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# Bird Town

by Edmund Lawler

From a hellscape of rusting household scrap, tangles of overgrown invasive plants and vines, even a pall of smoke from a smoldering subterranean peat fire, arose a vibrant ecosystem and habitat for migrating birds.

Thanks to the vision and tenacity of a determined corps of volunteers, birds and waterfowl migrating aloft the Mississippi Flyway — the aerial highway from the Gulf of Mexico to northern Canada — have an alluring rest and feeding stop in the heart of Chesterton. It is one of 15 Hoosier communities Indiana Audubon Society recognizes as a “Bird Town.”

The eyesore that served as Chesterton’s town dump through the 1960s now is the Westchester Migratory Bird Sanctuary, a verdant 42-acre oasis of upland and wetland terrain that attracts more than 90 bird species. The ever-changing roster includes sandhill cranes, eastern bluebirds, red-tailed hawks, yellow warblers, green herons, egrets and a young eagle.

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Sandhill cranes in the bird sanctuary. Photos by Terry Hoover.



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## Bird Town

 Continued from Page 1

“This is about providing a natural environment, particularly because Chesterton is a Bird Town as we’re on the migratory flyway. We leveraged that to make this a habitat for migratory birds,” says Mary Kackza, president of the sanctuary, a nonprofit that operates as the Porterco Conservation Trust. It has no paid staff, just volunteers like Janet Williams, Cliff Cichowlaz, Tom Kelly and Terry Hoover.

“Everything we are planting in the sanctuary’s upland is made to be a shelter for the birds and food for them, as well as for the bees and butterflies,” Kackza says.

Over the past seven years, volunteers have removed invasive species like non-native phragmites, duck weed and canary reed grass that blotted out the water. They are being replaced with native plants.

“If the birds can’t see the water in the wetland, they won’t stop here,” she says.

Kackza credits Richard Maxey, a Valparaiso in-

surance broker and the sanctuary’s treasurer and project manager, for orchestrating the site’s miraculous metamorphosis from wasteland to wetland. Indiana Audubon Society honored Maxey in 2020 with the Earl Brooks Conservation Award, given annually to an individual who has advanced the conservation of natural resources in the state through his/her many endeavors.

“He had the visionary idea to restore the wetland that had been overrun by the invasives, obscuring the water,” says Kackza, whose background is in community and economic development, a role she played as a Peace Corps volunteer in Azerbaijan. “Richard went into the community and garnered key support. We get donations of mulch, compost, parking lot slag and other in-kind contributions.”

The sanctuary does not rely on government or corporate grants, with the exception of a \$37,500 donation from Cargill Inc. and several smaller grants to help defray the cost of restoring the battered landscape.

“Our financial support really comes from pri-



Board member Janet Williams (from left), Project Manager Richard Maxey and President Mary Kackza are photographed against the backdrop of Westchester Migratory Bird Sanctuary’s wetland. Photo by Priscilla Lawler

vate citizens,” says Kackza, who cites the case of a 90-year-old woman who learned of the sanctuary’s dire need for a Bobcat compact tractor.

“She came here after her aerobics class and we chatted in the gazebo,” Kackza says. “I explained why we needed a Bobcat with tracks to help remove the invasive species. I estimated that a used one would cost about \$15,000. A short time later, Richard went to our post office box and discovered an envelope with a check for \$20,000.”

A used Bobcat was purchased and bears the first name of the generous donor.

In addition to private donations, the sanctuary hosts community fundraisers like its fourth annual “Soup Social,” scheduled for Oct. 15 at the United Methodist Church in Chesterton. The event will feature 20 different kinds of soup. Admission is \$10.



A red-shouldered hawk photographed in the bird sanctuary. Photo by Terry Hoover.

In July, Chesterton Feed & Garden Center, a steady supporter of the bird sanctuary, held its Clean-A-Feeder event. Area residents brought in their bird feeders and bird houses to be sanitized. The fee was \$10, with \$5 donated to the bird sanctuary, raising \$1,490.

The garden center sanitized the feeders and houses with a bleach solution to destroy any lingering pathogens in light of the mysterious disease afflicting bird species in 10 states, including Indiana.

The state’s Department of Natural Resources encourages residents to store feeders until the outbreak is over or until more information becomes available. Removing feeders helps prevent transmission of the disease as birds congregate or share the same feeder, according to the DNR.

Continued on Page 4



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## Bird Town Continued from Page 3

(It was recently announced that in most counties, including LaPorte, it is safe to put the feeders out again.)

Maxey became familiar with the land that would one day become the bird sanctuary when he served on the Porter County Parks Foundation. It provides funding, volunteer support and technical assistance to the county's parks and recreation department.

The foundation, which acquired the wetland portion of the current sanctuary from the Duneland Family YMCA in 2002, considered cleaning up the site and making it a venue for environmental education for area students. But, according to Maxey, once restoration work at the site got under way, "The foundation realized it was beyond their ability to do anything with it. The board believed that restoration work was going nowhere and saw it as a money pit and a labor pit."

They had a point. The years of degradation had taken their toll, and the time and expense to restore it would be enormous. Maxey received estimates of \$700,000 to \$800,000 to completely remove all the waste concentrated in a seven-acre upland section of the site.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management, explained his vision and received a permit to cover the old dump site with 12 to 14 inches of clay.

Fortunately, it was determined no toxic chemicals were dumped at the site. The goal was to restore the area to what it looked like a century earlier.

But it would take a mountain of clay.

"We brought in about 80 semiloads of clay. Some were donated, some we paid for ourselves," Maxey explained. "We then packed it down with our equipment and then topped the clay with soil and compost."

Atop the new layer grow native flowers, plants and trees as part of the sanctuary's reforestation.

In addition to IDEM, Maxey tapped a variety of government organizations for advice and consultation on the project, including DNR, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. National Park Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Other organizations enlisted for advice and assistance were the town of Chesterton, Indiana Dunes Tourism and Purdue University Northwest. In 2016, a homeowner's association whose property abutted the wetland portion of the sanctuary donated a three-acre lake known as Griffin Lake.

"I had to contact a lot of people and organiza-



Students work and learn during a school outing in the bird sanctuary. Photo by Terry Hoover.

The estimated expense was not in the foundation's budget. So, it donated the land to the newly formed Porterco Conservation Trust, a.k.a., the bird sanctuary.

Maxey, who left the foundation to focus his energies on what would become the bird sanctuary, had a Plan B that was launched in 2014. Relentlessly determined and ever resourceful, Maxey contacted

tions so we could do the right thing," says Maxey, a Master Gardener who explains he enjoys watching things grow. "And the right thing is to protect the wetland and keep it from further degradation.

To prevent the garbage, chunks of concrete and rusting junk now buried beneath a stratum of clay from contaminating the wetland, sanctuary volunteers built what's called a gabion wall along the

edge of a portion of the wetland. A gabion is a sort of wire cage filled with material such as rock. The bird sanctuary used limestone, which allows water to flow through while purifying it before it reaches the wetland.

An engineer from the USDA showed Maxey how water in and around the sanctuary flows from the southeast to the northwest, which influenced the positioning of the gabion wall.

In the 1950s, an underground vein of peat — an accumulation of partially decayed vegetation — was exposed when a ditch was dug through the wetland to drain it, according to Maxey.

“It was only partially successful, and the peat caught fire when it was possibly struck by lightning,” he said. “It smoldered for months because the fire department could not get equipment out there to put the smoky fire out,” only adding to the site’s ghastly atmosphere.

Fast forward to 2021. The decades’ worth of scrap is entombed, native vegetation flourishes and both



A blue bird in the bird sanctuary. Photo by Kim Rinaldi.

resident and migratory birds are thriving in an ecologically rich habitat at the foot of Indiana Dunes National Park, one of the nation’s most biodiverse protected areas.

Mandi Glanz, regional specialist for Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management, was the featured speaker at the bird sanctuary’s Stewardship Day on April 10. Glanz, who leads the organization’s war on invasives in Northwest Indiana, was impressed by the bird sanctuary’s progress and impact on the local environment.

“By avoiding the use of invasives and growing native species, we can have a positive impact on wildlife, pollinators like bees and butterflies, soil health and water quality,” she said in phone interview. “Invasives out-compete the native species and decrease bio-diversity by robbing resources from the native species.”

Key to ridding or reducing invasives in Indiana, Glanz says, is the creation of regional cooperatives

Continued on Page 6

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# Bird Town Continued from Page 5

to combat invasive species like the Porter/LaPorte County Advancing Natives Team, or PLANT.

The remarkable restoration of the habitat in Chesterton isn't just for the birds.

"The sanctuary is very accessible to people who live in town," Kackza says. "Kids from the adjoining neighborhood use the trails to get to Westchester Intermediate School."

In the fall, students from the school will run on the bird sanctuary's trails as part of their annual "Glow Run." The trails are illuminated, and students wear head lamps to find their way through the dark in the pre-Halloween event, Kackza says.

During daylight hours, students from area schools, as well as those from Valparaiso University, visit the bird sanctuary to learn about conservation ecology and migratory birds. Student groups have also volunteered to plant flowers, pull weeds and invasives, clear brush and help construct a 32 x 24-foot picnic shelter that can accommodate up to 50 people.

The bird sanctuary aims to strike a balance between a polished urban park and the wild, primitive look of a wilderness area. It has a fleet of picnic tables, two gazebos and a viewing platform on the edge of the wetland. It's a prime spot to watch birds swoop gracefully over the water or to just enjoy the



The gabion wall and gazebo in the bird sanctuary. Photo by Janet Williams  
serenity of a habitat with stunning wetland vista.

"We wanted to create a sanctuary for migrating birds, but it turned out to be a sanctuary for people as well," Maxey says. "People come here, walk the trails and enjoy peace and quiet right in the center of town."

## If You Go

There is no admission charge to the Westchester Migratory Bird Sanctuary, 1050 S. 11th St., Chesterton. Open every day of the year, volunteers are invited to help groom trails, remove invasives or plant flowers from 9 a.m.-noon Saturdays, weather permitting. Visit [www.westchesterbird.org](http://www.westchesterbird.org) for more details

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## Michigan City Public Library

Michigan City Public Library's circulation/front lobby area is open to the public.

The front doors are open. Remodeling of the front lobby is almost complete. Public seating is available, and the computer lab is open.

The Friends of the Michigan City Public Library book sale is Oct. 21-23 at the library. Donations can be dropped off from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday at Visit Michigan City LaPorte tourism bureau, 4073 Franklin St. Donations can include magazines, children's books and puzzles.

*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](http://tinyurl.com/4f8kfo3v) and log in with a library card number.
- Fold3, a military-records database powered by Ancestry.com. 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](http://tinyurl.com/58cnu2vn) and log in with a library card number.

*The following program is scheduled:*

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- **Duneland Stamp Club at 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9.** The club meets the second Thursday of each month. New members are invited.

- **Protecting Indiana's Underwater Heritage at 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11.** Charles Beeker,



Beeker

director of Indiana University's Center for Underwater Science, will speak on the ongoing study to identify "strategies to develop the shipwreck as a marine protected area and underwater preserve appropriate for public interpretation." IU has received a grant of more than \$65,000 from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for continued research on the Muskegon, Indiana's first shipwreck listed

on the National Register of Historic Places. The program is hosted by the library, Michigan City Historical Society and Old Lighthouse Museum.

- **Take-Home Craft for Kids & Teens through Sept. 11.** Free take-home craft kits are available at the Youth Services desk while supplies last.
- **Virtual Story Time with Take-Home Craft through Sept. 14.** A new storytime video is posted at 10 a.m. Wednesdays on the library website and YouTube channel at [www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/](http://www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/) Visit Youth Services to get the craft! The program is aimed at children through age 5. Contact the Youth Services department at (219) 873-3045 for more details.

*Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit [www.mclib.org](http://www.mclib.org) for more details.*

## Blessing of the Graves

National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Rebecca Dewey Chapter, will host a Blessing of the Graves at 2 p.m. EDT Sunday, Sept. 12, at Galien (Mich.) Township Cemetery on Pulaski Highway.

The following veterans will receive recognition: Robert S. Andrews, Raymond Marion Backus, Russell Burton Babcock, Nicholas Gerit Burger, Hazel Fern Heckathorne Castonguay, Lyle E. Doyle, Raymond Thomas Ender, Louis Donald Gerold, Russell D. Hampton, Harland Harris, Glen Everett Hinman, Joseph Melton Hull, Ford William Klasner, Victor Dale Klasner, Arthur Moore Klingerman, Orville A. Kuhl, Dale Metzger, John William Miller, William R. Much, Laverne E. Potter, Donald M. Ochse, Joseph A. Quirk, James D. Stricklett, Ellis Wayne Shepardson, LeRoy Shepardson, Clark B. Sherman, Elmer Clayton Smith, Leslie Kenneth Straub, Robert E. Wimmer and Paul Lyle Warner.

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Nurses must present valid IDs, and all first responders must present ticket collectors with active-duty identification. All active-duty police officers, firefighters, paramedics, dispatchers and emergency medical technicians are welcome.

Also, SSL is offering free eastbound weekday rides through Sunday, Oct. 31, to all riders. Nurses and first responders can do promotions Sept. 13-15 and get a free round-trip ride. On the weekend, tickets must be purchased for eastbound trips.

Visit [www.mysouthshoreline.com](http://www.mysouthshoreline.com) or download the SSL app (available for iPhone and Android) for more details.

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**New Museum Staff**



Keri Teller (center), LaPorte County Historical Society Museum director, is photographed with new staff members Jacey Dare (left), collections manager, and Danielle Adams, assistant director. Dare studied history at Vincennes University before coming to the museum, while Adams studied anthropology at DePauw University. Both have interned at museums in and outside of LaPorte County. The museum is located at 2405 Indiana Ave., LaPorte. It is closed until further notice due to roof work.

**Monarch Music Fest**

Save the Dunes will celebrate the Monarch butterfly's regional journey and migration with the Monarch Music Fest from 1-5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 12, at Michigan City's Brewery Lodge & Supper Club, 5727 N. County Road 600 West.

A portion of the proceeds benefits Save the Dunes' work to protect and advocate for the Indiana dunes, Lake Michigan and surrounding natural areas. This includes efforts to protect pollinators such as the Monarch butterfly. Monarch populations are in steep decline due to habitat loss and fragmentation, climate change and pollution.

Tickets for the 21-and-older event start at \$40 on-line and are available until the event reaches capacity (250 people limit). Each ticket includes entrance, food and two beer tickets. Beer, wine and cocktails for an additional cost will be available

Performers include Johnny V & Friends, Alex Akers and Chicken Dolphin Band. Also planned is a silent auction.

Tickets can be purchased at [www.savedunes.org](http://www.savedunes.org) under the events tab.

**Monthly Concert Canceled**

Michigan City Senior Center's monthly concert featuring The Senior Moments (now called The Moments) has been permanently discontinued.

More information about the band is available on Facebook under "The Moments."

# the Gardens

## ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF OUTING

THURSDAY, SEPT. 23 • 11:30 A.M.  
BRIAR LEAF GOLF CLUB

### What you need to know:

- Sign up at [www.friendshipbotanicgardens.org](http://www.friendshipbotanicgardens.org)
- 11:30 a.m.: Registration opens, lunch available
- 1:00 p.m.: Shotgun start
- 5:00–6:00 p.m.: Silent auction ends/awards
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## LaPorte County Parks



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

### Healthy Lifestyles

The free social club meets from 9 to 10 a.m. Wednesdays at Luhr County Park Nature Center, 178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. 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:

- Oct. 6 — Pulmonary health, Patti Solona, Northwest Health LaPorte.
- Nov. 3 — Understanding Medicare Parts A, B, C and D, and the upcoming annual enrollment period, Megan Rogers, State Health Insurance Assistance Program specialist.

### Nature's Tiny Tots

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

The free program is from 10-11 a.m. Sept. 13 and 20, Oct. 18 and 25, Nov. 8 and 22 and Dec. 6 and 20 at Luhr County Park. Masks are required for 3 and older. Call (219) 325-8315 at least one week in advance to register.

### Easy Exercises for All Ages

The free program is from 9-10 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 15, at Luhr County Park.

Physical therapist Diane Rich offers a head-to-toe walk through of exercises to keep muscles and joints limber. Call one week beforehand at (219) 325-8315 to register.

### Pioneer Days

Historically clad re-enactors and vendors lead the family event from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 25-26, at Creek Ridge County Park, 7943 W. County Road 400 North.

The cost is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children or seniors (4 and younger are free). Experience outdoor cooking, crafts, candle dipping, wagon rides and food.

### Pumpkin Painting & Bingo

Decorate a pumpkin from 5-6:15 p.m. Monday, Oct. 4, at Luhr County Park.

The maximum allowed is 30 people. Pumpkins and decorations will be provided. Play bingo and win prizes. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call to register at (219) 325-8315.

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**Milo Guest Speaker at Awards Event**

The Society of Innovators at Purdue Northwest will host the 2021 Innovators Awards Luncheon from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 17, at Avalon Manor Banquet Center, Merrillville.

The annual celebration of innovators unites business and community leaders from across Northwest Indiana's seven-county region. The 2021 Class of Inductees will be presented. The guest speaker is Blair Milo, founding director for the Center for Talent and Opportunity at Sagamore Institute. She previously served as secretary of career connections and talent for the state and was LaPorte mayor from 2012-2017. With the Sagamore Institute, she focuses on closing the wealth gap for women and minorities through entrepreneurship.



Milo

Registration is open. Individual tickets are \$40, and tables of eight cost \$280. Contact Jason Williams at jawilliams@pnw.edu or visit pnw.edu/soi-luncheon to register or for more details.

**Bilingual Free Family Day**

Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., will host its first Bilingual Free Family Day from 1-4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11.

The focus is the "Bramson/Indiana/Lake" exhibit, with tours in English and Spanish developed by LCA Education Director Nelsy Marcano. Activities and snacks are planned.

Visit [www.lubeznikcenter.org](http://www.lubeznikcenter.org) or call (219) 874-4900 for more details.

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### LP Theater Reserved Seating

LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St., is offering something new: online reserved seating for its next production, "Guys & Dolls."

Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, Oct. 1-2 and 8-9, and 2 p.m. Sundays, Oct. 3 and 10. The directors are Jim Snyder and Tony J. Thomas, with Chuck Steck as musical director.

Visit [www.laportelittletheatreclub.com](http://www.laportelittletheatreclub.com) for online reserved seating.

### Fall Festival on the Fairgrounds

Fall Festival on the Fairgrounds is from 6:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11, at LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. Indiana 2.

The event includes the 20th Annual Draft Horse Show, food trucks, farmer's market and Anything on Wheels Cruise-In. Cars, trucks, motorcycles and tractors can participate in the cruise-in.

Contact Ryan at (219) 477-9720 or Suzi at (219) 363-0177 for more details.

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## A Reminder of What Matters Most Amid the 20th Anniversary of 9/11

by Andrew Tallackson

*“We are under attack.”*

Jolted from a deep slumber, my cell phone cradled next to my ear, I sat up in bed, trying to rub the sleep from my eyes.

It was my neighbor across the street. Ray was a great guy, but he could be a little off sometimes. A bit paranoid.

“OK, Ray, what?”

“We. Are. Under. Attack,” he shouted into the phone. “Turn on the television.”

The line went dead. He’d hung up, but before doing so, it sounded like a newscaster was shouting on the television about something he’d just witnessed.

I swung my legs over the side of the bed. Tried, again, to rub the sleep from my eyes. It’d been a late night at the newspaper, and after my wife barked out the front door, late for school that morning, I crawled back into bed, hungry for another hour or two of rest.

Stumbling to the bedroom TV, I grabbed the remote, punched in the number for CNN...and to my shock witnessed the precise moment when United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. The CNN reporter was trembling, ducking at one point, repeatedly muttering “Oh my God” into his microphone, feverishly trying to regain his composure.

It was 9:03 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

Collapsing onto the edge of the bed, I gazed at the images in disbelief. This couldn’t be real. This was something out of a movie. A bad dream. The coverage of New Yorkers fleeing on the ground, a deathly cloud of loss and destruction ballooning in size from where the towers once stood, these were images from a disaster movie. Not real life. Not something that could happen in my lifetime.

But it was real. Brutally, unforgivably real.

Breakfast wasn’t an option. My stomach was a rumbling mass of nerves. And the dawning realization that I’d misjudged the time came crashing down. About 45 minutes from now, I was due to interview a group at a local Catholic church about their new community fundraiser.

Quickly turning on the water in the shower, I hopped in, allowing the cold spray to energize me.

Then, throwing on a pair of jeans and a T-shirt, my appearance was moderately presentable at best. The shock of what had just transpired, though, made the issue of my appearance irrelevant.

Arriving with about five minutes to spare, I was greeted at the front doors of the parish by a committee member. She thanked me for coming amid the circumstances and ushered me downstairs, to a spacious community room where the rest of the committee, and the priest of the church, awaited.

The woman introduced me, then took her seat at



Rescue crews photographed at Ground Zero after the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

the table. About nine to 10 others filled out the remaining seats. They smiled, but their expressions felt forced. Almost like they were suffocating from the overwhelming sense of loss and confusion...but trying to keep up a brave front.

No one mentioned what we’d just witnessed. We carried on, everyone discussing the details of the forthcoming event. What it entailed. Who did what. The overall goal. I must have been listening, because my right hand was rapidly taking notes. But none of it registered. It was like being on autopilot. I was numb.

An older woman, seated directly to my right, noticed. She gently placed her hand on mine.

“Honey, are you OK?,” she asked with tender, almost maternal concern. “You don’t look so good.”

What came out of my mouth was not of my own doing. It was the grief speaking.

“I don’t know,” I replied, shaking my head. “I just don’t get it. After what just happened. No offense, everything seems so pointless now.”

The table of committee members grew silent. A few turned their heads to the priest, as if waiting for a response, *something* that might lift our spirits.

He paused. Sighed in recognition. Then, he spoke. "Now, more than ever, is why we do this, why it's important," he said, his voice calm, reassuring. "Because that's what they want."

We knew who he meant by "they." Whomever was responsible for the attacks.

"They want us to give up," he continued. "And if we do, if we stop living, then they win."

He learned forward in his seat, repeating those last two words with particular emphasis.

*They. Win.*



I've been thinking about that conversation a lot these days, what with the 20th anniversary of 9/11 just days away. What with everything transpiring in Afghanistan. With the Taliban back in the news. My heart going out to those families in Afghanistan, desperately trying to reach safety.

A creeping despair tries to worm its way into my psyche, but I am reminded of those words, spoken by that priest just hours after the towers fell. How they resonate today.

Many of us do not have the power to inflict great change on the world. We are bystanders to events on a global scale. We can achieve a small victory, though, by not letting hate steal our joy. That is what hate by its very nature is designed to do. Steal our joy. Rob us of our zest for living.

As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11, remember what happened. Mourn the senseless deaths of those who perished that day. Whether you pray or hope for the best, think of the families — those who lost loved ones on 9/11.

And in the days and weeks going forward, live life to the fullest. Never let hate steal your joy. Because if you do, well, it's what the priest said.

*They. Win.*

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



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## “Vacation Friends” is Dumb, Slight...and Frequently Hilarious

by Andrew Tallackson



Marcus and Emily (Lil Rel Howery and Yvonne Orji, center) are roped into mass chaos by Ron (John Cena) and Kyla (Meredith Hagner) in “Vacation Friends,” now streaming on Hulu.

“Vacation Friends” shouldn’t work. The premise is flimsy at best. It’s a “Saturday Night Live” sketch stretched out to 1 hour 43 minutes.

Thing is, I laughed. In some cases, loudly. The laughs may not be steady, but when they do arrive are big and generous, thanks to a script with wild sight gags and quotable zingers, and a cast with the right energy.

Five people are credited with the screenplay for “Vacation Friends,” now streaming on Hulu, including director Clay Tarver. They’ve all got experience with TV sitcoms, from “Freaks and Geeks” to “The New Adventures of Old Christine.” The movie, in a way, is one big sitcom, but the humor subverts our expectations so it never quite heads where we think it will.

The movie boils down to this: Chicagoans Marcus (Lil Rel Howery) and Emily (Yvonne Orji) are successful, but uptight, vacationing in Mexico when their paths cross with Ron (John Cena) and Kyla (Meredith Hagner). They behave as if their alien leaders left them on Earth with no instructions. They are wild. Impulsive. Blissfully ignorant of social mores. And, they inexplicably cling to Marcus and Emily for dear life.

We wait for “the plot” to kick in, that Ron and Kyla are criminals or undercover cops: people hiding their true identities behind outlandish behavior. But “Vacation Friends” has none of that. It’s just



### “Vacation Friends”

*Running time: 103 minutes. Hulu. Rated R for drug content, crude sexual references and language throughout.*

about two working stiffs thrust into the company of sincere, if misguided party animals. And with Marcus and Emily being black and Ron and Kyla being white, it struck me that, had this movie been released in the ‘80s, the races of the lead characters would have been reversed, the laughs descending into uncomfortable stereotypes: The high-strung whites loosened up by the street-smart black couple.

But by avoiding that tired comedy trope, “Vacation Friends” allows the laughs to flow from the cast, from introducing obvious jokes, but flipping them inside out. What do I mean by that? Take one of the movie’s earliest sight gags. Marcus has nagged hotel staff to have the room for him and Emily prepped to perfection. We know it *won’t* be, of course, but how bad is belly laugh hilarious. When Ron allows Marcus to take the wheel of his boat, warning him about rocks in the water, it is a guarantee Ron will hit a rock. But what happens when that moment arrives is laugh-out-loud hysterical.

Howery and Orji play it straight in contrast to Cena and Hagner (she’s like Kate Hudson’s ditzy sorority sister), whose characters are free spirits driv-



Meredith Hagner is like watching Kate Hudson's ditzy sorority sister.

en by whatever pleases them. The dialogue for Cena and Hagner, in fact, comes out of nowhere, much of it profane, but perfectly clashing with the more refined world from which their new friends come. And Howery and Orji, the frequently stunned looks on their faces, are deadpan icing on the cake.

"Vacation Friends" doesn't break new ground as a comedy. It's silly, dumb, instantly disposable. But while this cast is in motion, you're laughing too hard to care.

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



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# A Popular Event Returns



It was canceled in 2020 due to COVID-19, but Aug. 21-22 saw the return of the Lubeznik Arts Festival, all to an enthusiastic response from the community. This was the 39th year for the event, which offered a mix of fine arts and crafts, family art making, live entertainment and food.

All photos by Bob Wellinski



Yahya Abdul-Mateen II stars as an artist tormented by the spirit of a notorious killer in "Candyman."

## "Candyman" is a Smart, but Not Exactly Scary Update

by Andrew Tallackson

Here is a horror sequel/reboot that is exceptionally written, directed and acted. It couldn't be timelier, with greater impact than the 1992 original.

A slight problem, though.

It isn't scary.

Tense and moody, yes, but cover-your-eyes terrifying? Not really.

I have vague memories of the original. Mostly that it was set in Chicago's Cabrini-Green projects. That saying the title killer's name five times while staring in the mirror brought him to life...and jacked up the body count. That for some sad reason, Hollywood felt audiences would only respond to a horror movie set in black housing projects if the heroine was white.

Jordan Peele, whose "Get Out" (2017) and "Us" (2019) were the two greatest examples of horror as social commentary in the past 10 years, produced and co-wrote this slick update. Because of him, it is a smarter movie than its inspiration. It has more to say about gentrification, about the real motivation behind it, than any Oscar-season awards bait.

But horror over the past decade has experienced a resurgence not just in Hollywood, but in our daily lives as well. In movies, the jump-scare, the movie fright tactic in which all is quiet, then something leaps out, is now a tired trope in 21st century cinema. We yawn in its presence. And what we see on the television these days — hideous acts of racial



### "Candyman"

*Running time: 91 minutes. Rated R for bloody horror violence and language, including some sexual references.*

injustice — far outweigh the terrors imagined on the big screen.

That Peele's "Candyman" update, helmed by the relatively green director Nia DaCosta, feeds us more food for thought than most movies is what recommends it. It honors its source visually as a reboot and extends its premise as a sequel through a continuation of the story.

Cabrini-Green as a housing project is long closed, only the two-story structures its skeletal remains. In its place are upscale town homes and high-rises. In this "refurbished" neighborhood live art gallery director Brianna Cartwright (Teyonah Parris, of Marvel's "WandaVision") and her artist boyfriend, Anthony McCoy (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, "The Trial of the Chicago 7"). These two are firmly entrenched in the Chicago art community, while at the same time acknowledging that where they live conceals a former community with dark secrets. The movie achieves several nods to the original, not just through shadow puppets to recall that tragic past, but also in referencing Virginia Madsen's character, the graduate student researching Cabrini-Green

when she encountered the violent spirit of the area's notorious killer.

Anthony, intrigued by the Candyman legend amid a creative rut, foolishly says his name five times before a mirror, and pretty quickly, the corpses start piling up.

James Wan, the guy behind the "Insidious" and "Conjuring" franchises, reintroduced American audiences to the Japanese-style of jump-scare, often involving dark, shadowy figures lurking in the backgrounds. We get a lot of that in "Candyman," and while the gore is ample, we know what to expect from the scares.

What creates a mounting sense of dread, though, are the ideas crackling through the surface. That gentrification is about letting urban communities suffocate through violence before redesigning them, and repopulating them, with upwardly mobile whites. The Candyman character, in turn, is a symbolic representation of that violence. And, the film argues, as so many have done before it, art can be a volatile, tortured form of expression.

Whereas the original showed its housing project residents as traumatized, this version has its characters reclaiming the violence, using it against oppressors. That may be the film's boldest move, driven home by the empowering performance from Parris, who with "WandaVision" and now this film is proving herself to be a formidable presence.



Teyonah Parris, last seen in Marvel's "WandaVision," delivers another strong performance as an art gallery director.

"Candyman" delivers plenty of ideas. Just don't expect any nightmares afterward.

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

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## Killer Twist Lifts “Sweet Girl” Into Something Special

by Andrew Tallackson



Jason Momoa and Isabela Merced star as a father and daughter on the run in “Sweet Girl.”

The secret weapon of “Sweet Girl” is the twist, one that saves it from what we believe will be a foregone conclusion.

Until that 11th hour surprise, this new Netflix film starring “Aquaman” himself, Jason Momoa, is a passable time-killer. A strange hybrid of John Grisham conspiracy thriller, revenge road trip and cracking-skulls action flick. It works to the level of never being dull, but hardly memorable.

That twist, though. I found myself sitting a little straighter afterward. At attention, more emotionally invested in the outcome.

Momoa stars as Ray Cooper, a working-class family man whose life, as we know from the opening scene, has spun precariously out of control. He’s being pursued by cops atop the Pittsburgh Pirates stadium.

Flip back a few years, and Ray has led a charmed life until his wife, Amanda (Adria Arjona) is diagnosed with aggressive cancer. Their prayers appear answered when it’s announced a generic drug version of pricier treatment is near FDA approval. Those hopes are dashed, though, when rival drug manufacturer BioPrime thwarts production of the new treatment. During a live CNN interview with BioPrime CEO Simon Keeley (Justin Bartha from “The Hangover”), Ray calls into the show, mad as hell, threatening to kill Simon should his wife die because of BioPrime’s greed.

Typically in these movies, the bad guys, the ones who take out the lovely spouse, are street thugs or



### “Sweet Girl”

Running time: 110 minutes. Netflix.

Rated R for some strong violence and language.

gangsters. But a pharmaceutical company? That revelation yields a strange disconnect. Are we really about to watch Rambo take down Pfizer?

And usually in these movies, the action scenes are all about the hero’s talents with his fists. The “John Wick” movies are less about plot and more about choreographing the fight scenes so Keanu Reeves looks like a bad-ass. Momoa can hold his own with the Dwayne Johnsons and John Cenas of the world, but when the bad guys come after Ray in “Sweet Girl,” the fights are nothing out of the ordinary, nothing you can’t see on your average TV cop show.

What Momoa has going for him is that he can act. He does rage well, particularly a hospital scene where he lets loose all the pent-up grief. The intensity he brings to scenes on the road keeps you hooked even as the familiarity of the story itself suggests few, if any, surprises remain.

But there is a reason the film is called “Sweet Girl.” Ray has an 18-year-old daughter who sticks by his side, even when he demands she stay home. Her name is Rachel, and she is played by Isabela Merced, a 20-year-old actress whose resume is tied largely to cartoon character Dora the Explorer. The



Justin Bartha appears as the CEO of a pharmaceutical company that blocks a more affordable cancer treatment from seeing the light of day.

second half of "Sweet Girl" belongs to her. She owns the movie, wresting it away entirely from Momoa. A raw, fierce drive propelled by intelligence, courage and daring.

And when the twist arrives — honestly, I did not see it coming — the revelation is a game-changer. It breaks your heart. "Sweet Girl" grabs you by the throat and forces you to re-evaluate what came before it. The risks, everything that's at stake, become electric. Now, a movie we were ready to dismiss commands our attention. The final scenes of "Sweet Girl" do not slip into grotesque violence. The characters are pushed to the brink, forced to evaluate what they can tolerate about themselves as people.

Some may call the twist of "Sweet Girl" convoluted. Not worth the effort required before it. It worked for me. More so than I expected.

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



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## Adventures in Good Music



We set off on “Adventures in Good Music” shortly after moving to Michigan on June 27, 1987.

Allow me to explain.

Those were the days before smartphones and the like, so one had to rely on an old-fashioned AM/FM radio for musical accompaniment to one’s life.

(Hey, we’re all stars in our own movies, right? So, of course, we need musical accompaniment for our adventures.)

We spun the dial when we first moved here and discovered the station we still love to listen to: WAUS 90.7 FM. Billed as “your 24/7 classical connection,” it broadcasts commercial-free from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich. They know their classical music. In the late 1980s, WAUS aired a syndicated program called — drum roll, please — “Adventures in Good Music with Karl Haas.”

We immediately became huge fans, not only because Haas had a sonorous voice, but also because he humanized classical music. He took all the stuffiness out of it and told folksy stories of Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart and all the rest.

I especially enjoyed accompanying Haas on his “Adventures in Good Music” while driving the sylvan backroads of Southwest Michigan on the way to various evening meetings of one sort or another.

And I most especially remembering Herr Haas chuckling one evening, saying his most informed listeners were truck drivers. Yes, he said, on those rare occasions he got something wrong, he would immediately hear from one of his truck-driving listeners to set him straight.

Haas is no longer with us. His delightful “Adven-

tures in Good Music” is no more, but we carry his love of great music wherever we go.

Allow me to explain.

My musical adventures gained new life some years ago in Michigan City when we were amazed to hear the amazing Bill King play his licks on his licorice stick with the Michigan City Chamber Music Festival. At Natalie’s urging, I finally got the courage to approach him, telling of my love of the clarinet and the frustrations I suffered as a child, particularly at the hands of an utterly disapproving music teacher.



Bill King, himself, came to our house in Harbert, Mich., to sell me my most amazing clarinet.

Bill urged me to get a “horn, a teacher and learn to play more than ‘Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.’”

In the fullness of time, I bought one beauty of a “horn” right in our living room when he came calling with four models to sample as part of his Clarinet Connection business.

Then, equipped with such an amazing instrument, I needed to find a teacher worthy of such a finely crafted instrument.

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Me with a most excellent teacher, Jason Gresl, in Hamel Hall at Andrews University.

Leave it to Natalie to locate Jason Gresl at Lake Michigan College, of all places. Seeing that my system of teaching myself the clarinet from various instructional books was not progressing, she said, “I’m going to find you a teacher.” And so, she called the aforementioned college in Benton Harbor and inquired about clarinet lessons.

She got all excited by the response, saying, “Get in the car. We have 40 minutes to get there to register for clarinet lessons with Jason Gresl.”

“What?!? Who?!?”

“I’ll explain as we drive.”

And she did. What she told me was that I had just lucked into securing as a teacher a professional musician with a pedigree that included graduation from the celebrated music program at Oberlin (Ohio) College and performances with — well — we don’t have the space here to list them all. Suffice it to say, I began my studies with Jason in January 2013 and immediately improved. And I immediately developed a love and devotion to the wisest, wittiest, most hard-working teacher I have known.

Jason and I have enjoyed many adventures in good music together. He is patiently guiding me to the finish line for my first compilation of recorded music: some original pieces and others from the jazz and classical repertoire. Jason guided me in the writing of three of the pieces, and that was quite an adventure in itself.

But I did want to conclude this musically inspired piece by sending you two “postcards” from trips Jason sent me on in recent years:

- (Chicago) — Some six years ago or so, Jason sent me off to North-



John Bruce Yeh in performance at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago

eastern Illinois University for master classes in clarinet. Thus, I was thrilled to see Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s John Bruce Yeh debut a work written just for him. Yeh explained that he is dedicated to the works of new composers, and he proved it that day with his bravura performance of a piece whose name escapes me. But I do believe you can find his performance on his home page or by simply Googling “John Bruce Yeh.” You will be dazzled, for sure. And imagine how dazzled we all were that Saturday on the northwest side of Chicago when the great John Bruce Yeh took center stage and knocked our clarinet-colored socks off.



A selfie of two clarinetists from Chicago’s South Shore: Anthony McGill... and the guy who *wishes* he could play like Anthony McGill.

- (Kalamazoo, Mich.) — A few years back, at Jason’s behest, I drove over to the Celery City to hear clarinet legend Anthony McGill in concert with Pacifica Quartet. They brilliantly performed Mozart and Brahms clarinet quintets. By virtue of my Boy Scout training, I was prepared, thus securing a seat in the first row of the auditorium at Western Michigan University, where they have a most excellent music program. I thus got to watch Mr. McGill work his magic on the instrument of my childhood, the beloved and always soulful clarinet. He nailed everything he performed with those four talented string players. Best of all, Mr. McGill “hung out” with fellow clarinetists after the concert, and he happily took our questions. Mine, quite simply, was this, “How did you keep your embouchure (the mouth’s grip on the mouth-piece) going through all that?” He laughed and said he almost lost it on the Brahms “Quintet in B Minor,” holding on desperately to the finish. He strongly advised daily exercises to firm up one’s embouchure, such as lots of long notes and slowly pronouncing each of the vowels.

Oh, I also got to tell Anthony we shared something else in common beside the clarinet, namely that we both hailed from the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago.

There, that’s my story, and I’m stickin’ with it.

## Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs will be offered:

- **History Comes Alive Weekend from 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 11-12.**

Members of the Ouatennon Brigade, a re-enacting group, will land on the beach and set up camp near the beach pavilion. The brigade portrays the French-Canadian voyageurs of the 1700s in dress, food and lifestyle.

- **Singing Sands Stargaze from 8-11 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11.**

The annual Calumet Astronomical Society event involves local experts and naturalists who will have several telescopes available, answer questions and give periodic constellation talks using laser pointers. Take a blanket or beach chair to the main beach east of the pavilion. The program is weather-dependent.

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

- **The Indiana Dunes Outdoor Adventure Festival is Friday-Sunday, Sept. 10-12, throughout the Indiana Dunes region.**

The all-ages event, which is free with no registration required, unites more than 50 activities with support from Indiana Dunes State Park, Indiana Dunes Tourism and more than a dozen other partners. The goal is to showcase the region's outdoor activities, such as hiking, paddling, biking, geocaching, photography and birding.

The festival has been modified to ensure social distancing and small group sizes can be maintained to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Masks are required inside national park buildings, but optional outdoors. Highlights include a Little Calumet River paddling trip, hikes and bike rides led by regional experts and access to national park areas not normally open to the public.

Visit [www.dunesoutdoorfestival.com](http://www.dunesoutdoorfestival.com) for additional information.

- **Wetland Wonders is from 10 a.m.-noon Saturdays at The Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education and Miller Woods ponds.**

Join a ranger to search for life in a pond. Sampling equipment and identification sheets are provided. Visitors also can hike the trail through Miller Woods, check out the nature play zone or explore activities inside the center.

- **Bailly Chellberg History Hike is from 1-3 p.m. Sundays.**

Join a ranger for a hike to Bailly Homestead and Chellberg Farm. Learn about early settlers and farmers who came to the region in the 1800s. Take children to Chellberg Farm at 4 p.m. to help a ranger feed the animals. Meet at the Bailly/Chellberg Farm parking lot, which is on Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20 and 12 in Porter.

- **Closed are 1.5 miles of the Little Calumet River Hiking Trail for safety and resource protection.**

The temporary closure allow a contractor to replace approximately 1,000 feet of boardwalk. The work is expected to last no more than 120 days. Hikers will still have access to the adjacent Bailly/Chellberg trails, along with another 48 miles of trails, including: Dune Ridge, Miller Woods, West Beach, Heron Rookery, Tolleston, Great Marsh and the Pinhook Bog Upland Trail.



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](http://www.nps.gov/indu) for details.

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### Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

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

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

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### 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). 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.).

*The following programs are planned:*

- **Water/Ways-Family Stream Exploration Day from 11 a.m.-noon Saturday, Sept. 11, at Red Mill County Park, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, LaPorte.** Explore the park and get experience as a conservationist while learning about animals that live in the Little Calumet River.
- **Talk to a Lawyer Day from 1-4 p.m. Monday, Sept. 13, at the main library.** Get a short, free conversation with a local attorney on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Teen Anime Club from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 13, at the main library.** Meet other teen anime fans through the club.
- **Page Turners Book Club from noon-1 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14, in the main library Study Cafe.** Refreshments will not be served, but guests can take coffee or tea.
- **Pajama Time from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14, at the Coolspring Branch meeting room.** The library story time invites children ages 2-5 to wear pajamas during the program.

*LaPorte County Public Library is located at 904 Indiana Ave. The Coolspring Branch is located at 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Visit [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org) for more details.*



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### JROTC Supports School Activities

Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps participated in numerous activities as Michigan City Area Schools kicked off the 2021-2022 school year.

The cadets provided color guards for Superintendent Barbara Eason-Watkins' opening speech to staff members and at the first two home football games. Cadets also worked the two orientation days at MCHS for students, as well as the Back to School Rally at Elston Field. The rally provided free school



Cadets offload supplies for the Back to School Rally.

supplies to students, along with many activities to motivate them for the school year.

COVID-19 has had an adverse effect on JROTC enrollment. Many events in which cadets normally participate, particularly presentations to the middle schools, were not allowed. Maj. Tom McGrath, the senior Marine

instructor, hopes the return to a more normal routine will result in enrollment exceeding 100 cadets, which is the Marine Corps requirement.

"Our cadets are enthusiastic about competing in military drill meets and CyberPatriot (the national cyber security game), as well as doing more community service and supporting patriotic events," he said in a press release. "As other students see all that our program has to offer, I am confident our enrollment will increase."

One highlight this year is the Midwest Military Drill Championship on March 19, 2022, at MCHS. Nineteen schools from Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana will compete for a chance to go to Daytona Beach, Fla., for the National Drill Championship in April. If Michigan City earns that spot, the trip, like all JROTC activities, will be done at no cost to the cadet nor MCHS. It is primarily funded by the Marine Corps, and augmented by the MCJROTC Booster Club.

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**9-Hole League**

**Aug. 26, 2021**

**Flight A**

- Low Gross — Kathy Peters.
- Low Net — Melanie Davis.
- Low Putts — Donna Hennard.

**Flight B**

- Low Gross — Susan Kelley.
- Low Net — Pat Bailey.
- Low Putts — Nancy Trainor.

**Flight C**

- Low Gross — Kathy Hanley.
- Low Net — Catherine Kelly.
- Low Putts (tie) — Rima Binder, Sarah Blank, Alison Kolb.

**Flight D**

- Low Gross — Jeanne St. Peter.
- Low Net — Jude Stahmer.
- Low Putts — Sally Allen.

**2021 YEAR END AWARDS**

**Low Net Winners**

- Flight A — Carol Excell.
- Flight B — June Salmon.
- Flight C — Alison Kolb.
- Flight D — Jeanne St. Peter.

**Low Putt Winners**

- Flight A — Carol Excell.
- Flight B — Marge Walsh.
- Flight C — Sarah Blank.
- Flight D — Sally Allen.

**Hoofin-It 5K Race**

Reins of Life Inc. will host its first Hoofin-It 5K, which supports children and adults with disabilities, on Saturday, Sept. 11, at the South Bend facility, 55200 Quince Road.

Participants can run or walk along the 24 acres of horse pastures and 20 acres of wooded trails. All registered 5K runners and 5K walkers receive a race T-shirt and registration packet, along with ribbons and awards for top placements on site.

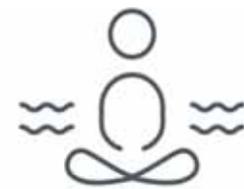
Packet pickup starts at 7 a.m. EDT, with the first race starting at 8 a.m. EDT. No pets are allowed. Discounts are available for veterans, first responders and active duty.

Warren Township Fire Department will attend to help pay respects to, and remember the lives lost on, Sept. 11. A Pony Club family one-mile walk includes a discounted family rate and prizes for completing the scavenger hunt.

Registration can be completed at [www.reinsoflife.org/hoofin-it](http://www.reinsoflife.org/hoofin-it)

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**LONG BEACH DEER HUNT**

The Long Beach Town Council (LBTC) is planning deer hunting with in the Town of Long Beach (LB) by recreational hunters using traditional bows, compound bows or crossbows from Sept. 15, 2021, to Jan. 31, 2022.

LB Country Club & Moon Valley have "opted out":  
 No Hunting!

**LB residents have NOT been given this option!**

PLEASE vocalize your concerns by:

**ATTENDING** the Sept. 13th meeting @ 7 p.m. at LB Town Hall

**SIGNING** the petition (if you have not already done so) located at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/SayNoHuntingInLB>

**CONTACTING LBTC:** Mike Johnstone [mjlbtc@icloud.com](mailto:mjlbtc@icloud.com)

John Kocher [kocher2235@gmail.com](mailto:kocher2235@gmail.com)

Bob LeMay [lbplemay@gmail.com](mailto:lbplemay@gmail.com)

Mary Lou McFadden [mcfadb@comcast.net](mailto:mcfadb@comcast.net)

John Wall [johnwall2022lb@gmail.com](mailto:johnwall2022lb@gmail.com).

For the town hall, call (219) 874-6616.

**CONTACTING LB Police Chief Swistek** [chief@lbpdin.com](mailto:chief@lbpdin.com) or  
 (219) 874-4243: register to "opt out" & request appropriate signage.

**CHECKING** with your homeowner's insurance agent about premises liability coverage, including property damage & personal injury caused by hunting activity/wounded or panicked wild animals.

Long Beach Better Government Association

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### Hoosier Star

The 16th annual Hoosier Star vocal competition-fundraiser is at 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11, at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St.

Doors open at 6 p.m. Ten finalists will compete in the adult and youth divisions.

The adult division is:

- Candace Archer, Michigan City.
- Karen Eigenmann, LaPorte.
- Myah Englebrecht, South Bend.
- Kim Kurtis, Valparaiso.
- Jarynn Sampson, South Bend.

The youth division is:

- Jayne Bartlett, Chesterton.
- Afyah Giuliani, LaPorte.
- Joseph Giuliani, LaPorte.
- Grace Phillips, Westville.
- Lola White, New Albany.

New this year is a \$15 Pay-Per-View virtual/live-stream option in addition to in-person admission. Balcony seats cost \$15 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and younger. Visit <https://lcso.net/events/hoosier-star/> to make reservations for either option.

In-person patrons may vote through a QR code or website address provided. Pay-Per-View patrons can vote by home computer or smart device. A link will be sent. Each admission includes one youth finalist vote and one adult finalist vote.

### Noon Time Talk Series

The Noon Time Talk Series continues at 12:20 p.m. EDT Thursday, Sept. 9, at Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart.

Paul Diebold, assistant director of preservation services for the Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology, is the speaker.

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

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### Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

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

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## Activities to Explore

### In the Area:

**Sept. 9-12** — “Steel Magnolias,” Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Thur.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$15, \$10/children 12 & younger & Thursdays. Reservations: (219) 874-4035, in person, [www.FootlightPlayers.org](http://www.FootlightPlayers.org)

**Sept. 10** — Second Friday Art Opening, 5-7 p.m., The Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery, 525 S. Broadway.

**Sept. 10-12** — The Indiana Dunes Outdoor Adventure Festival, Indiana Dunes region. Schedule/info: [www.dunesoutdoorfestival.com](http://www.dunesoutdoorfestival.com)

**Sept. 11** — Water/Ways-Family Stream Exploration Day, 11 a.m.-noon, Red Mill County Park, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, LaPorte. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 11** — Protecting Indiana’s Underwater Heritage, 1 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Sept. 11** — Bilingual Free Family Day, 1-4 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: [www.lubeznikcenter.org](http://www.lubeznikcenter.org), (219) 874-4900.

**Sept. 11** — Hoosier Star, 7 p.m., LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. Cost: \$15 Pay-Per-View virtual/live-stream option; in-person — balcony seats, \$15/adults, \$5/children 12 & younger. Reservations: <https://lcsa.net/events/hoosier-star/>

**Sept. 11** — Singing Sands Stargaze, 8-11 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Sept. 11-12** — History Comes Alive Weekend, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Sept. 12** — Save the Dunes Monarch Music Fest, 1-5 p.m., Michigan City’s Brewery Lodge & Supper Club, 5727 N. County Road 600 West. Tickets start @ \$40. Registration: [www.savedunes.org](http://www.savedunes.org)

**Sept. 14** — Page Turners Book Club, noon-1 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 14** — Pajama Time, 6-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library Coolspring Branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

### **Sept. 15 — YOM KIPPUR.**

**Sept. 15** — Easy Exercises for All Ages, 9-10 a.m., Luhr County Park, 178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Registration: (219) 325-8315.

**Through Sept. 11** — Take-Home Craft for Kids & Teens, Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Through Sept. 14** — Virtual Story Time with Take-Home Craft, Michigan City Public Library. Video link: [www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/](http://www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/)

**Through Sept. 30** — New exhibit, “Diversity” (Madeleine Schooley), The Legacy Center Gallery in Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E.

Barker Ave. Info: jessicar@qas.org

**Through Oct. 15** — Exhibit, “Bramson/Indiana/Lake,” Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: www.lubeznikcenter.org

**Saturdays** — Michigan City Farmers Market, 8 a.m.-noon, Eighth and Washington streets (Uptown Arts District).

**Saturdays** — LaPorte Farmers Market, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Lincolnway & Monroe (near Mucho Mas). Info: laportefarmermarket@gmail.com

**First and Third Mondays** — Singing Sands Toastmasters Club, 6:30-8 p.m., Zoom. Info: https://7269291.toastmastersclubs.org.

**Second Saturdays** — Free sunset yoga w/ Lauralee Sikorski (Sept. 11, 6:30 p.m.), Long Beach Realty Stop 31 location. Limited parking. Updates: Long Beach Realty Facebook page.

### In the Region

**Sept. 9** — Noon Time Talk Series, 12:20 p.m. EDT, Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Cost: \$5, members/free. Info: (574) 293-6660.

**Sept. 10** — Pink Floyd Tribute Echoes of Pompeii, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. General seating/\$45, reserved seating/\$70 (includes \$25 donation). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

**Through Sept. 12** — New exhibits, Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Exhibits: “The Hidden Common Place,” “Found,” “ReShoot,” “At the River’s End.” Info: www.boxfactoryforthearts.org

**Through Sept. 26** — Oils by Liz Williams, The Village Gallery @ Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso. Info: www.pinesvillage.org, (219) 465-1591.

**Saturdays** — Wetland Wonders, 10 a.m.-noon, The Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education/Miller Woods ponds, Lake Street north of U.S. 12, Gary’s Miller Beach neighborhood. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

**Sundays** — Bailly Chellberg History Hike, 1-3 p.m., Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20/12, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

**The Region of Three Oaks Museum** — 5 Featherbone Ave., Three Oaks Mich. Free admission; donations accepted. Hours (Eastern): noon-5 p.m. Friday-Sunday through October.

**Vickers Theatre** — *Now showing*: “On Broadway” (Not Rated) & “Respect” (PG-13). Check website or call for times. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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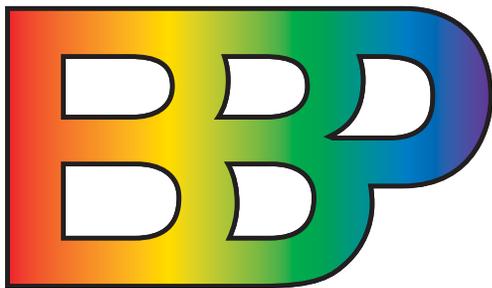
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**On September 9, 1776**, the term “United States” became official when the Second Continental Congress ruled “...that in all Continental Commissions and other instruments, where heretofore the words United Colonies have been used, the style be altered, for the future, to the United States.”

**On September 9, 1830**, Charles Durant made aviation history by flying in a balloon across the Hudson River from New York to Perth Amboy, N.J.

**On September 9, 1926**, the National Broadcasting Co. (NBC) was created by Radio Corporation of America.

**On September 9, 1956**, Elvis Presley, making his first appearance on national television, was featured on “The Ed Sullivan Show.”

**On September 9, 1957**, President Dwight Eisenhower signed into law the first civil rights bill to pass Congress since Reconstruction.

**On September 10, 1846**, Elias Howe, of Spencer, Mass., received a patent for a “chain-stitch” type sewing machine.

**On September 10, 1924**, in Chicago, Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb received life terms for the kidnap-murder of 14-year-old Bobby Franks.

**On September 10, 1955**, “Gunsmoke,” the long-running television series, premiered on CBS.

**On September 10, 1972**, at the Munich Summer Olympics, the U.S. Olympic basketball team lost to the Soviets, 51-50, in a controversial gold-medal match.

**On September 10, 1978**, after President Jimmy Carter signed the proclamation, the nation celebrated its first national Grandparents’ Day.

**On September 11, 1847**, at Andre’s Eagle Ice Cream Saloon in Pittsburg, the audience sang Stephen Foster’s “Oh Susanna.” This was reported to be the song’s first public performance.

**On September 11, 1927**, an American meat packer announced the production of a frankfurter with a zipper. The instructions were: “boil the hot dog in its zippered casing and then discard it.” There is no record as to how many, following these instructions, threw away the hot dog and kept the casing.

**On September 11, 1961**, “Bozo’s Circus” made its TV debut on WGN.

**On September 11, 2001**, nearly 3,000 people were killed when terrorists hijacked four jetliners, crash-

ing two into the 110-story twin towers of New York's World Trade Center. The two others crashed into the Pentagon and in a Pennsylvania field.

**On September 12, 1869**, the National Prohibition Party was formed in Chicago.

**On September 12, 1906**, Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich was born in St. Petersburg.

**On September 12, 1948**, Maine's Republican Margaret Chase Smith was elected to the U.S. Senate, becoming the first woman to have served in both houses of Congress.

**On September 12, 1954**, "Lassie" made its TV debut on CBS.

**On September 12, 1984**, the Chicago Bulls selected Michael Jordan as their No. 1 choice in the NBA draft.

**On September 13, 1954**, Edmund Muskie was elected governor of Maine, becoming the state's first Democratic governor in 20 years.

**On September 13, 1955**, for the first time since World War II, West Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to establish diplomatic relations.

**On September 13, 1978**, in Elkhart, a grand jury indicted Ford Motor Co. on three counts of recklessness, and one count of criminal negligence, in the death of three women killed in the fiery crash of a Pinto.

**On September 13, 1996**, rapper Tupac Shakur died at a Las Vegas hospital after he was wounded in a drive-by shooting; he was 25.

**On September 14, 1741**, George Fredrick Handel, having worked without interruption for 23 days, finished his composition of "The Messiah."

**On September 14, 1778**, Benjamin Franklin was appointed as the first American minister to France.

**On September 14, 1814**, at the bombardment of Fort McHenry (in the War of 1812), Baltimore lawyer Francis Scott Key wrote the words to "The Star Spangled Banner."

**On September 14, 1886**, George K. Anderson, of Memphis, Tenn., patented the typewriter ribbon.

**On September 14, 1901**, President William McKinley died in Buffalo of gunshot wounds inflicted eight days earlier. Vice President Theodore Roosevelt succeeded him.

**On September 15, 1777**, during the Revolutionary War, Polish Count Casimir Pulaski was commissioned a major general in the Continental Army.

**On September 15, 1890**, detective novelist Agatha Christie was born in Torquay, England.

**On September 15, 1916**, during World War I, units of the British army became the first to use military tanks.

**On September 15, 1949**, "The Lone Ranger" premiered on ABC television.

# Business cards



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- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, La-Porte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, Sept. 13.
- St. John Kanty, 7012 N. County Road 600 East, Rolling Prairie, 1-6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14.

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The Beacher's office hours are:

**Monday-Thursday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.**

**Friday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.**

**Closed: Saturday & Sunday**



## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

**Billy Summers** by Stephen King (hardcover, \$30 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook, audio CD and audiobook. 514 pages.)

*“So, a question: is killing for honor better than killing for money?”*

*Probably not, but that won't stop him.”*

A paid assassin. Three words at the heart of this story. However, that simple explanation has gotten in the way of the hype over the author — the great Stephen King himself. Lord of the horror genre, king of mayhem and killer cars. Can he break out of that box? Of course he can. He's Stephen King. Maybe it was time, as Monty Python said, “for something completely different.” So King puts the monsters back under the bed — for the moment at least — and gives us a good old-fashioned crime novel. One that works superbly on several levels.

There are so many things going on in this story, no wonder it's more than 500 pages, but King's writing style makes the pages fly by at warp speed. Here's why I love, love, this book...

The first thing you realize about Billy Summers is that he's a most unusual man, and not just because he's an assassin for hire. Once you get to know him, you can see he's not the kind of guy who could sit behind a desk selling life insurance or balancing your financial portfolio.

No, Billy will kill the bad guy, for a reasonable amount of money, and slip away unseen and unknown. Notice I say “bad guy” because Billy has a strict code of conduct — he will kill only really bad guys who have done really bad things and deserve to die. Rationalization at its finest.

Billy is an ex-Marine who served two tours in Iraq where he became a crack sniper, even winning the Bronze Star, Silver Star and Purple Heart.

However, the early years of his life foresaw the man he will eventually become. Here's why...

When Billy was 11, his mother's latest boyfriend came home and killed his 9-year-old sister, Cassie, in a drunken rage, while his mom was at work. Billy found the boyfriend's gun and shot him. Dead. End of problem. Of course, it was self-defense, but Billy's mom sank deep into drugs and more undesirable boyfriends. Finally, Billy was taken by the state and put in an orphanage. He stayed there until old enough to sign up for the Marines.

In Iraq, he finds out the meaning of family. The

eight guys he counts on to watch his back become his brothers, and the death of some of them makes him decide not to re-up after his two tours of duty.

Back in the states, he meets up with Bucky Hanson, a guy who is sort of an agent, brokering Billy the jobs that will define his adult life. Now, Billy's in his mid-40s and decides to retire from the business...after one more very lucrative job. He's offered a cool \$2 million to kill Joel Allen, a man who fits Billy's description of a bad man who needs to die.

He's given \$500,000 up front, with the rest upon completion of the job. And then Billy can retire. Too good to be true? One thing about Billy — you would never call him stupid. Remember the old adage — “There is no honor among thieves?”

He's set up in an office, and his cover is that he's an author writing a novel. He has an alias, a rental house and a used car to drive while waiting for the mark to appear. He has to wait in this unnamed Midwestern state for Joel to be extradited from California. Soon, Billy has a nagging feeling about this job. Something is off. So he makes up a whole other persona, rents an apartment on the other side of town and gets another car, along with a wig, glasses and new clothing.

There is another big problem here.

In all this waiting, Billy doesn't figure that his neighbors in the rented house will be so welcoming and friendly. He's used to the get in, make the shot and leave scenario, avoiding any interaction to have someone remember you.

Other things happen that will change his life forever: while waiting in the office pretending to be an author, he actually starts writing a book about his life. Then there's a young woman thrown out of a van outside his second apartment...should he leave her there? It's raining hard and she's unconscious.

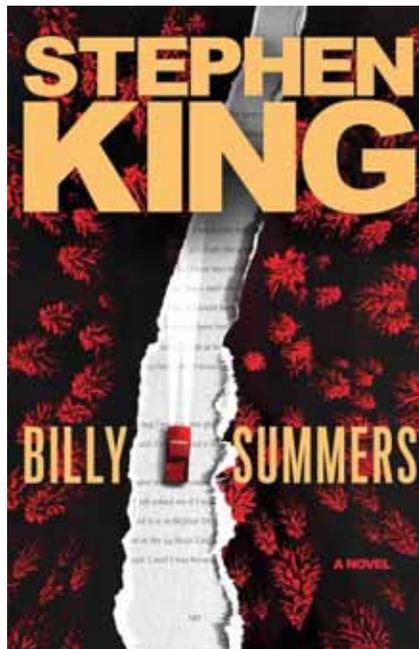
The story of Billy Summers is a hard reading: a hit-you-in-the-gut feeling kind of story. King has this ability to not just create a character, but bring him alive, get into his mind and make you forget you're cheering on a hitman.

King also takes us to the town, down the streets and into the houses. The reader is part of the story, you can't help but be. As the climax draws near, a feeling of dread and hope builds page after page.

What a man. And I'm talking about King *and* Billy Summers.

You'll be remiss if you miss this one!

Till next time, happy reading!



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