors for heart disease, techniques for stress reduction and best practices for talking to health-care providers, along with hands-on activities and a heart-healthy snack.

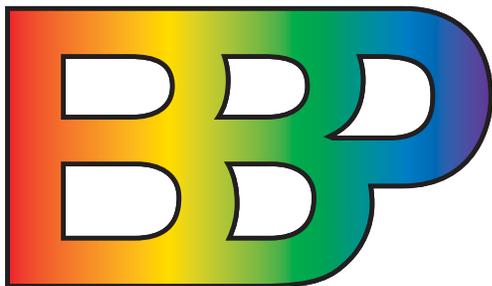
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On February 6, 1843, “The Virginia Minstrels,” the first minstrel show in America, opened in the New York’s Bowery Amphitheater.

On February 6, 1895, George Herman “Babe” Ruth, who would become baseball’s world-famous home-run king, was born in Baltimore.

On February 6, 1959, the United States first successfully test-fired a Titan intercontinental ballistic missile.

On February 6, 1971, after a 33-hour stay on the Moon, the Apollo 14 astronauts prepared to head back to earth.

On February 6, 1998, President Bill Clinton signed a bill changing the name of Washington National Airport to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

On February 7, 1778, Daniel Boone, along with about 30 other men, was captured by Indians at a Kentucky crossroads called Blue Licks. All except Daniel Boone were delivered to the British commander in York. Boone was taken to Chilicote. From there, he made a daring escape and walked 160 miles to freedom.

On February 7, 1867, author Laura Ingalls Wilder was born in Lake Pepin, Wis.

On February 7, 1904, most of downtown Baltimore was destroyed by fire.

On February 7, 1964, thousands of fans welcomed the Beatles when they arrived at New York’s Kennedy Airport for their first American tour.

On February 7, 1983, Elizabeth Dole was sworn in as the first female secretary of transportation by the first female justice on the Supreme Court, Sandra Day O’Connor.

On February 8, 1693, the College of William and Mary, the second oldest college in America, received its charter.

On February 8, 1837, for the only time in the nation’s history, the U.S. Senate chose the vice president. Richard Mentor Johnson was selected after no candidate received a majority of the electoral votes.

On February 8, 1843, Isabella Chambers, a 24-year-old New York girl, took out a \$2,000 life insurance policy on herself. She was the first woman in America to purchase life insurance.

On February 8, 1910, the first charter was issued to the Boy Scouts of America.

On February 8, 1931, actor James Dean was born in Marion, Ind.

On February 8, 2000, Bob Collins, Chicago's popular WGN morning talk-show host, was killed in a plane crash. He was 57.

On February 9, 1825, after no candidate received a majority of electoral votes, the U.S. House of Representatives elected John Quincy Adams as president.

On February 9, 1870, an Act of Congress established the United States Weather Bureau.

On February 9, 1942, daylight-saving "War Time" went into effect in the United States, with clocks turned one hour forward.

On February 9, 1964, the Beatles made their first live American TV appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show" on CBS.

On February 10, 1933, the Postal Telegraph Co. introduced the first "singing telegram" in New York.

On February 10, 1949, Arthur Miller's long running play, "Death of a Salesman," opened at New York's Morosco Theater.

On February 10, 1962, the Soviet Union exchanged captured American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers for Rudolph Ivanovich Abel, a Soviet spy held by the United States.

On February 10, 1968, Peggy Fleming of the United States won the gold in figure skating at the Winter Olympics in Grenoble, France.

On February 10, 1989, Ron Brown was elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee, becoming the first black person to head a major U.S. political party.

On February 11, 1752, America's first hospital, the Pennsylvania Hospital, opened in Philadelphia.

On February 11, 1808, in the Pennsylvania town of Wilkes Barre, hard coal was used for the first time as fuel for heating.

On February 11, 1858, French girl Bernadette Soubirous claimed to have seen a vision of the Virgin Mary near the village of Lourdes.

On February 11, 1869, Chicago was host to the Midwest's first women's suffrage convention.

On February 11, 1937, a sit-down strike ended at General Motors when the company agreed to recognize the United Automobile Workers as a legitimate union.

On February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States, was born near the present town of Hodgenville, Ky.

On February 12, 1870, women in the Utah Territory were given the right to vote.

On February 12, 1878, Fredrick Thayer, a resident of Waverly, Mass., was granted a patent for the baseball catcher's mask.

On February 12, 1938, author Judy Blume was born in Elizabeth, N.J.

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Ned E. Kalb Nominations

The community can submit nominations through Feb. 28 for the ninth annual Ned E. Kalb Community Leadership Award.

Purdue Extension Office of LaPorte County and Leadership LaPorte County — two organizations Kalb impacted — sponsor the award established in 2011. Kalb was a key founder of Leadership LaPorte County in the early 1980s. He also spent 15 years as the Purdue Extension director in LaPorte County, where he also served on many public and private boards. After leaving Purdue Extension, he went overseas to teach self-sufficiency to under-developed countries.

Nominees can be individuals or organizations. A panel of local leaders selects the winner, who is honored at the Extension annual meeting March 24 at LaPorte’s Silver Palace.

Past recipients include John Coulter, James Dworkin, George and Dory Morley, Diana Werner, Cynthia Hedge, Herb Higgin, Elaine Shurte and June Lenig.

Nomination forms are available from the Leadership or Extension offices. Call Leadership at (219) 325-8223, or Purdue Extension at (219) 324-9407 or (219) 874-5611. A form can be requested by email to kulman@purdue.edu, mfoell@purdue.edu or info@leadershiplaportecounty.com. An online nomination is at www.extension.purdue.edu/laporte



Prayer to the Blessed Virgin
(Never known to fail.)
Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the ‘Sea, help me and show me, herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth! I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3x). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in Eternal Glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. After 3 days, the request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor is granted.

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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

The Book Artist by Mark Pryor (*oversize paperback, \$15.95 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 268 pages*)

Mark Pryor keeps me content as a hot cup of coffee on a January morning. His characters are solid and believable, and his adventures take me to the City of Light — *oui!* Paris! Armchair traveler that I am, his descriptions of the city, its streets and people are my form of virtual reality, and a lot cheaper than a group travel tour.

Star of these murder-mysteries is Hugo Marston, head of security at the American Embassy in Paris. Cushy job? Sometimes, sometimes not.

“He was head of security and carried a gun everywhere he went, but sometimes his role was more hands-on, literally, like steering the grabby CEO away from the young diplomat’s wife, or leading the inebriated heiress to a comfy couch.”

A former FBI profiler now in his middle years, he is still single, although he keeps company with the lovely Claudia Roux, a newspaper journalist.

What I like about Marston is his demeanor. He’s not a physical Jack Ryan or black ops like Mark Greaney’s the Gray Man. He’s an intelligent man who can assess a situation, see things others can’t. And, he’s a collector of books, rare first editions — my kind of man!

But sometimes, when he least expects it, things come into play that make his job a lot more physical and a lot more complicated...

It’s early December when Marston finds himself invited — make that ordered — to attend the yearly Christmas party at the embassy. Ambassador J. Bradford Taylor has made it clear only death would excuse him from attending. And, to make sure his orders are followed, he directs Marston to pick up an American artist, Alia Alsaffar, at her hotel and escort her to the party.

Marston has to track down the lovely Alia, as she has forgotten about the party, and they share a quiet dinner at a restaurant instead. Alia is a sculptor who uses books as the focus of her pieces. She is in town for an exhibit of her work at the Dali Museum. Since books are Marston’s passion, and even though he doesn’t care much for sculptures, he is intrigued with Alia’s approach to art. They share a quiet evening, and that’s all there is to it.

The next night, Marston and Taylor enter the Dali Museum for the opening of Alia’s exhibition. All is going well, the champagne is flowing, the rich meet and greet, but soon the tranquility of the evening is

broken when Marston gets a message that Claudia is out on the street nearby, having collapsed after a practice run for an upcoming marathon.

Of course, Marston flies to her side, sees she is OK and taken home, then returns to the museum for another big shock...

Having left a tranquil scene, Marston is now faced with an ambulance, squad cars and uniformed police flooding the museum entrance. Marston makes his way inside, because of his credentials, to discover someone has been killed. He offers his help to the French detective in charge and is politely, but firmly, told his help isn’t needed. However, since the deceased is an American citizen, Marston must be allowed into the investigation. And, the deceased American is Alia Alsaffar.

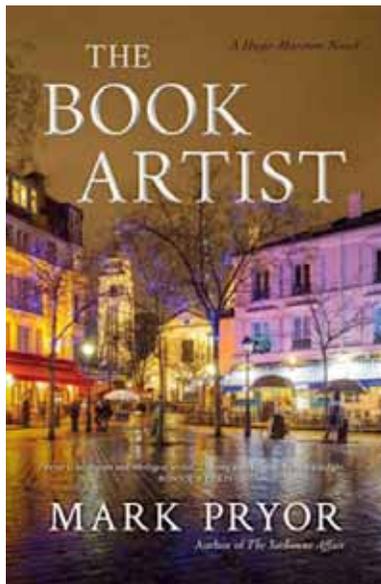
Imagine Marston’s surprise when, the next day, Claudia is picked up and charged with Alia’s murder. The police claim Claudia’s DNA was found under the victim’s fingernails — sure sign of a struggle — *n’est pas?* How could Claudia have been in two places at the same time? The police point out there was a window of opportunity for Claudia to sneak into the museum, execute the deed, then fake a collapse. Now, Marston must get involved and find

the real murderer.

At the same time, Marston receives voicemails from his best friend, Tom Green, who’s in Amsterdam hip deep in problems of his own. He’s a former CIA “spook,” ex-FBI, and a man who takes Sinatra’s song “I Did it My Way” very seriously. Yes, he’s always living on the edge, by his own rules, but there’s something about the guy that made him and Marston good friends ever since they met at Langley. And now, Green’s trying to drag Marston into revenge for his sister’s murder, an innocent victim in the wrong place at the wrong time. A well-known bank robber, Rick Cofer, picked the wrong bank for his last job. Tom’s sister was in the bank: shot and killed in the crossfire. Tom has devoted his life to finding Cofer and...bring him to justice? I doubt it. Bring him to Tom’s version of justice is more like it. He’s now calling Marston to say he’s tracked Cofer to Amsterdam...and needs his help. How can Marston refuse to help his friend *and* clear Claudia at the same time?

It’s an engrossing mystery and race against time that might make you want to go back and read the other books in this fine series.

Till next time, happy reading!



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