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A Sculptor and His Legacy

by Linda Weigel

"If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all." – Michelangelo

I've been in the mood for all things sculpture. It may be a carryover from humble previous attempts to sculpt, which turned out to be much more difficult than I imagined.

Perhaps, too, my recent explorations into the life of sculptor Isamu Noguchi opened a door to further exploration. Why? Because sculpture is 3-D and differs from 2-D in two important areas: actual physical depth and more than one viewpoint. You can walk around or sometimes even through a sculp-

ture. The space it occupies is almost as important as the work itself. In the case of smaller works, you can turn them, admiring all sides, which makes it tricky to execute because as the artist, you have to take into account not only a front view, but all sides at once. Working with all those dimensions, and incorporating a successful composition, require training, time and skill.

My admiration for artists who can create a piece that incorporates all these perspectives is considerable. My awe at how someone can model a subject in clay, later casting in metal or plaster, is deep. Building an armature, then taking clay, manipulating it



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Mustafa Naguib (right) is photographed talking with a student. Photo courtesy of Christopher Bennett.

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by hand with various tools, reworking, scraping and refining until the final result appears is only the first step in this additive process. The entire evolution from creating a mold to casting is intriguing and somewhat magical.

How many of us, then, understand the process by which a sculptor fulfills an artistic vision, while at the same time balances a high level of skill with thoughtful reflection. What is the legacy? Considering the tight discipline it takes to sculpt, the challenges of creating in 3-D and the costs of materials, the development from inception to finished work is remarkably complex.

With that in mind, a very talented sculptor recently came to my attention spurred by the search to find a new home for one of his works.

I wasn't familiar with him.

I wish I had been.

Mustafa Naguib was a man of immeasurable skill as an artist and educator. His was a journey that took him from his home country of Egypt to Beverly Shores and finally on to Glen Ellyn, Ill. I wish there was more information and a sizable biography about his life and work so I could more fully understand his background, motivation and formal education.

Unfortunately, that was not the case.



"To the artist there is never anything ugly in nature." – Auguste Rodin

Naguib was born Feb. 6, 1913, in Cairo, Egypt, and died Aug. 6, 1990, in Glen Ellyn. His was a life and career dedicated to art and art education, working in the classical, representational style of the Renaissance masters, often with full-figured, human-centered sculptures. He utilized sculpture methods developed thousands of years ago in Egypt, Greece and Rome,

most unusual at the time considering the then growing interest in abstract and other contemporary movements.

In his earlier years, he was the official sculptor to King Farouk of Egypt and later to the first Egyptian president, Mohamed Naguib. Whether they were related is not known. He was selected to create many commissions for the Egyptian government. He served for a time as art director of the military museum in Cairo. He lectured on Egyptian TV and taught fine arts at Helwan University in Cairo, Egypt. A prominent figure in Egypt, he left his home country in 1969 with just a small bag and little money, leaving behind everything else after a disagreement with then president Gamal Abdel Nasser and his vice president, Muhammad Anwar Sadat. He arrived in the U.S. in 1970 after spending some time teaching in Kuwait. After visiting friends in Indianapolis, he traveled the state as a lecturer and more. He married Patricia Roberts, who had interviewed him as part of the immigration process when he first arrived in the U.S. They soon settled

in Beverly Shores, where he established the Naguib School of Sculpture in 1973. The original log cabin-style school and outbuildings have long been demolished.

Along with his personal ability to sculpt and cast numerous works, Naguib was especially known for getting back to the essentials, even making his own tools, wax from resins and ovens from firebrick. How fantastic was that! For students who worked and studied with him, they were exposed to the truest art history living lessons: a history of how things actually were formed and created based on human ingenuity and building from scratch. I personally have some very limited sculptural history in my educational background, but nothing that could approach Naguib's instruction.



Mustafa Naguib is photographed welding in Beverly Shores. Photo courtesy of Christopher Bennett.



Mustafa Naguib in his Beverly Shores studio with students.
Note the size and proportions of the work in progress.
Photo courtesy of Christopher Bennett.

Lucky were the students who studied with him.

In addition to teaching, Naguib took on numerous commissions. One such request came from the wife of former U.S. Sen Paul H. Douglas to create a bust of her husband. The resulting work was considered near perfection in likeness of the then ailing senator. In 1975, an announcement was made for plans to move the Naguib School of Sculpture to a proposed \$1 million school at International Friendship Gardens in Michigan City. If only that had come to fruition. I suspect it would have put the town on the map for providing specialized education emphasizing the traditional approach to sculpture – today significant especially for restoration, renewal or replication of existing broken or weathered architectural elements as only one example.

Regardless, the Naguib School of Sculpture was impactful for many students. The training was classical in approach, which meant lessons in anatomy, how to construct a proper armature, clay sculpture, mold making, casting and finishing were a priority.

Students would have learned how to model in clay and how to engage with the material. The clay, itself, could provide an exciting surface quality. For large full-sized works, they would learn to weld to make the underlying armature to support the weight of the applied clay. The addition of layers of rubber mold, then liquid wax, might come next. Molds always had their own set of rules for application and later removal. Casting in metal would require a way to burn out the wax, melt the metal and pour the metal. Even when the mold cooled and the metal was released, there would be hours involved in cleaning and sometimes burnishing and polishing the surface. Just the skill involved to model the

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to model the piece and all the necessary steps to produce a finished artwork boggles the mind.

Naguib's students understood such complexities. Fortunately, I located two of his former student/apprentices to garner a peak into the Naguib School of Sculpture.



"Sculpture is the art of the intelligence." – Pablo Picasso

Jeffrey H. Dean attended both the Beverly Shores and Glenn Ellyn schools for 24 months over three years (1977-1981). On his website, he states, *"Naguib School was a very small private school. Mustafa Naguib had fled the revolution in Egypt and opened his school in the U.S. It was a 7 day a week, 24 hour a day affair, modeling life-size figures, making molds, casting plaster and bronze and a bit of stone carving."* He studied elsewhere, but for him, such "total immersion learning environments" were the key to a solid background in formal sculptural techniques.

"Each semester we modeled a life-size figure from a live model. We built heavy free-standing steel armatures, prepared garbage cans full of clay rolls, and worked with the model a few hours a day. There were usually only six or eight students at a time," he told *The Beacher*. "We set up around the model, turning the model's swiveling stand periodically. When we were finished, we made plaster waste molds and cast the figures in plaster."

Life in such a school involved considerable time, skill and patience. Dean explains, "We also built a foundry and cast some of our work in bronze. After making rubber molds and casting and investing the waxes, we hoisted the heavy plaster molds down onto brick pedestals in a circular brick-lined pit. We then built a spiral brick dome over the pit and stocked a wood fire for three days to burn out the wax models. Then we dismantled the dome, inverted and packed sand around the molds and poured the bronze, which we melted in natural draft, coke-fired crucible ovens."

What an education, and what stamina and love for the process his students must have had. With small classes in an intimate setting, there would have been plenty of time to ask questions, receive

answers and observe a Naguib demonstration.

How, I wondered, did they learn about anatomy so vital to representing the human form. Dean describes the process: "Naguib gave regular anatomy lessons using colored chalk to draw the muscle groups on large sheets of paper. We also did a lot of portrait modeling. His method allowed you to quickly build and capture a likeness within a couple of hours. Some of us also used pointing machines to carve limestone from plaster models."

Apparently, working on human forms was not the only subjects explored. Dean also learned to make rubber molds and solid plaster-piece molds. He spent one summer session modeling a half-size Arabian horse and made several relief sculptures.

What was some of the best advice Naguib gave? "Art for art's sake is misery. Art for people is life."

As to Dean's own work, he states, "All my work is influenced by and based on nature, whether figurative or abstract. I develop many of my ideas in response to the specific settings and guidelines posed by commissions.



A sculpture by Jeffrey H. Dean for a park in Benton, Ill. Photo courtesy of Dean.

"I'm also inspired by the shapes and character of materials I use and the compositions I see in nature and my surroundings."

Dean lives and works in Homer, Alaska, his home state where he was born and raised.

By 1978, Naguib's school had abandoned its Beverly Shores location and relocated to Glenn Ellyn.

"The environment was different, but the school still had a lot of nature around it, as it was in a wing of the old Maryknoll Seminary

building," Dean said. "It was also more convenient to Chicago for visiting museums on the weekends."

After graduating, Dean spent some time as an artist in the Fairbanks schools, and taught at a summer fine arts camp.

"My classes revolved around clay modeling, and I would always demonstrate making a portrait sculpture using the techniques I learned from Naguib," he said. "I'm currently teaching metal art techniques I've developed over the past 30 years to make heat-colored steel engravings through a comprehensive online course I've created."

Such a legacy begun by Naguib and passed on, in this case, to a successful student and professional artist who also finds the time to share his knowledge

and techniques with another generation is hopeful.
An example of a continuing legacy.

"I express myself in sculpture since I am not a poet." – Aristide Maillol

Another apprentice/student is Christopher Bennett from Bentonsport, Iowa. For him, Naguib had a lasting influence. He states on his website, *"I lived and apprenticed with him for three years. He was a mentor to me for everything from monument building to brushing my teeth properly, 'his way.' I subjected myself to 'his way' for three years. We were drilled in anatomy, molds, casting, carving and building. He was very demanding, but it did pay off well."*

Bennett continues on his website: *"Naguib gave me two important pieces of advice: 'I can't teach you art – I can only teach you technique. You already have art in your heart.' The other is: 'Go home to start – that is where your base support is, that is where you will grow from.' I did and I have."*

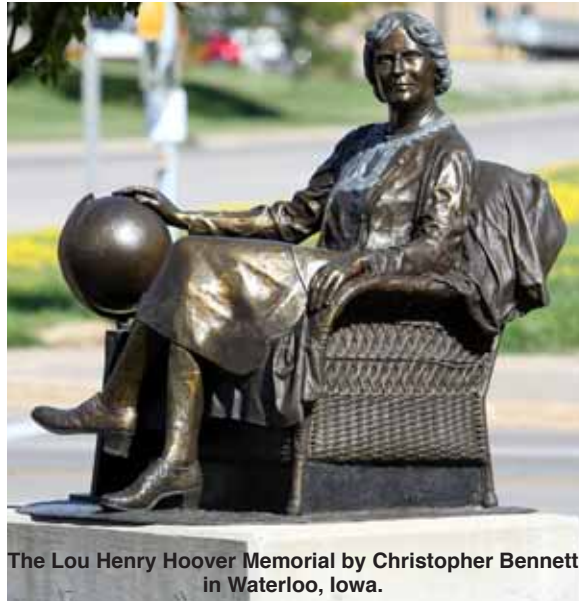
Bennett began his studies at Luther College, University

of Iowa, and lastly the Naguib School of Sculpture. He regrets attending college first rather than art school.

"In the colleges and, especially in universities, they try to teach you 'Art' without any solid techniques," he states on his website. *"I always felt that I was competing with established artists in style and artistry."*

For him, that didn't work. He felt that learning *"the ABCs first and be drilled in them"* was better. *"It only encouraged my own rebellion, frustration and anger because I was never given a base to spring from."* I can fully appreciate his sentiment here and respect it. I was blessed with attending college, too, but fortunately in my case, every art professor was skilled in relaying good technique through example and demonstration as we worked with live models.

Bennett says on his website, *"In contrast, from Naguib I learned to create a well-crafted artwork, and to survive and prosper. At the university I was encouraged to be 'artistic.' I believe I was damaged by*



The Lou Henry Hoover Memorial by Christopher Bennett in Waterloo, Iowa.

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university philosophy for years, regarding making a living at my craft.” Strong words, to be sure. He continues: *“That was discouraged as ‘commercial’ and ‘impure.’ We were never given any idea how to present ourselves or our artwork in the business world, let alone respect the procurement or management of money for our service to the public.*

“At Naguib School, all of these things were addressed and, as a working sculptor, he made himself an example.”

Obviously, this was an intense, hands-on approach from learning how to sculpt based on traditional techniques of working with wax, molds, fire and bronze to solid advice about going home to one’s base support.

Bennett has always been interested in art.

“I’ve always wanted to create artwork and work with people and also to sell a product. I first decided to be a sculptor when I was 17 years old, during a summer apprenticeship with a local potter whose husband was a sculptor.” Such youthful enthusiasm and clarity of mind never changed.

He is currently working on several private pieces and finds inspiration from his local environment,

“Colors, textures, shapes and forms abound in nature,” he says on his website. *“All elements of nature and landscape inspire me. People and their interactions with others and with their God fascinate me.”*

Bennett teaches as well. He offers workshops throughout his state and from his studio in Bentonport. Like his mentor, he is interested in establishing *“a school for classical figurative sculpture with an adjoining sculpture park filled with life-size bronzes.”* With such ambitions, the legacy to teach and pass on knowledge and technique continues. □

Amid Naguib’s legacy is a sad fact. The fact that after an artist dies and his commissioned works are left behind, what happens to them? Who takes care of them, and how are they preserved? What happens if the original owner must relinquish a work?

St. Andrews-by-the-Lake, Michigan City, was an

Episcopal church begun in 1956 and recently closed due to a decrease in membership. It faces just such a conundrum. Importantly, there remains on the wall in back of the altar a wonderful statue of “The Christ of Peace and Glory” (olive branch in one hand, palm branch in the other). Naguib was commissioned for it while he worked/taught in Beverly Shores and is in memory of Robert A. Akins and Robert E. Akins Jr. As relayed in a church memo, Naguib was *“meticulous in his work and destroyed the first statue he made for the church feeling it wasn’t good enough.”* The final result was quite wonderful, measuring approximately 7 feet in height by 6 feet wide with arms outstretched. Sadly, the sculpture now needs a home before the church property is sold and possibly torn down.

Naguib’s work for this church went beyond considerations of simply being a religious work. It is more than that. It is a sculpture by a recognized artist worthy of entering the collection of any museum or private collector. It is fine art – period.

Former church member Carol Hazelgrove is working assiduously to find a permanent new home for the work. If anyone has information that would be helpful in her search, email *The Beacher* at drew@thebeacher.com and it will be forwarded.

Legacy in the case of Naguib is a heritage, a heritage of art and art making the results of which have been passed on to future generations through his student/assistants. As a sculptor and educator, Naguib brought invaluable opportunities to learn from a master. It is meaningful how impactful he was to those fortunate enough to work and study with him.

I wish I could have been one of them. □

(More details on Naguib’s former students are available at www.jeffreyhdean.com and www.figurative-wildlifemonumentalsculpture.com)

Coming Soon

Linda Weigel’s in-depth coverage of the new sculptures honoring Michigan City-born suffragette Naomi Bowman Talbert Anderson.



Three views of “The Christ of Peace and Glory.” Photo by Linda Weigel



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Jewish Mini Film Fest Returns to Library



Two diverse films headline the Jewish Mini Film Festival at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 9, at Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St.

"They Ain't Ready for Me" is the award-winning documentary about Tamar Manasseh, a black rabbinical student fighting against killings in Chicago's South Side. Her group, Mothers/Men Against Senseless Killings (MASK), also addresses access to city services, educational advancement and job skill and economic development.

In "The Women's Balcony," a bar mitzvah mishap causes a major rift in a devout Orthodox-Israeli community. Amid the crisis, a charismatic young rabbi arrives to help navigate the congregation while internal struggles ensue, especially for the women. The film was a major hit in Israel where it highlighted increasingly tense conflict between ultra-Orthodox Judaism and more liberal factions.

The festival is supported by the Blossom and Irving Jewish Cultural Fund of Sinai Temple. Admission is free, and cakes and refreshments will be served.

Top Photo

"They Ain't Ready for Me"

Bottom Photo

"The Women's Balcony"

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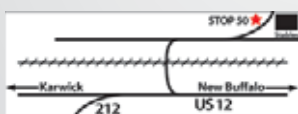
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Candidates also must have been retired or separated from the school system for at least five years. Because retirees are occasionally called back to service, the date of separation is considered the official retirement date, not including subsequent employment by MCAS. Employees from schools that were independent before school reorganization, as well as those from schools no longer in existence, also are eligible. Death does not make a person ineligible.

All applications remain on file for three years. At the end of that time, candidates must be renominated. Forms and a complete list of past recipients are available at <http://EducateMC.net/WOF>

The nomination deadline is Friday, April 29. Contact Betsy Kohn at (219) 873-2000, Ext. 8365, or email bkohn@educateMC.net for details.

"5x5 Show" Call for Artists

The "5x5 Show," which turns five this year, is back as an in-person fundraiser this year, the first time since 2019.

Through the benefit for The Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery, artists donate a 5"x5" work to be displayed in the gallery. All art sells for \$55, with stickers bought ahead of time and quickly applied to a buyer's favorite piece.

Promoted through www.bsdepot.com, online publicity will link to the artist's website and/or Instagram account. The submission deadline is May 2. Free canvases and/or frames are available at The Ellen Firme Gallery, 92 W. U.S. 12. Hours there are 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday.

The show is from 5-7 p.m. Friday, May 13. Art remains on display through June 2. Email sales@bsdepot.com for more details.

Photo Contest Deadline

Photo submissions for the 2022 LaPorte County Historical Society Museum contest "Streets and Signs" are due by Saturday, April 22.

Rules and entry forms are available at the museum or at www.laportecountyhistory.org. Email info@laportecountyhistory.org for more details.

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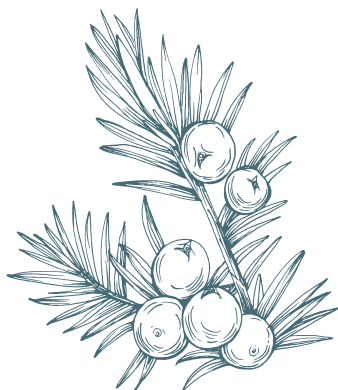
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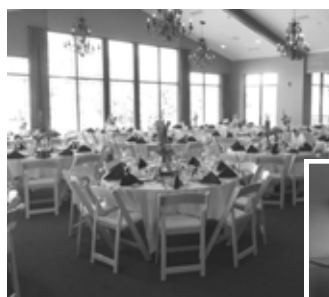
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Michigan City Public Library

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

The front doors are open. Public seating is available, and the computer lab is open. Hours are: 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday and closed Sundays.

The following programs are scheduled:

- **MCPL Podcast Episode Release at 9 a.m. Friday, April 8.** Miss Dana will chat about upcoming books, then interview a librarian about his/her job. Listen on Buzzsprout or through www.mclib.org/podcast
- **Needle Arts Club at 5:30 p.m. Mondays in April.** Membership to the group, formerly known as the Knit Club, is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome.
- **Great Decisions at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 11.** The foreign policy discussion group returns for its 24th season. The discussion topic is the Quad Alliance. Call (219) 873-3049 for more details. Reading material is available at the circulation desk.
- **Story Time at 10 a.m. Wednesdays in April.** Children birth to age 5 and adults will enjoy stories, songs and crafts. Check out previous story

time videos through the library's YouTube channel, Facebook page and website.

- **Virtual Story Time with Take-Home Craft.** 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/. 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.



The Collector's Corner Breakfast returns after a two-year COVID hiatus, the event set for 9 a.m. Saturday, April 23, in the St. John's United Church of Christ Fellowship Hall, 101 W. St. John Road.

Tickets, which cost \$25, may be purchased at the library circulation desk; no tickets are sold at the door. The breakfast is catered by Portofino Grill, and Martin Papke from Kathy's Antiques, Chesterton, returns to appraise items. Each ticketholder may take one item for appraisal.



Two new services are available:

- ComicsPlus offers unlimited access to thousands of digital comics, graphic novels and manga. Popular titles include Avatar: The Last Airbender & The Legend of Korra, Big Nate, Bone, Disney Princesses, Geronimo Stilton, Stranger Things, Locke & Key and American Gods. Patrons need a current library card and PIN.
- The app Library NewsStand includes 7,000 titles of digital magazines and newspapers in more than 60 language, including: *Newsweek*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes*, *The New Yorker*, *Reader's Digest*, *Elle* and *Esquire*. A library card is required.

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In the area I call "Indiana Lakefront," which stretches from Beverly Shores to the Michigan line lakeward of U.S. 12, there are normally 100 residences for sale. As of April 1, 2022, there are 9 residential properties for sale.

To put this even more in perspective, since Jan. 1, 2022, 14 properties are under contract and 39 residences have closed. That means we have about 18 days of inventory because we are selling at least one house every two days. We normally have 100 listings on the market, with 30 to 60 days of inventory based on current rate of sales.

Crazy times!

More outlandish (at least to me) numbers.

The median sale price for sold properties is \$617,500. The highest price was \$2.75 million. The total closed sales volume in 90 days is \$27,153,691. If we keep that up, we will close well over \$100 million in real-estate sales in one year along the lake north of U.S. 12 from Beverly Shores to the Michigan border.

Yes, some properties did not sell. Eight properties expired or went inactive. The median price of expired properties was \$1.2 million. Sounds like the reason they expired was they were overpriced. Price still matters.

So, if you own a second home (a home you will not have to replace) in the Indiana lakefront area, now is the time to sell. There is no inventory. People are buying. Prices are high.

If you own a primary residence, make sure you know what you are going to do to replace what you now own. It will not be inexpensive to buy another home in our area.

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Should I or Shouldn't I?

While my four children and their families finish the evening meal, I reach down and massage the velvet sweet spot behind Stella's mousy brown ears. My daughter's dachshund has undertaken the Herculean effort of hoovering up dinner scraps from under the patio table. Stella returns my lavish praise with a grateful lick and scampers off to perch below my 3-year-old grandson's chair.

"You should get a dog," my son Dan declares.

The rest of the family chimes in. "Yeah, Mom! What a good idea!"

Under the scrutiny of eight pairs of eyes, I consider the horizon.

Our last family dog, Emmett, died when my husband and I became empty nesters nearly a decade ago. Since then, the question Steve and I frequently wrestled with was not "when" we would get another dog, but "if" it was a good idea. In the end, we reasoned it wasn't fair to own a pet because of our frequent travel, and because we often lingered over lunch with friends after golf and tennis. Yet, as much as we struggled with the idea of pet ownership, both of us hated how quiet the house had become without a devoted pet greeting us at the door with wags and sloppy kisses.

Before I return my gaze to my family, I reflect upon why the dog question has taken center stage

This Girl,
That Life

Julie McGue



now. My husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2011, which forced us to have honest discussions over the years about what life would look like for me without him. Once during one of those heart-to-hearts, I ended the conversation with the statement, "Don't worry. I'm not looking to replace you. I'll just get a dog."

When I uttered those words, they were meant to diffuse a difficult dialogue. My comment was not meant to be a contract. It was just a retort to a "what if" situation, one which I didn't expect to realize when 2022 began.

Stella scoots back over to me. I pick her up, and she nestles into the warm niche between my thighs. As my hand glides through the dachshund's sleek brown fur, nostalgia for the many dogs we have loved as a family marches in. The memories boost my mood.

I giggle. "Do you kids remember how miserable Yankee was on his birthdays?"

We all laugh. Yankee, our family's first sable and white collie, was born on the Fourth of July in LaPorte. Besides the notable birthday, Yankee was born with an incapacitating fear of sudden, loud noises. Every July 4th, as the fireworks displays consumed the Michiana night skies, Yankee shivered and shook so profoundly, his teeth chattered.

Dan's smile edges into a wicked grin. We all laugh because we know what's coming. "Yeah! The fireworks wreaked havoc with his bowels, too."

Poor Yank. It didn't matter if we locked him in his crate or gated him in the yard, he was always overdue for a bath the following day. Yankee was succeeded by two more male collies: Bailey and Emmett. And during Emmett's 13-year tenure, I lost my mind one day and bought a tri-color female collie named Nellie under the guise that Emmett needed companionship.

I think Dan must be remembering this, too, because he glances over at me, and his grin is full of white teeth. "What about the time Dad and I returned from the Bears game? While we were gone, you and Molly had driven out to St. Charles and brought Nellie home. When Dad saw you'd brought home a puppy without discussing it, his face turned so red, I thought he would pop."

Molly chimes in. "Emmett and Nellie were cute together, but I'm not sure how I ended up with the

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chore of cleaning up the yard after them.”

“Now wait a minute,” Kassie says, “after you went to college, I inherited that nasty job.”

“Poop patrol is one reason that I’m not eager to get a dog right now,” I say.

Dan throws his arm around my shoulders. “That’s not a good reason, Mom. The dogs, especially Emmett, preferred you to everyone else in the family. You could use that kind of love and attention in your life.”

I smile at a memory which Dan’s words evoke. “You’re so right, Dan. Remember when...”, and then I launch into the retelling of one of my favorite tales involving Emmett and their dad.

I had taken my morning cup of coffee into the sunroom of our old house in Hinsdale, and Emmett, as always, shuffled in behind me. His nails clicked on the hardwood floors like typewriter keys. I let him plop beside me on the wicker sofa, and I scratched him behind the ears just as I had done with Stella earlier. Steve joined us in the sunroom with the big Sunday newspaper. On the sofa, Emmett inched closer and licked my hand. When Steve spoke to me, both of us heard a guttural sound.

“Is he growling at me?” Steve asked.

“I’m not sure. Maybe.”

When Steve stood up, there was no mistaking Emmett’s snarl.

“Up boy. Out! Out!” Steve’s face reddened. “That dog mistakenly thinks you belong to him instead of me.”

The mental picture of those two alpha males squaring off elicits belly laughs from my kids and me. As we tidy up the patio and move the group indoors, I think about how grand it is to laugh with my children about their dad, our dogs and the memories we shared as a family. And as much as I appreciate Dan’s well-meaning suggestion that a dog might fill the gaping hole left by Steve’s recent passing, my decade-old comment, “I’ll just get a dog,” feels like donning a dress that is already out of fashion. I miss my husband’s presence, and even though the house is quieter than I think I can bear some days, a few more houseplants is all I can commit to taking care of for the time being.



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Despite “The Slap,” Inclusivity Reigns at the Oscars

by Andrew Tallackson

So, which was the bigger Oscar upset: “CODA”... or “the slap”?

Pretty sure we have our answer.

I am writing this two days after the 94th Academy Awards. Only now is it sinking in among entertainment journalists, and the moviegoing public, that Sunday’s ceremony was a watershed moment for inclusivity. Right now, all we want to talk about is Will Smith losing his cool, walking onto the stage and slapping presenter Chris Rock across the face for cracking a joke at his wife’s expense.

In what up to that point was a sluggish, largely predictable evening, the moment cast the equivalent of a death shroud over the event.

Before then, what could we take away from the Oscars? Well, fairly quickly, it was obvious all buzz for “The Power of the Dog” had cooled. Save for Jane Campion’s Best Director win — the movie’s sole award — the nominations themselves apparently were the “win.”

Instead, the Academy went with its heart, and “CODA,” which ruled its three nominated categories — Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Supporting Actor — is *all* heart. In many ways, it recalls films of the late ’70s/early ’80s, Oscar winners like “Kramer vs. Kramer,” “Ordinary People” and “On Golden Pond.” Movies that veered away from spectacle and focused on real people with real problems. I don’t know that “CODA” is the best movie of the year, but it is more satisfying than “The Power of the Dog.” “West Side Story,” to me, is a more ambitious endeavor — visually, technically and emotionally — but overall indifference seems the remake’s worst enemy on all fronts.

Ariana DeBose’s Best Supporting Actress win, though, was the night’s first breakthrough moment, the Latinx, openly LGBT actress sending out a message of hope. When last year’s Best Supporting Actress winner Yuh-Jung Youn signified deaf actor Troy Katsur’s win through sign language, it was the evening’s loveliest, most compassionate gesture. And by “Encanto” winning Best Animated Feature, the message that representation matters rang through loud and clear.

“Dune,” the epic adaptation of Frank Herbert’s long-thought unfilmable work, was the evening’s big winner (six statues), but in technical categories only, continuing a trend set by “Gravity” and “Mad Max: Fury Road.” It is the Academy’s way of saying, “Hey, we love your movie, but we can’t have fantasy or science-fiction take the top prizes.”

(The 11 Oscars won by 2003’s “The Lord of the



The cast and behind-the-scenes talent of “CODA” accept the Oscar for Best Picture.

Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring” are seen as the Academy’s way of congratulating Peter Jackson for the entire trilogy, not the film itself.)

What should have been the most satisfying win was “Summer of Soul” for Best Documentary Feature. The beautiful irony of it: A movie about footage that sat abandoned for 50 years winning an Oscar. The closure. The cathartic release.

But what went down right before it won?

That’s right.

“The slap.”

I’m not going to use *The Beacher* as a forum to debate it. All the arguments for and against it are legitimate. That violence is never a solution. That

jokes at the expense of someone’s health are deplorable. That Smith was only defending his wife. All that, I get it.

What haunts me is Smith’s rambling Best Actor acceptance speech for “King Richard.” It was a case of watching a meltdown: someone emotionally collapsing on stage. A self-aware moment in which a man realizes he’s made a horrible mistake. That he tarnished a career high. That he let himself down, those closest to him, everyone in the room and everyone watching. That his behavior did not reflect the kind of man he wants to be. Doesn’t matter if you support Smith or not. Watching that speech was difficult and painful.



First-place winner Bob Sieko.



Second-place winner Mary Killingbeck.

Cohost Amy Schumer did her best soon after to lighten the mood: “*I’ve been getting out of that Spider-Man costume, did I miss anything? There’s like a different vibe in here.*” She and fellow hosts Wanda Sykes and Regina Hall, indeed, tried to achieve a playful spirit for the night.

But what was supposed to be a shorter ceremony — bestowing eight awards before the telecast — was an epic fail. Taking heat for robbing nominees of Oscar glory, the show’s producers included them anyway, just edited down. And with fluffy tributes and comedy sketches that ran hot and cold, the night was just as long as its predecessors, clocking in at 3 hours 36 minutes. I’m in my 50s now. That’s *way* past my Sunday night bedtime.

None of that matters, though. All we remember now is “the slap.” And the net result? A ceremony

Continued on Page 20

Continued From Page 19

that was like acid reflux after a disagreeable meal.



The silver lining for me, always, is our Beat the Editor contest. It is a blast to read all the entries our readers submit, their choices for who might win.

This year, I correctly predicted five of the six categories, missing out on Best Picture by assuming, "The Power of the Dog" would win. No one reader correctly predicted all six categories, but five tied with me with five correct guesses: Patrick Cannon, Long Beach; Jamie Edwards, Michigan City; Mary Killingbeck, Michigan City; Lori Richardson, Michigan City; and Bob Sieko, Walkerton.

Sieko was the only one to predict "CODA" would take the evening's top prize. That makes him our first-place winner. He receives a \$25 gift card to Swingbelly's, our contest sponsor, and a \$25 AMC gift card. Going into the drawing for second place, Killingbeck was the winner and receives a \$25 AMC gift card. Congratulations to both of you.

A big thanks to Swingbelly's for being our new sponsor. It is an honor having this local favorite be part of a *Beacher* tradition.

And thank you, dear reader, for always being the reason we do this. You're the best.



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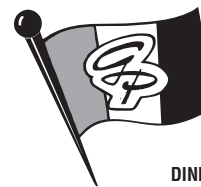
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“The Lost City” Delivers Enough Star Power to Make You Smile

by Andrew Tallackson



Sandra Bullock and Channing Tatum star in “The Lost City.”

Let’s set things straight: Nothing can touch “Romancing the Stone.” The playful chemistry between Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner. A hilariously profane Danny DeVito. A witty script by the late Diane Thomas. Action sequences with gags and heroics. A conclusion that is darn near perfect.

“The Lost City” has “Romancing the Stone” on the brain. Heck, its romance novelist hero played by Sandra Bullock attends a convention appropriately titled “Romancing the Pages.”

“The Lost City” is no “Romancing the Stone.” Not by a long shot. It does make you smile, though. A lot. There is something to say about a movie that has all the right ingredients, and while it swings for the fences and sometimes misses, you leave the theater with a grin on your face.

The influences of “Romancing the Stone” are all over “The Lost City.” Bullock’s Loretta Sage is a once-thriving romance novelist still grieving the death of her archaeologist husband five years later. She’s in a personal and creative funk. Her latest book, “The Lost City of D,” she knows it’s garbage. But at the prodding of her publicist, Beth (Da’Vine Joy Randolph), she attends the book’s launch party with her longtime cover model, Fabio-like himbo



“The Lost City”

Running time: 112 minutes. Rated PG-13 for violence and some bloody images, suggestive material, partial nudity and language.

Alan Caprison (Channing Tatum).

It is during the big event that she’s abducted by loopy billionaire Abigail Fairfax. He is played by Daniel Radcliffe in a surprisingly funny turn, sporting the film’s best line when he explains possible clues to lost treasure exist in her book, amid, of course, the many passages of “coital reverie.” So, she’s whisked off to an exotic island, with Alan and, eventually, Beth, in hot pursuit.

A movie like this sinks or swims on the chemistry between Bullock and Tatum. Thankfully, they have it. She’s in her comfort zone, he’s playing against type as exceedingly insecure. The dialogue between these two does not crackle like the lines Douglas and Turner had in their 1984 hit, but the two actors clearly feed off each other well. Their energy together matches the slapstick air of the Saturday morning serials that inspired the film.

Brad Pitt, however, is a riot, his performance

as former Navy Seal Jack Trainer one big wink to his audience. He's having a laugh at some of the roles he's played, but without playing the role as a joke. The movie, however, offers a big twist involving his character, which forces Alan to step up to the plate. And that is where "The Lost City" makes you smile, in letting Tatum's Alan discover his inner hero, while Bullock's Loretta rediscovers joy through a real-life adventure.

Directors Adam and Aaron Nee keep the action moving along briskly, and it looks great, photographed in sun-baked gold by Jonathan Sela ("Deadpool 2"). When the story lands all the characters in the fabled title city, Bullock does what she does best: reach for your heart amid the silliness to make you care about her character all over again.

Will "The Lost City" be remembered in the same breath as "Romancing the Stone"? Not likely. It



Brad Pitt steals the film with just a few short scenes.

should do well in theaters before enjoying a solid afterlife on streaming. But you could do far worse than spend time with these characters. They're good company.



Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com




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Museum admission is free that day. The Pioneer Land Spinners will sell items made from their spun fibers. Illustrators and painters include the Land of Lakes Art Alliance and Michigan City Art League. Beth Zimmerman will paint a landscape scene at her booth. Other artisans will present garden decor, vintage bird feeders, jewelry, ceramics, chocolates, succulents, wreaths and pewter art.

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Indiana Dunes National Park

The National Park Service is adding two prescribed fires to this spring's planned schedule, bringing the total to eight.

In Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood, the park will burn 16 acres immediately surrounding the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education on North Lake Street. The goal is to reduce the threat of wildfire by creating defensible space around the structure.

Immediately south of the CSX tracks, near the U.S. 20 and Indiana Toll Road interchange, the park will burn 38 acres as part of a natural-resource restoration project.

On March 15, the national park successfully burned 42 acres at West Beach in Portage and 56 acres at Mnoke Prairie in Porter.

An online map of the prescribed fire areas is at <https://bit.ly/INDUSpring2022Fires>



IDNP has jobs for four teens this summer.

The Youth Conservation Corps program is a work-learn-earn program for 15- to 18-year-olds. April 30 is the application deadline. Participants are paid \$7.25 an hour for the 40-hour work week. The program runs June 5-Aug. 13, and applicants work the entire length of the program. Jobs include working as part of a crew doing a variety of manual labor

tasks, normally outdoors. The crews perform work such as staining, painting and caulking the exterior of park buildings and work as grounds maintenance (mowing grass, picking up trash, cleaning restrooms) and trails rehabilitation.

No experience is necessary. Participants are selected by random draw from the pool of applications. They must be U.S. citizens and 15 before June 5, but not turn 19 before Aug. 13, the end date of the program. The application is available through high school guidance offices or the IDNP Office at (219) 395-1772. The forms also are available at www.nps.gov/indu/parkmgmt/jobs.htm

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.

Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs will be offered:

- **Spring Photo Scavenger Hunt from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, April 9.** Take a camera or phone to the Nature Center for the game that includes a list and prizes.
- **Walk with the Timberdoodles at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 9.** Join a naturalist on the west side of the beach pavilion to search for shorebirds often called woodcocks, bogsuckers or timberdoodles. The hike is moderate and just more than one-mile long.
- **Critter Dinner at 10 a.m. Sunday, April 10.** Meet at the Nature Center as reptiles and amphibians eat live meals.
- **Guess Who's Nest from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, April 10.** Meet a naturalist at the Nature Center where those who successfully match all the animals to their nest receive a prize.

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

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The Friends of Beverly Shores sale store will be closed in April, restarting Thursday, May 5.

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LONG BEACH WOMEN'S BOWLING



March 29, 2022

TEAM STANDING

	WON	LOST
1. Gutter Busters	23	13
1. Lady Strikers	23	13
2. Dolls With Balls	18	18
2. Diagonal Divas	18	18

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES

	SCORE
1. June Salmon	178
2. Pat Collado	157
3. Mary Lou McFadden	154
4. Lisa Albers	149
5. Shelley Dunleavy	148
6. Deb Frederick (total)	407

SPLITS

Kim Stokes	5-6
Susan Kieffer	2-7

STRIKES

Shelley Dunleavy	3
June Salmon	



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

Easter Egg Hunt With Horses

The "Annual Easter Egg Hunt with Horses" is at 3 p.m. EDT Saturday, April 9, at Spring Creek Equestrian Center, 16771 Pardee Road, Three Oaks, Mich.

Children should take a basket, dress for a barn and arrive early since the egg hunt starts promptly. Children can have their photos taken with the Easter Bunny and S'More, the pony, and there will be horses to pet. Also planned is a "Baskets of Horse Love" sale, with baskets filled with items for young horse lovers. The baskets can be purchased at the event or in advance at the barn. Sales benefit the Spring Creek Horses Help Foundation, which provides local, low-income children and adults an equine-based educational program on horse behavior, barn and horse care, and riding skills.

Those who plan to attend should email Alison at algrosse@yahoo.com or text (269) 756-3894. Let her know the number and ages of children attending. Visit www.springcreek-equestrian.com for details.

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History Museum Lecture

The lecture "Copshaholm: A House and Its Peers on West Washington" is at 6:30 p.m. EDT Wednesday, April 13, at The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend.

Todd Zeiger, director of the Indiana Landmarks Northern Regional Office, will explore architecture of the Victorian era, including the range of styles and scale of homes along West Washington Street in the decade Copshaholm was built.

Presented as part of the museum's yearlong celebration of Copshaholm's 125th anniversary, Zeiger will chronicle national influences that shaped Copshaholm's design, as well as other homes nearby, then and now. Guests can stroll the grounds around Copshaholm before or after the presentation.

Tickets are \$5, or free for members. Reservations are required at www.historymuseumSB.org. Call (574) 235-9664 for more details.

Job Fair Employers Sought

April 12 is the deadline for region employers to register for the sixth annual Michigan City-LaPorte County Community Job Fair.

Employers who wish to be an exhibitor can sign up at no cost at <https://conta.cc/3umCAJv>. Each company will have access to a draped table and chairs, as well as space for on-site interviews as needed.

The job fair is from 2-6 p.m. Tuesday, May 10, in the Blue Chip Casino Stardust Room, 777 Blue Chip Drive. The event is sponsored by the Economic Development Corp. Michigan City, Michigan City Chamber of Commerce, Blue Chip Casino, Northwest Indiana Workforce Board and Work One.

Contact the EDCMC at (219) 873-1211 or info@edcmc.com for more details.

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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

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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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In the Area

April 7 — Steady Stitchers Club of LaPorte County Extension Homemakers Lend-A-Hand Day, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., Steady Stitchers' new studio, 1640 First St., LaPorte. Info: kulman@purdue.edu, (219) 324-9407.

April 7-10 — "Drinking Habits," Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Thur.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$15, \$10/Thur. Reservations: (219) 874-4035, www.footlightplayers.org

April 8 — MCPL Podcast Episode Release, 9 a.m., through Michigan City Public Library. Link: www.mclib.org/podcast

April 9 — Jewish Mini Film Festival, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St.

April 10 — Artisan Fair, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Free admission. Info: (219) 324-6767.

April 11 — Teen Anime Club, 4:30-6 p.m., Meeting Room B @ LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

April 11 — Great Decisions, 6:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

April 12 — Page Turners Book Club, noon-1 p.m., Meeting Room B @ LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

April 12 — Birds, Frogs and Bugs Oh My, 4-5 p.m., Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Registration: (219) 325-8315.

April 13 — Mommy and Me Sunflower Workshop, 10-11 a.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Cost: \$30/child. Registration: tinyurl.com/28mvxwnd

Through June 30 — Local artist Elda Rundzaitis, The Legacy Center Gallery @ Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Legacy Center hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Thur., 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun.

Mondays in April — Needle Arts Club, 5:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

First/Third Tuesday — Bingo, 5-6 p.m., Long Beach Community Center, Room 13, 2501 Oriole Trail. Free.

Saturdays — Turn Up Dance Fitness with Stacy G., 8:30-9:30 a.m., Long Beach Community Center,

2501 Oriole Trail. Cost: \$5 paid at class.

First and Third Mondays — Singing Sands Toastmasters Club, 6:30-8 p.m., Senior Health/Wellness Center (old hospital ER, Barker/Bufalo).

In the Region

April 9 — Spring Photo Scavenger Hunt, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 9 — Three Oaks/River Valley Pageant Committee Gown Sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. EDT, Three Oaks United Methodist, 2 Sycamore St. East. Admission: \$1. Info: springer3oaks@sbcglobal.net, (269) 449-3443.

April 9 — Annual Easter Egg Hunt with Horses, 3 p.m. EDT, Spring Creek Equestrian Center, 16771 Pardee Road, Three Oaks, Mich. Reservations: algrosse@yahoo.com, text (269) 756-3894.

April 9 — Walk with the Timberdoodles, 7 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 9 — Billy Elton, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: general/\$40, reserved/\$65. Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 10 — Critter Dinner, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 10 — Guess Who's Nest, 1-3 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 10 — Southshore Concert Band, "The Joy of Music: 30 Years," 2 p.m. EDT, Lake Michigan College Mendel Center Mainstage, 1100 Yore Ave., Benton Harbor, Mich. Free admission; donations accepted.

April 10 — Mountain Heart, 7 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: general/\$30, reserved/\$55. Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 13 — Lecture, "Copshaholm: A House and Its Peers on West Washington," 6:30 p.m. EDT, The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Tickets: \$5, free/members. Reservations: www.historymuseumSB.org, (574) 235-9664.

April 13 — "Out of the Box Open Mic," 7-9 p.m. EDT, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Admission: free, performers/\$5. Info: <https://mattlenny.com/contact>

Through April 10 — "Youth Art Month 2022, Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tue.-Fr./1-4 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Admission: \$10/adults, \$8/students, \$6/students (ages 8-12). Info: www.midwestmuseum.us, (574) 293-6660.

Through May 15 — Guillermo Sotelo's "Broken Alphabet: A Love Letter to Graffiti," Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: (269) 983-0271, www.krasl.org

Through May 28 — "University of Notre Dame:

The Fabric of a Global University," The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Tickets: \$11/adults, \$9.50/seniors (60+), \$7/youth (6-17), free/members. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat./noon-5 p.m. Sun. Info: (574) 235-9664, www.historymuseumSB.org

Through Oct. 2 — "WIRED: The Rise (and Fall) of Electric Cars," The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St., South Bend. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Sun. Admission: \$10/adults, \$8.50/seniors 60+, \$6/youth ages 6-18. Info: www.studebakermuseum.org, (574) 235-9714.

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

Sundays in March — Miller Woods Hike, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Paul H. Douglas Center, 100 N. Lake St., Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.



American Red Cross

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

- Northwest Health Heart and Vascular Building, 901 Lincolnway, LaPorte, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday, April 7.
- First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, April 9.
- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, April 11.
- South Central Junior-Senior High School, 9808 S. County Road 600 West, Union Mills, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday, April 13.

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 www.redcrossblood.org for more details.

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Pageant Committee Gown Sale

Three Oaks/River Valley Pageant Committee will hold its annual Gown Sale from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. EDT Saturday, April 9, at Three Oaks United Methodist, 2 Sycamore St. East.

Those who want to donate gowns can take them to the church between 6-8 p.m. EDT Friday, April 8. Donors set the price, and by paying \$5 to participate, event staff do their best to sell the dresses.

Admission is \$1 at the door. Contact Nikki at (269) 449-3443 or email springer3oaks@sbcglobal.net for more details.

The pageant committee runs events such as Miss & Mr. Three Oaks/River Valley, Miss Teen Three Oaks/River Valley and Little Miss Three Oaks/River Valley pageants.

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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Shadows Reel: A Joe Pickett Novel by C.J. Box (hardcover, \$28 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 352 pages.)

It's back to the wide-open West of Wyoming for this 22nd novel featuring Game Warden Joe Pickett, whose character and adventures get better with each book.

It's Thanksgiving Day, and Joe and Marybeth's three daughters are home for the holiday. The girls are spread out with lives of their own, so a chance to get them all together, even for a few days, is a treat. Little do they know, that dream is about to be shattered...

Three quick chapters lay out the bare bones of this story. The weaving of all these parts will show you a story that makes you realize the Old West has simply become the New Old West in scope and attitude.

Pickett is a 21st century version of a 19th century sheriff. He has the brains and brawn to handle most situations, but even he will be stymied by what is about to happen.

This holiday, the Pickett house also is host to Liv Romanowski and her baby daughter, Kestrel. Husband Nate is Joe's best friend and out of state this day. His bird abatement business took a hit last book when a thief, Axel Soledad, beat up Liv and stole his falcons. He's now out for revenge and on the hunt to find Soledad, supposedly seen recently in Colorado.

Romanowski is a fish out of water. Putting aside his military training and covert assignments for marriage to Liv is not easy for him. But as most poets will tell you, the love of a good woman can melt the coldest heart, and falconry helps Nate focus on something productive and calming. So when someone puts his family in jeopardy, his military training kicks into high gear and he's on the hunt. Nate's story runs parallel to Joe's, providing another avenue of adventure from Wyoming to Oregon and stops in between.

The day doesn't start out well as a call to Joe from rancher Lorne Trumley says someone killed a moose on his property. The season is over, and the animal is in a hard-to-reach area for the octogenarian.

It's not a moose Joe finds, but a local fishing guide, Bert Kiser, who had been tortured and killed, the body burned and dumped on Trumley's property.

Back home — After getting the turkey in the oven, Marybeth makes a trip to the local public library where she is director. A man drops a package

at the doorstep and runs away when he sees her.

Inside the package, Marybeth finds an old photo album with German writing on the cover and the year 1937. It is full of pictures of Hitler and his henchmen. Some research by Marybeth shows several local men served in World War II and were part of the famous Band of Brothers. They were the ones who entered Eagles Nest, Hitler's hideout in the mountains, and took souvenirs, like this photo album, back to the states with them.

Joe searches for clues in Bert's house and finds an Army foot locker belonging to Bert's father, who was a soldier in WWII. There's a connection here to Bert's murder, Joe is sure, but what exactly is it? Finding out may prove dangerous.

Of course, dinner would not be complete without another problem...Marybeth had invited nearby neighbor, Lola Lowry, for dinner, but she's a no-show. Could Joe go over and make sure she's OK since she's not answering her phone?

Yet another holiday setback. Joe finds Lola dead on her living room floor, obviously killed. Now, Joe is faced with two unexplainable murders: two people who lived quiet lives and had no valuables to die for.

The local sheriff is a hoot, providing as many grins as groans. It remains to be seen if he will be help or hindrance...

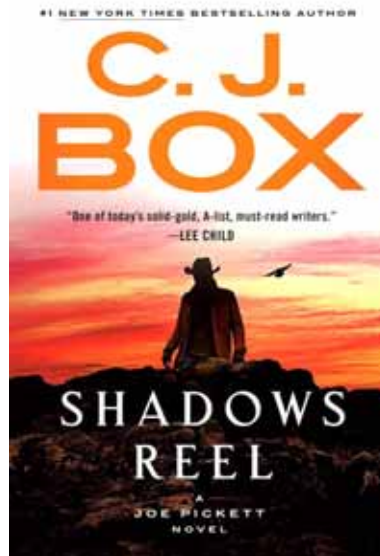
the jury's still out on that one.

European politics are the last thing you would expect from a story set in the mountains of the western U.S. But sometimes, truth is truly stranger than fiction as this time around, Joe is caught in a three-way battle of wits and shotguns.

It's Marybeth who comes up with an idea to flush out the killers, but things get out of hand, and it's time for a good old-fashioned shootout. But at what price? At the same time, Nate sends a message from Portland, Ore., saying he needs Joe's help, something he has never done before. His timing couldn't be worse...

Box works an improbable situation into a probable one with ease. It works because it's believable and Box is a master storyteller. He never fails to deliver an exciting, edge-of-your-seat-story that is compulsive reading. He has won numerous writing awards, including a French *Elle* magazine literary award. No surprise — he lives on a ranch in Wyoming. Visit his website at www.cjbox.net and on FB at [authorcjbox](https://www.facebook.com/authorcjbox)

Till next time, happy reading!



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