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Hometown Pride

by Connie Kuzydym

Their names as LaPorte-area musicians may sound familiar.

Florence Andrew.

Eddie Burke.

Guy Foreman.

Each shaped one of LaPorte's greatest conductors: Gary Wedow.

Their influence reaches back generations, but right now, the Zoom call is filled with Gary's hearty laughter. He's wearing a LaPorte Slicer baseball cap, an enormous smile and a mischievous glint in his eyes. Our conversation was that of an old friend, not someone I had just met, as we traded laughs over our alma mater's mascot.

Gary enthusiastically accepted the invitation to guest conduct LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra during its season finale on April 17 at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. The concert, "Welcome Home Gary Thor Wedow," features music from the opera and vocal worlds he has been a part of for years. It begins with two pieces that are pre-French Revolution in style: Mozart's "Symphony No. 36 in C Major, 'Linz' KV 425," Händel's "Water Music" excerpts and two English oratorio arias featuring soprano



Gary Wedow is slated to conduct LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra's April 17 concert at LaPorte Civic Auditorium.

Kellie Motter, tenor Edward Graves and LCSO's Chuck Steck on the trumpet. The program moves to Romantic operatic repertoire from Donizetti, "Lucia di Lammermoor." The mood changes to Americana pieces by Aaron Copland, "Old American Songs," and ends with "Wheels of a Dream" from the Tony-winning musical "Ragtime."

A LaPorte native, Gary has never forgotten the starting notes of his career, nor the individuals or experiences that shaped his illustrious career as a conductor. In an emotional response, he explains why years after leaving

LaPorte, articles written about him still mention his hometown.

"LaPorte made me. I was thinking today, I live in New York. So many of my colleagues went to Juilliard, studied with famous virtuosi when they were young and they were child prodigies," he said. "I'm totally a product of a small Midwestern town that gave me an incredible education...in the public schools. I felt very beautifully educated when I got

Continued on Page 2

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to Indiana University. I could compete with everybody in my classes...So proud of LaPorte. I wouldn't be able to do it if it hadn't been for the training, the support, the guidance, that I got in LaPorte."

While this journey is rooted in LaPorte, it travels throughout the United States, Canada and even overseas, where he's spent sometimes six months of the year on the road as a conductor.

He understands the importance of music being local. He feels orchestras such as LCSO are more important than the New York Philharmonic. That is where young people are nurtured, where they form a community of supporters. He loves going to places like Utah, Seattle and Philadelphia, where student musicians are homegrown, have their own special personalities and are passionately supported by the community.

That is what it was like for him growing up.

"When I went to (college), I was very naive," Gary said. "We had high school band, high school orchestra, swing choir, concert choir. We had all of these opportunities. And when I got out in the world, I discovered there are tons of people that had no connection with any of this, and we had everything in LaPorte.

"I really do feel LaPorte is a special place. They really support the arts."

Gary's support system started with his family. Becoming an accompanist started as a youngster. His family was musical: His grandfather played the trumpet, his father the clarinet, his mother the piano. They all sang. There were huge stacks of popular music from the '30s and '40s in their home. His mother would pull out a piece, place it on the piano

and he was expected to play. This taught him how to sight-read, a skill that would serve him well. None were sophisticated musicians, but they appreciated music and, most importantly, they supported Gary.

During high school, he was always doing something musically. He played the French horn in band and orchestra, was in the marching band's color guard and played the piano in swing choir. Foreman, LaPorte High School's band director, and choir director Eddie Burke offered numerous opportunities for him to play the piano in high school music programs and plays. In the community, he played the church organ at St. Paul's, as well as for adult singers or instrumentalists who needed an accompanist.



Gary Wedow with Florence Andrew at her home after a piano recital, circa 1977.

It was Florence Andrew, his high school piano teacher, who influenced him the most. She studied in Boston at the New England Conservatory of Music, at Chicago's Northwestern University and with talented pianists like Hazel Harrison, a black woman born in LaPorte who had a successful career in Europe.

Miss Andrew, as Gary warmly calls her, was more than a piano teacher. She was a nurturer who saw in him what others would eventually see. Her gift to him was a love of music. She nurtured his ability, when she felt he needed bigger musical experiences. They traveled to Chicago, taking organ lessons while watching

and learning from each other. Before coming home, they would take in a performance with the symphony, the ballet or a Broadway show. Through those opportunities, he experienced firsthand the world of music.

The notes of his career traveled to Bloomington when he was accepted at the renowned Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Gary intended

to become a high school music teacher. During auditions, his piano ability made him eligible to major in the subject. His counselor encouraged him to choose “a once in a lifetime opportunity to hone his keyboard skills.” With the blessing of his parents, he pursued that major and never looked back. He was surrounded by extraordinary instrumental and vocal professionals, including a menagerie of internationally talented artists who fled the horrors of Nazi Germany. Roaming the halls, the sounds of Hungarian, Polish, German music filled the air.

The school also was the perfect avenue for retiring divas and leading men from New York’s Metropolitan Opera.

“The dean was very clever,” Gary said. “He’d see these great stars at the Met. He was a huge opera fan. He’d see them at their peak, then he’d see them start on the other side of the hill. As they were on the other side, he’d start wooing them...to come... and many of them did.”

Gary honed his skills at IU, playing during voice lessons for those stars who embraced, guided and encouraged him. All the while, he was learning an incredible repertoire of music. He loved working with singers, and they with him.

“It was, ‘Gary what are you doing Friday afternoon at 5?’ ‘Nothing,’” Gary said. “I have 3 students flying in from N.Y. and I’ll pay you \$20 an hour.’ That was like \$200 an hour now. I would sit there and play for these divas that had flown in to study with these divas.”



Gary Wedow is pictured with (from left) Jorge Bolet, Sister Marjorie Delaplane and Carol Rausch. Rausch now is the head of music at New Orleans Opera and the head opera coach at Chautauqua Opera.

Fellow student vocalists also engaged his services. But it was virtuoso Jorge Bolet, a Cuban pianist and professor of music (piano) at IU, who struck a chord in Gary’s career.

Immediately after the vocal recital Gary was accompanying, his professor was the first one backstage. Being a sizeable man, he recalls, Bolet picked him up, shook him and with emotion said, “Why don’t you play the piano like that when you play for me?”

It was a light-bulb moment.

Continued on Page 4

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Hometown Pride Continued from Page 3

“I don’t like playing by myself. I like playing with people, collaborating, being with people, being a part of a musical team and that changed our work,” he said. “He (Bolet) respected me as a musician. He saw I had talent. Immediately, he’d hear all the music I played for the singers. That’s when I realized I need to be a musician who was with other musicians.”



Gary Wedow is photographed with band buddies (from left) Bob Jones and Ken Juranek at their 2018 reunion.

After graduating, Gary headed to the New England Conservatory of Music and earned a Master of Music degree. There for a short time, he worked as the pianist for a group of singing waiters at the Sheraton Hotel. Enjoying the experience, he unfortunately needed to choose between the two due to the time demands both required.

Completing his studies, he remained in Boston for about 10 years, working for the Handel and Haydn Society, which performs Baroque and Classical music. It was an untitled apprenticeship role where he marked parts, organized rehearsals and played in the orchestra. Conductor and artistic director Thomas Dunn also gave him small opportunities to conduct.

Dunn saw what Bolet had seen: Gary’s potential as a conductor.

“You put things together,” Dunn told him. “When you play for singers you guide them...you shape them.”

After 12 years in Boston, Gary felt the time had come to move to New York. During the summers, he was chorus master at The Santa Fe Opera. Its director also ran the Manhattan School of Music. Mentioning the upcoming move to him, the director immediately hired

Gary into its opera department.

The next 10 years provided numerous conducting opportunities, including seven years as chorus master and head of the young artist program at the Canadian Opera Co. While there, Julliard called. It was seeking a conductor for a key opera. Richard Bradshaw, who ran the Canadian Opera was unavailable, but assured them he had the perfect person. Gary auditioned. His career as a conductor was born.

(He became a part-time faculty member at Julliard and has been there since 1994.)

During this time, he also met his husband, Larry. Keeping one foot in New York, he traveled to and from Toronto. Then in 1997, the New York City Music Opera came calling. It needed a chorus master. This was not what he wanted, but the offer of regular conducting opportunities was attractive.

“New York City Music Opera was great. They brought in star conductors, but also had a conductor team...We were this team of conductors who sometimes you rowed in the boat, sometimes you led.” Gary said. “It was a wonderful, supportive feeling that you could learn your craft in this incredible deep way.”

In 2007, Gary was conducting so frequently in addition to the New York City Music Opera that, with guidance from his agent, he struck out on his own.

Gary has conducted numerous companies, such as Boston Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Portland Opera and the Amherst Early Music Festival. He receives repeat conducting requests. Since the start of the year, he has been involved in projects at Julliard



This undated LaPorte High School Jazz Band photo shows Ken Juranek on clarinet, Bob Jones on trombone and Tom Dorman on trumpet. Dorman for years played with the Doc Severinsen Band.

and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. After the concert in LaPorte, he will work on a project with the Utah Opera in Salt Lake City. This summer, he is working with the Des Moines Metro Opera doing "Platée," a French Baroque opera.

Grueling is not a word he associates with his schedule; rather, he sees it as an opportunity. If things start to feel overwhelming, he heeds a mentor's wisdom: "Don't see it as this thing weighing down on you. See it as this wonderful tapestry that you're a part of. Yes, there's a lot of things going on at the same time, but it's rich and it's involved and you just have to keep going forward and it's exciting."

Gary explains there are three types of conductors: the tyrant, the mother-father-parent and the scholar. He conducts as the parent and the scholar. Every once in a while, he says, you

may have to pull out the tyrant.

His style of conducting encourages those he works with to perform their best, by explaining the why.

"Would you consider doing it this way? Because look at how the composer has written it. Look at how your line is shaped," Gary explains. "I feel explaining to and showing the musicians that you're

trying to get them to sound their best, wow, they'll let you do anything then. They'll trust you."

Throughout his career, he has promoted singing because of the happiness factor.

"They used to say it's because of the breathing. There is truth to that, but more they have discovered it raises your level of endorphins. It makes you happier," he said. "If I play the piano for a little bit, I'm soothed."

Gary has worked on numerous projects over



Gary Wedow appears with Seattle Opera's cast of Rossini's "Cinderella" and Australian director Lindy Hume.

Continued on Page 6



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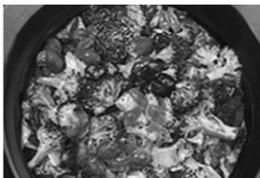
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Hometown Pride Continued from Page 5

the years. So many have brought him the same intensity of happiness, he won't choose a favorite. Instead, he defers to Luther Vandross' song "Love the One You're With."

"For me, it's what you're doing...when I'm not near the one I love, I love the one I'm near," he said.

Gary was not immune to the challenges created by COVID-19; fortunately, he was able to work online. By the end of last October, the simple act of going into Julliard for distance-masked one-on-ones with students was a joyous occasion.

He learned years ago at Julliard to check his ego at the door, as many of his students will be more gifted and smarter than him. Instead of it bothering him, he embraces working with the younger generation and learning from them. There is a mutual respect, an admiration between them.

There are things Gary would still like to accomplish. As a young chorus master, for instance, he had the opportunity through New York City Music Opera to conduct "Madama Butterfly" at the Lincoln Center. He

turned it down to the dismay of many. From what he was seeing, he knew the production would not turn out well. He was correct and dodged a bullet.

Today, he yearns for more.

"If you gave me a 'Butterfly' to conduct, I would say yes so fast, because now, what do I have to lose?" Gary said. "I will conduct anything. I am hungry for every new experience, every new repertoire. I've done the safe route. I've grown as a conductor. I want new experiences."

Throughout it all, he continues to think about Miss Andrew, Guy Foreman, Eddie Burke, Jorge Bolet. It's as if those people are still with him. Urging him on. He also acknowledges the generosity of conductors he met along the way who gave him opportunities that allowed him to learn his craft by doing.

He encourages young artists to never surrender to fear or cynicism, even though the profession is difficult. He says to preserve your joy in the art



Gary is photographed with Jorge Bolet when he came to LaPorte, to see him and Les Schoof put on "110 in the Shade."

form. It's natural to experience fear and nervousness, he said, but learn from the mistakes, knowing that life is a constant learning curve.

On life's road, he has learned anything is possible, and don't limit yourself.

"Start out on a journey. Be directed, but don't be afraid to try another path. Don't be afraid to experiment in a different direction," Gary said. "I went to school to be a high school music teacher; I think I would have loved that. I think I would have been a good high school music teacher, but I've had this other life that for me has been extremely rich. A wonderful man that I have spent 35 years with. I've lived in New York for 35 years and had experiences that I would have never dreamed were possible, and all because I said yes."

(More information about the April 17 concert will appear in the April 15 Beacher.)



Many in the local music scene remember Gary and are excited he is returning home for his first performance with LCSO.



Gary with his longtime friend, Julie Ridley.

Julie Ridley, who refers to Gary as her bestie, feels a tinge of sadness it has taken so long to get him here. Friends since middle school, both played French horn, and spent a lot of time together through the high school music and theater scene.

"I was so grateful to have him as my friend," Julie said. "Gary was calm. He was that boulder in

the middle of a rushing river. He was solid and honest and kind and so intelligent."

Julie loves having him as one of her best friends.

"He was always there for me...he accepted me unconditionally," Julie said. "He was always there for me to talk to...I'm happy he is still in my life."

She and her daughter have been to New York and enjoyed being with Gary and Larry. She recalls the first time she saw Gary perform in New York. He was choral master of the New York City Opera. He gave them dress circle seats for the matinee performance of "Carmen."

"It was magnificent. And here's my buddy," Julie said. "He's getting, like, 10 standing ovations. I never felt prouder. I was just crying my eyes out because I just felt such pride for him and so happy for him that he was able to realize his dream...Music is everything to him"



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Hometown Pride Continued from Page 6

His talent is something most recognized about him even in high school. Attending the right schools and working hard, she believes, is why he is successful. For all the fame and experiences, he is humble and gracious.

“He’s very modest about it,” she said. “I never have heard anyone say anything bad about Gary. He’s down to Earth. He can have you laughing in stitches. I don’t think he’s let his great success turn his head in anyway. I think he’s happy in his own skin...he’s very comfortable with Gary, and I think that comes across.”

In 2013, Julie nominated him for the first group on LaPorte High School’s poster initiative “Learn Today to Excel Tomorrow,” which showcases past graduates to inspire today’s students.

“He’s truly a Slicer,” she said. “When he mentions that in his comments...He’s true about that. He was never a football player, but Gary was as much a Slicer as any person that had recognition because of a sport.”



Music is how Gary Wedow and Fran Milo met. The notes of their friendship were written through their musical experiences at LaPorte High School. Gary, a junior, and Fran, a sophomore, shared the piano bench in jazz band. He also was the accompanist for swing choir, which Fran joined her junior year. Both programs offered numerous social, out-of-school experiences for these young musicians, allowing a special friendship to grow.

Gary headed to Indiana University a year before Fran. They were both in the music school, but did not see each other, as he had an entirely different career path than hers.

The Jacobs School of Music is a world-reknown institution. It is a tough school, with a lot of pressure, which causes many musicians to choose an alternate path.

“He found his place at IU, which was huge for him,” Fran said. “In his area of music, it’s a bit of a mecca. There’s a reason why IU’s music school is in

This late-1960s yearbook photo shows Fran Milo, Gary Wedow and Dave Gre on bass.



the top five music schools in the world. That’s because the teaching staff that they have assembled there. And Gary got in with a very good teacher, and he did a lot of accompanying because that is his gift ...and it is a unique gift. “

Fran speaks fondly of her friend as she explains what makes him a world class conductor.

“He has been sought after by organizations to bring together productions, concerts, performances that involve some of the finest musicians from all over the world. He really is sought after,” she said. “You just look at who’s performing in these things and you know this guy’s something. Maybe that’s the simple explanation — the acknowledgement from all of the rest of the musicians around the world who, themselves, are world-class.”

Throughout all his successes Fran says Gary is kind to a fault. He loves people, and he loves to uplift people. He is an encourager. He fosters younger talent by orchestrating the opportunity for them to perform and to learn.

Gary’s achievements, she believes, have impacted where he grew up, as he always acknowledges that his musical roots came from his hometown. He truly is an ambassador for LaPorte.

“That acknowledgement from a world class musician such as Gary Wedow, it’s huge,” Fran said. “It’s a feather in the cap of how LaPorte, Ind., supports music.”



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An experienced instructor will guide students through painting a scene inspired by the Indiana Dunes. Each class will feature a different nature-related theme. "The Birds at the Shoreline" class on April 10 will show how to paint shorebirds, sand and a little water to make pictures complete. On June 12, "Waves, Water and Sun" shows how to create a shoreline painting using contrasting colors to achieve depth and motion. On July 10, students create an outdoor floral grassland in the "Butterflies on a Floral Grassland" class.

Registration closes one week before the class or when filled. The limit is 20 participants per session. Programs may be recorded for use by the National Park Service, Art Barn or Friends of Indiana Dunes.

Registered participants can pick up a free supply kit (including a canvas, acrylic paint and brush) at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center before the event. If unable to pick up a kit, call (219) 395-1882 before registering to make alternate arrangements. The kits are provided through support from the Friends

of Indiana Dunes



The National Park Service has implemented a mask requirement for employees, visitors, partners and contractors.

The move supports President Biden's Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, aiming to protect those who live, work and visit national parks.

At Indiana Dunes National Park, face masks are required in all park buildings and facilities, including the Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center, Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education and Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk pavilion. Masks also are required on NPS-managed lands when physical distancing cannot be maintained, including on narrow or busy trails, overlooks and in historic homes.

As conditions are subject to change, visitors should check the park's website and social media channels for updates before a visit. Visit tinyurl.com/2r86ch6e for details. Park rangers are on duty to provide information, protect visitors and park resources and uphold the requirement.



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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 or visit www.nps.gov/indu for details.

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South Shore Arts will host online editions of its Art in Focus program at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 8 and 22.

Retired Hammond educator Rita Ray founded the program in 1996, part of a free ongoing series offering insights into artists and their artistic forms.

The emphasis of the online programs is interaction between the presenter and audience. Each session is hosted by South Shore Arts Deputy Director Micah Bornstein. The presentation then is rebroadcast on the South Shore Arts website the following Monday.

The schedule is:

- April 8, guest lecture and conversation with Bornstein and Lou Joseph. The focus is "Colossus," a collaborative project between the two. Joseph is a visual arts specialist with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts and director of ICA Baltimore.
- April 22, guest lecture and conversation with Marcia Carson. The program examines notable works of Impressionism, highlighting the historical significance of each piece.

Visit www.SouthShoreArtsOnline.org/art-in-focus or contact Director of Education Summer Scharinghausen at Summer@SouthShoreArtsOnline.org for more details.



"Colossus," a joint project between Micah Bornstein and Lou Joseph.

Historical Society Museum Reopens

The LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., has reopened with normal hours of 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Masks over the nose and mouth are required at all times, along with proper social distancing.

New exhibits on the lower floor include 4-H Club, Washington Park Zoo and History of Computers exhibits. New cabinets from LaPorte Hospital have been installed downstairs to exhibit hospital memorabilia. On the main floor, a display case now features toy trains.

Downstairs features the new W.A. Jones at Home exhibit. Now on display is the jacket Jones wore when hunting with President Theodore Roosevelt, and the upholstered wheelchair he used in his later years.

In the Fern Eddy Schultz Research Library is the new Dr. M. Barber Backer research/computer center. Backer's scrapbooks, detailing LaPorte's medical history, soon will be housed in this area.

Email research@laportecountyhistory.org or call (219) 324-6767 for more details.

Singer-Songwriter Competition

June 1 is the submission deadline for The Acorn's 2021 Singer-Songwriter Competition.

The event includes cash prizes totaling \$1,500, along with chances to perform at future events. All different types of music are welcome. Soloists are invited, along with groups of up to three people.

Entries must be submitted by 11 p.m. EDT Tuesday, June 1. Visit tinyurl.com/yc9huypr for details.

The Acorn is located at 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Visit www.acornlive.org or call (269) 756-3879 for details.



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SAM Free Family Concert

The School of American Music's annual faculty recital, its fourth Free Family Concert series, is at 3 p.m. EDT Sunday, April 11, at Converge Community Church, 601 Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich.

Saxophonist Elin Boklund and trumpeter Madison Kutch are the soloists. Tickets to the live event are free, but space is limited, and COVID-19 safety protocols will be observed. Patrons can reserve seats at www.schoolofamericanmusic.com, where donations are welcome.



The recital also will be livestreamed on SAM's Facebook page. Madison Kutch (left) and Elin Boklund.

In addition to saxophone, Boklund teaches all band instruments at SAM. Pursuing a graduate degree in music education, she has been a member of Down by the Dock Jazz Band since 2013 and recently was appointed its director. A student of the late Jim Barkow, she is principal saxophone in LaPorte City Band and performs with LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra. For the recital, she will play "Allegro" from "Concerto in F Minor" by George Frederic Handel, "Sonata for E-flat Alto Saxophone and Piano, Movement II" by Bernhard Heiden, "Dix Figures a Danser Pour Saxophone Alto et Piano" by Pierre Max Dubois and "I Got Rhythm" by George Gershwin.

Kutch also teaches multiple band instruments at SAM, although trumpet is her specialty. A longtime student of Charles Steck, she is a member of LCSO, Windiana Concert Band, Michigan City Municipal Band and LaPorte City Band. She teaches elementary music for schools in Michigan City and has given private lessons for eight years. For the recital, she will play "Andante et Allegro for Trumpet in C" by J. Guy-Ropartz, "La fille aux cheveux de lin" (Girl with the Flaxen Hair) for cornet by Claude Debussy and "Prelude et Ballade, for Trumpet in B-flat" by Guillaume Balay.

The family concert series is supported by the Pokagon Fund, donations and Converge Church and its tech team.

Leeds Project Heart

Pinwheels for Prevention and Dunebrook are the April focus of Leeds Project Heart at Leeds Public House, 401 Franklin St. Fifty percent of proceeds from a special cocktail will support Dunebrook. Visit www.leedspublichouse.com for details.

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“Godzilla vs. Kong” is Silly...and Loads of Fun

by Andrew Tallackson

“Godzilla vs. Kong” is two hours of giant beasts kicking the crap out of each other...and for me, that was enough. The 10-year-old lurking inside me was satisfied.

Of the three entries in Legendary’s self-proclaimed “MonsterVerse” since 2014’s “Godzilla,” which includes “Kong: Skull Island” (2017) and “Godzilla: King of the Monsters” (2019), this is the best. Now, I happen to be a fan of the 2014 franchise kickstarter. Many are not. They say it’s dull, takes too long for the angry lizard to show himself. I say director Gareth Edwards, who would go on to direct “Rogue One” (2016), the best of the new “Star Wars” pictures, stages moments that rival Spielberg in popcorn-flick grandeur. A young girl, paralyzed with fear as a tsunami rolls toward her. A school bus driver, his vehicle wedged into traffic along a bridge as Godzilla approaches.

“Godzilla vs. Kong,” now in theaters and streaming free on HBO Max, is loud. Things go boom. People flee en masse in city streets, scrambling for cover. It’s a “Godzilla” movie. This is what we want from one, and it’s done in high style and kinetic energy.

The story is simple. Godzilla, once seen as humanity’s savior, appears to be turning on civilization, laying waste to a Pensacola tech facility. Perplexed, and fearful Kong is the next target, scientists attempt to move the big ape to a safer location.

Where on Earth might that be? In a nod to Jules Verne’s Journey to the Center of the Earth, it’s below the Earth’s crust. Way below, into what’s theorized is the Hollow Earth, home to all the Titans that rise to make hors d’oeuvres out of the human population.

So yeah, it’s not David Mamet complicated. We frequently go to the movies because we’re not in the mood to think. We want to be dazzled. And the first spectacular action sequence in “Godzilla vs. Kong” arrives at sea, as Godzilla goes after the fleet of battleships transporting a tranquilized Kong to the Hollow Earth entrance. How do you stage a monster smackdown that’s not on solid ground? Well, you have a re-energized Kong leap from ship to ship, diving into the water to tussle with Godzilla. In the most jaw-dropping moment, Kong hangs on for dear life to one of the ships, which repeatedly capsizes.

The director here is Adam Wingard, who up until now specialized in micro-budgeted horror like “You’re Next” (2011) and “The Guest” (2014). I feared he might not have the chops to helm a pop-

corn flick with a rumored \$160 million budget. Wingard, however, helms it like he’s been waiting all his life for this. Take, for example, the movie’s big finish. It’s staged, appropriately enough, in Hong Kong. The city is lit up like a massive neon night club. So amid all the ensuing mayhem, which is like



The action is plentiful and well staged in “Godzilla vs. Kong.”



“Godzilla vs. Kong”

Running time: 113 minutes. In theaters, HBO Max.

Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of creature violence/destruction and brief language

watching “Wrestlemania” on meth, you’re aware of the action, but also how gorgeous the movie looks with all those colors popping out you. Wingard’s camera zips through the action, yet never loses you. The perspective never gets muddled so all you see is chaos.

The movie is not exactly an actor’s dream. The characters are more at service to the plot. But Alexander Skarsgård, Millie Bobby Brown, Rebecca Hall, Brian Tyree Henry and Julian Dennison are smart enough to just roll with it and have fun. Although, giving credit where credit is due, Kaylee Hottle as Jia, a deaf girl who forms a bond with Kong, has a cherubic face and soulful eyes that give the movie unexpectedly tender moments.

“Godzilla vs. Kong” doesn’t ask much out of its audience, just that you kick back and enjoy yourself. It delivers.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



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“Tina” Offers a Sobering Look at the Iconic Performer

by Andrew Tallackson



Tina Turner (center) attends the Broadway preview of a musical about her life in “Tina,” now on HBO.

We know Tina Turner’s story. From frequent interviews. From her memoir, *I, Tina*. And, of course, from the Oscar-nominated film, “What’s Love Got to Do With It?”

She is a survivor. Against every obstacle tossed her way. However, the new HBO documentary “Tina” is the first to argue that the public is responsible for trapping her in the past. The very story we draw inspiration from is something she’d like to forget, but it claws at her. Drags her down, repeatedly forced to revisit it.

If this documentary, then, is Tina’s swan song, a cathartic way to once and for all purge herself of Ike and the abuse she suffered, then it is a fitting close to a life all the more remarkable because of how she triumphed in the end.

Directors Dan Lindsay and T.J. Martin, Oscar winners for 2011’s sports documentary “Undefeated,” take a fairly traditional approach to retelling Tina’s earlier days, balancing archival footage with more recent interviews. It charts how she met Ike, how he nurtured her talents then, slowly but steadily, subjected her to the horrors of domestic violence. How through Buddhism she found peace, and subsequently the courage to leave Ike, rewriting her life by becoming one of the most popular rock entertainers on the planet.

That, we all know.

Incredible, then, that these interviews take on a new urgency amid the *#metoo* era. We are reminded that Tina was one of the first celebrities to go public with her past, in a time when people did not discuss domestic abuse in the open. And maybe that is why her story resonates so strongly with people. We forget that it took exposing Harvey Weinstein to the world for so many women to come forth with revealing what they once suffered. Tina had the courage to do so about *30 years* before then.

The question, then, the dilemma the documentary poses is this: How do you heal from the trauma of abuse when your past is constantly flashing before you? We see this in an archival interview with Tina and Mel Gibson, the two trying to promote “Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome” (1985), but the reporter instead asking Tina for her thoughts on Ike’s drunk-driving arrest. Or her memoir *I, Tina*, which she viewed as a way to get her story out there, then abandon it for good, only to see it intensify the focus on Ike. And the press tour for “What’s Love Got to Do With It?,” when she is asked why she hasn’t watched the film. Her response: Why would I want to relive the violence, the memories of Ike brutalizing her?

In some respects, it is the price of celebrity. The



Tina Turner, now 81, admits it's often impossible to escape her past with Ike Turner.

public adores its performing gods and goddesses, and it won't let them forget any detail of their past. But the singer, now 81, admits how darn near impossible it is for the public to let go. The physical scars and bruises may be long gone, but you can see them in her eyes: The damage still exists.

Directors Lindsay and Martin, though, are wise to remind us of the second chapter to Tina's life: the meteoric success and true love with former record producer Erwin Bach. The many interviews — Angela Bassett, who scored a Best Actress Oscar nomination for playing her, Kurt Loder, who cowrote I, Tina, musical collaborators Roger Davies and Terry Britten, and friends like Oprah Winfrey — all speak to her remarkable talent, her ability to practically hypnotize you with her ferocious energy. Her strength to survive the impossible.

You do have to give directors Lindsay and Martin credit. They ask the tough questions, even while taking themselves to task for exposing Tina yet again to old wounds. At the documentary's close, we see her at the Broadway previews for a musical about her life, and the smile on her face seems genuine. She is not "performing," but at peace.

Let's hope it can stay that way.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

Gardener Association Grants

The LaPorte County Master Gardener Association again will offer a Community Grant Program to individuals or groups for gardening/horticultural volunteer projects that support the community.

Each grant is not to exceed \$300. The number of grants is at the LPCMGA's discretion, and based on available money. All requests must be through the application at www.lpmastergardener.com. Only one application may be submitted per project. A total of two projects per organization may be submitted for consideration.

April 30 is the deadline.

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“Another Round” Takes a Witty Look at Middle-Age Blues

by Andrew Tallackson

In the hands of an American director, “Another Round” would have been a slob comedy. Think about it. Four men realize the best exit strategy for a mid-life crisis is alcohol. *Lots* of it. I see the likes of Will Ferrell, Jason Bateman and Kevin Hart. Gross-out jokes. Mind-boggling nudity.

But through Danish director/co-writer Thomas Vinterberg, “Another Round” is wise, funny, surprisingly moving. Worthy of the Oscar nods it received for Best International Feature Film and Director. The later, in fact, is *the* upset this year, knocking Regina King (“One Night in Miami”) out of the loop. Could it be, I wondered, that voters were ill at ease with King’s stinging exploration of race in America.

Turns out, I was wrong. Vinterberg deserves the nomination.

Streaming on Hulu, the movie introduces four middle-age teachers at an upper-grades school in Copenhagen. Martin (Mads Mikkelsen), Tommy (Thomas Bo Larsen), Peter (Lars Ranthe) and Nikolaj (Magnus Millang). Once, they might have been good at their job. Now, jaded by the students, they’ve becoming boring. Listless. Disappointments to their families.

Together one night to celebrate Nikolaj’s 40th birthday, Nikolaj shares a theory by Norwegian psychiatrist Finn Skårderud that suggests people with daily blood-alcohol contents of 0.05 are more relaxed and creative. The idea seems ludicrous to these guys, but as they let it swirl about in their thoughts, they decide to go for it.

Vinterberg stages their experiment with wit and insight. These men don’t simply chug a beer before work. They buy Breathalyzers to ensure their BAC is *exactly* 0.05. They try to disguise the scent of booze on their breath. And, nothing to drink after 8 p.m.

Just what uptight educated men might do.

The plan works. As the alcohol thaws their middle-age freeze, all four men snap to life. The most joyous moment is delivered by Mikkelsen, who up until this point plays Martin as if in a lobotomized funk. Now, liberated by the drink, he zips around

his classroom, inspiring a lively discussion on key historical figures and their private lives.

There also are quiet, tender moments, the most affecting being Larsen’s Tommy, who comforts the



Invigorated by alcohol, Martin (Mads Mikkelsen) engages his class in discussion in “Another Round,” now streaming on Hulu.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“Another Round”

Running time: 117 minutes. Hulu. Not Rated.

pint-sized outcast on the soccer team he coaches.

“Another Round,” however, isn’t content to let these men off the hook. No, it is smarter than that. Vinterberg puts them through the ringer, forcing them to confront real issues, specifically fear of failure. Only when they experience joy without resorting to alcohol can they be happy.

That message might nearly tip the scale for “Another Round,” sabotaging the otherwise buoyant tone. But no, Vinterberg applies just enough introspection before arriving at a bittersweet resolution. Actually, the final scene of “Another Round” is exhilarating. Rapturous joy amid the freeing sensation of knowing what you want from life.

I adore this film.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

And the Nominees Are...

PICTURE

- "The Father"
- "Judas and the Black Messiah"
- "Mank"
- "Minari"
- "Nomadland"
- "Promising Young Woman"
- "Sound of Metal"
- "The Trial of the Chicago 7"

DIRECTOR

- Lee Isaac Chung, "Minari"
- Emerald Fennell, "Promising Young Woman"
- David Fincher, "Mank"
- Chloé Zhao, "Nomadland"
- Thomas Vinterberg, "Another Round"

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

- "Judas and the Black Messiah"
- "Minari"
- "Promising Young Woman"
- "Sound of Metal"
- "The Trial of the Chicago 7"

ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

- "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm"
- "The Father"
- "Nomadland"
- "One Night in Miami"
- "The White Tiger"

ACTRESS

- Viola Davis, "Ma Rainey"
- Andra Day, "The U.S. vs. Billie Holiday"
- Vanessa Kirby, "Pieces of a Woman"
- Frances McDormand, "Nomadland"
- Carey Mulligan, "Promising Young Woman"

ACTOR

- Riz Ahmed, "Sound of Metal"
- Chadwick Boseman, "Ma Rainey"
- Anthony Hopkins, "The Father"
- Gary Oldman, "Mank"
- Steven Yeun, "Minari"

SUPPORTING ACTOR

- Sacha Baron Cohen, "The Trial of the Chicago 7"
- Daniel Kaluuya, "Judas and the Black Messiah"
- Leslie Odom Jr., "One Night in Miami"

SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- Paul Raci, "Sound of Metal"
- Lakeith Stanfield, "Judas and..."

SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- Maria Bakalova, "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm"
- Glenn Close, "Hillbilly Elegy"
- Olivia Colman, "The Father"
- Amanda Seyfried, "Mank"
- Yuh-Jung Youn, "Minari"

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 email to drew@thebeacher.com. The deadline is noon Friday, April 16. Editor Andrew Tallackson's picks will appear in the April 22 edition, before the April 25 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 May 6 edition.

Name:

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Travel By Water

We are not meant to travel by water. We are land creatures and, as such, we are designed to walk upright and gather our nourishment from the land.

But we clearly evolved out of the water, because we are forever drawn to it.

So no wonder we go forth in the cold, dark days of winter and change into swim suits and willingly travel through water in indoor pools. Hey, some hearty souls even go so far as to call themselves polar bears and run happily into icebound lakes and rivers.



Yes, I lettered in swimming at Morgan Park High School in 1966, and the sweater still fits.



Why? Why this madness? Why do we want to travel by water when the fish are clearly laughing at us, and the dolphins are dancing rings around us?

When there were circuses to be enjoyed, we used to laugh at the clumsy attempts by seals to behave like land mammals. So, of course, they guffaw in seal when we enter their salty domain on surfboards and get mistaken for them by great white sharks.

I pondered all of this the other day as I swam some long, slow distance at South Shore Health & Racquet Club in St. Joseph, Mich.

There are no fish in the pool — at least that I am aware of — but, if there were, they would be laughing their gills off at my clumsy attempt to be a sea creature.

I am no more a creature of the sea than an octopus is a mountain climber.

Come on, land-based folks, we are landlubbers, pure and simple.

Ask any seasick sailor where he would rather be: on a storm-tossed ship out in the middle of the ocean, or home in bed with a fire dying peacefully in the hearth.

Hmm. Such were my thoughts as I hit the wall and turned back to do another lap. Why am I doing this? What sort of creature do I think I am?



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I could be making three times better time on deck, even in deck shoes.

Yeah, I told myself, but you like it.

You like travel by water.

Why?

Just because you were a big fan of "Flipper" on TV doesn't mean you are some friendly dolphin that always comes to rescue its stupid landlubber pals.

You're a human with no webbing between your fingers and toes. You could swim all the long, slow distance you want and never give a goldfish a swim for its money.

So why?

Why abandon a warm bed, get dressed, drive through the wintry darkness, get undressed, throw on a swim suit, jump into a cool, chlorinated swimming pool and swim laps before first light?

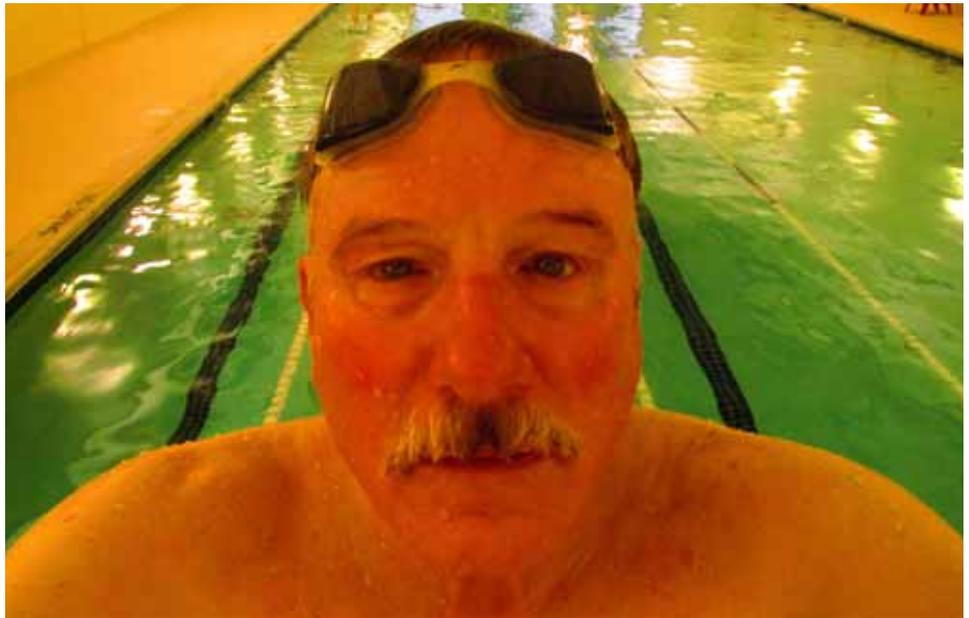
What's this all about?

Why, Chuckie Boy, are you doing this?

Stroke, stroke, bail, bail.

Hmmm.

Another turn.



A self-portrait after a "70 for 70" swim at South Shore Health & Racquet Club. Meaning, I swam 70 lengths to honor my 70th birthday earlier in

More of the same, with fogged-up goggles, no less. And then it hit me.

Loud and clear, and right from the '60s of my mis-spent youth:

IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT!

And so, do it. I do, and I will continue to swim long, slow distances as long as it keeps feelin' good.

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• **Beginning Ceramics classes for adults resume on site this month, with Milissa Beale serving as the instructor.**

During the five-week course that starts from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 7, participants learn basic techniques for wheel throwing, hand building and how to finish works using standard decorating and glazing styles. Students will make three to five finished pieces. An additional daytime class starts from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, April 9.

For those with ceramics experience, open studio classes are from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Fridays beginning April 9. There is no structured lesson; however, Beale is present to offer help and guidance. Works created can be fired for participants.

The cost for the Beginning and Open Studio classes is \$165, with members receiving a \$20 discount. The cost of clay (25 pounds) is an additional \$20, payable to the instructor on the first day of class. All other supplies are included.

A limited number of seats are available due to COVID-19, and a COVID-19 waiver must be signed. Masks are still required. Hand sanitizer will be available and social distancing practiced. The classroom will be cleaned and sanitized.

Due to COVID-19, no missed sessions can be made up at this time.



Monthly children's art classes during the school year are taught on Zoom by Jennifer Aitchison.

All materials are included in the tuition and can be picked up from the center. Students actively participate in learning while studying a major movement of modern art history each month. All classes include drawing in some form and exposure to mediums such as painting, printmaking, sculpture,



Milissa Beale is the instructor for Beginning Ceramics classes.

collage, drawing, weaving and paper arts. On-site classes may be added later when it is safe to do so.

April projects will be created in a mix of mediums inspired by the Surrealism movement. Discussion will include the philosophy behind the works of Salvador Dali and Rene Magritte. All materials are included.

The schedule is:

- Monday, 1:30-3 p.m., homeschool, 8- to 15-year-olds.
- Monday, 3:30-5 p.m., elementary, 8- to 12-year-olds.
- Tuesday, 1-2 p.m., preschool/K, 3- to 5-year-olds.
- Tuesday, 4-5:30 p.m., 5- to 8-year-olds.
- Wednesday, 3:30-5 p.m., 5- to 8-year-olds.
- Thursday, 1:30-3 p.m., 8- to 15-year-olds.
- Thursday, 3:30-5 p.m., fifth through eighth grades.
- Thursday, 5:30-7 p.m., 13- to 18-year-olds.

Tuition is \$90 per month for high-school, middle-school, elementary and home-school students (the member rate is \$70), and \$75 for preschool and kindergarten students (the member rate is \$55). Preschoolers will need assistance from someone at home. A bag with supplies is included in the tuition and can be picked up from the center.

Chesterton Art Center is located at 115 S. Fourth St. Visit www.chestertonart.com or call (219) 926-4711 for more information.

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Footlight Players

Footlight Players again will offer a free two-week workshop open to the first 30 participants between ages 7-17.

The only requirement is that the child must attend every session and performance. Five instructors are involved. Returning are: Robert Komendera (acting director and author); Lee Meyer (music/vocal direction); Laura Meyer (assistant choreographer/costuming); and Janice Rice (workshop/production manager). Joining them is Denise Barkow (assistant to the director/choreographer). Instruction includes acting techniques, vocal elocution/projection, stage presence, character development, vocal and musical training, choreography and costume design.

The workshop will have nine sessions from 1-4 p.m. July 12-16 and 19-22. A full dress rehearsal is Friday, July 23, and performances are at 7:30 p.m. July 24 and a July 25 matinee. The show, "Happily Ever After," was written by Komendera.

Each participant receives a show T-shirt, show button, a full script, including music, and two complimentary tickets to the show. A cast photo and DVD of the opening-night performance are available for a nominal fee.

Visit www.footlightplayers.org and complete the form, or call Komendera at (219) 8795-840 to request one be sent by mail. The deadline is July 6.

Also, any high school senior, or individual who graduated high school in the past two years and lives in LaPorte County, can apply for the \$1,000 "Robert W. Komendera Fine Arts Scholarship."

Offered by The Footlight Players Inc. of Michigan City, it honors Komendera's more than 35 years of dedication to community theater.

Visit www.footlightplayers.org to complete the application, or have one mailed by contacting Komendera at (219) 879-5840 or William Wild at (219) 861-7034. If sending the application by mail, address it to: Footlight Players, Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 46, Michigan City, IN 46361-0046.

A committee will read all applications and select the recipient. The winner and three members of his/her family will be invited for free to view a musical revue Friday, June 25, where a check will be awarded to the winner. All applicants must plan to further his/her study of any fine arts program. Applications must be received on or before May 1.

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LCSO in the Spotlight



Sohyun Yoon.

Editor's note — This weekly spotlight, provided by Tim King, LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra executive director, highlights its talented musicians.

Sohyun Yoon is a violinist from South Korea who has been an LCSO member since 2010.

She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in violin performance and music education from universities in Seoul, then attended Indiana University-South Bend to further her education in violin performance.

Under the direction of members of the Avalon String Quartet and Euclid Quartet, she completed the artist diploma, performer diploma and another master's degree in violin performance, with a full scholarship throughout her studies.

In addition to LCSO, she has performed with various ensembles, including South Bend Symphony Orchestra, Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra and Symphony of the Lakes. She is married to LCSO's associate concertmaster, Jae-Sung Lee, and they perform together as members of The Quartet Northside.

LaPorte County Public Library

LaPorte County Public Library has updated its curbside pickup service using meeScan.

New users can download the meeScan app through options such as Apple and Google Play. Then, place holds on items using a customer account. Once at the library, check in using the app and clicking Pickup from the bottom of the screen (or calling the library location). An appointment no longer is needed. Add the parking space on the app if picking up from the main location. Enter information in the instructions box if picking up holds placed on more than one account, or if needing additional assistance.

A staff member brings held items to the vehicle. Customers using the app receive updates as their requests are processed. Returns can be placed in book drops and be checked in within 24 to 72 hours. At this time, there is no limit to the number of items customers can reserve and pick up during curbside.

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

Check laportelibrary.org and follow social media for updates.

The following program is planned:

- Renaissance Inventions from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 10, at the Coolspring Branch. Using augmented reality goggles, get a close view of some of Da Vinci's famous Renaissance inventions, such as the Leocopter and his bird-like flying machine. Afterward, make a dragonfly helicopter. All attendees older than 2 must wear a face mask. Seating is arranged to maintain social distancing. Registration is required through the website.

LaPorte County Public Library is located at 904 Indiana Ave. The Coolspring Branch is located at 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Visit www.laportelibrary.org for more details.



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

- Northwest Health LaPorte, 1007 W. Lincolnway, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, April 9.
- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, April 12.

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

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, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. 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:

- April 14 — Owl Prowl.
- April 28 — Flower Power.
- May 12 — Timber.

Migratory Bird & Scavenger Hunt

The program is from 9 to 11:30 a.m. or 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday, April 8, at Luhr County Park.

Stop by the Nature Center to pick up a self-guided scavenger hunt.

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. April 12 and 26 and May 3 at Luhr County Park. Call at least one week in advance to register.

Rock Painting Craft Make and Take

The free program is from 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday, April 15, at Luhr County Park Nature Center.

Take two favorite rocks to paint. All ages are welcome, and children must be accompanied by an adult. Supplies are available while they last. No pre-registration is required. Mask must be worn.

Healthy Lifestyles

The free social club that emphasizes quality of life meets from 9 to 10 a.m. Wednesdays at Luhr County Park Nature Center. Programs focus on health trends, gardening, medical information and balancing active lifestyles. Call at least one week in advance to sign up (the maximum allowed is 30). The schedule is:

- May 12: "Soil Health, Garden Tools and Pruning 101" by Sacha Gee-Burns.
- June 9: "GERD — New Treatments for Relief of Heartburn & Acid Reflux," Dr. Conn.
- July 14: Nutrition, food groups and labeling, Stephanie Thomas.



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Fernwood Botanical Garden

• **Member Dog Days from 8 to 10 a.m. EDT Saturday, April 10.**

Exclusive to members, dogs must be on a lead, and owners must clean up after them. Check Fernwood's Facebook page for a weather status update the Friday before.

• **Spring Retreat from 1 to 4 p.m. EDT Saturday, April 10.**

Workshops emphasize taking sensory walks (forest-bathing), exploring micro-environments, creating mandalas and appreciating poetry inspired by natural elements. The retreat closes by the river with seasonal reflective meditation. Visit <https://spore-studios.com/yoga/> to register.

• **Outdoor Yoga from noon to 1:15 p.m. EDT Friday, April 16.**

Join instructor Deirdre Guthrie for the all-levels class. Visit <https://spore-studios.com/yoga/> for details or to register.

□

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.

Bikes on Trains Program

The South Shore Line's Bikes on Trains program is offered on five morning and three afternoon/evening rush-hour weekday trains.

It's also available three morning and seven afternoon/evening off-peak weekday trains, as well as 14 weekend trains.

Bike cars are rack-equipped in addition to regular seating so passengers can ride in the car near their bicycles. Bike icons can be found on the SSL timetable next to specific train times that run equipped with the racks. These cars also are clearly marked with a bike symbol on the windows. Bikes are not permitted during special Chicago events such as Lollapalooza and the Chicago Air & Water Show.

Visit www.mysouthshoreline.com or download the SSL app (available for iPhone and Android) for more details. Passengers wishing to take bicycles on the train must comply with requirements listed on the SSL's website. Masks are required in stations and on trains.

Gabis Arboretum Spring Hours

Gabis Arboretum at Purdue Northwest, 444 W. County Road 100 North, Valparaiso, has shifted to spring hours.

Hours are 8 a.m.-7 p.m. daily. Hiking trails and indoor facilities are open. Admission fees also resume. The Railway Garden opens May 1 and remains open from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday-Sunday through Oct. 31. Visit tinyurl.com/74km3zen for details.

Boys & Girls Club

Boys & Girls Clubs of LaPorte County is officially “back to after school.”

After months of adjusting to changing schedules and operating with extended hours during periods of online learning, club members and staff are settling back into their routines for after-school offerings. The club offers services from 3 to 6 p.m. daily at Pine Elementary School, Springfield Elementary School and the Charles R. Westcott Club. In recent weeks, club members have participated in a wide range of activities, including making slime, decorating valentines and creating a virtual museum in recognition of Black History Month.



“Reduced COVID-19 risk levels have made it possible for our friends at Michigan City Area Schools to resume in-person learning, and for us to return to many of the traditional after-school programs that our club members and staff enjoy,” BGCLPC Chief Executive Officer Michelle Shirk said in a press release.

All BGCLPC services are free. The organization relies on grants in addition to annual campaign donations from individuals, businesses and foundations. Visit www.bgclpc.org for more details.

Bridgman Public Library



Hazelgrove

Author William Hazelgrove will present “Sally Rand: American Sex Symbol” in a free Zoom presentation at 6:30 p.m. EDT Tuesday, April 13, through Bridgman (Mich.) Public Library.

Hazelgrove will focus on Rand finding fame and fortune in Hollywood silent movies in the 1920s. Then, with the advent of talking pictures, her career collapsed and she ended up in Chicago broke. Two ostrich feathers discovered in a second-hand store rescued her from obscurity.

The Zoom link is available at www.bridgmanlibrary.com. The library is located at 4460 Lake St. Call (269) 465-3663 for more details.



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Meals on Wheels Shoe Drive

Meals on Wheels LaPorte County will collect new, used and gently worn shoes through May 31.

Michigan City locations include: St. Joseph Young Men's Society, 2001 Franklin St.; St. John's United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road; Walgreens, Barker Avenue and Franklin Street; and LaPorte Community Federal Credit Union, 1315 Southwind Drive. *LaPorte locations include:* Bethany Lutheran Church, 102 G St.; LaPorte Community Federal Credit Union, 1800 E. Lincolnway; and Tractor Supply, 71 Pine Lake Ave. Contact Amanda Fowler at (219) 872-9117 or afowler@laportecountymealsonwheels.org for more details.

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Bird Habitat Stewardship Day

A free "Migratory Bird Habitat Stewardship Day" is from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 10, at Westchester Migratory Bird Sanctuary, 1050 S. 11th St., Chesterton.

Mandi Glanz, an Indiana Invasives Initiative regional specialist, will be joined by other plant and wildlife experts to discuss birds, bats and other animals, invasive plants, water quality and how to help the environment. Another emphasis is identifying plants harmful to people, such as poison ivy. Children can pull invasive garlic mustard and plant paw-paw trees.



Glanz

Take heavy duty work gloves and gardening tools. Some tools will be available. Lunch is provided. Email info@westchesterbird.org or call (219) 252-0888 for more details.

Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs will be offered:

• **"Walk & Talk With the Timberdoodles" at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 10.**

Join a naturalist on the Beach Pavilion's west side to search for shorebirds often called woodcocks, bogsuckers or timberdoodles. The hike is moderate and just more than one-mile long. Dress for the weather. Pre-registration is required.

• **"Salamander Gander" at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, April 11.**

Meet at the Nature Center Auditorium to learn about salamanders before heading out to search for them. Pre-registration is required.

• **COVID-19 program safety precautions.**

Pre-registration is required for all programs to properly meet gathering guidance restrictions. Social distancing must be practiced by staying at least 6 feet away from others. Masks or other face coverings of the nose and mouth are required.

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

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• **The four-week Zoom workshop “Intermediate/Advanced Pastels” from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Thursdays, April 8-29.**

Mary Ann Pals will demonstrate detailed pastel techniques while working from her home studio. She also will receive formal written and verbal critiques of individual pastel projects. Students can choose their own projects or ones provided by her.

During the first class, Pals will offer help in choosing a reference photo that has a sound composition, attractive light/dark contrast and color harmonies. Students then work at their own pace outside of class, emailing their progress pictures to Pals each week for a formal critique during each subsequent class session. The cost is \$80.

• **“Painting with Pastels” for beginners through advanced students, with Pals as the instructor, starting April 21.**

The five-week session for beginners is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays, April 21-May 19. The cost is \$80. The three-week session for intermediate through advanced students is May 5-19. The cost is \$50. The target age is 18 and older. Students are guided through painting with soft pastels. They also are provided with a supply list after the first class.

The Art Barn is located at 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Call (219) 462-9009 or visit www.artbarnschool.org to register or for more details.

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Activities to Explore

In the Area:

April 8 — Migratory Bird & Scavenger Hunt, 9-11:30 a.m. or 1-4 p.m., Luhr County Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Info: www.laportecountyparks.org, (219) 325-8315.

April 10 — Renaissance Inventions, 10-11:30 a.m., LaPorte County Public Library Coolspring Branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Registration: www.laportelibrary.org

April 10 — Free Zoom painting class, 2-4 p.m. Through Art Barn School of Art, Friends of Indiana Dunes Inc., Indiana Dunes National Park. Registration: www.artbarnschool.org

April 10 — “Walk & Talk With the Timberdoodles,” 7 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Registration: (219) 926-1390.

April 11 — “Salamander Gander,” 10:30 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Registration: (219) 926-1390.

Through April 30 — Exhibit, “Inspired/Inspire,” Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: www.lubeznikcenter.org, (219) 874-4900.

Through June 5 — New exhibits, “Lost and Looking” & “Pipelines and Borderlines: The Art of Survival,” Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: www.lubeznikcenter.org

Wednesdays — Virtual Story Time, 10 a.m., through Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/

In the Region

April 8 — Free South Shore Arts online Art in Focus program, 7 p.m. Focus: “Colossus.” Link: www.SouthShoreArtsOnline.org/art-in-focus

April 9-18 — “(title of show),” Elkhart Civic Theatre @ Bristol (Ind.) Opera House, 210 E. Vistula St. Times (all Eastern): April 9, 10, 16, 17 — 7:30 p.m./April 11, 18 — 3 p.m. Tickets: (in person) students/\$16, seniors 62+/\$20, adults/\$22; (streaming) \$19. Reservations: www.elkhartcivictheatre.org/tix, (574) 848-4116.

April 10 — “Migratory Bird Habitat Stewardship Day,” 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Westchester Migratory Bird Sanctuary, 1050 S. 11th St., Chesterton. Free. Info: info@westchesterbird.org, (219) 252-0888.

April 10 — Spring Retreat, 1-4 p.m. EDT, Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. Registration: <https://spore-studios.com/yoga/>

April 10 — The Empty Pockets perform “Abbey Road,” streaming live from The Acorn, 7 p.m. CDT/8 p.m. EDT. Registration: tinyurl.com/t3m88ype

April 11 — School of American Music’s annual faculty recital, 3 p.m. EDT, Converge Community Church, 601 Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich. Free. Reservations: www.schoolofamericanmusic.com. Livestream @ SAM Facebook page.

April 13 — Free Zoom program, author William Hazelgrove, "Sally Rand: American Sex Symbol," 6:30 p.m. EDT, through Bridgman (Mich.) Public Library. Info, Zoom link: www.bridgmanlibrary.com

Through April 11 — Youth Art 2021, Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Hours (EDT): 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tue.-Fri./1-4 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Info: www.midwestmuseum.us, (574) 293-6660.

Through April 25 — Pop-up Exhibit (artists, business tenants, board members, volunteers), The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Hours (Eastern): noon-4 p.m. Fri.-Sun. Info: gallery@boxfactoryforthearts.org

Through June 6 — New exhibits, "Boom Bloom" & "The Undetectable Presence: A Selection of Sculpture," Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: www.krasl.org

Tuesdays/Fridays — Open Studios for 18 and older, 1-4 p.m., Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Cost: \$5/day. Registration: tinyurl.com/8hmejvp9

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On April 8, 1730, in New York City, the first Jewish congregation in the United States consecrated its synagogue.

On April 8, 1935, the Works Progress Administration was approved by Congress.

On April 8, 1952, to avert a nationwide steel strike, President Harry S. Truman seized the steel industry.

On April 8, 1974, Atlanta Braves outfielder Hank Aaron, in a home game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, hit his 715th career home run. The homer came off pitcher Al Downing, and broke the home run record set by legendary Babe Ruth.

On April 8, 1986, actor Clint Eastwood was elected by a landslide as mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif.

On April 8, 1990, Ryan White, 18, the AIDS patient whose battle for acceptance gained national attention, died in Indianapolis.

On April 9, 1833, the first tax-supported library in the United States was founded in Peterborough, N.H.

On April 9, 1928, Mae West made her New York debut in a play called "Diamond Lil." Critics described it as "shocking," "suggestive" and in "questionable taste." Such reviews, naturally, made the play a huge success.

On April 9, 1939, after being denied the use of Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution, more than 75,000 people gathered in Washington's Lincoln Memorial Park to hear black singer Marian Anderson perform.

On April 9, 1959, NASA announced the selection of America's first seven astronauts: Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, John Glenn, Gus Grissom, Wally Schirra, Alan Shepard and Donald Slayton.

On April 9, 1963, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was made an honorary U.S. citizen.

On April 10, 1790, the United States patent system was established.

On April 10, 1849, New York's Walter Hunt was granted a patent for the safety pin.

On April 10, 1866, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was incorporated.

On April 10, 1912, the luxury liner Titanic, on its maiden voyage to New York, set sail from the English port of Southampton with 2,224 people aboard.

On April 10, 1925, F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby was published.

On April 11, 1689, William III and Mary II were crowned as joint sovereigns of England.

On April 11, 1898, following the sinking of the U.S.S. Battleship Oregon, President William McKinley asked Congress to declare war against Spain.

On April 11, 1921, Iowa became the first state to impose a tax on cigarettes.

On April 11, 1931, Dorothy Parker retired as drama critic for *The New Yorker*, thus ending her self-described "Reign of Terror."

On April 11, 1947, marking the first time a black player appeared with a major league baseball team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, with Jackie Robinson in the lineup, played an exhibition game against the New York Yankees.

On April 12, 1877, the catcher's mask was first used in a baseball game.

On April 12, 1927, Baseball's opening day at Yankee Stadium featured a historic 15 future Hall of Fame players.

On April 12, 1934, Tender is the Night by F. Scott Fitzgerald was published.

On April 12, 1947, television talk show host David Letterman was born in Indianapolis.

On April 12, 1955, the Food and Drug Administration declared the Salk polio vaccine to be safe and effective.

On April 13, 1796, the first elephant (a gift from India) to see the New World arrived in New York.

On April 13, 1870, the Metropolitan Museum of Art was founded in New York.

On April 13, 1923, the Illinois legislators voted to give women the right to serve on juries.

On April 13, 1958, Van Cliburn became the first American to win the Moscow's "Tchaikovsky International Piano Contest."

On April 13, 1964, voted as best actor for his work in "Lilies of the Field," Sidney Poitier became the first black to win an Academy Award.

On April 14, 1775, Philadelphia Quakers, under the guidance of Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush, organized the first American society for the abolition of slavery.

On April 14, 1828, the first edition of Noah Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language was published.

On April 14, 1865, while attending the comedy "Our American Cousin" at Washington's Ford's Theatre, President Abraham Lincoln was shot and killed by actor John Wilkes Booth. The President died the next morning.

On April 14, 1912, the British luxury liner Titanic struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic off Newfoundland on its debut voyage to New York. Early the next morning, it sank with the loss of 1,500 lives.

BROCHURES



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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

The Bounty by Janet Evanovich and Steve Hamilton (hardcover, \$28 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 305 pages.)

Nick and Nora Charles, Mr. and Mrs. Smith — crime-fighting duos have always been popular in books and movies. This week, I give you two of our most prolific crime writers whose combined talents light up the sky like the 4th of July, with a story of another crime-fighting duo sure to entertain.

First I give you — Kate O'Hare, FBI agent. She's good, but her current assignment as handler to Nick Fox leaves a lot to be desired — he is not one to be “handled.”

Nick Fox — former master criminal, now an FBI “consultant,” another word for “help us or go directly to jail.” He's hard to control, has his own way of handling situations, which usually leaves Kate...frustrated.

This is the seventh novel featuring this unusual duo with a love-hate relationship: “*He was smart, sexy, and playful, and if Nick had once been a world-class thief, he was still and always would be a galaxy-class kisser...*” Kate can only call their relationship “complicated.”

On loan to Interpol, the pair is on their way to Rome to catch a thief — based on intel from the dark web — who supposedly aims to enter the Vatican City museum and steal a “diamond-encrusted ring that once belonged to Pope Paul VI” and worth millions. Only it turns out he's not after the ring. Did they really think he would be that predictable?

Last-minute information from the Italian police is that the would-be thief is one Quentin Fox. Yup, Nick's father. Now, the chase becomes personal.

Quentin is an art dealer, although his international business dealings are very shady, until Nick finds out he has been working “*as an off-the-books resource for the CIA.*” What a shock. Second shock — Quentin isn't after the ring, but a piece of a 75-year-old treasure map.

Now we have the third shock — Seems Quentin's work with the CIA ended some years ago, so whatever he is doing now is on his own. That's a lot for a son to absorb.

And then there's the Big Problem. Nick and Kate need a lot more background on what is going on...

A group of neo-Nazis, led by Klaus Egger and calling themselves The Brotherhood, have come together to find the millions in gold supposedly hid-

den during World War II. Egger's grandfather was a member of the original Brotherhood. These men now have united with the Red Star Corps, a terrorist group looking to acquire biological and chemical weapons the gold would buy.

Clues written on various pieces of a map will, supposedly, lead them to the treasure possibly buried somewhere in eastern Europe. Nick can't believe his father would work for these monsters. He needs to know if Quentin is working on his own, for the Brotherhood or just enjoying the chase?

Since the Vatican has a copy of the stolen map, it's time for Kate and Nick to assemble a team and hope they can catch up with Quentin.

First person they contact is Professor Lewis, an expert on Germanic literature. He is called in to translate the symbols on the map, hopefully leading them to the next piece of the puzzle. I don't think getting shot at is part of the professor's plan, but he proves to be stalwart, and the only one who can interpret the runes on the map.

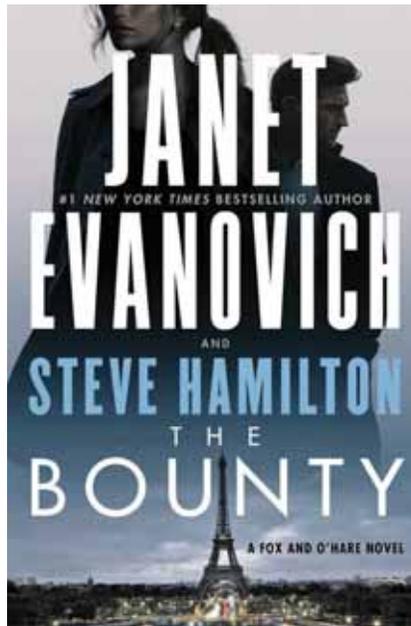
Kate knows they need “*climbing gear, communications, weapons...*” And that can only be provided by one man — Kate's father, Jake O'Hare, a former Special Forces operative, expert in getting in and out of tight situations.

The real question is not just whether they can find all pieces of the map, but whether they can keep from getting killed by the Brotherhood and maybe killing each other... learning to work and be nice to each other may be the hardest thing they have to do.

From Rome to London, to Paris and Vienna, to the most beautiful castle in the world — Neuschwanstein in Bavaria — the five of them will explore caves, the very top of the Eiffel Tower, polar bears in a zoo, a monastery on the side of a mountain, even a trip to the Sahara by way of Casablanca. How many more clues are there?

Don't forget the determined Brotherhood, chasing Nick and Kate across Europe hoping to find — what? — that the treasure really does exist? Or that they have been duped? Evanovitch gives us plenty of action, as well as two interesting characters in Nick and Kate. With the help of seasoned crime writer Steve Hamilton, this is an action-paced story. Some humor and a little romance make all these characters come alive — you will be cheering and booing until the exciting climax.

Till next time, happy reading!



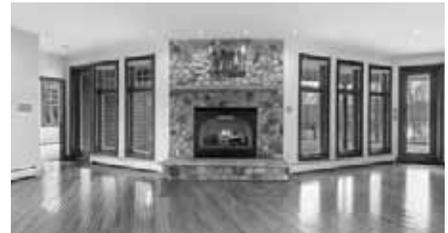
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