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The Search Draws to a Close

by Andrew Tallackson



Wilbur Lin leads LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra during its March 14 performance at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. All concert photos by Bob Wellinski.

“We have an audience. How about that?”

The giddy relief in Tim King’s voice was evident as he introduced LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra’s March 14 concert amid a round of applause. After a difficult year in which COVID-19 took its toll on many an arts organization, the ensuing performance embraced an air of hope.

As LCSO’s executive director, King now could check off a few items from his administrative wish list:

- The first LCSO concert with a live audience in more than a year.

- The presence of Wilbur Lin, final candidate in the “Bravo Maestro!” conductor search, one prolonged by the pandemic.
- A program whose rendition of Gershwin’s “Rhapsody in Blue,” which featured a virtuoso turn at the piano by LaPorte’s Carey Scheck, was, in my opinion, one of the symphony’s finest hours.

King was all smiles. The musicians, the board, the tech team — everyone — could argue now was the time for optimism and renewal.

Think about it. At this time last year, everything

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The Search...

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was up in the air. Programs by four of the six LCSO conductor candidates were in the bag: Russell Ger, Maria Mercedes Garcia Diaz, Alexander Platt and Carolyn Watson. Lin was in town, with one rehearsal under his belt, when Indiana imposed its COVID-19 guidelines for self-isolation and quarantine. Arts organization after arts organization shelved its slate of programs. Our overall quality of life was in limbo.

As the months dragged on, with no end in sight to the pandemic, LCSO began exploring options through outdoor performances and virtual concerts. Conductor candidate Christopher Fashun arrived in November for a virtual lineup of "The Great American Songbook." That concert also involved LCSO taking crucial health measures that included socially distancing the musicians from each other.

Now, with a crowd of about 300 present at LaPorte Civic Auditorium for the final "Bravo Maestro" concert, a process begun in 2018 was drawing to a close. Did King, at any point, fear this moment might never arrive? He laughed when asked that question.

"I was more scared for the November (2020) concert than this one," he said. "I always felt like we'd be somewhere further along by the time March came along. It was the Nov. 7 concert that scared me to death. I was so worried we couldn't get that concert in and, therefore, we'd have to go another year of doing this.

"It's exhausting for everybody," he continued, "but for some reason, I think it worked out for the best. I think there was too much pressure last time. We knew COVID was coming, and it was like we had to

get it under the wire. Everyone was tense and worried about it. They don't feel that way now. We've already played under these conditions. They know what is expected. There is not a tenseness that was there this time last year. And it's better for the candidate. I don't think he feels the tension either."

If Lin had any case of the nerves, he didn't show it. Amiable, humble, he was practically chomping at the bit to get started on "Rhapsody in Blue."

"I really like this, not just because it's one of the most dazzling, the most stunning pieces you can



Making sure musicians wore masks and were socially distanced from each other remained a priority during the concert.

imagine, but also because this is the piece that actually put the United States of America on the map in the grand scheme of western classical music," he told the crowd.

"Before Gershwin, there were a lot of well-respected jazz musicians, but they were never considered serious musicians by musicians of the world. This piece put Gershwin on the map. This piece put American orchestra music on the map."

And with that, Scott Kurtzweil, LCSO's principal clarinet, flawlessly unleashed the piece's legendary clarinet trill opening. From there, Lin and the orchestra felt like an extension of each other. There was no lag between Lin's brisk command through his baton and the desired response from the musi-

cians. The sound was so tight, there were moments when I closed my eyes, appreciating the work as if listening to a recording of it.

And then, there was Scheck. “Rhapsody in Blue” is no easy feat for a pianist. It requires a certain athleticism, a propulsive energy and skill. But Scheck, a LaPorte Community School Corp. middle-school music teacher, was not intimidated. Her fingers raced across the keys with a precision that was mind-boggling. Her technical prowess was matched by her interpretation of the piece, the feeling she invested in it, from thunderous intensity to delicate sensitivity.

The response in the end was a rousing standing ovation that edged close to a minute in length.



Carey Scheck's turn at the piano for “Rhapsody in Blue” yielded a nearly one-minute standing ovation.

After the concert, Scheck chatted with concertgoers in the LaPorte Civic front lobby. So impressed was the audience, in fact, it was difficult for *The Beacher* to conduct its interview. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to compliment her. That included a student of Scheck’s who didn’t hesitate to ask, “Are your hands red?,” prompting hearty laughter from Scheck. The boy continued. “I think my hands would hurt. That was too much finger moving. I couldn’t do that.” The educator in Scheck emerged, offering a gentle “awww” before adding, “They are OK, although if I practice too much, they get a little sore.”

Scheck first played a solo arrangement of “Rhapsody in Blue” during a 2019 LCSO A La Carte fundraiser, prompting King to inquire if she’d be interested in performing it with the symphony.

Ready to appear with LCSO last year, Scheck was grateful for the delay COVID-19 caused. Sadly, it was around that time her father became ill and passed away. Coping with that loss, she stepped away from “Rhapsody in Blue.”

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“I took most of the summer away from it, then picked it back up and that made such a big difference,” she said. “To have that time on it, then away, it was really great.

“The piece is very tonal,” she continued. “It makes a lot of musical sense, so memorizing it is not quite as challenging. It’s definitely one of those pieces where, once you know it, it’s just in you.”

□

The second half of LC-SO’s March 14 concert was Beethoven’s “Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Opus 92,” slated last year to celebrate the composer’s 250th birthday. The irony of the piece, whose “Allegretto” movement is so popular, it often is performed separately from the complete work, is that it arrived during a most difficult time. Beethoven was experiencing hearing loss, and a love affair that had come to an end.

But, as Lin explained to the audience, “This is one of Beethoven’s most joyous pieces ever. He was at a period of his life where he was accepting the circumstances surrounding him...he started to accept that this is who he is.”

He then placed the work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I think this is the perfect message for us,” he said. “We are ready to move on. We are accepting what we need to go through, but we are hopeful, we are joyful, and this piece is the perfect moment for that.”

And with “Symphony No. 7,” Lin put LC-SO’s string section to work, accentuating the lush themes and closing it with regal, triumphant flourish. Then, in an unusual move, he asked each individual section to stand at separate times so the musicians could savor the moment. The rapturous applause.

Lin was delighted by the reaction. He certainly has the background to achieve such greatness. The Taiwanese-American conductor recently was named Cincinnati Symphony’s assistant conductor. His first season began as assistant conductor of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra and conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestras. He also is the artistic director during summer seasons of the Chamber Philharmonic Taipei. Another highlight:

He graduated from Riccardo Muti’s Italian Opera Academy.

After the concert, Lin took a few moments to speak with *The Beacher*. His focus was less about himself and more about everyone involved in the performance.

“We did our hard work, and it paid off for me and the orchestra,” he said. Asked about Scheck, he exclaimed, “Carey, oh my God. Why are we hiding Carey from us in this town? So tell me, is every teacher in your school district a concert pianist? So impressive.”

Lin had nothing but praise for the musicians.

“This group, everyone is here for the music,” he said. “They are not here just because this is an orchestra or the prestige, they are here for the music.

“It is so satisfying when you know that whatever you are contributing is accepted by people who are actually trying to meet you there. It’s not like I’m teaching them anything. I’m bringing my music here, and they are matching with their music, and that is the best feeling in the world.”

In the week leading up to the concert, Lin had four rehearsals with the orchestra. He also not only met in person with music students at LaPorte High School, but also conducted Zoom sessions with students at other schools.

What would he bring to LC-SO if chosen as its conductor?

“I will bring a few things,” he said. “First of all, I will bring my humble self here. I am willing to learn, to grow with this orchestra. I’ve had some experience internationally, so I will be able to bring those connections here to connect this orchestra with other orchestras around the world. And I will make sure I am part of the growth of this orchestra.”

□

So what happens next, now that all six candidates have completed their “auditions.”

King said the goal is to “fast track” a decision, hopefully by April 15. The selection committee will review all evaluation sheets completed by concertgoers over the course of the series, along with input from musicians. After the committee vote, the decision goes before the LC-SO board. The person selected, King said, will have the option to conduct



The March 14 concert marked the first time a live audience was present at LaPorte Civic Auditorium since COVID-19 hit.

the fall Hoosier Star fundraiser, but will be officially unveiled at the season kickoff in November.

A key ingredient to the success of the conductor search has been Interim Music Director Chuck Steck. He was the glue, the link between musicians and the composer candidates.

He described Lin as a joy to work with over the past week.

“He has been a good sport, and he’s worked within all the parameters, the social-distance space we had to do,” Steck said. “He’s made good things happen and together, this orchestra, they are making some great things happen.”

Reflecting on the past few years



Tim King

as interim music director, he paused. Briefly consumed by emotion.

“There is a great deal of pride,” he said. “I’ve been with this orchestra almost 50 years. They are operating with such consistency and with such care. And things happen and they happen well.”

He praised LSCO Personnel



Chuck Steck (left) is photographed with Elisabeth Waldburger on clarinet and Mike Scheck on trumpet.

Manager Morgan Sleeper, Librarian Dana Chartier and Kurtzweil, who also serves as operations manager, all helping make LSCO run like a well-oiled machine.

And, of course, Steck says, Tim King.

“It starts with a guy like him saying, let’s make sure you have what you need, let me find the resources, and constantly coming back saying you are doing a great job,” Steck said. “Everyone, they care.”

(Coverage continues on Page 6.)



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LCSO Musicians Offer Perspective on Ideal Candidate

by Connie Kuzydym

The baton awaits a new maestro. The arduous search for LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra's new conductor is over. The musicians are submitting their final review, ranking the candidates.

Imagine being a musician walking into rehearsal with a new conductor not once, but six times. Fortunately, Chuck Steck, LCSO's interim music director, diligently worked with the candidates to understand what they wanted from the chosen pieces. He then held two pre-maestro practices with the orchestra.

For the musicians, playing with LCSO is not a full-time job. Rather, they are part of a thriving community organization because they enjoy playing. Principal Percussionist Brad Staats, Principal Cellist Sara Thomas and Principal Horn JoFran Bendix are long-time instrumentalists with LCSO. The consensus is the "Bravo Maestro!" search has been an awesome and interesting experience.

"I think this proves this organization is a very coachable group, because these are very quality candidates coming through," Staats said. "Every time one comes through, our level of play rises. We learn from them...We've had a couple (guest) conductors that have come back a second or third time...and say how much better we are than we were the last time they were here...It's fun to learn the different perspectives, and I think we soak it all in."

Bendix agrees it's been wonderful and exciting to meet new conductors. She believes they have learned a lot from the process.

Thomas has experience playing amid a conductor search.

"Anytime you get to play under a different conductor, it's just going to be interesting to see what angles they come from and how we go about creating the final project," she said.

Appreciating the varying styles and visions of each candidate, the musicians also stress fundamentals as important.

"I'm looking for how they interpret dynamics, tempo clarity and understanding how his baton works, making sure we understand his movements. That we're coming in at the right time while giving him/her the time to explain what they want, so we do it the way they want, because every conductor has their own interpretation," Staats said.

Bendix finds guidance in nuances and respect of the parts important, along with clear direction, which helps them understand the precise directions written and what the conductor wants to achieve.

"It kind of brings out the individuality of the conductor," she said. "They all have ideas about interpretation."

A clear beat pattern, what they are trying to convey with their hands, along with clear verbal communications, is part of what Thomas observes.

"You want a conductor who's knowledgeable of all the sections," she continued. "It's really good to have someone who has a general idea of the type of sound your instrument is capable of and helps you draw that out...Someone who can express their interest and tell you what they want and the sound they are trying to craft...The conductor has some

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Sara Thomas (left) leads the cello section.



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LCSO Musicians Continued from Page 6

style or vision. He's studied all this music, and he knows the score inside and out, he knows...what he wants to bring up, what he wants to bring down... The more effective he is not just to the strings, but other sections in a really positive, productive, diplomatic way. It's really appreciated."

As musicians, they are one part of the cog in the process. The selection committee makes the ultimate decision. Challenging, to be sure, as there are six caliber candidates.

"We can probably center in on what these people can offer us, if it fits the expectations of the board and how they think the symphony can go," Bendix said. "I think we're in good hands, but I think it's going to be a difficult decision."

Although Staats has a definite first choice, there is more to the process.

"I think there's musicians' input, community input, audience input and whatever logistics have to be worked out because none of these people live in LaPorte," he said. "I think it's going to be a tough



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call. Thomas agreed.

"It's never going to be one person that's going to be 100 percent there...but when you have several to choose from that are in that 90 percent category, that's tough," she said. "The board isn't in the rehearsal seeing how it goes. Is it intense in the right way, is it too intense? Is it good, is it bad, is it productive? They're not seeing the same side of things that we do. We have our opinions and our surveys... and they have their opinions and surveys. They take that all into consideration."

Six very different candidates, conducting a wide variety of music. Never playing the same piece twice only adds to the difficulty of comparing them.

Looking from the musician's eye versus the marketing or business side, Thomas offers her perception of the ideal candidate.

"I would want someone knowledgeable, skilled, diplomatic, not demeaning, positive, engaging with musicians at whatever level we are...I want a conductor that can really craft that in us and take us to the next level in a productive, professional, polite, diplomatic way," she said. "Musicians want to do the best we can to offer this person a very valuable conducting experience"



JoFran Bendix is photographed during a July 2019 concert in New Buffalo, Mich.

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Bret (left) and Kyle Oscarson raised the most money for the virtual Will Sing 4 fundraiser.

The Will Sing 4 fundraiser went virtual March 5, in the process raising just more than \$10,000 for The Pax Center of LaPorte.

In the event streamed to Facebook and YouTube, eight local artists competed in a friendly competition to see who could raise the most money for The Pax Center. Each group pre-recorded two songs to allow for proper social distancing. In Round One, the first song was played and viewers donated online or by pledge to get their favorite artist to the second round.

Taking home the top honors, by raising the most money, were Kyle and Bret Oscarson, followed by the second-place duo of Norah and Natalie Gartland. Tallying the final donations, the Oscarson twins edged the Gartland girls by \$10. Coming in third place were The Dave's consisting of Dave Farris and Dave Pratt. They were joined in their first



Will Sing 4 co-producers Craig Oscarson (left) and Tim Gartland (right) present a check to Jason Clemons and Nate Loucks of The Pax Center.

song by singer Erin Conlin. Other participating artists included The Robbie Britton Band, Blue Sky Music, Audrey Marsh, James Neary and Zachariah Kirkham.

Email willsing4@yahoo.com for more details on Will Sing 4.

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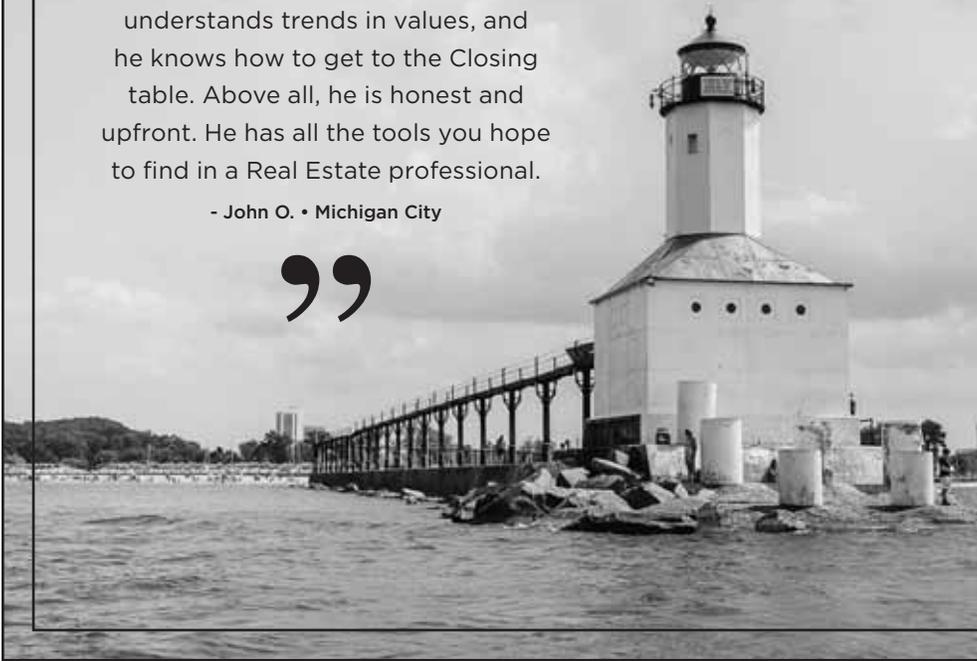
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The following services are temporarily suspended: public programs and meetings; literacy tutoring; MakerSpace/3-D printing; study rooms; homebound service; interlibrary loan; puppets; puzzles; blocks and children's AWE computers in Youth Services;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

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

One computer is reserved for genealogy research, with time limited to one hour per person per day. Four charging tables allow a limit of 30 minutes per use (no seating is available at these stations). WiFi is available throughout the building and exterior/parking lot.

Two new databases are available. Newspapers.com World Collection contains historical newspapers from the 1700s-2000s, including thousands of well-known regional, state and small local newspapers in the United States and other countries. Visit tinyurl.com/4f8kfo3v and log in with a library card number.

In addition, Fold3, a military records database powered by Ancestry.com, is available. It provides access to military records, including stories, photos and personal documents. Visitors can combine records found there with personal effects to create an online memorial for someone who served. Visit tinyurl.com/58cnu2vn and log in with a library card number.

The following virtual programming is scheduled:

- Graphic Novel Club Zoom Meetup from 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday, March 25. The focus is March, which recounts John Lewis' efforts during the Civil Rights movement. Registration is required by calling Jonathan at (219) 873-3045 or email YSONline@mclib.org. The focus next month is Nelle Stevenson's Nimona.
- Great Decisions returns through Zoom. Limited discussion booklets are available at the circulation desk. Call (219) 873-3049 for more details.
- Virtual Story Time. A new video will be posted to the website, Facebook page and YouTube channel at 10 a.m. Wednesdays. Each video will be available for two weeks at www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/. Stop by Youth Services to receive the craft project for the week.

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• **The new exhibit "Inspired/Inspire," which highlights Michigan City Area Schools visual-arts educators, runs through April 30.**

Highlighting 11 educators from elementary, middle and high schools, the exhibit celebrates their efforts to keep inspiring their students, and themselves, amid a challenging past year.

Works include painting, photography, drawing and sculpture. Artists are: Holly Beadles, Diane Grams, Samantha Rich, Erin Ledyard, Karen Maudlin, Julie Pitman, Sarah Quartuccio, Matthew Raney, Kelly Tokoly-Rothermel, Susanne Vigen and Cheri Whitler.

The exhibit is displayed in the NIPSCO Education Studio Gallery.

• **The 2021 Lubeznik Arts Festival is Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 21-22, on the LCA grounds.**

Now in its 39th year, 85 exhibitors are anticipated. The juror is Laura Cutler, who received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Otis College of Art & Design, with a concentration in ceramic sculpture, and her Master of Fine Arts in painting and anatomy from The New York Academy of Art. She has taught painting, drawing and ceramics at numerous colleges and is an Indiana University-South Bend associate faculty member. She has co-owned Thaddeus C Gallery in LaPorte since 2004.

Applications must be submitted by midnight CDT Monday, April 5, complete with a \$35 fee. Visit tinyurl.com/yhyxj8rf to apply.

Held in conjunction with the festival is "Bramson/Indiana/Lake," a show of works by Phyllis Bramson, Robert Indiana and Mayumi Lake.

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This Year, Oscar Voters Did Their Job...and Did It Well

by Andrew Tallackson

What more can you say?

Oscar voters, for once, did their job. The best of the best are before you now, ready for your consideration in *The Beacher's* Beat the Editor contest.

Sure, there were snubs — what would the Academy Awards be without them? — but 2020's contenders pretty much deserve to be here.

Consider, too, not just the diversity of nominees for the 93rd Academy Awards, but also the history makers:

- Chloé Zhao is the first Chinese woman nominated for Best Director, for “Nomadland.”
- Two women — Zhao and Emerald Fennell for “Promising Young Woman” — securing Best Director nominations. The glass ceiling cracked by Kathryn Bigelow for “The Hurt Locker” continues to shatter.
- Riz Ahmed is the first Muslim to score a Best Actor nod, for “Sound of Metal.”
- Steven Yeun is the first Asian-American nominee for Best Actor. It's also a welcome consolation to “Walking Dead” fans who saw his character meet a gruesome fate. There *is* life after Glenn.

Speaking of “Sound of Metal,” I could not be happier for its six nominations, including Best Picture. This is the kind of small, independent picture you want to shout from the rooftops for everyone to see, first for its bravery and second for the remarkable work by Ahmed and Paul Raci. Nominated for Best Supporting Actor, the veteran character actor is deeply moving as the founder of a community for the deaf. The film is streaming on Amazon Prime. If you haven't checked it out, do so. Pronto.

David Fincher's “Mank,” which leads the pack with 10 nominations, including Best Picture and Director, is the kind of film Hollywood loves because it takes a bruising look at itself. I wasn't a fan, but it likely will sweep the technical categories — and it *is* quite the technical achievement, gorgeous on every level — but not the evening's top prizes.

The surprises? Daniel Kaluuya pretty much has a lock on Best Supporting Actor for “Judas and the Black Messiah,” his turn as Illinois Black Panther Chairman Fred Hampton mesmerizing on all fronts. But kudos to Oscar voters for recognizing his costar, Lakeith Stanfield, for achieving a career best as the FBI informant who betrayed Hampton. Stanfield's final scene with Kaluuya was a blazing piece of acting: crumbling at the knowledge the end is near.

Why not more love for “One Night in Miami,” particularly Regina King for Best Director? The media has been hyping the Oscar-winning actress from Day One as a lock for a nomination. Was it sexism? Could those who voted in this field not handle the idea of three women as nominees? Or did they simply feel the movie wasn't good enough, since it failed to score a Best Picture nod? Having not seen “Another Round,” which earned a surprise nomination for Director Thomas Vinterberg, that remains to be seen.

I would have liked to see Delroy Lindo receive a Best Actor nomination for Spike Lee's “Da 5 Bloods.” This was a career high: a portrait of a man consumed by his past and falling apart at the seams. The film only received one nomination — Best Original Score? Was the field of

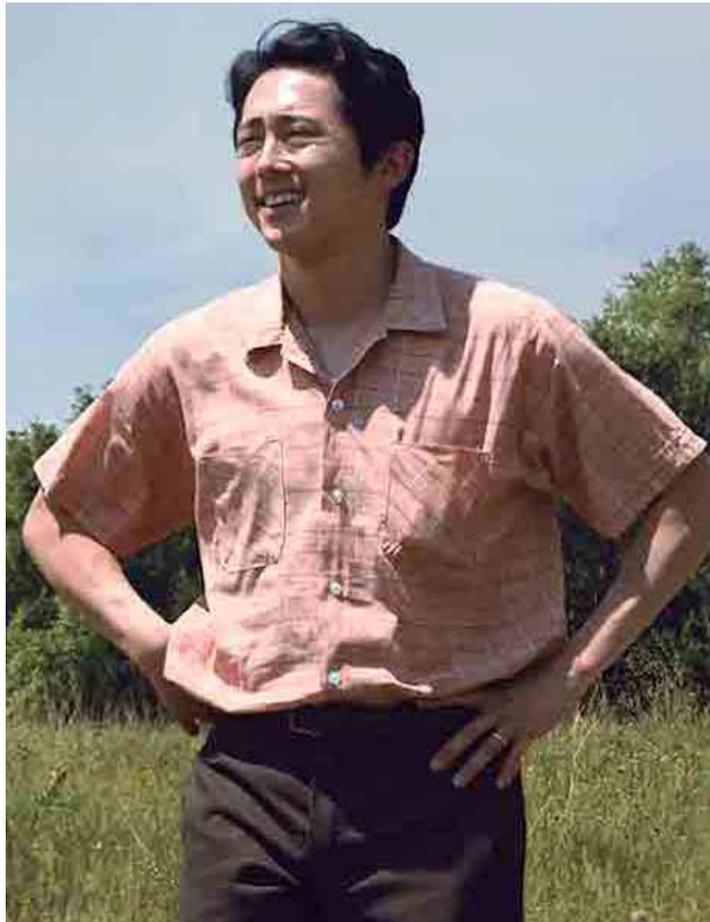
potential nominees too crowded this year? Again, we don't know.

But beyond that, hey, good job, voters. And lest we forget, just about all of these films are available through streaming services, the very reason we still have an Oscar ceremony this year.

The ballot you see to your right is your entry into our annual contest. Special thanks to Fiddlhead for again being our gracious sponsor, the top prize including a \$25 gift certificate to the popular Uptown Arts District restaurant.

And with that, let the guessing game begin!

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



Steven Yeun is the first Asian-American actor nominated for Best Actor.

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"

- 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:

City/Town:

Phone Number:



“Moxie” Bravely Takes on Sexism in High School

by Andrew Tallackson



Vivian (Hadley Robinson) finds herself attracted to skateboarder Seth (Nico Hiraga, directly behind her) in “Moxie,” now streaming on Netflix.

Back in 2018, Molly Ringwald penned a brutally honest piece for *The New Yorker* reflecting on “The Breakfast Club” and “Sixteen Candles,” two movies that made her a household name in the ’80s. A one-time muse of the late John Hughes, their creator, the actress acknowledged the affection people have for these comedies, but argued time has not been kind to them in terms of how women are sexualized, or relegated to the punch line of awkward sex jokes.

“Moxie,” a new Netflix comedy directed by actress Amy Poehler (TV’s “Parks & Recreation”) and based on Jennifer Mathieu’s novel, seems like it’s in direct response to Ringwald’s article. It’s “Sixteen Candles,” but with a #metoo twist. The shy introvert still hopes to win over the cute guy...but only after inciting a feminist revolt at school.

Subtle, it ain’t, but we do not live in subtle times. Sometimes, a message needs to be delivered loud and clear, and everyone in this smart comedy makes a persuasive plea against sexism in schools.

Relative newcomer Hadley Robinson stars as Vivian, and the first day of her junior year starts like any other. All the clicks are in place – jocks, cheerleaders, stoners, marching band – and by the back-to-school rally, the list of who’s hot and who’s not is posted on social media. Who has the juiciest butt, the most ample breasts...you get the idea.

Disgusted by the rampant sexism, and inspired by her once rebel single mother (Poehler), Vivian se-

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“Moxie”

Running time: 111 minutes. Netflix.

Rated PG-13 for thematic elements, strong language, sexual material and some teen drinking

cretly creates a Zine titled *Moxie* in which she calls out the inappropriate behavior. In some cases, it is preppy phony Mitchell (Patrick Schwarzenegger, appropriately smarmy). Other times, it’s Principal Shelly (Oscar-winner Marcia Gay Harden), who turns a blind eye to the behavior. *Moxie*, however, quickly catches on, inspiring a key group of girls to stand up for themselves. Protest. Make a difference.

Robinson is a find. She’s instantly relatable because she looks the right age, like someone you’d see at any high school, but who has a way of disappearing into the crowd. Her relationship with Poehler, as Vivian’s mother, is complex. She admires her mother for her rebellious past, but questions her need to date a colleague (Marvel’s Agent Coulson himself, Clark Gregg), as if it’s a slap in the face to feminism. Her mother’s response, however, shows uncommon intelligence for a teen movie.

Another triumph is how Poehler, as director, casts the right actresses in the right roles. Lauren Tsai as Vivian’s best friend, Claudia, Sydney Park as girls soccer team captain Kiera and especially



Amy Poehler (center) does double duty as the director and co-star of "Moxie."

Alycia Pascual-Peña as new-girl Lucy: These aren't just "types," but real young woman, flaws and all. The film allows them to have a voice. They're angry, disillusioned, ripe for change, empowered by their blossoming friendship.

We also have Nico Hiraga as Seth, the skateboarder with an eye for Vivian. He's almost too good to be true: teen perfection bordering on sainthood. However, we admire how the film balances its portrayal of the jerks with the sensitive types like Seth.

The big finish of "Moxie" isn't a school dance or football game, but a cathartic release in which the female students walk out, rallying together on the school's front steps. The truths these women espouse are powerful in terms of gender, even race. It is a brave way to close the film, although one character's dark fate almost ruptures the quasi-light tone of the picture. Then again, "Moxie" is dealing with relevant issues among teens, even the ugly ones. That it has, well, the "moxie" to go for it, to push buttons, is cause for notice.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com



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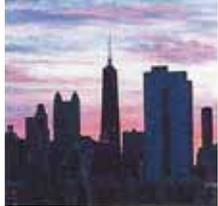
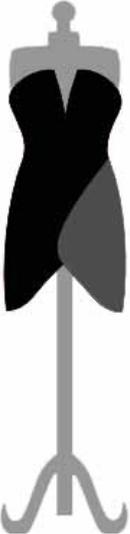
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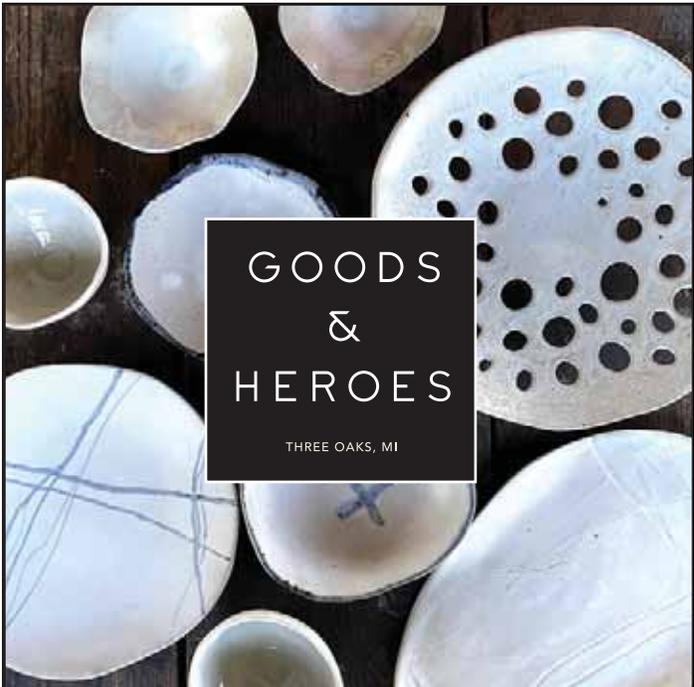
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Junior Hikers Hit the Trails



Harbor Country Hikers conducted its first session with the Class of 2021 hikers from New Buffalo Area Schools' Bison After School Enrichment Program. The group will meet weekly to hike the many trails surrounding the elementary school, visiting features such as the Skunk Cabbage Lane, vernal pools, Turtle Creek and the new butterfly field. Hitting the trail for the first session were (from left) fifth-graders Henry Gadiel, Grace Payne, Kai Hymes and Colten Lijewski, third-grader Dahlia Martinez-Muckey, fifth-grader Adam Dali, HCH President Pat Fisher, fifth-graders Colt Payne and Joseph Edwards and fourth-grader Abigail Edwards.



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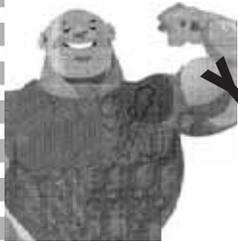
Virtual Trivia Night

Family Advocate's Court Youth Advocate Program will host a virtual trivia night from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 1.

Matt Hammond from Hambone's Trivia will co-host an online version of his Indy-Famous Trivia Party. Registration, open for teams of four to six people, costs \$50. Event T-shirts, mulligans and an additional round opportunity are available for purchase at www.lpfamilyadvocates.com

Proceeds from the event support CYA efforts for youth and volunteer recruitment and training. Contact CYA Program Director Brenda Stellema at (219) 324-3385 or email bstellema@lpfamilyadvocates.com for more details.

The CYA Program helps youth find potential and achieve goals through mentoring guides. This year's theme is "Reach for Your Dreams Wherever You Are."



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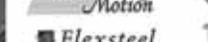
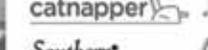
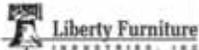
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Keeping a Tradition Alive

Photos by Paul Kemiell • Article Submitted by Jim Whitenack

A handful of volunteers kept alive the annual Maple Sugar Time tradition, operating the Chellberg Farm sugar shack March 11 in Indiana Dunes National Park.

Most of the event was celebrated virtually, but the volunteers present helped mark the unofficial start of spring in dune country. They included Don Frame, Cliff Goins, Rudy Moyado, John Roquet and Ranger Jim Whitenack. They worked in the warm steam of the sugar shack, where sap is still boiled down the way the Chellberg family did back in the 1930s.

The park's volunteer program offers opportunities for individuals and groups to serve alongside park employees. Call (219) 221-7098 or email parkconnection@gmail.com if interested.



Holland Gives His All, but “Cherry” is Overlong and Self-Indulgent

by Andrew Tallackson



Cherry (Tom Holland) and Emily (Ciara Bravo) sink deeper into opioid addiction in “Cherry,” now streaming on Apple TV+.

“Cherry” finds three of Marvel’s key players attempting to play grown-up...but with mixed results.

The heavily-hyped adaptation of Nico Walker’s semi-autobiographical novel, now streaming on Apple TV+, scores points for originality. An Iraqi veteran, suffering from PTSD back home, turns bank robber to cover his opioid addiction. That’s not something you see every day.

There is major moviemaking here from brothers Anthony and Joe Russo (“Avengers: Endgame”), while “Spider-Man” star Tom Holland and actress Ciara Bravo push themselves into exceedingly dark territory. Holland can act. No doubt about it.

The movie, though, overstays its welcome. There is no reason it should clock in at nearly 2½ hours. The fault rests with the Russos, who overdirect, reveling in pointless style. The result is a self-indulgent Scorsese wannabe.

You have to admire, though, how committed Holland is to playing Cherry, who is loosely based on Walker. It is a physical performance, requiring considerable transformation over the course of the picture, and an exhaustingly emotional one as PTSD ravages his existence.

As the film opens, Cherry, a nickname he later earns in Iraq, is attending classes at a community college when he locks eyes with a fellow student, Emily (Bravo). The actress, she’s a zinger. Dressed like the girl next door, but with eyes that blaze with mischief. They hit it off, but when she ends the relationship, he enlists in the Army in a moment of

★ ★ 1/2

“Cherry”

Running time: 142 minutes. Apple TV+. Rated R for graphic drug abuse, disturbing and violent images, pervasive language and sexual content

misdirection. The twist is, she returns, ready to pick up where they left off. He asks that she remain true to him the two years he’s in Iraq.

As their Marvel resume has proven, the Russos know how to tell a story. They can stage a tough, muscular action sequence. There are scenes in “Cherry,” designed to convey the horror of warfare, where their camera boldly sails through the action, and you marvel at the technique on display.

When Cherry returns home, Emily waiting for him, the two descend into opioid use as his PTSD consumes them. The chemistry between Holland and Bravo is electric here, especially as they feverishly go about their next score. Holland’s ravaged face, achieved through makeup and superb acting, becomes vacant. His face thinned out, dark rings around his eyes.

The thing, though, about depicting drug use is, too much of it and you risk alienating your audience. There is something creepily voyeuristic about watching someone ravage their own body through drug use. When you dwell in that world, the experience becomes oppressive...and that’s what happens here. The Russo brothers confuse endless scenes of



The unconventional story has Cherry turn to robbing banks to finance his drug addiction.

Cherry and Emily getting high with authenticity, when a few carefully constructed scenes would have sufficed.

But that is the least of the film's issues. The Russos overindulge. You don't have to be a film-school geek to realize the movie is style for style's sake. The brothers *love* slow motion. Slow motion walking. Slow motion running. Slow motion combat. Slow motion drug abuse. Then we have the weird camera angles. Bombastic opera music. Misplaced humor and irony...although look closely at the names of the banks Cherry robs. Those visual gags may be as close as the film comes to social commentary. But had the Russos backed off, they might have trimmed a good 20 minutes off the picture... and yielded a more powerful experience.

If there is a point, if "Cherry" is designed to say something, I couldn't tell. Having not read the book, it remains to be seen if something got muffled in translation. Instead, it feels like the Russo brothers showing off, trying to prove they can do more than just achieve box-office gold for Marvel. They are talented. No point in arguing that. But with "Cherry," someone needed to rein them in a bit.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

Benevolent Bazaar

A Benevolent Bazaar, sponsored by The Friends of Beverly Shores, is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 27, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, March 28, at 100 Brown St., Suite 3, Chesterton.

Welcomed are donations of furniture, sporting goods, artwork, kitchenware, tools, books, electronics, vintage purses, jewelry and home décor. Those making donations can arrange for local pickups or a drop-off time in Chesterton.

Contact Linda Wagner at wagnercasa44@gmail.com or (219) 299-6998, or Monique Rub at (312) 989-0853 or moniquetrub@gmail.com, to donate or for more information.

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Michigan City Area Schools Kindergarten Roundup Under Way

Michigan City Area Schools will conduct kindergarten enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year online through Friday, March 26, at <http://educateMC.net/kindergarten>.

Kindergarten students must be 5 by Oct. 1. Parents/guardians will be asked to upload .jpgs or .pdfs of: (1) the child's official birth certificate from the state Board of Health; (2) the parent/guardian's driver's license or state photo ID; (3) a record of the child's immunizations and proof of lead screening; and (4) proof of residency, such as a utility bill, property tax bill, lease agreement on business letterhead or public-assistance documentation. Families also must provide emergency contact information.

Individual schools will be open by appointment for those needing assistance with online enrollment. Parents should call ahead if wishing to enroll on site or drop off documentation.

The elementary schools are:

- Coolspring, 9121 W. County Road 300 North, (219) 873-2073.
- Edgewood, 502 Boyd Circle, (219) 873-2079.
- Joy, 1600 E. Coolspring Ave., (219) 873-2090.
- Knapp, 321 Bolka Ave., (219) 873-2096.
- Lake Hills, 201 Ferguson Road, (219) 873-2105.

- Marsh, 401 E. Homer St., (219) 873-2102.
- Pine, 1660 County Line Road, (219) 873-2114
- Springfield, 3054 W. County Road 800 North, (219) 873-2117.

Parents who need assistance to determine which



Pictured are kindergarten students at Pine Magnet School.

school their child will attend may contact the MCAS Transportation Department at (219) 873-2127.

School-based Pre-K programs are offered in partnership with the LaPorte County Family YMCA at Springfield and Pine, serving students from any attendance area. Children must be 3 or 4 by Oct. 1. There are tuition fees associated with these programs; however, need-based scholarships are available and CCDF vouchers accepted. Visit <http://educateMC.net/preK> for details.

Information and an application for Magnet School programs in the arts (Pine) and STEM (Lake Hills) are available at <http://EducateMC.net/magnets>. Magnet schools are accepting applications for grades K-6, with most available slots at the kindergarten level. The deadline for Magnet School applications is April 30.





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The cost is \$99 for four weeks. Register at tinyurl.com/mp7p6ejp

- **April 2 is the submission deadline for The Art Barn School of Art's 27th Annual Juried Art Exhibition, which runs May 15-July 8.**

The exhibit promotes the creation and recognition of 2-D works. This marks the first year for photography and ceramic submissions. The juror is Randall Roberts of Elkhart's Midwest Museum of American Art. Purchase and merit awards total \$2,000. Visit tinyurl.com/3d7znjhs to register.

All proceeds generated by the exhibit, aside from awards, support Art Barn educational programs and exhibitions.

- **Open Studios for 18 and older from 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays, the cost being \$5 a day.**

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

Westchester Public Library

Westchester Public Library has curbside pickup at its Thomas and Hageman branches.

Use a library card or go online to place holds on up to 10 items, including DVDs and CDs. Once notified the items are available, park in specially-numbered spaces at each branch during pickup hours.

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

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



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The LaPorte County Association of Realtors donated \$2,500 to Family Advocates to support its volunteers and staff who advocate for abused and neglected children, at-risk youth and parents. Representing the association are Olga Sanchez (secretary), Karole Myres (treasurer), Tommy Sunn (co-chair for the charity auction committee) and Brad Anderson (president). Representing Family Advocates are CEO Karen Biernacki, Lesley Lefeber, Lisa Huber, Maggie Fritzen, April Greetham, Kayla Pedraza and Rechelle McCray.

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“Wake Up the Gardens”

Friendship Botanic Gardens will host its annual “Wake Up the Gardens” volunteer day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 27.

Volunteers can help prepare the grounds for the May 1 season opening. They can rake leaves, pick up fallen branches and sticks and clean other debris. Individuals will have his/her own cleanup area and not be within close proximity of each another.

Students can receive community service hours. Take a rake and garden gloves, if possible. Water and light snacks will be provided. Dress for the weather, as the event is planned rain or shine.

RSVP to admin@friendshipgardens.org or (219)-878-9885. Friendship Botanic Gardens is located at 2055 E. U.S. 12. Visit the Facebook event page for more details.

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Call for Artists

April 15 is the submission deadline for the 2021 Michiana Annual Arts Competition through The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich.

The juried fine-art exhibit is open to artists from Southwest Michigan and northern Indiana. Entrants may submit up to two works original in concept and execution, created within the last two years, not completed under instruction and not previously exhibited at The Box Factory. Accepted categories include: photography; watercolor; oil and acrylic; pastels and drawing (pencil, color pencil, oil pastel, charcoal, pen and ink); sculpture (including metalwork and assemblage); ceramics; and miscellanea (fiber arts, glass, printmaking, mixed media and jewelry). Artists should enter the category related to his/her primary medium.

A non-refundable entry fee covers up to two pieces per artist. The fee for one piece is \$25, or \$40 for two. Complete entry information is available at www.boxfactoryforthearts.org/maac. Entries will not be complete until the entry form, image files and payment have been submitted.

Online jurying is April 19-23, with selections announced online April 24. The judging of winners is May 3, with the exhibit running May 14-July 11. The Best of Show winner receives \$1,000 and the best of each category \$200.

The exhibit is supported by the Southwest Michigan Tourist Council, Box Factory members, area businesses and corporate sponsors. Email galler@boxfactoryforthearts.org for more details.

10-Digit Dialing Starts in April

All telephone users in the 219 and 574 area codes are encouraged to start using 10-digit dialing instead of seven digit to make local phone calls.

NITCO customers can start using 10-digit dialing immediately; all other carriers will be ready in April. The full transition is mandatory by Oct. 24.

The Federal Communications Commission is requiring the change to accommodate the national "988" National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will be fully applied by July 16, 2022.

Residential and business customers in the 219 and 574 area codes should be aware that:

- Your telephone number/area code will not change.
- In these area codes, you will need to dial the area code and telephone number (a total of 10 digits).
- All long-distance calls will still require dialing 1 + the area code + the telephone number (a total of 11 digits).

Ten-digit dialing will not change the price of a local call, coverage area or other rates and services. You can still dial three digits to reach 911 (emergency services), 211 (social services), 411 (directory assistance), 711 (telecommunications relay service) or 811 (call to request utility locate before a dig).



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Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs will be offered:

- **Full Moon Hike at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 27.**

The hike ventures from the Nature Center to Lake Michigan and back. A naturalist will share stories about the moon and stargazing, with treats served. Pre-registration is required.

- **Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Workshops on Saturday, March 28.**

Learn the art of wire wrapping to make beach glass jewelry. Sessions are from 10:30 a.m. to noon or 1 to 2:30 p.m. The cost is \$7 per person. 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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Indiana Dunes National Park

“Diana’s Dare,” a new hiking challenge, kicks off with a free online event at 2 p.m. Thursday, March 25.

More than 100 years ago, Alice Mabel Gray left Chicago to live in an abandoned shanty along the Indiana Dunes shoreline. For the next 10 years, as she explored the Dunes, she withstood natural hardships and those created by a relentless, sensation-driven press. She became known as “Diana of the Dunes,” and her exploits in the region have since become the stuff of legends, ghost stories and books.

During the program, get a preview of the challenging new trail experience, and learn more about Gray’s life and legacy. Get a preview of a selfie station and the trail’s views of Lake Michigan.

The trail challenge is supported by a partnership between Indiana Dunes Tourism, the Friends of Indiana Dunes and IDNP. Visit the Facebook page IndianaDunesNPS for the program.

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.

The park is offering virtual ranger chats for teachers and students through a variety of media.

The programs can cover a wide range of topics and grade levels. IDNP educators can customize programs to meet teacher preferences. For example, the park can bring Max, the milk snake, into a virtual classroom to teach about animal adaptations.

Visit www.nps.gov/indu or www.facebook.com/IndianaDunesNPS for a list of programs, then call the scheduling office at (219) 395-1885 for details.

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.

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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A Notice to Our Readers

The Beacher will continue the following office hours for now

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

*Thank you for your patience
during the COVID-19 pandemic*

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Fernwood Botanical Garden

- **Member Dog Days from 8 to 10 a.m. EDT Saturday, March 27.**

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.

- **"Meet the Greats: Fernwood Virtual Lecture Series" from 7 to 8 p.m. EDT Thursday, April 1.**

Bill Noble will present "Spirit of Place: The Making of a New England Garden."

For 30 years, Noble has worked in garden design and preservation. As director of preservation for The Garden Conservancy, he was instrumental in preserving and restoring dozens of gardens throughout the U.S. As a designer, he helps create new gardens or restore and rehabilitate existing ones.



Noble

His new book, *Spirit of Place: The Making of a New England Garden*, chronicles making his garden in Northwich, Vt. It is included in the Smithsonian Institution's Archive of American Gardens and has been featured in The Garden Conservancy's Outstanding American Gardens.

The cost is \$25, or \$20 for members.



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.

American Red Cross

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

- La Lumiere School, 6801 N. Wilhelm Road, LaPorte, 2-6 p.m. Thursday, March 25.
- Northwest Health LaPorte, 1007 W. Lincolnway, 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Friday, March 26.
- First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, March 27.
- Northwest Health LaPorte, 1007 W. Lincolnway, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, March 29.
- Michigan City Fire Training Center, 2510 E. Michigan Blvd., 1-5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 30.

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

Youth Art 2021



A sample of the works featured in Youth Art 2021.

Youth Art 2021, which features works selected by art educators from five area high schools, runs through April 11 at Elkhart's Midwest Museum of American Art.

Now in its 42nd year, 79 works in all media hail from Concord, Elkhart Area Career Center, Elkhart and Northridge high schools. The exhibit affords students in grades nine through 12 the opportunity to have their work exhibited in a museum setting. The pieces explore art-education topics such as cognitive and emotional health, self and visual awareness and an appreciation of individual differences.

The museum is located at 429 S. Main St. Hours are (all times Eastern) 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 1-4 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Admission costs \$10 for adults, \$8 for college students, \$8 for students ages 13-18 and \$6 for student ages 8-12. Call (574) 293-6660, visit www.midwestmuseum.us or email info@midwestmuseum.us for details.



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Activities to Explore

In the Area:

March 25 — Free online preview, “Diana’s Dare,” 2 p.m., through Indiana Dunes National Park. View program @ Facebook page IndianaDunesNPS

March 25 — Graphic Novel Club Zoom Meetup, 3-5 p.m., through Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Focus: March. Registration: (219) 873-3045, YOnline@mclib.org

March 27 — “Wake Up the Gardens” volunteer day, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12. RSVP: admin@friendshipgardens.org, (219)-878-9885.

March 27 — Full Moon Hike, 7:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

March 28 — Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Workshops, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Sessions: 10:30 a.m.-noon/1-2:30 p.m. Cost: \$7. Registration: (219) 926-1390.

Through March 31 — Dale Cooper installation (3-D paper flowers), The Legacy Center Gallery @ Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Gallery hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Info: jessicar@qas.org

Through March 31 — Duneland Photography Club exhibit, “Seasons Change and So Did I,” Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Masks, social distancing practiced. Info: www.chestertonart.com, (219) 926-4711.

April 1 — Family Advocate’s Court Youth Advocate Program virtual trivia night, 6-7:30 p.m. Cost: teams of 4-6/\$50. Registration: (219) 324-3385, bstellema@lpfamilyadvocates.com

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

March 27 — Spring Creek Horses Help Foundation annual Easter Egg Hunt with Horses, 3 p.m. EDT, Spring Creek Equestrian Center, 16771 Pardee Road, Three Oaks, Mich. Info: algrosse@yahoo.com

March 27-28 — The Friends of Beverly Shores Benevolent Bazaar, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. March 27/10 a.m.-2 p.m. March 28, 100 Brown St., Suite 3, Chesterton. Info: wagnercasa44@gmail.com, (219) 299-6998.

Through March 28 — New exhibits, KAC Members’ Show & local ceramist Jennifer Zona, Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Hours:

11 a.m.-5 p.m. EDT Fri.-Mon. Info: www.krasl.org, (269) 983-0271.

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

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

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.

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.

Three Oaks Survey

Officials in Three Oaks, Mich., are conducting a survey through April 1 to improve its website and communications.

Village and township residents, business owners, visitors — anyone who engages with Three Oaks — is encouraged to participate. The three-minute survey is at www.threeoaksvillage.org, the village facebook page or at tiny.cc/ThreeOaksWebSurvey.

Paper copies are available in the Three Oaks Village Hall lobby, 21 N. Elm St.

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On March 25, 1859, after the state legislature gave control of the city's police to a Police Board, Chicago's Mayor John Wentworth immediately fired the entire police force.

On March 25, 1867, the cornerstone was laid for Chicago's famous Water Tower.

On March 25, 1882, fascinated New Yorkers lined up on the sidewalk to witness the first public demonstration of pancake making in the window of a restaurant.

On March 25, 1954, RCA announced it had begun producing color TVs at its plant in Bloomington, Ind. The sets, with 12-1/2 inch picture tubes, cost \$1,000 each.

On March 25, 1973, trolley buses made their final runs on Chicago's North Pulaski and Cicero lines.

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 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 27, 1703, Russian Czar Peter the Great founded the city of St. Petersburg.

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

On March 27, 1836, the first Mormon temple was dedicated in Kirtland, Ohio.

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, 1920, movie fans waxed ecstatic over the wedding of Hollywood's two most popular stars, Mary Pickford ("America's Sweetheart") and Douglas Fairbanks.

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 29, 1812, the first White House wedding took place when Lucy Payne Washington, sister-in-law of President James Madison, married supreme Court Justice Thomas Todd.

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 organization 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, 1943, World War II rationing of meat, butter and cheese began.

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, 1842, Dr. Crawford Long, Jefferson, Ga., while performing a minor operation, first used ether as an anesthetic.

On March 30, 1853, Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh was born in Zundert.

On March 30, 1858, Philadelphia's Hyman Lipman received a patent for a pencil with an eraser.

On March 31, 1831, President Andrew Jackson appointed Jonathan Bailey 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 March 31, 1918, Daylight Savings Time went into effect in the United States.

On March 31, 1931, Knute Rockne, Notre Dame's legendary football coach, was killed when his plane crashed in Kansas.

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Pokagon Fund Aids Railroad Museum



Executive Director Dan Peterson of The Pokagon Fund presents the check to museum president Vanessa Holecek Thun on March 17.

The Pokagon Fund has awarded a \$7,000 grant to New Buffalo Railroad Museum to support general operations for the 2021 season.

The grant required a \$3,500 match, which an anonymous donor covered. In addition to buying personal-protection supplies to fulfill COVID-19 requirements, the museum will use the funds for ongoing expenses so visitors can still visit for free.

The museum, 530 S. Whittaker St., re-opens Saturday, April 12, and runs through Oct. 31. Hours are noon to 5 p.m. EDT Saturdays and Sundays. Masks are required. Contact Board Treasurer/Volunteer Administrator Katha Kissman at ask@thenewbuffalorailroadmuseum.org for more details.

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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Dark Sky by C.J. Box (*hardcover, \$28 in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook. 349 pages*)

This week, we head out to the mountains of Wyoming to join state game warden Joe Pickett. This is the 21st book in the series that never fails to entertain. This time, Joe will be taxed with an order by the governor to take Steven Price, a social platform mogul, on an elk-hunting expedition. A billionaire on a real western campout away from the soft life in San Francisco? Roughing it will be the least of Price's problems on this journey...

They will soon find out there's more than elk on the mountains as there's also an old hunting guide, local man Earl Thomas, along with his two sons, on a mission to kill the man he holds responsible for his daughter's suicide...Steven Price.

Then there's Nate Romanowski, Joe's best friend, former Army special forces, who's always operated under the radar and his own views of justice. He's a first-class falconer running his own falcon-raising and training business. Since he met and married Liv, and they had a baby girl, Nate's been trying hard to be a good citizen, until his falcons are in danger from a less than honest man, Axel Soledad, who hunts falcons illegally and is after Nate's birds.

"Soledad was suspected of not only stealing falcon eggs but sending raptor chicks to international buyers via FedEx and private courier." Apparently, a lucrative business. No way is Nate going to let this man get away with his illegal and harmful business.

Joe is married to Marybeth, and they have three daughters; the oldest, Sheridan, works for Nate, fascinated by the falcons and eager to learn how to raise and train them. But finding Soledad may have to go on the back-burner as the Price/Pickett hunting expedition turns from elk-hunting to man-hunting...and both men have gone radio silent.

So why has Joe been given this less than desirable assignment? Joe is surprised when the new governor calls him in, saying he will take Steven Price on an elk-hunting expedition. Why? There are a number of guides who could handle that job. However, the governor knows Price is looking for a place to build the largest server farm in North America for his company, Aloft Inc., and his social-media platform ConFab. He wants to make sure Price finds Wyoming the perfect spot for his venture. That means Joe is chosen as a good-will ambassador for

the state. It would mean lots of money coming into the state and a feather in the governor's cap.

When the plane lands, Price is accompanied by his assistant, Tim Joannides, a squirrely kind of guy, and a bodyguard, Zsolt Romy, an Eastern European of much muscle and few words.

They bring with them a truckload of camping gear — so much for the "wilderness experience." Weapons, sat phones and a myriad of equipment flow out of the plane, most of which would never fit on twice the number of pack horses Brock Boedecker, a local rancher, brings along.

Of course, Steven has his nose in his phone — a lot — as he explains to Joe he is posting to ConFab all his movements on the trip. After all, his many fans are always waiting to see what adventure he is up to next. His ego needs these postings, too.

It doesn't take long for things to start happening. First, there's Steven and company expecting Joe and Brock to wait on them hand and foot, then elk are put on the back-burner as Joe comes back from tracking elk to find unwanted guests around the campfire...Just passing by? No, it looks like trouble.

Meanwhile, Nate is tracking whomever is helping Soledad steal hawks and their eggs. At a local

feed and seed store, he finds out Raylan Waggy has been buying a large amount of live rodents, just the thing a falconer would buy. Nate's about to find out if he is working for Soledad, when Sheridan notifies him that her mother is worried she hasn't heard from Joe in over a day. When he is out in the mountains, he always calls her nightly to let her know all is well. Steven also has been quiet on ConFab, which is unheard of. Rumors circulate on the site as to what happened to this egotistic man who wants the world to worship his every move.

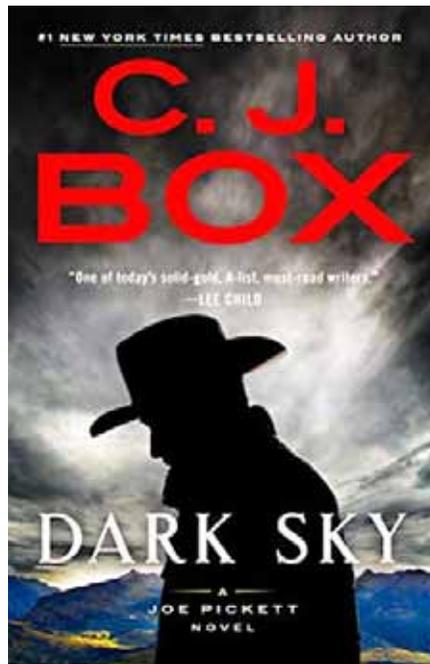
Price will have one heck of a story to tell — assuming he lives to tell it.

Man against man, man against nature, who will win in the end?

This is an exciting story, perfectly paced with lots of action, the beautiful Wyoming landscape so realistically described — both in its astounding beauty and its incredible fury.

Box ends with a bit of a cliffhanger, giving a glimpse of what might be on the table for his next Joe Pickett novel. Can't wait!

Till next time, happy reading!





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