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Renaissance Woman

by Edmund Lawler

She's been a public defender, middle-school science teacher and stage manager at Busch Gardens in Florida, but by far the best gig for this Army-brat-from-everywhere Renaissance woman is her current role as a National Park Service ranger.

Capitol Hill helping write legislation for National Park Service's Directorate and been a public-information officer on the devastating forest fires out west. She now manages community partnerships and special projects for the recently rechristened



Lynda Lancaster, photographed in 1995 as a boat ranger through Biscayne National Park in Florida.

Indeed, it's been a magic carpet ride for Lynda Lancaster, taking her from Biscayne National Park in Florida to Sitka National Historical Park in Alaska, from Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota to Gateway National Recreation Area in New York City. In between and along the way, she's worked on

Indiana Dunes National Park, where she's been assigned since 2008.

It was in what was then known as Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore that Lancaster first worked for the National Park Service — as a summer seasonal

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worker setting up the animal exhibit of turtles, frogs and snakes that inhabit the park. Her first permanent job with NPS was at the national lakeshore, where she became the scheduling officer responsible for all school programs. From there, she crisscrossed the country, absorbing the natural beauty and unique culture at each national park.

A dream job? Yes. Glamorous? No, Lancaster says, noting there's much administrative nitty-gritty with any role as a public servant. But the rewards of public service far outweigh the managerial headaches.

"You get to live and work in the community," says Lancaster, who shares a home with her husband on a pond popular with birds near Chesterton. "You get to find out what the local culture is like, and you get to meet the people."

"That's what I've really loved about it, and why I wanted to work in the park service and not stay in the same spot all the time. I enjoy moving about and learning about different places. I particularly liked finding out about places on the ocean."

There's no ocean in Northwest Indiana, but there is an extraordinary Great Lake lapping at the doorstep of one of America's most biodiverse national

parks.

"Visitors are always surprised that a park so close to Chicago has such a diversity of plants and animals," she says. "They assume it's just a beach. But they are delighted to find so much else."

Lancaster also was drawn to the area because of its proximity to Kalamazoo, Mich., where her mother was living and where Lancaster earned her undergraduate degree in biology from Western Michigan University. Her goal was to become a doctor until she realized, "I'm scared of sick people."

Despite her affection for the NPS, she walked away from the ranger's job she fought long and hard to land. Two factors played into that difficult decision. Back in Kalamazoo, her mother's health was deteriorating, and Lancaster was growing frustrated by what she described as a lack of upward mobility for women in the National Park Service.

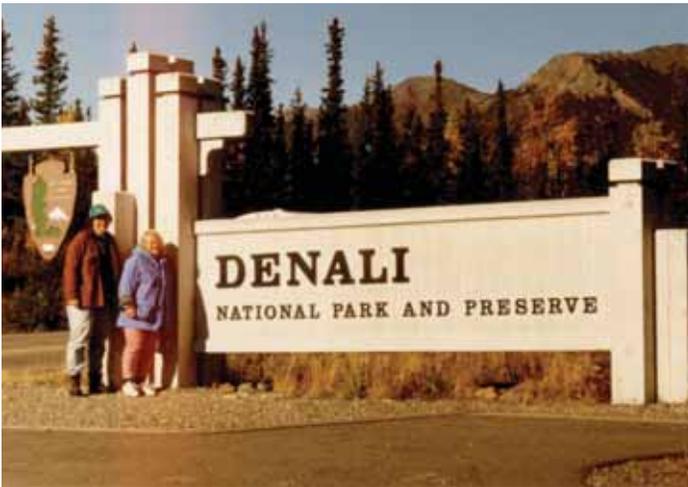
However, she was heartened to be selected for a program that put male and female rangers on a fast-track training program that could lead to a park superintendent's job or other top managerial positions in the NPS.

During the program, she was assigned on a short-term basis to several national parks, including Denali in Alaska and Olympic in Washington state to broaden her managerial skill set.

At Gateway National Recreation Area in New



Lynda Lancaster talks about her work through the National Park Service during an interview with *The Beacher*. Photo by Andrew Tallackson



This photo features Lynda with her late mother, Gail, at Denali National Park and Preserve.

York City and Monmouth County, N.J., where she was creating educational curriculum for student visitors from all five boroughs, she concluded it was time to leave the park service. She applied to and was admitted to Valparaiso University School of Law.

She was concerned her lack of experience in law enforcement within the park service would inhibit her ability to manage rangers tasked with policing responsibilities, which is a significant segment of the ranger force.

“I was unofficially told that you can’t become a superintendent because you can’t supervise people whose job you have not done,” she said. “I later learned that wasn’t true, but I had decided by that point to escape the pigeonhole I was in and get into a broader field of job opportunities.”

Lancaster’s grandmother had died recently and left her enough of an inheritance to pay her law-school tuition.

“My grandmother said if you invest your money in education, no one can take that away from you,” she said.

Lancaster initially took a six-month leave of absence from the service, but resigned after earning good grades in her first semester of law school.

Upon graduation, Lancaster returned to Florida to become a public defender in Orlando. She first moved to Florida shortly after graduating with a Master of Fine Arts in arts administration and stage management from Virginia Tech University to serve as the first-ever stage manager at Busch Gardens in Tampa. She worked at the theme park for five years before putting her biology degree to use as a science teacher at a Catholic school in Tampa. During the summers, she headed north to work in the dunes.

As a public defender in Orlando, where she spent 2 1/2 years, Lancaster initially represented defendants coming through jail intake. Next, she defended juvenile offenders and later was assigned to defend people accused of abusing their spouses or

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Renaissance Woman Continued from Page 3

domestic partners. The domestic violence work was stressful, super stressful, she said. Not long after enrolling in law school, she experienced a twinge of buyer's remorse and began re-applying to the park service.

After five years and some 300 applications, Lancaster's dogged persistence paid off. She was rehired by the NPS. Better yet, she was back in the Midwest, assigned to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, where she became the public information officer and coordinated the volunteers and civic engagement programs.

In her current role, she is focusing on community partnership initiatives, such as the Urban Waters Partnership. Under the program, 11 federal government agencies, including the NPS, 19 local government organizations, such as Michigan City, and 25 area non-governmental organizations like the Shirley Heinze Land Trust are working to improve water quality and recreational access to the Little Calumet-Galien sub-watershed of Lake Michigan. The dunes' unique ecosystem, under constant threat from industrial development, is precious to Lancaster.

It was at her grandparents' cottage in northern Michigan on Six Mile Lake near Charlevoix where, as a child, Lancaster fell in love with the outdoors. She recalls her fascination with the birds, fish and forests where she felt she found a home. Home was a fleeting concept for her and her two brothers because her father, a U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, moved them frequently from base to base



The end of Lynda's first season with the National Park Service, photographed with her supervisors, Kip and Mo.

in the United States.

She rarely got to enjoy the lakeside cabin with her father, who was often on long deployments to Vietnam, West Germany and South Korea. Nevertheless, the crystalline lakes and sylvan forests of northern Michigan hold a special place in her heart.

And so do the national parks she's encountered over the course of her career. Her favorites are



The gorgeous view in Sitka National Historical Park.

Olympic National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park near Key West, Fla., and Buck Island Reef National Monument in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Her absolute favorite is Olympic: "The tide pools, the rain forests, the glaciers. It is just beautiful."



Lynda is photographed with a Dolly Varden trout at Sitka National Historical Park in Alaska.

Her top spot in Indiana Dunes National Park is Cowles Bog and the trail that skirts it before cresting a series of dunes to reveal a stunning view of Lake Michigan's aquamarine waters.

"I want to make sure that our public lands are available to everyone, and I mean everyone," she says. "The national parks must be relevant to every generation."

A Message to Our Readers

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a challenge for a newspaper like *The Beacher*. How do you promote things to do in your own backyard, and the region, when everything is temporarily closed or shut down?

I, however, see that obstacle as a challenge, to get crafty and creative. That is why we'll be writing about movies and TV shows you can watch or stream at home. Our correspondents will continue to interview people with fascinating stories. We'll also highlight attractions near, far and wide that offer virtual tours. Sally Carpenter will continue to offer the best in new books. And, of course, we'll highlight the good news that exists in our communities

One thing we're doing is asking families to send us pictures of fun, creative things they are doing at home to pass the time during the COVID-19 crisis. Send the picture to drew@thebeacher.com, include the names of everyone in the picture, what you're doing and the town/city in which you live. We'll pick our favorites to publish in *The Beacher*.

Times are trying, indeed. But life goes on, and we at *The Beacher* do, too. So, let's get busy!

Sincerely,

Andrew Tallackson
Editor
The Beacher Weekly Newspaper



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“Love Them First” is a Powerful Exploration of Public School Struggles

by Andrew Tallackson

“Anytime anybody sees a child that looks forlorn, lost, not taken care of — spread your arms, scoop them up, ask questions later, but love them first.”

Mauri Melander Friestleben
Lucy Laney Principal

“Love Them First: Lessons from Lucy Laney Elementary” is a rallying cry for compassion in public schools, and a love letter to educators who believe calm and kindness are the answers to reaching our youth.

The documentary — 2019’s Official Selection at the Heartland International Film Festival in Indianapolis, and the 2020 Alfred I. Dupont-Columbia winner — is inspiring *and* heartbreaking, a wakeup call about the unfathomable hurdles youth face at home, how that impacts their learning and why schools must become a beacon of hope.

Now streaming on Amazon Prime, the driving force of “Love Them First” is Friestleben, who gave full access for a year to the filmmakers. The school, Lucy Laney, is located in north Minneapolis. The student population is 90 percent black. Her goal: undo history. Statistics reveal that the state not only has the largest achievement gap between black and white children in the country, but the school also has been on the bottom of the state’s list of “underperforming” schools for 20 years. Friestleben wants her school off the list.

We prep for scenes where Friestleben employs groundbreaking curriculum or out-of-the-box teaching styles. Instead, she emphasizes heart. First day of school, teachers line the entryway: cheering, high-fiving. Counselors help students understand why their behavior is wrong, that is has consequences. Announcements constantly reinforce how each student is loved, beautiful, full of potential.

The end result: Discipline cases drop by 90 percent, test scores from most black students rise.

In interviews, Friestleben is pretty emotional. Molested as a 4-year-old, she understands the insurmountable challenges these kids face. But she also stresses the tremendous courage it took to let her own tragedy not destroy her.

Friestleben also issues a challenge, to everyone, to strip themselves of judgment when it comes to those living in poverty. We meet, for instance, a mother living in squalor with seven children. No father present. Instinct, Friestleben argues, is to ask the mother, “Why did you have seven children?” But,

she argues, nothing can be changed now. So, show each child the love they deserve, and give them the best possible chance at succeeding.

“Love Them First” sounds like it’s bathed only in the warm fuzzies. It is not. Late in the film, Lucy Laney is dealt a tremendous blow that is crushing to watch. But again, Friestleben pushes forward.



Lucy Laney Principal Mauri Melander Friestleben hugs her students at school daily.

★ ★ ★^{1/2}

“Love Them First: Lessons from Lucy Laney Elementary”

Running time: 88 minutes. Streaming on Amazon Prime

“It is our challenge and our honor and our privilege to love on every child as they come into the doors of this school, regardless of how they take a test. Regardless,” Friestleben says, and we are moved.

This should be required viewing.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



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Area, Regional Closings and Cancellations Due to COVID-19

- The Acorn Theatre — Theater staff are canceling or rescheduling shows.
- AMC Classic Michigan City 14 is closed.
- Barker Mansion is closed indefinitely, with all scheduled tours, programs, events and rentals on hiatus until further notice. Staff, however, are interested in, and in the process of, creating online educational content to explore history from home. Visit tinyurl.com/tguclb7 to provide input.
- Buchanan Area Chamber of Commerce's 14th annual Chili Cookoff Contest, scheduled for April 2, is canceled.
- Chesterton Art Center is closed and aims to open April 6.
- Dan Schaaf's first showing of "Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler" is postponed, with a new opening date to be announced.
- Footlight Players' "Friday Night at Footlight" open-mic venue for March 27 is canceled.
- The Gabis Arboretum at PNW office in Valparaiso is operating remotely. Buildings are closed through the end of the month; however, trails will remain open.
- GQ Tops, 1862 W. 81st Ave., Merrillville, has canceled its free program, "Design Your Outdoor Kitchen," originally scheduled for March 19.
- The Harbor Country Book Club meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 26, is canceled.
- The Holdcraft Players postponed its latest production, "Almost, Maine," and will announce new dates soon.
- Indiana Dunes National Park buildings and restrooms are temporarily closed. All public and school programs are canceled.
- Indiana Dunes State Park has canceled all indoor programs.
- Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph, Mich., is closed, including access to the galleries and clay studio, through April 3.
- LaPorte County Family YMCA's LaPorte, Elston and Long Beach branches are closed at least through March 31. Call for details on child care.
- LaPorte County Historical Society Museum is closed until further notice. Judge William Boklund's program, "Prohibition in LaPorte County and The Perfect Storm," scheduled for March 28 has been postponed and will be rescheduled.
- LaPorte County Public Library and all its branches are closed through April 6.
- LaPorte Little Theatre has canceled performances of "Guys & Doll" scheduled for May 8-17. Season ticketholders either can donate the value of their ticket to the theater, or request a refund by April 5 at lpbtc@yahoo.com. Because the show falls at the end of LaPorte's 2019-2020 season, credit or exchanges are not available.

Long Beach COVID-19 Update

The following actions are in effect:

- Long Beach Town Hall is closed to walk-ins until further notice. Staff will work inside and be available by telephone and/or email.
 - Water bills can be mailed or put into the drop box in front of the office.
 - All permits are available online and may be dropped in the box or emailed to deputyclerk@lbpdin.com.
 - For police assistance, use the intercom, or call (219) 874-4243 or 911 in case of an emergency.
 - The Long Beach Family YMCA has closed its Long Beach branch in Long Beach Community Center. The center is closed, and all resident functions (pickle ball, card games) are canceled until further notice. Some tenants will operate their businesses, but limit visitors.
 - All town meetings have been canceled until further notice.
- Lend-A-Hand Day, sponsored by the LaPorte County Extension Homemakers and Steady Stitcher, set for April 2 is canceled. The next event is from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. May 14.
 - Lighthouse Place-Premium Outlets, at press time, was closed through March 29.
 - Lubeznik Center for the Arts is closed through April 6. The RePaint the Town fundraiser has been rescheduled to 5:30 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12.
 - Michigan City Public Library is closed.
 - Midwest Museum of Art in Elkhart has canceled all group activities, including gallery talks, films and tours, through April 2.
 - The Polish-American Cultural Society, Michigan City Chapter, meeting set for Wednesday, March 25, is canceled.
 - South Bend's History Museum and Studebaker National Museum are closed through March 27.
 - Valparaiso University's Brauer Museum of Art is closed through April 13. The VU Student, Art Faculty and Senior Seminar exhibits scheduled for April 7-May 10 have been canceled. The museum is expected to reopen April 14 with "Mary Bourke: Unfinished and Spectral Speculations" Japanese print exhibits, as well as selections from the permanent collection, through May 10.
 - Vickers Theatre is temporarily closed.
 - Westchester Public Library locations are closed through April 12.

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Philanthropic Education Organization has elected and installed its 2020-2021 officers. They are: President Linda Pompeii; co-vice presidents Ree Labaj and Karen Lyness; Treasurer Carol Spreitzer; Recording Secretary Connie Crama; Corresponding Secretary Jeanette Tyrrell; Chaplain Mary Ann Jensen; and Guard Theresa Janovsky. Pictured are (from left) Pompeii, Lyness, Labaj, Crama, Tyrrell and Jensen.



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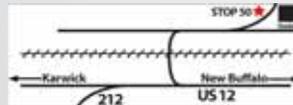
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Virtual Tours Offer Glimpse Into The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

by Andrew Tallackson



The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis’ mascot, Rex, greets visitors each morning during the virtual tours.

I have a confession. Back in my youth, as an elementary-schooler, to be precise, I wanted to live not within driving distance of Chicago, but in the vicinity of The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis.

The popular attraction seemed to defy what constitutes a “museum.” It was interactive before the term became commonplace. The exhibits challenge the mind and body. You could whirl about in a carousel one minute, explore the darkest recesses of a cave the next.

Anytime my family visited friends in Indianapolis, we made a point to stop by The Children’s Museum. As a parent, my wife and I took our son there when he was only 4. He was enraptured by it.

So it was a pleasant surprise when, amid all the COVID-19 concerns, a press release arrived at *The Beacher* by email detailing how the museum, tar-

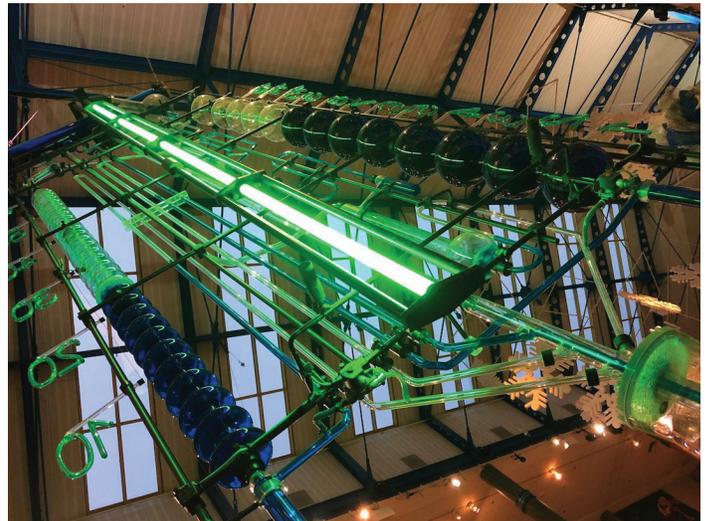
geting families with children at home because of “social distancing” these days, could take virtual tours, complete with educational units of study and other things to do.

The museum, according to the release, has resources that can be used in the classroom or homeschooling: a standards-based curriculum that covers many topics. All are written by trained educators. Subjects range from dinosaurs, trains and science to art, health and fitness. The units are broken down by grade level.

The “Museum at Home” program, accessed at www.childrensmuseum.org/MuseumAtHome, includes:

- Real Science Videos: DIY science experiments families can do at home.
- Facebook Live Chats with Experts: Topics range





Some of the images available during virtual tours of The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis.

from science to art.

- **Preschool Story Time:** Listen to a story read by one of the museum preschool teachers.
- **Museum in a Minute:** A quick walkthrough of each exhibit.
- **Morning Workout:** Work out with trained coaches from the Riley Children’s Health Sports Legends Experience.
- **Curate a Collection:** Curators provide tips on how children can start home collections.
- **Museum Trivia:** Learn history and facts about the

museum and its collection of more than 130,000 artifacts.

- **Interpretive Shows:** Videos from interpretive experiences, many of which include trained, costumed actor interpreters.
- **Morning Greeting from Rex:** The video hails from the museum’s Tyrannosaurus Rex mascot.

I’ve watched some of the videos, and they’re a blast. Don’t hesitate to visit the website. The museum went all-out on this. You won’t be disappointed!
Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

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Tired of Zombie Shows on TV?

by Andrew Tallackson

Curious times, no doubt. A global pandemic that has closed schools, shut down tourist attractions and made purveyors of toilet paper insanely wealthy.

So maybe it makes sense Netflix on March 13 unleashed Season Two of its South Korean zombie epic “Kingdom.” If people are hunkering down amid COVID-19, why *not* remind them life can get worse. Flesh-eating zombie worse.

Now, I get it. The last thing we need is *another* TV show with the recently dead brought back to life. An over-saturated market is to blame. We greet the once-dependable frightfest with mass indifference.

The concept was novel when George Romero unleashed it with 1968’s “Night of the Living Dead.” In his world, the monsters that haunt us were no longer recognizable. Now, they were *us*. Friends and family, reduced to mindless killing machines. So when Romero launched his zombies into attack mode, like at an isolated farmhouse, or a shopping mall in 1978’s brilliant “Dawn of the Dead,” the results induced a queasy claustrophobia. The world was closing in, with no safe place to hide.

Unfortunately, the “Resident Evil” franchise — in theaters and among gamers — reduced Romero’s creations to video-game targets. There for the shoot-em-up. Thankfully, Danny Boyle rewrote the playbook with “28 Days Later” (2003), switching the setting to London and the cause a “Rage” virus. These suckers *moved*. And, of course, there is AMC’s “The Walking Dead,” which envisioned the zombie epic as a sociological study, brilliantly at first, before running out of steam after five seasons. Despite meager ratings, it persists today.

Factor in “Walking Dead” spinoffs (“Fear the Walking Dead”), “Walking Dead” imitators (“Z Nation”), big-budget epics (“World War Z”), zombie spoofs (“Zombieland,” “Shaun of the Dead,” “Scouts Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse”), zombies abroad (“Cargo,” “The Cured”) and zombies as disease-of-the-week sobfest (“Maggie”)...and the entertainment industry has it all covered.

Until now.

“Kingdom” is more proof South Korea knows how to transform stale formulas into wildly invigorat-

ing distractions from everyday life. Bong Joon-ho’s Oscar-winning “Parasite” envisioned class warfare as a dark, acidic comedy. “Train to Busan” (2016) basically was “zombies on a train,” but told with such kinetic energy, director Yeon Sang-ho left you breathless.

Now, we have Season 2 of “Kingdom” streaming on Netflix. Period piece. Political drama. Supernatural thriller. All in one.



The action sequences in “Kingdom” are epic on every scale.

Here are six reasons why “Kingdom,” in two short seasons, has emerged as epic entertainment.

Reason 1: The Setting

Adapted from the webcomic series “The Kingdom of the Gods,” “Kingdom” unfolds in Korea’s Joseon period, specifically after Japanese invasions between 1592 and 1598. A gorgeous, sprawling landscape, the hillsides dotted with quaint villages and ornate royal fortresses. Honor, legacy and respect rank supreme. No character launches into gravity defying acrobatics. No modern weaponry. Some have swords, most turn to anything they can get their hands on to defend themselves.

Reason 2: The Plague

Ten seasons now, and we have no clue what caused the outbreak in “The Walking Dead.” “Kingdom” wastes no time in revealing the culprit: a pretty, but deadly flower known as the “Resurrection Plant.” Like Romero’s zombies, the infected individual passes on the disease through bites. They

South Korea Has the Remedy

move like second cousins to the “Rage” monsters in “28 Days Later,” but with a twist: They only appear at night. Daybreak offers a desperate reprieve...*at first*. The Season One climax rolls out a horrifying revelation that changes all the rules.

Reason 3: The Politics

Why let a zombie outbreak distract from a little political warfare. The hero is Crown Prince Lee Chang (Ju Ji-hoon), who is deemed a traitor amid

terminated, no-nonsense tenacity.

Reason 5: The Scale

“Kingdom” is staged by director Kim Seong-hun with epic scope. The camera soars above the action so we get a feel for how enormous the action sequences are. The big moments, like the Season 2 opener, contain hundreds of extras, arrows, shields and costumes, much of it observed by the viewer for only a second or two.

The gore is considerable, but hardly as graphic as “The Walking Dead.” Instead, Kim Seong-hun places his characters in impossible situations. There is a sequence in Season One, for example, where a small group pushes a cart with the injured toward safety...right as the sun recedes into darkness. The camera alternates between the cart and zombies gradually awakening from their slumber. The slower the cart moves, the faster the monsters seem to awaken. Edge of your seat does not do it justice. It’s nerve-frying unbearable.

Amid grand sequences, “Kingdom” often dials it down for quieter moments that become increasingly moving. The series brings the friendship between the crown prince and his personal guard, Moo-Young (the dynamite Kim Sang-ho),

to a heartbreaking close. And by the final episode of Season 2, the loyalty shown toward the crown prince is deeply affecting: codes of honor and respect, untarnished amid the unthinkable.

Reason Six: The Length

“Kingdom” is what I call meat-and-potatoes TV. Six episodes per season, each one spanning 30, 45 or 50 minutes. No filler. The show has a story to tell, and it tells it efficiently, with little to no fat.

All seems resolved by the end of Season 2. Carefully, though, scene by scene, a mounting dread. The horror is not over, but not how we anticipate. The series shifts gears, headed in what appears to be an altogether different direction.

Another example of South Korean entertainment pushing the boundaries of the familiar to deliver the unforgettable.



Bae Donna is the show’s unsung hero as a no-nonsense physician.

a political coup after reports surface the emperor is dead. The prince not only has to maneuver through a dangerous countryside — province after province falls victim to the plague — but also dodge soldiers ordered to wipe out him and his compatriots.

Reason 4: The Characters

Like “Game of Thrones,” “Kingdom” juggles a fair share of characters, and sometimes, it *is* tough to square away which group is which.

However, Ju Ji-hoon as the crown prince is a stoic portrait of unflinching honor. His face, etched in pain, heartbreak and reason, conveys a man guided by the legacy of his ancestors.

The show’s unsung hero is physician Seo-bi, played by the wonderful Bae Doona as feral calm under pressure. Seo-bi repeatedly ends up in harm’s way and time after time keeps her cool to find the best possible outcome. Her reserve leads to answers arriving much more quickly than they did on “The Walking Dead.” Bae Doona’s face draws you in: de-

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

My Favorite Movies of All Time

by Andrew Tallackson

Whenever casual conversation with people I meet shifts to movies, a question inevitably directed my way is this: What are your Top 10 favorites?

That is tricky. My movie collection is extensive, with many selections revisited from time to time because they offer their own distinct pleasures. Mini-treasures, in a way.

If a theme exists among the selections here, it is that, save for one, all came into my life during my formative years. For one reason or another, they left an indelible mark amid my youth and withstood the test of time. Many today are regarded as classics. Just about all are escapist fare, respites from daily drudgery.

So, without further ado, here are my all-time favorite movies:



1. "Rear Window" (1954) Director: Alfred Hitchcock

I am nosy by nature. Maybe that's why journalism offered so much appeal. It grants permission to peek into the lives of others. And it likely explains why Hitchcock's classic, for me, is cinematic catnip. Jimmy Stewart plays a bored photographer, confined to a wheelchair because of a broken leg, who spies on his neighbors from his apartment window. After hearing a woman cry out in the night, he is convinced her husband murdered her. Backing his theory are his socialite girlfriend played by Grace Kelly, who makes a ravishing slow-motion entrance, and acid-tongued scene-stealer Thelma Ritter as his physical therapist. Hitchcock plants his camera in Stewart's apartment. We're trapped with him, so we are privy to details only as Stewart uncovers

them. The tension builds to an unbearable climax, with Kelly sneaking into the allegedly dead woman's apartment as her husband approaches from the hallway. Amid all the thrills is an exploration of how voyeurism taps into our darker instincts. "That's a secret private world you're looking into out there," Stewart's detective pal warns. "People do a lot of things in private they couldn't possibly explain in public." Thankfully, in Hitchcock's hands, the answers are hypnotically entertaining.



2. "The Shawshank Redemption" (1994) Director: Frank Darabont

They say the title sank it. Audiences had no clue what it was about. But thanks to word of mouth, home video and repeat TV airings, it is now one of the most beloved films ever. Tim Robbins plays Andy, a banker falsely imprisoned for killing his wife who forges an extraordinary friendship with a fellow inmate, played by Morgan Freeman in an Oscar-nominated performance. Freeman narrates the picture, his voice like poetry. Aching with longing. You hang on every word. The movie is about the most intangible of subjects — hope — and it takes its time, building to the most satisfying twist ending ever. Stephen King's novel ended ambiguously, but Darabont gives you the much-deserved closure. Before then, line after line of Red's dialogue — "I have to remind myself that some birds aren't meant to be caged. Their feathers are just too bright"; "I can barely sit still or hold a thought in my head. I think it's the excitement only a free man can feel, a free man at the start of a long journey whose conclusion is uncertain" — all of it backed by Thomas Newman's majestic score, leaves you in the throes of a good, hearty cry.



3. "Field of Dreams" (1989) Director: Phil Alden Robinson

Speaking of a good cry, "Field of Dreams" is one of the few films men will publicly admit to weeping at in the theater. Ironically, the movie, more than 30 years later, still gives off a love-it-or-hate-it vibe. Either you buy into the fantasy...or dismiss it as hoey. Kevin Costner plays a farmer who hears a mysterious voice that prompts him to build a baseball diamond in his cornfield. The ensuing journey is equally about baseball as it is fathers and sons. Robinson ("Sneakers," "The Sum of All Fears"), in his directorial debut, applies a delicate touch. There are moments so fragile, you practically hold your breath. James Earl Jones delivers one of the all-time great speeches about baseball — "America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time" — and the final "reunion" reduces most men to a blubbling mess. I saw the film with my dad at Dunes Plaza Cinema, right after we'd engaged in a heated disagreement. Needless to say, we were all hugs after the movie.



4. "Jaws" (1975)

Director: Steven Spielberg

I begged my parents for weeks to see what history now regards as the first summer blockbuster. You couldn't escape it. The TV ads. The posters. The toys and games. My parents' argument: Too scary for a 5-year-old raised on the banks of Lake Michigan. Five-year-olds, however, are annoyingly persistent. My parents relented. We stood in line for hours at Dunes Plaza Cinema. And the final verdict? Nightmares. For weeks. Spielberg transformed a bubble-gum story — an East Coast community is terrorized by a great white shark — into a mythic adventure: thrilling, frightening, enormously entertaining. That the film's mechanical shark would not work for most of the shoot was a blessing in disguise. It forced Spielberg to rely on audience fears of what we can't see, what lies beneath. By not seeing the shark until the end, the payoff was a battle worthy of "Moby Dick."



5. "Airplane" (1980) Directors: Jim Abrahams, David Zucker, Jerry Zucker

Speaking of "Jaws," "Airplane" barreled out of the gate with an uproarious spoof of Spielberg's classic, complete with a plane's tail gliding through a sea of clouds, John Williams' pulsing score on the soundtrack. "Airplane" is credited with single-handedly killing off the disaster genre, lampooning not only the clichés of the genre, but everything else under the sun, from "Saturday Night Fever," to "From Here to Eternity," to classic coffee commercials. And by hiring veteran actors like Leslie Nielsen and Robert Stack to play it straight, the laughs escalated by the minute. "Airplane" remains a madcap example of cinematic anarchy. You laugh

Continued on Page 18

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just as hard today as you did when it first arrived in theaters.



6. “Star Wars,” “The Empire Strikes Back,” “Return of the Jedi” (1977, 1980, 1983)

Directors: George Lucas, Irvin Kershner, Richard Marquand

The holy trinity of the “Star Wars” franchise. Seeing these films in theaters, it was like a religious experience. Special effects now could take us to fantastical worlds, journeys that captured our imaginations. Each new film topped itself with cinematic wizardry, but in the end, it was the twisted family dynamic within the Skywalker clan that kept us rooting for good to triumph over evil. Since then, we’ve had prequels and sequels. “Rogue One” (2016) came the closest to replicating the spirit of the originals. None, however, achieved the same awe and wonder.



7. “Aliens” (1986)

Director: James Cameron

For my money, still Cameron’s best, and we have Sigourney Weaver to thank, her Ripley defying what was expected of a female hero: tough, without sacrificing maternal instincts. Ripley emerged as a born leader amid Marines investigating a seemingly abandoned colony on the same planet with the deadly alien from the original. The now-classic confrontation between Ripley and the alien queen remains my most unforgettable movie theater experience. The crowd was largely female. Ripley’s rallying cry — “*Get away from her, you bitch!*” — brought the audience to its feet. Screams, cheers, thunderous applause. Call it girl power, but Weaver’s Ripley signified that the days of helpless slasher-flick heroines were coming to an end. It was time for the ladies to kick some ass.

8. “Romancing the Stone” (1984)

Director: Robert Zemeckis

Romantic-comedies don’t do it for me. They’re all the same. A guy initiates a lie to meet a girl. The relationship blooms...until the deception is revealed.

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Gal dismisses guy. Guy broods. Gal forgives guy. Guy and gal live happily ever after. “Romancing the Stone,” however, was trickier, having fun with the conventions of romance novels. A dynamite Kathleen Turner plays a lonely romance novelist who tracks down her kidnapped sister with help from a mercenary rogue, played by Michael Douglas in full alpha-male mode. Witty, instantly quotable and playfully choreographed, the characters by the midpoint are on equal footing. As the two dig for buried treasure, the film gives us this exchange:

Turner: “You’re the best time I’ve ever had.”

Douglas: “I’ve never been anybody’s best time.”

What we have are two people who craved excitement, a purpose in life. Now, they have it *because* of each other. That, to me, is romantic.



9. “The Poseidon Adventure” (1972)

Director: Ronald Neame

Yes, it’s stupid. Yes, the dialogue is terrible. And yes, the cast overacts itself into oblivion. But of all the 1970s disaster pictures, this is the only one that functions on any emotional level. Once the luxury liner capsizes — still a marvelous feat of stuntwork and effects — you forgive the script’s weaknesses.

What is Your Favorite Movie?

Email me your name, town/city, your favorite movie and a sentence or two as to why it’s your favorite and we’ll include it in a followup story. All submissions are due to *The Beacher* by noon Tuesday, April 7. Submit your comments to drew@thebeacher.com

The survivors crawl and scrape their ways through one spectacular setpiece after another, the body count escalating scene after scene. And despite all the histrionics, you care for the characters. Gene Hackman’s preacher is all fire and brimstone when rallying the troops, his Christ-like sacrifice at the end superbly acted. Ernest Borgnine and Stella Stevens make for a hilariously vulgar couple, while Shelley Winters and Jack Albertson milk the elderly couple they play for every ounce of pathos imaginable. The 2006 remake contained infinitely superior visuals, but none of the heart of the original.



10. “Poltergeist” (1982)

Director: Tobe Hooper

Still one of the best haunted house flicks, thanks to an instantly identifiable middle-class American family. Hooper (“The Texas Chainsaw Massacre”), joining forces with Spielberg (he served as producer/co-writer), closely observed the daily rituals of the family so we deeply care for them. Better yet, this is a rare ghost story where all the “rules” make sense. So forcefully told is this world, you accept it from the get-go, cheering the family on as it finds itself under constant attack, their 5-year-old daughter “kidnapped” by angry spirits. The effects age well — that creature at the bedroom door, halting the mother from entering, is terrifying — and the family, which includes Craig T. Nelson and JoBeth Williams, remains among Spielberg’s best. Netflix’s “Stranger Things” would not exist were it not for ’80s classics like “Poltergeist” that showed average Americans facing their darkest fears.

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A Guide to Area Restaurants Offering Carryout, Delivery Services

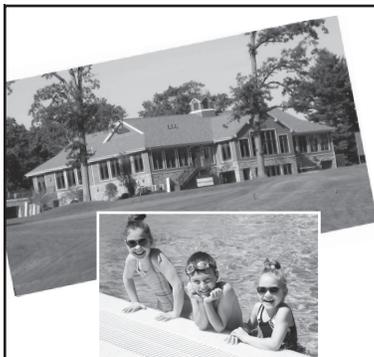
Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, *The Beacher* looked into which restaurants in our area are still offering carryout.

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

By no means is this list a complete guide to local restaurants. Our staff tried to reach as many places as possible by phone, or by checking websites and facebook pages.

Michigan City Area

- A Slice of Heaven. (219) 380-8374.
- Albano's Villa. (219) 872-0571.
- Barker Pub. (219) 873-9306.
- Bartlett's Fish Camp. (219) 879-9544.
- Ben's Soft Pretzels (delivery available). (219) 879-5557.
- Biggby Coffee. (219) 809-9912
- Bubbles (drive-through available). (219) 872-1024.
- Buffalo Wild Wings (delivery available). (219) 872-9464.
- Carlson's (regular services). (219) 872-0331.
- Chili's Grill & Bar (curbside, delivery available). (219) 872-2266.
- China One. (219) 872-7722.
- Cool Runnings Jamaican Restaurant. (219). 210-3885.
- Creekside Bar & Grill (curbside available). (219) 814-4041.
- Denny's (delivery available). (219) 879-1860.
- Domino's Pizza. (219) 879-8330.
- El Cajete. (219) 872-3333.
- El Cantarito (curbside, delivery available). (219) 243-7117.
- Fiddlehead (delivery available). (219) 210-3253.
- FLUID Coffeabar and Roasting Lab (ask about delivery). (219) 878-1800.
- Frosty Boy. (219) 874-3773.
- Galveston Steakhouse. (219) 879-5555.
- Gelsosomo's. (219) 872-3838.
- Hacienda Mexican Restaurants (curbside available). (219) 879-4404.
- Hammer's Restaurant. (219) 879-0760.
- Hokkaido Japanese Restaurant. (219) 814-4226.
- Holly's Restaurant. (219) 879-5124.
- India House Restaurant. (219) 874-5700.
- Jimmy John's. (219) 871-0850.
- Joe's Bar & Grill and Pizzeria. (219) 879-9336.
- Lakeshore Coffee. (219) 874-7006.
- Leeds Public House. (219) 814-4530.
- Lighthouse Restaurant (drive-through, curbside available). (219) 872-1900.
- Little Caesar's Pizza. (219) 879-3211.
- Little Giant Pizza. (219) 874-4268.
- Local Option (delivery available). (219). 874-3663
- Long John Silver's (drive-through). (219) 879-4193.
- Memo's House of Pancakes. (219) 871-1583.
- Miller Pizza by the Beach. (219) 878-9480.
- Mucho Mas Michigan City. (219) 221-6639.
- Olive Garden Italian Restaurant. (219) 879-6830
- Panda Express. (219) 879-1079.
- Panera Bread (drive-through available). (219) 879-5765.
- Panini Panini (free delivery through March 29). (219) 873-1720.
- Papa John's Pizza. (219) 872-7227.
- Patrick's Grille (curbside pickup). (219) 873-9401.
- Pita Express. (219) 210-3512.
- Polish Peasant (curbside). (219) 873-1788.
- Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen (drive-through available). (219) 210-3540.
- Red Lobster (delivery available). (219) 879-1328.
- Roma Pizza Michigan City. (219) 872-9123.
- Royale With Cheese. (219) 243-7106.
- Schoop's. (219) 872-0170.
- Shrimp Max of Michigan City. (219) 221-6485.
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- Station 801. (219) 872-4976.
- Stop 50. (219) 879-8777.
- Swingbelly's Restaurant. (219) 874-5718.
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- Dunkin Donuts. (219) 879-2922
- Hardee's. (219) 879-8025
- KFC. (219) 879-0343
- McDonalds. (219) 874-7772
- Rally's. (219) 221-6001
- Sonic. (219) 878-1950
- Subway. (219) 872-7827
- Taco Bell. (219) 879-4022
- Wendy's. (219) 872-0368
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- Aurelio's Pizza (delivery, drive-through available). (219) 324-9950.
- Bare Bones Gastropub. (219) 575-7469.
- Ben's Soft Pretzels (inside Walmart). (219) 324-8593.
- Buffalo Wild Wings. (219) 324-9464.
- Burger Bar & Grill (delivery available). (219) 324-1144.
- Cafe Trilogy. (219) 561-3310
- Colima. (219) 324-0355.
- Domino's Pizza. (219) 380-0760.
- Gourmet House Chinese Restaurant (delivery available). (219) 362-1270.
- Great Wall Restaurant (delivery available). (219) 324-4580.
- J&J's Pizza Shack (delivery available). (219) 362-4290.
- Jimmy John's. (219) 324-9600.
- JJ's Sideout Bar & Grill (delivery available). (219) 369-6583
- Little Caesar's Pizza. (219) 326-7725.
- Marco's Pizza (delivery available). (219) 326-1010.
- Mari's Mexican Restaurant. (219) 326-6226.
- Mucho Mas (delivery available). (219) 362-9183.
- Northside BBQ. (219) 324-0952.
- Papa John's Pizza. (219) 362-7272.
- T-berry's Diner (some delivery available). (219) 362-6261.

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

Fast Food with Drive-Throughs

- Arby's. (219) 326-1718.
- Burger King. (219) 325-9000.
- Culver's. (219) 369-6450.
- Dairy Queen Grill & Chill. (219) 325-0400.
- Dairy Queen LTD Brazier. (219) 326-5454.
- Dunkin' Donuts. (219) 369-4957.
- KFC. (219) 326-7433.
- McDonald's (Boyd Boulevard). (219) 362-6717; Pine Lake Avenue. (219) 362-5819.
- Pizza Hut. (219) 324-5180.
- Subway. (219) 326-5818.
- Taco Bell. (219) 324-5180.
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- Ghost Isle Brewery. (269) 469-9069.
- Jackie's Cafe (delivery available). (269) 469-1800.
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- Roma Pizza (delivery available). (269) 469-3698.
- Song Asian Cuisine (delivery available.) (269) 586-3699.
- Timothy's Restaurant (curbside available). (269) 469-0900.
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- Michigan City Fire Training Center, 2510 E. Michigan Blvd., 12:30-5:30 p.m. Monday, March 30.
- Sacred Heart Church, 201 Bach St., LaPorte, noon-5 p.m. Wednesday, April 1.

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Native Plant Sale Changes

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Friends of Indiana Dunes will offer its 24th Annual Native Plant Sale as pre-order only.

No open shopping is planned.

Order forms are available at www.dunefriends.org, and a link is available on the group's Facebook page. Contact committee chairwoman Angel Gochee-Goins at (219) 707-3617 or by email at angel@dunefriends.org for more details.

More than 110 native plant species are available, including: woodland flowering plants and ferns; dry, medium and wet prairie flowering plants; grasses, shrubs and trees. All varieties come in pots, and most species are native to Northwest Indiana, northeast Illinois and Southwest Michigan.

The deadline is April 10. The new pickup location is the Friends' new office at Mineral Springs and Oak Hill roads in Porter. Individuals will be assigned specific pickup times Saturday, April 18.

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Spring Creek Easter Egg Hunt

The newly-formed Spring Creek Horses Help Foundation will hold a free Easter egg hunt at 3 p.m. EDT Saturday, March 28, at Spring Creek Equestrian Center, 16771 Pardee Road, Three Oaks, Mich.

Children can pet horses, and have their photos taken with the Easter Bunny. A bake sale is planned, with proceeds to benefit the foundation.

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New Footlight Players Season

Footlight Players has revealed its 71st season of productions.

After reading more than 30 scripts, Footlight's Play Selection Committee came up with a slate of shows, accompanied with directors, assistant directors and production managers.

The schedule is:

- **Sept. 4-13** — A comedy, Leslie Kimbell's "Four Old Broads." Director, Sarah Dolan; Assistant Director, Jessica Landis; Production Manager, Lara West.
- **Nov. 6-15** — a holiday comedy, Tom Dudzick's "Miracle on South Division Street." Director Denise Barkow; Assistant Director, Joe Blanchard; Production Manager, Jan Rice.
- **Feb. 5-21, 2021** — A musical revue, Jerry Herman's "Jerry's Girls." Director, Laura Meyer; Assistant Director, Jan Rice; Musical/Vocal Director, Lee Meyer; Production Manager, Bobby Komendera.
- **April 2-11, 2021** — A comedy, Tom Smith's "Drinking Habits." Director, Dee Piotrowski; Assistant Director, Di Younce; Production Manager, Lara West.
- **June 5-21, 2021** — A musical, Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music." Director, Debbie Bartholomew; Assistant Director, Dee Piotrowski; Musical/Vocal Director, Lee Meyer; Choreographer, Danielle Bilderback; Production Manager, Paulette Lisek.

The musicals will run three weekends Friday through Sunday and straight plays two weekends Friday through Sunday, with an added performance the Thursday of the second weekend.

The theater is located at 1705 Franklin St. Call (219) 874-4035 or visit www.footlightplayers.org for more details.



**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.

Fernwood Botanical Garden

• **Birding Local Wetlands from 9:30 to 11 a.m. EDT Sunday, March 29.**

A naturalist will lead the trip to local wetlands to learn about duck identification. Spotting scopes are provided. Take binoculars and dress for the weather. Meet in the Fernwood parking lot at 9 a.m. EDT, or at Three Oaks Sewage Ponds at 10:30 a.m. EDT.

The cost is \$15, or \$12 for members. Registration is required.

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.

Reins of Life Feeders

Volunteers are needed to feed horses at Reins of Life, 9375 W. County Road 300 North, Michigan City.

Horses are fed twice a day every day of the year. Training is not required. Feeders, who must be at least 16, work a two-hour shift each week with the same group of volunteers.

If interested, contact Beth at (219) 276-7849. Visit www.reinsoflife.org for more details.



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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On March 26, 1827, composer Ludwig von Beethoven died (in Vienna) at 56.

On March 26, 1837, St. James, Chicago's first Episcopal Church, conducted its first worship services.

On March 26, 1885, the first commercial motion picture film was produced by the Eastman Dry Plate and Film Co. at its Rochester, N.Y., plant.

On March 26, 1956, Althea Gibson became the first African American to win a major tennis title: the women's singles in the French Open.

On March 26, 1958, the U.S. Army launched the Explorer 3 satellite.

On March 26, 1964, the musical "Funny Girl" with Barbra Streisand opened on Broadway.

On March 27, 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon sighted Florida, claiming the land for Spain.

On March 27, 1794, acting on the recommendation of President George Washington, Congress approved the establishment of the U.S. Navy.

On March 27, 1884, the first long-distance telephone call (between the managers of Bell Telephone Co. in Boston and New York) was made.

On March 27, 1902, a Chicago newspaper writer first referred to the Chicago National League baseball team as the Cubs, a name officially adopted five years later.

On March 27, 1917, the Seattle Metropolitans became the first U.S. hockey team to win the Stanley Cup.

On March 28, 1797, New Hampshire's Nathaniel Briggs was granted a patent for an agitator type washing machine.

On March 28, 1834, the Senate voted to censure President Andrew Jackson for the removal of federal funds from the Bank of the United States.

On March 28, 1858, Chicago's first YMCA was organized.

On March 28, 1925, *The Chicago Tribune* moved into the newly completed Tribune Tower.

On March 28, 1944, New York City's radio station WQXR banned singing commercials.

On March 28, 1987, Maria von Trapp, whose life was the inspiration for the musical "The Sound of Music," died in Morrisville, Vt., at 87.

On March 29, 1812, the first White House wedding took place when Lucy Payne Washington, sister-in-law of President James Madison, married Supreme



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On March 29, 1848, mighty Niagara Falls stopped falling when an ice jam on Lake Erie blocked the flow of water to the Niagara River. It was 30 hours before the ice broke, and the falls were once more the delight of honeymooners.

On March 29, 1882, the Knights of Columbus was chartered in Connecticut.

On March 29, 1932, vaudeville comedian Jack Benny made his radio debut with these words, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is Jack Benny. There will be a slight pause while you say, 'Jack who?'"

On March 29, 1962, Jack Paar hosted NBC's "Tonight" show for the final time.

On March 29, 1976, the movie "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" won Academy Awards for best picture, best actor, best actress and best director.

On March 30, 1675, Father Jacques Marquette, along with his party, left their cabin on the south branch of the Chicago River, having spent the winter there.

On March 30, 1822, Florida became a U.S. territory.

On March 30, 1923, the British liner SS Laconia, flagship of the Cunard Line, became the first passenger ship to circumnavigate the world, arriving in New York City after 130 days.

On March 30, 1953, Albert Einstein announced he was revising his "Unified Field Theory."

On March 30, 1970, Secretariat, the racehorse who would go on to win the Triple Crown in 1973, was born.

On March 31, 1831, Jonathan Bailey was appointed by President Andrew Jackson to serve as Chicago's first postmaster.

On March 31, 1870, in Perth Amboy, N.J., Thomas Peterson Mundy cast a ballot in a municipal election, becoming the first black to vote following ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment.

On March 31, 1880, Wabash, Ind., became the first town to be completely illuminated by electricity.

On March 31, 1889, the Eiffel Tower officially opened in Paris.

On April 1, 1789, the U.S. House of Representatives held its first full meeting in New York City and elected Frederick Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania as the first Speaker of the House.

On April 1, 1853, Cincinnati became the first city in the United States to pay its firefighters a regular salary.

On April 1, 1872, the Chicago Public Library debuted.

On April 1, 1918, England (just a few months before the end of World War I) established the Royal Air Force.

On April 1, 1970, President Richard Nixon signed a measure banning cigarette advertising on radio and television to take effect after Jan. 1, 1971.

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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Crooked River by Preston and Child (hardcover, \$29 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 400 pages)

“We are all in danger.”

“What from?”

“I don’t know — and that’s what makes it so very dangerous.”

Sanibel Island, Fla., is a great vacation spot. People love to walk along the sandy beaches, picking up shells that float in on the tide. Imagine yourself in that tranquil picture when the tide brings in something more unusual than shells. One hundred and 12 light green sneakers...with 112 severed feet inside them. And from the angle of the cuts and amateur hacking, it would appear the feet were severed by their owners...

Do I have your attention now?

This is another exciting novel from the combined pens of Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child featuring FBI Special Agent Aloysius Pendergast. Pendergast is an unusual character: He’s not a super hero, nor a former Navy Seal, but a highly intelligent, classically educated, dashing dresser who talks with a high-class New Orleans accent of old. And that’s what I like about this series — a totally different character involved in storylines that put a capital T in thriller! But I digress...back to the current story...

P.B. Perelman, police chief of Sanibel Island, is the first on the scene after the feet come floating onto the beach, but he soon learns he will not be in charge of the investigation.

A task-force meeting is set up inside the Fort Myers Police Department. It doesn’t take long for Deputy Sector Commander Stephen Baugh of the U.S. Coast Guard — an officious, obnoxious fellow — to let everyone know he is in charge. Other members of the group would include the Fort Myers Police Department, Sanibel Police Department, FBI and the District 21 Medical Examiner’s Office.

Pendergast is cajoled into investigating the case — no one orders him directly — because of its strange, unusual aspects. After perusing the beach, he visits the chief medical examiner, Moira Crossley, who is examining the shoes and feet for any forensic evidence. Now, Pendergast is fully engaged...

Meanwhile, the Coast Guard, under Baugh’s excellent command (yes, that’s sarcasm), has decided the shoes must have come from Cuba, probably the result of torture at a known prison on the north-

ern coast. Meanwhile, Pendergast conducts his own investigation that leads to Dr. Pamela Gladstone, oceanographer, who has been studying the patterns of gulf currents. With Pendergast’s help, they decide the shoes likely came from the gold coast of Florida near a state park. That theory doesn’t fly with the Coast Guard, so Pendergast does what he does best — he goes at it alone. He sends another FBI agent, Peter Quarles, to China on a fact-finding mission. It seems he has pinned down a possible location from which the green sneakers came.

Pendergast enlists the aid of a second FBI agent, Native American Armstrong Coldmoon, to head to Guatemala to check on a second lead. This one involves groups of people migrating north to the U.S. What do they have to do with the feet in sneakers? Truth is, you never know. Pendergast checks out all possibilities, no matter how obscure.

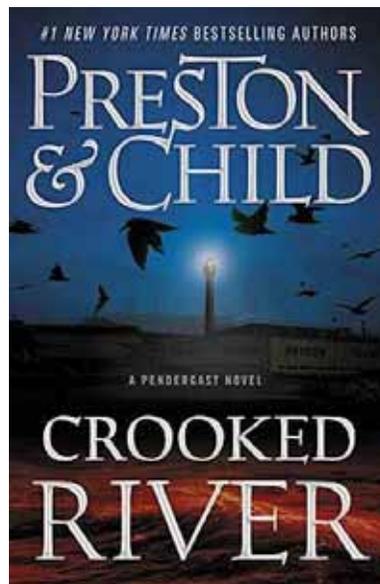
Add into this mix an ambitious young reporter, Roger Smithback, and you have a lot of territory to cover. Smithback has made it into the tent on the beach where the sneakers are, finding one with a foot inside chopped off higher above the ankle and with a tattoo that looks like a gang symbol. He’s just young enough and dumb enough not to know sneaking around gang territory asking stupid questions will get you in trouble, every time.

So now, we have any number of people looking in many different directions, the competent and the incompetent, each trying to solve the question of where the feet originate from, before any more people die. Every chapter brings another stunning revelation, ending up in the marshy coast of northern Florida — not before Pendergast takes a heart-pounding ride on a speedboat trying to outrun a vicious storm in the unpredictable gulf waters. It’s knock-your-socks-off, non-stop action with a bloody climax in the swampland that leaves you wondering who will survive?

Two books of this series about Pendergast include Relic and The Cabinet of Curiosities, chosen by readers in a National Public Radio poll as being two of the 100 greatest thrillers of all times. Relic was made into a movie. Excellent reading, premier entertainment.

Visit www.PrestonChild.com to sign up for a monthly “strangely entertaining” newsletter, *The Pendergast Files*. They also post on FB.

Till next time, happy reading!





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