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# Reinventing Classics

by Edmund Lawler



Dan Schaaf (right) records dialogue for his latest project, "Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler," with Sherri Waddle-Cummings. Photos by Paul Kemiel



Sherri Waddle-Cummings infuses emotion into her dialogue for the film.

Suddenly, quite by accident, Dan Schaaf discovered a wildly creative artistic pursuit — breathing new life into classic silent films by composing musical scores and scripting dialogue performed by local stage actors.

"Channel 20 used to run silent films at midnight," Schaaf recalls of his epiphany in the late 1990s. "They ran the Fritz Lang classic 'Metropolis,' a 1927 sci-fi that I had never seen. I figured I needed to see it once in my life, so I set the VCR to record it at midnight."

He watched it the next morning and was enchanted by the epic work of cinema from the legendary German director. But there was one problem.

"It had this dreadful musical score that sounded like it came from a Laurel and Hardy comedy, and it had absolutely nothing to do with the film," Schaaf says. "I told myself, 'I can do better than this.'"

And he did.

Schaaf, who first began composing music as a Marquette High School student and later while studying English and electrical engineering at Purdue University, penned a score for "Metropolis." Un-

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beknownst to him, others had as well. He's grateful for his blissful ignorance.

"Had I known," he says, "I may have never done this. In a way, it's all an accident."

But it was a serendipitous one. His musical arrangement for "Metropolis" laid the groundwork for many of his reimagined silent-film productions to come, both staged and on video. Schaaf not only wrote his own score for "Metropolis," but he also assembled local actors for a live "performance" of the dialogue he wrote to accompany the film. It screened in 2000 at the Sound of Silents Film Festival at Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks, Mich.

His "Metropolis" production later was presented at the University of Notre Dame, Columbia College Chicago, the old State Theatre in South Bend and other regional venues. Schaaf, who alternates between roles as playwright, director, composer, arranger, even software engineer, named his operation Sudden Productions, acknowledging the impulse on which he discovered his new-found passion for scoring and scripting silent movies.

In addition to composing a silent film's soundtrack and script, Schaaf also provides sound effects for video presentations of the silent films. For example, for the 1924 silent movie "Aelita: Queen of Mars," a Soviet-produced extravaganza, Schaaf created the sounds of bells ringing in Moscow, footfalls on an empty street and the creak of an opening door.

Next up for Schaaf and Sudden Productions is the soundtrack for "Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler," the 1922 silent film directed by Lang, who later took his

act to Hollywood after fleeing Nazi Germany. In the film, Dr. Mabuse is a psychologist-turned-criminal mastermind who amasses a fortune through gambling and murder. The cast includes such characters as a Follies starlet, Russian countess and naive American playboy. The production is scheduled to debut in late March-early April at venues under consideration.

During a recording session this month for "Dr. Mabuse" in a studio at the Franklin Arts District Artists building, Schaaf cajoled local actors to dramatize their roles for the film's recreation.

"I want more of the attitude and less of the accent," he instructed actor Noel Carlson, playing the role of wealthy American playboy Edgar Hull, who falls victim to Dr. Mabuse. "You are an energetic, ebullient American!"

Schaaf's wife, Bonnie, helped him track the script to ensure no lines were skipped. He sat cross-legged on a chair before a folding table supporting his laptop. Focused and intense, Schaaf read lines from the script to provide context for the actors, who recited their scripted lines as they stood behind a microphone several



Dan Schaaf uses computers to tweak all aspects of his latest production. Photo by Paul Kemiell

feet in front of him.

As local actress Maggie Reister stepped to the microphone, Schaaf coached her on how to melt into the role of Countess Dusy Told.

"You are a countess. You are bored with life, and you are bored with your husband, so you hang out in a casino," Schaaf told her. "You have a certain world weariness and an air of haughtiness."

Reister hit all her marks.

Schaaf was struck by the exuberance she brought to the role, asking as she was leaving the studio if



## Reinventing Classics Continued from Page 3

major impact when they were released, such as “Metropolis” and “Aelita.”

“There also has to be a narrative quality to them that can drive the music,” he adds.

He describes his creative process as trial and error.

Mostly error.



A scene from “Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler.”

“I thrive on making mistakes, but those mistakes may lead to something pleasant or useful or intriguing,” he says. “The challenge is coming up with the germ of an idea and then elaborating or improvising on it so that it leads something larger, more organic and functional.”

He aims to create a successful marriage of image and sound.

The technical challenge to writing dialogue performed by actors is syncing it reasonably close with the mouths of the actors on screen.

“It’s an amusing challenge,” he says.

Intertitles (the title cards that contextualize scenes in a silent film) are eliminated and replaced by dialogue, frame rates are accelerated and certain scenes may be cut. “Dr. Mabuse” is a 5 1/2 hour film that Schaaf will edit down to about 90 minutes.

Schaaf is particularly proud of two productions over the course of his creative career. One is “Roxann’s Kiss,” a pop opera for which he wrote the mu-

sic, although he did not direct the play. It was an adaptation of the tale of Cyrano de Bergerac performed in Cedar Lake, Ind., more than 25 years ago. The other is “Aelita: Queen of Mars,” which his repertoire company has performed many times over the past 20 years.

Once his production of “Dr. Mabuse” has launched, Schaaf will turn his attention to “Belle Gunness, the Murder Mystery.” It is based on the Norwegian-born Gunness who is said to have murdered more than a dozen men in LaPorte for their money in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Schaaf and a cast workshopped the play at Canterbury Theatre and in a Chicago theater in 2018. He is considering restructuring the production as a video. No matter what form his next production will take, Schaaf is always writing.

“Don’t ask for permission to do a play,” he advises. “A lot of people write a play, but they wait and wait for it to be produced. Don’t wait. Produce it yourself. And rather than perfect a single play, it’s better to

write several plays because that lets you get better at writing.



Larry Jortner (from left), Sandy Young and Noel Carlson perform “Aelita: Queen of Mars” in Chicago. The three are involved in “Dr. Mabuse.”

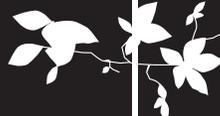
“The trick is to get good at writing, and not to get your writing good,” he says. “The more you do, the better you get at it. That’s why I call it Sudden Productions. You do it suddenly. Get it over with!”



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## WinterFest Returns for Weekend of Events



“Snowball Softball” remains a popular offering through the annual WinterFest.

The annual WinterFest, organized by the LaPorte Park and Recreation Department, returns Friday through Sunday, Jan. 24-26, with many events back from previous years.

Kicking off the festivities early is “Yoga at the Civic,” a free class from 8 to 9 a.m. Friday, Jan. 24, in the lower level of LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. (use the door at the end of the ramp on Plain Street). Donations will be accepted to support the park department’s youth scholarship program.

The day continues with ice-sculpture demonstrations from 2 to 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24, in Plaza 618 on Lincolnway. Afterward, families can head to Cummings Lodge in Soldiers Memorial Park from 6 to 7:30 p.m. for Family Game Night. Take dinner and a favorite game, or sample provided popcorn and punch.

Saturday kicks off with Family Ceramics from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Jan. 25, in the lower level of LaPorte Civic. Participants can paint seasonal gifts such as snowmen, Valentine’s Day boxes and figurines or Easter eggs. The \$6 cost includes paints and brushes, but not the bisque item for decorating. All children must have a parent/guardian present.

The “Snowball Softball” Adult Coed Tournament returns to Lions Field at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25.

Team awards for first, second and third place, along with individual awards for first place, are planned.

Breakfast with the Birds, sponsored by LaPorte County Parks, is from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, at Luhr County Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 W, LaPorte. No pre-registration is required. The program is open to all ages, but children must be accompanied by an adult.

A “Wheel Throwing Pottery Demonstration” by local artist Alayna Bublitz is from noon to 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, in the LaPorte Civic Ceramics Room (enter through the ramp on Plain Street). The event will include time for individuals to sit at a wheel and get their hands dirty.

A “Community Snow Angel” event is at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, behind Cummings Lodge.

Sunday features a new event, “Parties on the Gogh,” from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, in Cummings Lodge. The art event, taught by Kristi Chadderdon, includes all supplies. Participants must be 12 and older. The fee is \$35. Pre-registration is required by email at [kristichadderdon@gmail.com](mailto:kristichadderdon@gmail.com), or pay with cash or check at the park office, 250 Pine Lake Ave.

The cornhole tournament is back Sunday, Jan. 26, with registration and check-in from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at LaPorte Civic. Pool Play begins at 1 p.m., followed by a single-elimination tournament. The entry fee is \$50 per team or \$25 per player. Participants must be 21 or older. Cash or check are only accepted on site or at the park office.

Horse-drawn wagon rides are free from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, in Soldiers Memorial Park. After a trot through the park, hot chocolate is available at Cummings Lodge.

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# “Cobra Kai”: My New TV Obsession

by Andrew Tallackson

What is it about my generation that makes us so obsessive about '80s pop culture? We can recite dialogue verbatim from “Ghostbusters” and “Coming to America”...but can't recall what we ate for breakfast. We can tell you about E.T.'s favorite candy, or scold friends who call me Shirley, but not who the prime minister is of the United Kingdom.

You catch my drift.

I have a theory. My generation — Generation X — had far easier access to film and television than our parents did. If we loved a particular movie, we could buy a VHS copy and watch it over, and over, and over again... at least until the tape broke. We became cultural connoisseurs of everything '80s.

So when a Gen-Xer says “wax on, wax off,” we know it's lip service to Mr. Miyagi, the Yoda-like sage of “The Karate Kid.”

Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg, the 40-something creators of “Cobra Kai,” worshipped “The Karate Kid.” These two, the warped gurus behind the “Harold and Kumar” series, knew the characters inside and out: their loves, likes, dislikes, fears, clothes, hangouts. You name it.

So by resurrecting key characters from the franchise as adults, along with their families and friends, “Cobra Kai” exists as nostalgia *and* modern tweak, comedy *and* drama, and it succeeds on all fronts. It is one of the most all-around entertaining shows on TV. I'm just sorry for having arrived late to the party.

“Cobra Kai” has two seasons under its belt — no pun intended, well, maybe, just a little bit — both having streamed on YouTube Premium. I am not a subscriber. I picked up the DVD combo last month that includes both seasons, then plowed through it in a few weeks. It is one of the few shows I can watch with my 13-year-old son that does not exist in a generational vacuum: It speaks to both of us.

A quick refresher: “The Karate Kid” (1984) saw working-class East Coast teen Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) dragged by his mother to bleach-blond California, bullied by Nazi-like students of the local karate dojo (named Cobra Kai) and mentored through Zen-like karate by Mr. Miyagi (Pat Morita, who scored a Best Supporting Actor nod for the performance). Ensuing entries in the series spanned from so-so (Part II) to largely forgettable

(Parts III and IV, the latter introducing audiences to Hilary Swank).

“Cobra Kai,” Season I of which debuted in 2018, is set 34 years after Daniel's come-from-behind victory at the local karate match against Cobra Kai champ Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka).

Both actors returned for the series. Daniel now owns a successful car dealership, has a beautiful wife (a wry, hilarious Courtney Henggeler) and two children, the one with the most screen time being his teen daughter, Samantha (Mary Mouser). John-



Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio, right) brings his daughter, Samantha (Mary Mouser), and her friend, Robbie (Tanner Buchanan), to a karate presentation in Season 2 of “Cobra Kai.”

ny, by comparison, can't hold down a job, drinks too much and is estranged from his family, particularly his son, Robbie (Tanner Buchanan).

Both men are in their 50s, and what “Cobra Kai” suggests is how what happened to us in high school can shape the people we become as adults. We may believe we've moved on, but past hurts and resentments still linger. Daniel may paint a picture of middle-age success, but he's still painfully insecure. Zabka hasn't aged as well as Macchio. At 54 to Macchio's 58, his face looks harder, but all the lines and creases serve the character well. Zabka looks like a man destroyed, and controlled, by his past. The actor is surprisingly strong, and the twist here is that, as “Cobra Kai” progresses, you root for Johnny. He's the underdog, trying to jump-start Act 2 of his life, while Daniel is a bit of a jerk. A bully, to be frank, in the face of Johnny's quest for redemption.

Johnny also is trapped in the '80s, which fuels

many of the show's best laughs. He hasn't evolved with the times. After resurrecting Cobra Kai as his new karate dojo, for instance, he barks out insults in the most un-PC manner.

(When a student tells Johnny to go easy on him during training, that he's "on the spectrum," a clueless Johnny fires back, "Well, get off it.")



Top photo: Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka, right) finds himself influenced by his former mentor, John Kreese (Martin Kove). Bottom photo: Eli (Jacob Bertrand, left) and Miguel (Xolo Maridueña) embrace different aspects of karate amid the drama of high-school life.



There are plenty of laughs like that, along with flashbacks, pictures, key phrases and locations that honor the original movies.

As the old rivalry heats up between Daniel and Johnny, the lives of their children offer parallel journeys that mirror actions of the adults. And it is here "Cobra Kai" takes on a more immediate tone in an era more conscious than ever of the devastating effects of bullying. The show explores how karate, as one antidote, can bring out the best or worst in people. Some, like Eli (Jacob Bertrand), teased because of a facial deformity on his upper lip, stray too far down a dark path. Others, like Robbie and especially Miguel (the wonderful Xolo Maridueña), strive to find balance in their training. Miguel, in fact, has the most crowd-pleasing example of that

midway through Season 1 when he cracks open a can of whup-ass in the school cafeteria.

By the final episode of Season 2, everything these teens learned is put to the test when, after a summer of misunderstandings, an explosion of violence erupts on the first day of school. The showdown catches you off guard. We aren't prepared for the venom of these kids. But that's another example of how "Cobra Kai" does not offer a watered-down vision of teen life. It knows teens are human. They swear. Sometimes, they drink. Often, they act on impulse, their emotions getting the better of them.

I watched my son closely during the Season 2 finale. He's had instances where he was bullied, seeking backup from guidance counselors who squashed the antagonistic behavior. Watching the young characters of "Cobra Kai" duke it out, I scanned his face for reactions. His eyes were big. He was taking it all in. Later, it was clear he was mulling the show's theme, that victory is less about trophies and violence and more about honor.

There aren't many shows like "Cobra Kai," that speak to our middle-age yearning for nostalgia, while also influencing the next generation as to the kind of people they *should* become as adults. The episodes are short — only 30 minutes each — which means the series is insatiably binge-worthy.

"Cobra Kai" is smart, witty, human, with characters who grow increasingly endearing. The lessons learned apply to adults and children. Zabka and Macchio have said in interviews they'll stay with the show as long as there is an audience for it.

Count me in. My son, too. Season Three arrives sometime this spring. It can't get here fast enough.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [drew@the-beacher.com](mailto:drew@the-beacher.com)

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Michigan City Chamber Music Festival and School of American Music have joined forces to present the free concert "Viola and Violin Virtuosity!" at two locations.

Featuring violist-composer Rudolf Haken and violist/violinist Kunito Nishitani, the Michigan City concert is at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, at First Presbyterian Church, 121 W. Ninth St. It is part of the "Classics, Coffee and Cookies" series, and no tickets are necessary. A New Buffalo performance is at 7 p.m. EST Saturday, Jan. 25, at Converge Community Church, 601 W. Buffalo St. Part of SAM's Free Family Concert Series, it will feature pieces by classical composers, as well as a viola/violin duet composed by Haken. The performance is free, but tickets are required through [schoolofamericanmusic.com](http://schoolofamericanmusic.com)

Haken is professor of viola at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has performed



Kunito Nishitani (left) and Rudolf Haken.

in North and South America, Europe and Asia. His compositions often combine classical and popular themes, and he is a featured musician at MCCMF performances.

Nishitani has taught at universities and music schools in the U.S. and Japan. He founded and is music director of the Shakuji International Orchestra and Kunito International Youth Orchestra, both in Tokyo.

MCCMF and SAM have scheduled more programs February, April and May. Visit [mccmf.org](http://mccmf.org) or [schoolofamericanmusic.com](http://schoolofamericanmusic.com) for more details.

## Fernwood Botanical Garden

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• **Wild Ones meeting from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. EST Sunday, Jan. 26.**

Get involved with restoring native plants, natural landscapes and pollinators to backyards and the community. Visit [www.wildones.org](http://www.wildones.org) or contact Heather Catania at [skaarcat@aol.com](mailto:skaarcat@aol.com) for details.

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

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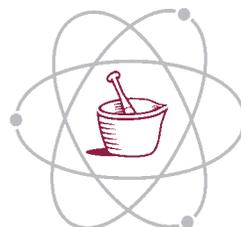
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## Ice Sculpting Show 2020 at LaPorte County Museum

The LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., will host its second Ice Sculpting Show from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Jan. 25, on the front lawn.

Ice sculptors will chip away at large blocks of ice with tools such as chisels, blow torches and chain saws. The participants are members of the Michigan Ice Carvers Artisans, a group from Northwest Indiana and Southwest Michigan. Five, in fact, are headed to the 2020 Ice Alaska World Ice Art Championships in February in Fairbanks, Alaska.

City's Pure Ice, 5855 U.S. 35, LaPorte, is providing the ice. Museum admission is free thanks to City's Pure Ice Owner Bud Lies.

The museum, open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., also will feature an ice-industry display, specifically the various ice-harvesting companies in La Porte County, their locations and tools of the trade. Snowball and ice tong scavenger hunts, and a coloring corner, are planned. LaPorte County Historian Fern Eddy Schultz helped provide information for the display.

The ice carving demonstration coincides with LaPorte's WinterFest celebration sponsored by LaPorte Park and Recreation Department. More information is available on Page 8.

Visit [www.laportecountyhistory.org](http://www.laportecountyhistory.org) or call (219) 324-6767 for more details.



One of the ice sculptures from the 2019 show.

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### Fourth Friday @ Footlight

The open-mic venue Fourth Friday @ Footlight returns at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24, at Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St.

The featured performer is Captain Ambivalent, a self-proclaimed nerd-rock singer/songwriter who has performed at Valparaiso's Front Porch Music, on South Bend public television, at Whiting's Pierogi Fest and at Michigan City's The Nest.



Admission is free with a requested donation. Performers pay \$2 and can register at [www.FootlightPlayers.org](http://www.FootlightPlayers.org). Call (219) 874-4035 for more details.

### Rummage/Treasure Sale

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, 7396 W. Johnson Road, Michigan City, will host its annual rummage/treasure sale from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, Jan. 23-25.

Items include antiques, clothes, coats (all sizes, all seasons), shoes, purses, books, cookbooks, glassware, bedding items, VHS tapes and DVDs, Christmas items, fabric and crafts.

Visit Holy Trinity Orthodox Church on Facebook for photos of items on sale.

### Public Art Committee

The Michigan City Public Art Committee will hold a special meeting at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, in the City Hall Mayor's Conference Room, 100 E. Michigan Blvd.

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# Into the Storm

*Beacher* photographer Paul Kemiell says he witnessed 18-foot waves, with winds at 50 miles per hour, while taking pictures Saturday, Jan. 11, in Washington Park. We've included just a sampling of the many images he captured that day.





# “Joker” Gets Last Laugh With 11 Oscar Nominations

by Andrew Tallackson

So, wow, Academy voters *really* like “Joker.”

The DC origins story about the rise of Batman’s darkest adversary scored 11 nominations Jan. 13. Joaquin Phoenix’s Best Actor nod was no shocker — the trophy was his from Day 1 — but the surprise is how it leads the pack over “1917,” “Little Women” and “Ford v Ferrari.” The nominations range from Best Picture, Director and Adapted Screenplay to Cinematography, Score and Editing.

“Joker” was the year’s most divisive entertainment. Critics were mixed, conservatives hailed it the poster child for violent cultural influences... but audiences couldn’t get enough, to the tune of more than \$1 billion worldwide, the first R-rated picture to do so. Phoenix is in virtually every scene, and he carries the story. The performance is an astonishing descent into madness.

The film, itself, isn’t so much a comic-book movie as it is director/co-writer Todd Phillips’ tribute to 1970s Scorsese — grim, cynical, brutal — which may be why the Academy takes it seriously, as opposed to more agreeable fare like “Avengers: Endgame.” It is a good film. Bold. Risky. But 11 nominations? Eh...

“The Irishman,” “1917” and “Once Upon a Time in Hollywood” trail closely behind, each with 10 nominations. Look for these three to nab honors here and there, but the race itself is wide open. Few safe bets exist.

The Internet, however, Twitter especially, appears to have lost its mind that Jennifer Lopez did not receive a Best Supporting Actress nod for the surprise hit “Hustlers.” She *was* good in the film. Likely, her best work, particularly her final scene with Constance Wu, the exchange a mix of anger, betrayal and crumbling sisterhood. But the movie is hollow, with no likable characters and a repetitive second act. Academy voters, and this is a guess, may have concluded the film’s box-office success was validation enough.

The most regrettable absence is Lupita Nyong’o, whose dual performances in Jordan Peele’s “Us” served up the year’s most thrilling feat. Nyong’o, the “12 Years a Slave” Oscar winner, created two polar opposites of the same character with a gusto rare for thrillers. But that word, “thriller,” may be

what robbed her of a nomination. Peele’s “Get Out” (2017) was embraced as an allegory about Trump’s America. “Us” ventured into more traditional horror themes, and unless you’re carted around on a dolly, cocooned in a straight jacket and face mask, the Academy does not take horror seriously.

Other head-scratchers? Two notable absences for Best Documentary: “Apollo 11,” which restored footage surrounding the 1969 moonwalk to pristine



Joaquin Phoenix is all-but assured a Best Actor win for “Joker.”

condition, and “Amazing Grace,” which unveiled unreleased footage of a 1972 church concert/recording by Aretha Franklin. The performer died in 2018, and the film is a stirring tribute to that once-in-a-lifetime voice.

Kudos, though, to Scarlett Johansson, now only the 12th performer in Oscar history to score two nominations in one year — Best Actress for “Marriage Story” and Supporting Actress for “Jojo Rabbit” — as well as fellow Best Actress nominee Cynthia Erivo, a tower of strength in “Harriet.”

Who will win? That’s where you, dear reader, can have a little fun. To your right, we’ve unveiled the ballot for our annual Best the Editor contest. All the rules and guidelines are there, so I won’t rehash the obvious. But know this: Having seen all nine Best Picture nominees, I am prepped and ready, tickled as always to see who trumps my picks.

Until then, the race is on.

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

# And the Nominees Are...

**PICTURE**

- "Ford v Ferrari"
- "The Irishman"
- "Jojo Rabbit"
- "Joker"
- "Little Women"
- "Marriage Story"
- "Once Upon a Time in

Hollywood"

- "Parasite"

**DIRECTOR**

- "The Irishman,"

Martin Scorsese

- "Joker," Todd Phillips
- "1917," Sam Mendes
- "Once Upon a Time...,"

Quentin Tarantino

- "Parasite," Bong Joon Ho

**ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**

- "Knives Out"
- "Marriage Story"
- "1917"
- "Once Upon a Time..."
- "Parasite"

**ADAPTED SCREENPLAY**

- "The Irishman"
- "Jojo Rabbit"
- "Joker"
- "Little Women"
- "The Two Popes"

**ACTOR**

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

**ACTRESS**

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

**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..."

**SUPPORTING ACTRESS**

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

1st & 2nd Place Prizes

**Rules for The Beacher's Beat the Editor Contest:**

Check one box in each category. Only one entry per person. Entries from *Beacher* employees will not be accepted. Forms can be dropped off at *The Beacher* or submitted by mail to: The Beacher, Attn: Oscar Contest, 911 Franklin St., Michigan City, IN 46360. Only scanned copies will be allowed by fax to (219) 879-8070 or email to [drew@thebeacher.com](mailto:drew@thebeacher.com). The deadline is noon Monday, Feb. 3. Editor Andrew Tallackson's picks will appear in the Feb. 6 edition, before the Feb. 9 telecast. Those who beat his picks will be placed into a drawing. First place receives a \$25 Fiddlehead gift certificate and an AMC movie pass. Second place receives an AMC movie pass. If no one beats him, readers with the most correct picks will be placed into the drawing. The winner will be revealed in the Feb. 20 edition.

Name:

City/Town:

Phone Number:



# Oscar Season: The One That Got Away

by Andrew Tallackson



August Diehl and Valerie Pachner star in "A Hidden Life."

Terrence Malick, the philosophical dreamer behind movies that either invigorate audiences ("The Thin Red Line," "Badlands") or alienate them ("The Tree of Life," "To the Wonder"), has achieved his most profound work with "A Hidden Life."

I get it, though, why his films lack widespread appeal. When Malick does his pensive *auteur* thing, his works take the length-be-damned approach, the pace pokey in ways that drive you batty. You sit there, anxious, anticipating something, *anything*, will happen, and it takes forever to do so.

"A Hidden Life," which clocks in at 2 hours, 54 minutes, is no different, but for the patient, it is a powerful meditation on staying true to what you believe amid a world that crushes the life out of you.

The film is based on the true story of Franz Jägerstätter (August Diehl), a devout Catholic and Austrian farmer who became a conscientious objector during World War II, refusing to take an oath supporting the Nazis.

Franz and his wife, Franziska (Valerie Pachner), live as peasant farmers in a small, tight-knit village. Their life is simple, yet complete, and the first hour of "A Hidden Life" is like a sensory experience that immerses you in their world. The steady crunch of feet along a gravel path. The swoosh of a scythe as it halves blades of grass. A cowbell shaken by its bovine owner. This world feels alive, worth celebrat-

★ ★ ★ 1/2

## "A Hidden Life"

Running time: 174 minutes. Rated PG-13 for thematic material, including violent images.

ing...even as we hear, in the distance, the hum of a fighter plane, signifying war is on the horizon.

Franz participates in basic training, assuming the war will end soon. As it drags on, as his family expands, he is summoned into combat, which requires he swear an oath of allegiance to Hitler. And it is here Franz questions himself, his faith, and decides to take a stand. He refuses the oath.

Malick delicately handles the ensuing fall from grace for Franz and Frani within their community. Silent faces. Passing stares riddled with disgust. Shouts of "traitor."

Eventually, Franz is arrested and placed in prison, repeatedly given the chance for an out by taking the oath. And each time, he refuses. He's physically and psychologically tormented in return. Why do this, his captors ask? No one will know. No one will care, they say. But as a fellow prisoner tells Franz, "*Better to suffer injustice than to do it.*"

Is Franz simply a martyr? Malick doesn't suggest so. Instead, he explores what his faith tells him, and how he incorporates it into every fiber of his being.

Diehl (ironically, best known for playing a Nazi in Quentin Tarantino's "Inglourious Basterds") and Pachner give achingly natural performances. They love each other, they love what their faith means to them, and they support each other to the end. Frani, in fact, is no saint, at one point pounding the earth in agony amid her husband's fate.

The scene is heartbreaking, as is Karin Neuhäuser as Franz's mother, who embraces her daughter-in-law, yet her face is a roadmap of sorrow.

“Better to suffer injustice than to do it.”  
“A Hidden Life”

Malick's film takes its title from the last line of George Eliot's "Middlemarch," which states *"the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."*

The world will remember Oskar Schindler for what he accomplished in the face of Nazi tyranny, but Malick argues Franz and Frani should be as well. By the end of "A Hidden Life," you're inclined to believe him. The film is slowly making its way around the country. Seek it out. You won't soon forget it.

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



Franz refuses to sign an oath of allegiance to Hitler, which ultimately lands him in prison.



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## LaPorte County Mentoring Collaborative Plans “Celebrating Our Youth” Event

The LaPorte County Mentoring Collaborative, sponsored in part by United Way of LaPorte County, will host the “Celebrating Our Youth” luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30, at Silver Palace, 1719 State St., LaPorte.

The lunch is presented with Indiana United Ways, Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte and American Licorice. The emphasis is how groups impact the community through mentoring. Youth-serving agencies involved in the collaborative are:

- LaPorte Slicers School-based Mentoring Program for students who need consistent, supportive adults in their lives. It stresses goal setting, problem solving and celebrating successes.
- Youth Service Bureau’s School Buddies Program, which offers one-to-one mentoring at LaPorte County schools. Mentors spend one hour a week

eating lunch, playing games and talking with elementary school students.

- The Boys & Girls Club’s Al Whitlow Experience for children 5-18 in the Charles Westcott Club, and its extension in Pine and Springfield elementary schools. It provides one-on-one, group and peer mentoring.
- Family Advocate’s CYA Program, which matches struggling youth who need someone to talk to about their concerns with adults.
- Michigan City Area Schools Safe Harbor’s H40 Mentoring Program. Students meet with a mentor for one hour a week at the child’s school, under the support of the Hours for Ours site coordinator. Tickets are available from any of the agencies involved in the collaborative, or RSVP to [info@united-waylpc.org](mailto:info@united-waylpc.org)



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## Michigan City Public Library

- **Makerspace: open lab hours at 3:30 p.m. Thursdays.**

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

- **Winter Craft for Kids at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23.**

All materials are provided. The craft is appropriate for children 4 and older accompanied by an adult. Children must be present to receive supplies.

- **Creative Coding Club from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26.**

Children and families will create with interactive media projects using the Scratch programming language, Makey Makey and the BBC Micro:bit. The program is appropriate for children 8-18. Those 12 and younger must have a parent or guardian attend with them.

- **Story Time at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., at 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 27.**

The Story Time Crew presents stories, songs, activities and crafts. Arrive a few minutes early to receive your child’s name tag. The program is appropriate for children birth-5 accompanied by an adult.

- **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.

### The Ballet Lady

A 25-year tradition returns as Judith Joseph brings "The Ballet Lady" to Head Start of LaPorte County classrooms through Feb. 14.



The public can observe with special permission. The outreach program through Metamorphosis Traveling Theatre is part show, part educational experience stemming from Joseph's work with the National Dance & Theatre Institute and Jacques D'Amboise, who pioneered bringing dance to New York's inner city youth.

In their own classrooms, with furniture pushed aside, children learn about posture, how muscles work, simple ballet movements and how to create dances of their own.

The schedule is:

- Jan. 24 — Niemann Elementary School, 811 Royal Road, Maple classroom.
- Jan. 27 — Niemann, Walnut classroom.
- Jan. 29 — Knapp Elementary School, 321 Bolka Ave., Head Start classroom.
- Jan. 31 — Niemann, Aspen classroom.
- Feb. 3 — Niemann, Chestnut classroom.
- Feb. 5 — Niemann, Sassafras classroom.
- Feb. 10 — Niemann, Pine classroom.
- Feb. 12 — Niemann, Elm classroom.
- Feb. 14 — The Presbyterian Church, 307 Kingsbury Ave., LaPorte, Dogwood classroom.

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## Indiana Dunes National Park

• **Science in the National Park from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, at The Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education.**

Meet experts and scientists conducting research, followed by a short hike. Dress for the weather.

• **Snowshoe hike from 1 to 3 p.m. Sat. through Feb. 29 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. This weekend, the 34-minute "Vanishing of the Bees" explores not just the declining population of native bees, but also how diverse Indiana Dunes habitats support specialized bee populations.

• **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.

*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

• **Subnivean Subjects at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25.**

Meet in the nature center auditorium to learn about the Dunes' smallest mammals, then search outside for signs of mice, moles and voles.

• **Beach Discovery Hike at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25.**

Meet a naturalist at the beach pavilion for an exploratory walk along the state park beach.

• **Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Workshop at 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26.**

Learn wire wrapping and make beach glass or stone jewelry. Space is limited, with a \$5 fee. Register by calling the nature center at (219) 926-1390.

*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.*

## Noon Time Talk Series

The Noon Time Talk Series continues with "Prints & Drawings II" at 12:20 p.m. EDT Thursday, Jan. 23, at Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart.

Director/Curator Brian Byrn will discuss the new installation of works on paper from the MMAA collection. Admission is \$5. Members are free. Call (574) 293-6660 for details.



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### Chesterton Art Center

• **Sarah Fantuzzo will teach a series of drawing workshops, “Drawing Toolbox.”**



A work by Fantuzzo.

Fantuzzo touches on different topics each month, providing techniques and tips to improve drawing skills. Each session is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, with a 30-minute break for lunch. Students can take a bag lunch or step out.

The topics are: Feb. 8 — Drawing the Head; March 21 — Drawing Facial Features; April 11 — Drawing Textures; May 9 — Drawing Nature; and June 13 — Drawing On The Go (Portable Studio).

On Feb. 8, Fantuzzo will focus on basic structure, as well as various angles.

The cost of a workshop is \$60, with members receiving a \$20 discount. A supply list will be provided at registration.

• **Deb Armstrong will teach an “Intermediate Cell Phone Photography Workshop” from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 15.**

The class includes editing photos with popular apps, backing up photos, sharing/social media and printing (prints, books, decor, gifts).

Each student should take his/her smart phone to class. The cost is \$50, with members receiving a \$20 discount.



*Chesterton Art Center is located at 115 S. Fourth St. Visit [www.chestertonart.com](http://www.chestertonart.com) for more details.*

### Westchester Public Library

• **Bits & Bytes series, Navigating Windows 10, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, in 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](http://www.wpl.lib.in.us). Click on the Bits & Bytes link.

• **Step To It Scavenger Hunt in January.**

Indoor scavenger hunts run through the month at Thomas and Hageman branches, as well as the history museum. Ask for a clue sheet at the front desk at each location. After finding all 10 clues, participants are entered to win a Fitbit Versa Lite.



*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.*

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# American Red Cross

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

- LaPorte Hospital, 1007 W. Lincolnway, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24.
- Conservation Club House, 1 Mill Pond Road, Union Mills, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26.
- Marquette High School, 306 W. 10th St., Michigan City, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 28.

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



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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.

## LONG BEACH WOMEN’S BOWLING



Jan. 14, 2020

TEAM STANDING	WON	LOST
1. Diagonal Divas	7	1
2. Gutter Gals	6	2
2. Gutter Busters	6	2
2. Wrecking Balls	6	2
HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES	SCORE	
1. Sue Labovitz		184
2. Dottie Brinckman		174
3. Cindy Beck		170
4. Kathy Osborne		166
5. Debbie Novak		163
6. Nancy Kubath		160
7. Mary Lou McFadden		156
8. June Salmon		155
9. Tammy Nelmar		154
10. Susan Kieffer		151
11. Pat Collado (series)		406
12. Elle Parkerson (series)		405
SPLITS		
Jean St. Peter		1-5-7
Polly Fletcher		2-7
STRIKES		
Sue Wall — 3.		

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

### LaPorte County Public Library

• **String Art Constellations from 4 to 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, at the Coolspring Library.**

Children can create constellation string art using canvas, paint and string. Register at [laportelibrary.org](http://laportelibrary.org) so enough supplies are available.

• **Coffee & Canvas from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, at the Main Library.**

Learn about Georgia O’Keeffe, her life and works. Register at [laportelibrary.org](http://laportelibrary.org) so enough supplies are available.

• **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 January and February.**

The January focus is making winter hats for students at area elementary schools. The February 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](http://www.laportelibrary.org) for more details.*

## Bootleggin' at Barker

Barker Mansion again will join forces with Dig the Dunes to present "Bootleggin' at Barker" on Saturday, Jan. 25, at the mansion, 631 Washington St.

Two "cocktail tours" are at 5 and 8 p.m. Each tour has limited tickets available, and the cost includes food and cocktails. Visitors can tour the mansion while listening to live music. Four area restaurants will compete



for the best cocktail: Leeds Public House, The Brewery Lodge, The False Front and McGinnis Pub.

Tickets are \$45. Visit eventbrite or call (219) 873-1520 for reservations or more details.

## Monday Musicale

Monday Musicale will meet at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 27, at First Presbyterian Church, 121 W. Ninth St.

Program chairwoman Bev Griffith said in a press release the evening of sacred music embodies "American values (this year's theme) in different musical genres, from Gregorian chant, to Liszt, to traditional hymns."

The program will feature John Crayton on violin, organist Carol Garrett, Griffith and Lee Meyer on piano, George Maslankowski (clarinet), Nancy Nichols (oboe), Garth Taylor (guitar), Lew Timberlake (handbells) and vocalists Michelle Alexander, Leslie Ritter and Joe Stewart.

Selections include the French folk tune "Twas In the Moon of Wintertime," "Just a Closer Walk With Thee," "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" and an original composition by Alexander, "Shower of Roses." Other selections include J.S. Bach's "Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major," "Etude in D-flat Major" by Franz Liszt and a medley of advent carols written for handbells. Guest vocalist Tara Dodge will join Crayton and Taylor on "Amazing Grace." A piano improvisation on the spiritual "There Is a Balm in Gilead" will close the program.

The hosting committee, led by Maslankowski, will serve light refreshments in the Edith Boyd Lounge. The public is invited. There is no admission charge; however, any donations support the youth scholarship fund.

Monday Musicale offers active and associate (non-performing) memberships. Contact Ange Benz at (219) 874-3754 or Sue Cassler at (219) 362-1421 for more details.



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## Activities to Explore

### In the Area:

**Jan. 23** — Winter Craft for Kids, 3:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Jan. 23** — String Art Constellations, 4-5 p.m., Coolspring Library, 6925 W. County Road 400 North, Michigan City. Registration: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Jan. 23-25** — Annual rummage/treasure sale, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, 7396 W. Johnson Road, Michigan City. Info: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church on facebook.

**Jan. 24** — WINTERFEST: ice-sculpture demonstrations, 2-5 p.m., Plaza 618, Lincolnway, LaPorte. Info: (219) 326-9600.

**Jan. 24** — Leadership LaPorte County ninth annual Bowling Bash, 6 p.m., Casey's Lanes, 610 Colfax Ave., LaPorte. Team cost: \$100. Registration: [www.events.r20.constantcontact.com](http://www.events.r20.constantcontact.com)

**Jan. 24** — Fourth Friday @ Footlight, 7 p.m., Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Admission: free. Performers: \$2. Info/signup: (219) 874-4035, [www.FootlightPlayers.org](http://www.FootlightPlayers.org)

**Jan. 25** — Ice Sculpting Show, 9 a.m.-noon, LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Free. Info: [www.laportecountyhistory.org](http://www.laportecountyhistory.org), (219) 324-6767.

**Jan. 25** — WINTERFEST: "Snowball Softball" Adult Coed Tournament, 9 a.m., Lions Field, Soldiers Memorial Park, LaPorte. Info: (219) 326-9600.

**Jan. 25** — Breakfast with the Birds, 9:30-11 a.m., Luhr County Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Free. Info: (219) 325-8315, [www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org)

**Jan. 25** — Coffee & Canvas, 1-4 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Registration: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Jan. 25** — Beach Discovery Hike, 2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Jan. 25** — "Bootleggin' at Barker," 5 & 8 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Cost: \$45. Reservations: [eventbrite](http://eventbrite.com), (219) 873-1520.

**Jan. 25** — Open Mic Night with host Joe Biscaglia, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generation Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Info: [acornlive.org](http://acornlive.org)

**Jan. 25-26** — "Viola and Violin Virtuosity!" Jan. 25: 7 p.m. EST, Converge Community Church, 601 W. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich. Free ticket reservations: [schoolofamericanmusic.com](http://schoolofamericanmusic.com). Jan. 26: 3 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 121 W. Ninth St. Free. Info: [mccmf.org](http://mccmf.org)

**Jan. 26** — WINTERFEST: "Parties on the Gogh," 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Cummings Lodge, Soldiers Memorial Park, LaPorte. Cost: \$35. Pre-registration: [kristichadderdon@gmail.com](mailto:kristichadderdon@gmail.com)

**Jan. 26** — Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Work-

shop, 1 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Free: \$5. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Jan. 26** — Creative Coding Club, 2-4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Jan. 27** — Monday Musicale, 7 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 121 W. Ninth St. Donations accepted. Info: (219) 874-3754, (219) 362-1421.

**In the Region**

**Jan. 25** — Art+Canvas, 1-4 p.m. EST, Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. Cost: \$60/project, \$48/members. Info: [www.fernwoodbotanical.org](http://www.fernwoodbotanical.org), (269) 695-6491.

**Jan. 25-26** — Movie Screening, “Vanishing of the Bees,” 1 p.m., The Paul H. Douglas Center, 100 N. Lake St., Gary’s Miller Beach neighborhood. Info: (219) 395-1882.

**Support Groups**

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

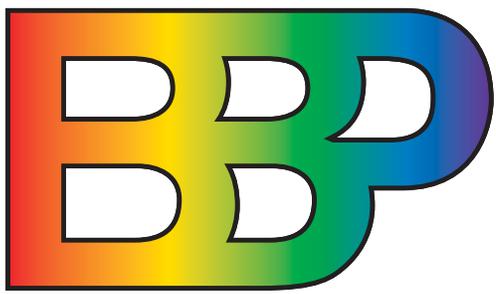
**Mondays, Fridays** — Overeaters Anonymous, 7 p.m. Mon./Franciscan Hospital Clair of Assisi Room, 3500 Franciscan Way; 9 a.m. Fri./First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Info: <https://oa.org>, (219) 879-0300.

**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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**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 will be published after the favor is granted.

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## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**On January 23, 1845**, Congress mandated national elections should take place the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

**On January 23, 1849**, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman to receive a degree in medicine. A native of Bristol, England, her degree came from the Medical Institution of Geneva, New York.

**On January 23, 1950**, the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, proclaimed Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state.

**On January 23, 1977**, the popular TV mini-series "Roots," based on Alex Haley's novel, began airing on ABC.

**On January 24, 1848**, gold was discovered on the California property of John A. Sutter, leading to the famous "California Gold Rush," as well as to the infamous "forty-niners."

**On January 24, 1908**, the first public meeting of the Boy Scouts, founded by England's Robert Baden-Powell, took place in London.

**On January 24, 1935**, canned beer went on sale (in Richmond, Va.) for the first time.

**On January 24, 1993**, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, one of the most influential civil rights lawyers of the 20th century, died at age 84.

**On January 24, 2004**, NASA's Opportunity rover landed on Mars, arriving at the Red Planet three weeks after its identical twin's landing.

**On January 25, 1533**, after having his marriage to Catherine of Aragon declared invalid, England's King Henry VIII secretly married Anne Boleyn.

**On January 25, 1890**, *New York World* reporter Nellie Bly received a tumultuous welcome after completing a round-the-world journey in 72 days, beating the fictional 80-day trip of Jules Verne's Phileas Fogg.

**On January 25, 1915**, telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell inaugurated transcontinental phone service with a call from New York to San Francisco.

**On January 25, 1949**, the new nation of Israel held its first election.

**On January 26, 1784**, Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to his daughter, Sarah Bache, disapproved of the eagle as a symbol of the United States. His reasons: "I wish that the Bald Eagle had not been chosen as the Representative of our Country. He is a Bird of bad

*moral Character; like those among Men who live by Sharping and Robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. The Turkey is a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original Native of America."*

**On January 26, 1802**, Congress passed an act calling to establish a library within the U.S. Capitol, a harbinger of the present "Library of Congress."

**On January 26, 1875**, George F. Green, of Kalamazoo, Mich., was granted a patent for an electric dental drill.

**On January 26, 1918**, to conserve meat and grain, World War I food administrator Herbert Hoover asked Americans to voluntarily observe "wheatless Mondays and Wednesdays; and meatless Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

**On January 26, 1967**, the "Great Blizzard of '67" began piling up snow (eventually totaling in excess of two feet), and bringing many Midwest cities, including Chicago, to a virtual standstill.

**On January 27, 1756**, Austrian music composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born at Salzburg.

**On January 27, 1880**, Thomas Edison was granted a patent for an incandescent light.

**On January 27, 1967**, at Cape Kennedy, Fla., astronauts "Gus" Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee died in a flash fire during a routine test aboard their Apollo I spacecraft.

**On January 28, 1547**, upon the death of King Henry VIII at 55, his son, 9-year-old Edward VI, ascended to the throne of England.

**On January 28, 1807**, London's Pall Mall became the world's first street to be illuminated with gas-light.

**On January 28, 1878**, the first daily college newspaper, *The Yale News*, began publication in New Haven.

**On January 28, 1986**, before millions of horrified viewers, the space shuttle Challenger exploded over the Atlantic Ocean, bringing death to the seven Astronauts (including school teacher Christa McAuliffe).

**On January 29, 1845**, "The Raven," Edgar Allen Poe's most famous poem, was first published in *The New York Evening News*.

**On January 29, 1900**, baseball's American League was organized. It consisted of teams from Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

**On January 29, 1936**, Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Honus Wagner, Christy Mathewson and Walter Johnson were elected as the first members of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

**On January 29, 1963**, the first members of the Football Hall of Fame were announced in Canton, Ohio. They consisted of Sammy Baugh, Bert Bell, Joe Carr, Dutch Clark, George Halas, Mel Hein, Pete Henry, Cal Hubbard, Don Hutson, Curly Lambeau, Tim Mara, George Marshall, John Blood McNally, Bronko Nagurski, Ernie Neavers and Jim Thorpe.

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**Annual Bowling Bash**

Leadership LaPorte County will host its ninth annual Bowling Bash at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24, at Casey's Lanes, 610 Colfax Ave., LaPorte.

Individuals can register teams of four that receive three games, pizza and soft drinks. The team cost is \$100, with door prizes planned.

Visit [www.events.r20.constantcontact.com](http://www.events.r20.constantcontact.com) to register. Visit [leadershiplaportecounty.com](http://leadershiplaportecounty.com) for more details.

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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](http://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. Jan. 27, Feb. 3 and 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:

- Jan. 29: Who Made That Track?
- Feb. 5: Clouds Overhead.
- Feb. 12: Could You Be a Squirrel?
- March 4: 1 Bird, 2 Bird.
- March 18: Water Everywhere.
- April 1: Flower Power.

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## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

**Twisted Twenty-Six** by Janet Evanovich  
(hardcover, \$28 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 306 pages.)

If you're not familiar with Janet Evanovich, I would like to introduce you to her long-lasting, very entertaining character Stephanie Plum. She has the staying power of the Energizer Bunny, maintaining her delightful persona in 26 books.

Is Stephanie the alter-ego of Evanovich? Hmm. It makes you wonder when an author manages to keep her character's — umm — character in each succeeding book. And that's a good thing. You know when a new book comes out, it will bring back an old friend who's sure to provide a great reading experience. Here's cheers to Stephanie and her latest adventure, which I hope you enjoy as much as I did...

*"Some men enter a woman's life and screw it up forever. Jimmy Rosolli did this to my Grandma Mazur. Not forever, but for an afternoon last week when he married her in the casino at Atlantis and dropped dead forty-five minutes later."*

Now *that's* a provocative beginning, to be sure, unless you know the dynamics of Stephanie's family. Let me explain. She lives in Trenton, N.J., and works for cousin Vinnie as a bail bonds enforcement agent. Simply put, she's a bounty hunter. *"It's a crappy job, but it's not as bad as my present job of escorting Grandma to Jimmy's viewing at Stiva's funeral home."* Yeah, I don't think you've ever gone to a wake quite like the one for Jimmy Rosolli.

Stephanie is of Hungarian/Italian ancestry in a very ethnic part of Trenton called The Burg. She lives in an apartment with her hamster, Bob. She has two very dishy men in her life: one she should stay away from and one she should marry. She does neither. She knows someday, maybe, she and Joe Morelli, her Trenton police boyfriend, will marry, but can't seem to stay away from Ranger, the heart-stopping hunk who runs a private security company called Rangeman.

Stephanie's sidekick in all this is Lula, a bodacious black woman and former 'ho who would follow her into hell as long as they could pick up a bucket of chicken and a dozen donuts along the way.

Grandma lives with Stephanie's mom and dad. *"So far, my father hasn't killed Grandma — only because we took his guns away and we never leave*

*sharp knives lying out in the open."*

Grandma Mazur is always packing a handgun in her oversized purse, and Stephanie lives in fear that one day she will use it. Grandma's main entertainment is bingo at the firehouse and wakes at Stiva's Funeral Home, where she can get great cookies, coffee and lots of gossip.

Stephanie's mother copes with Grandma by ironing a lot and drinking her "tea" — basically, bourbon.

This time, Stephanie's life revolves mainly around the after-shocks of Grandma's marriage and widowhood. Jimmy was a small-time mobster in his day and part of a group of five other aging mobsters who have a room in back of the strip club where they line up in their La-Z-Boys smoking, eating and drinking the afternoons away. But don't let the La-Z-Boys fool you, they still have plenty of larceny left in them.

It was said Jimmy possessed a set of keys when he died that opens... who knows what? If anyone knows, they're not saying.

Grandma swears Jimmy didn't have time to say anything before he died, but the boys, his ex-wife and sisters all think Grandma is hiding the keys and about to find out some big secret. All the sisters can do is give Grandma the evil eye, al-

though one did try to run her over with a car, but the other mobsters can, and do, try much more. Problem is, they don't count on Stephanie and her will to do anything to save her grandmother, but first she and Grandma must find the elusive keys before someone gets killed.

In between all this mob business, Stephanie and Lula still manage to go after bail skips.

Strange felons, you say? More like weird, I say. Like the naked man who climbs up on buildings regularly and says he is waiting for his dragon to pick him up. Or the young man who is a shoplifter extraordinaire whose mother thinks he's a secret shopper.

To top it all off, Stephanie is having a life crisis. Where is her life going? She's tired of picking up dirtbags who stink up her car before she can get them to the police station.

But this whole key business has to come to some kind of conclusion. Whatever that is, Stephanie Plum and company will give you more than your money's worth, I guarantee it!

Till next time, happy reading!



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