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The Bridge Club

by Kim Nowatzke



One of the latest bridges to receive a commemorative name is this one for Allan Whitlow on Springland Avenue over Trail Creek near Krueger Middle School. Photo by Andrew Tallackson

Bruce Johnson, Don Lode, Sue Webster and Matt Werner make up a relatively new group sometimes playfully referred to as the “Bridge Club.” It has nothing to do with card games; rather, the four members of the LaPorte County Bridge Naming Committee research and nominate prominent, impactful area figures to have local bridges named after them.

The committee’s origins began with Richard Mrozinski, who at the time was LaPorte County Board of Commissioners president. Driving down Johnson Road near the home of Jim Arnold, who served for

nine years as an Indiana state senator, Mrozinski contemplated the possibility of naming a section of the road after Arnold. It didn’t happen but, through that initial idea, the LaPorte County Bridge Naming Committee was born in January 2021.

“It’s one of the better things I’ve accomplished during my years on the board,” said Mrozinski, who now serves as the commission’s vice president.

Mrozinski reached out to folks he knew to get the ball rolling. Charter members included former county highway superintendent Bob Young, who provided

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The Bridge Club

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whereabouts of bridges in the county. Richard “Dick” Reel was another. He retired from the Purdue Co-operative Extension Service after 33 years working in three different counties. He also helped develop Pioneer Land at LaPorte County Fairgrounds.

Don Lode, who is chairman of the LaPorte County Soil & Water Conservation District, serves on the LaPorte County Conservation Council and is vice president of the Rolling Prairie Conservation Club, among other positions, was a charter member as well.

“I wanted to be on (the committee) because I like history,” he said, adding he has “learned so much” since joining.

Bruce Johnson wanted to be included, as he was appointed LaPorte County Historian in January 2021. Johnson is known not only for his extensive knowledge of LaPorte County history, but also as a charter member of the LaPorte County Genealogy Society and for his extensive genealogical work with area families. He has been the LaPorte County Historical Society president for the past eight years and a member for 35 years.

“I’m really into history – local, state, the United States and the world,” he said.

To date, Johnson has visited 121 countries, making sure he “sees everything possible” on each trip.

Sue Webster, a LaPorte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission member, asked to join, contributing her knowledge of townships, cemeteries and Michigan City history.

“I thought it was important,” she said. “I love the history of the county and wanted to concentrate and bring recognition to the early settlers of the townships so people know why and how they got started.”

Bob Young resigned in December 2021, and Dick Reel passed away this past February.

Matt Werner is the newest member, having been appointed in September.

“I was curious to find out what the bridges’ names were and how they were chosen by the commissioners. The next thing I knew, I was on the committee,” he shared lightheartedly.



The LaPorte County Bridge Naming Committee is (from left) Matt Werner, Sue Webster, Bruce Johnson and Don Lode. Photo by Kim Nowatzke

The Union Mills farmer has written three books on local history, including *Season of Upsets*. He has written many articles, including his celebrated coverage for *The Beacher* of the Elston High School 1966 boys basketball state championship season.

“I’ve always been involved in history,” he said, “and particularly local history.”

Ironically, Werner was a student in Johnson’s fourth-grade class. Besides a stint in the Peace Corps and a year-long sabbatical as a missionary in Africa, Johnson taught for 38 years with South Central Community School Corp. That included teaching all three classes of fourth-graders the Indiana history component, and leading the students in projects about famous Hoosiers, particularly local figures.

A trip to see the Old Fort in Fort Wayne, and discussing current events

in Johnson’s class, stand out in Werner’s memory.

“I’ve been addicted to history ever since,” he shared.

Johnson, Lode, Webster and Werner meet quarterly to develop a list of proposed candidates to present to the LaPorte County Commission twice a year. Johnson and Webster serve as co-chairs. After last July's presentation, Webster sent a follow-up email to the board. It stated, *"Our committee loves what we are doing while we are choosing people to honor. Researching our ideas is quite an experience. We all have our own special interests...it has all been a joy to work on this project."*

After the meeting, Webster said, LaPorte County Sheriff John Boyd stopped her in the hallway to tell her his first cousin is the late Sgt. Robert Birkholtz, who was Killed in Action on July 12, 1970. That day, he was one of the names approved to have a bridge named after him.

"He (Boyd) said, 'This is going to mean so much to our family,' and he couldn't wait to tell his mom about this bridge naming," Webster said. "I gave him my printed report. He truly seemed touched. He told me many details about his cousin, and what Robert's parents went through. I hope that all families of these honorees feel the same way in that we want their loved ones to be remembered."

Johnson said one bridge he was especially excited about was the one named after Potawatomi Indian Chief Saugana. The memorial bridge is located at County Road 500 East crossing the Indiana Toll Road (Interstate 80/90) in Galena Township just outside of Lake Saugany.



The Potawatomi Indian Chief Saugana Memorial Bridge, located on County Road 500 East crossing the Indiana Toll Road in Galena Township just outside of Lake Saugany.

In research prepared for the commission, Webster shared, *"In 1827 the Winnebago Indians invited the Potawatomies to join them in war of extermination against the white settlers and Chief Saugana was one of the most influential of the Potawatomi chiefs to reject the proposal. As the Winnebagoes continued with their plans, Chief Saugana, along with 15 other chiefs and headmen, visited the area missions with*

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The Bridge Club

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this message: 'Our brothers, we are very sorry to hear that some Indians are fighting with the white people. We will not join them. We will remain at peace. We are happy that you have come to live among, you are our friend, the same as one of us. If anything occurs that we should know for our safety, we desire you to inform us and advise us what to do. If we hear anything of danger to you, we will inform you.'

Webster also said Chief Saugana was highly regarded as an "Indian chief who sought for a peaceful existence." He is believed to be buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery at The University of Notre Dame.



Allan Whitlow. File photo by Kim Nowatzke

from 2015 until his death in 2017. He earned the reputation of a "moral compass." He served as director of the Boys & Girls Club of Michigan City (now the Boys & Girls Clubs of LaPorte County) and was the assistant coach on the 1966 Elston High School state championship basketball team.

For Werner, he was most happy to see a LaPorte County bridge named after Allan "Al" Whitlow.

In Webster's report, Whitlow was described as "genuine in his concern for people, a mentor who provided direction to many, especially youth."

A longtime Michigan City Area Schools educator, Whitlow served on the Michigan City Common Council in the early 1980s, then again



The Robert Birkholz Memorial Bridge on County Road 1000 North over the Galena River.

"I knew Al, and he was a fantastic man," Werner said. "I talked to him about history stuff, and he



The bridge on County Road 1000 South near Bigelow Mill Road in Wanatah was named after Abijah Bigelow in April 2021.

didn't get the recognition he deserved while he was alive. He was a great guy."

Johnson was glad to see Charles Finney was on the list of the first bridges named.

"I thought, 'That's perfect for sure.' He was a fascinating figure," Johnson said. "He had a unique and interesting life – a unique beginning to his life. I was amazed by his life story and how he started out."

In Johnson's research, he discovered a bout with tuberculosis brought Charles Finney's semi-pro baseball career with the LaPorte Cubs to an abrupt end. He devised a plan to sell group medical insurance to medical doctors, which made him a millionaire before he turned 40. He purchased the Kansas City Athletics, eventually moving it to Oakland, Calif., where it won three world series in a row. The famous Finley Farm was located on Johnson Road, where he often entertained his team members.

Webster said the bridge naming committee, along with the LaPorte County Commissioners, personally get requests for possible candidates for bridge names. Others send their suggestions to the board secretary, Diane Gonzales.

Eventually, there are plans to upload information on the bridges to the LaPorte County website, and include a place where the public can suggest names.

"They (the Bridge Naming Committee) do such a good job," Mrozinski said. "We not only end up with a bridge named after someone, but in the process, we have learned a lot about these people. There are some really interesting stories."



The Franklin Street bridge is now renamed after lighthouse keeper Harriet Colfax

More About the Bridges

Sue Webster presented the first list of nominations in April 2021, and the six names were approved:

1. Clifford D. Arnold Memorial Bridge located on Johnson Road over Interstate 94.
2. Phillip Fail Memorial Bridge on Fail Road over the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90).
3. Abijah Bigelow Memorial Bridge located on County Road 1000 South near Bigelow Mill Road, three miles north of Wanatah.
4. Charles "O" Finley Memorial Bridge on Johnson Road over the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90) by the famous Finley Farm.
5. Harriet Colfax Memorial Bridge, also called the Franklin Street bridge, over Trail Creek.
6. Miriam Benedict Memorial Bridge located on Wozniak Road north of Indiana 2 and crossing the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90) in New Durham Township.

Bruce Johnson presented the second list, which was approved in September 2021:

1. Burton "Bud" Ruby Memorial Bridge located on County Road 400 North over Interstate 94.
2. Benjamin H. "Ben" Bortz Jr. Memorial Bridge located on Goldring Road over the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90).
3. Frederic C. Mennen Memorial Bridge located on the southern portion of Fail Road that crosses a

railroad and connects with Severs Road in LaPorte.

4. Gen. Joseph Orr Memorial Bridge located on Waverly Road and crossing the channel between Stone and Pine lakes in LaPorte.
 5. Gottlieb Marks Memorial Bridge located on County Road 1600 South, east of U.S. 421 between county roads 700 West and 800 West. It is in the southern part of the county near the Marks farm.
 6. William "Bill" Hager and Marlow Harmon Memorial Bridge located on Liberty Trail between Springland Avenue and U.S. 12 in Michigan City.
- The last group of bridges, presented by Webster, was approved in July 2022:*

1. The Lucius T. Harding Memorial Bridge on Grangemouth Drive over the Stone Lake Channel near Pine Lake Avenue.
2. Allan Whitlow Memorial Bridge on Springland Avenue over Trail Creek near Krueger Middle School.
3. Robert E. Birkholz Memorial Bridge on County Road 1000 North over the Galena River.
4. William Ingram Memorial Bridge located on County Road 200 South over Fish Creek.
5. Justice Isadore "Izzy" Levine Memorial Bridge located on County Road 600 West, south of U.S. 20 crossing over the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90).
6. Potawatomie Indian Chief Saugana Memorial Bridge located on County Road 500 East, crossing the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90) in Galena Township just outside of Lake Saugany.



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“One City, One Sound,” Holiday Food Drives Return

More than 850 vocalists and instrumentalists will kick off the holiday season during Michigan City Area Schools’ “One City, One Sound” concert at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, in the Michigan City High School gymnasium.

Admission is free; however, attendees are encouraged to take a canned good/non-perishable food item for The Salvation Army. Monetary donations to The Salvation Army also will be accepted.

This year’s program will feature:

- 365 voices in a choir of fifth- and sixth-graders from all eight Michigan City elementary schools.
- 145 voices in a chorus of students from Barker and Krueger middle schools.
- 60 voices in the Michigan City High School Freshmen Chorus, Concert Choir, Treble Chorale and City Singers.
- 300 instrumentalists (grades 6-12) playing in MCAS elementary, middle and high school concert bands, the MCHS percussion ensemble and MCHS jazz band.

Each group will perform individually, and the closing number will involve all bands and choruses in a selection called “Pacem Noel.” Other numbers include “Jingle Bells,” “Linus and Lucy,” “Sing We Now of Christmas” and “Christmas Time is Here.” MCAS music teachers will lead their groups; the combined numbers will be directed by MCHS choral director Michelle Howisen and band director Frank Gast.

Due to COVID-19, the concert was canceled in 2020. Last year’s performance was pre-recorded and released online. This year reflects a return to the in-person format. The concert will be broadcast live on the MCAS YouTube Channel and on Channel 98 educational TV. It also will air live on Michigan City radio station WEFM (95.9 FM).

After the concert, traffic departing the high school on Pahs Road using the east drive will exit only to Johnson Road. The west drive will exit only to Woodland Avenue.

In a related matter, the MCHS Student Council again is coordinating a district-wide “drive through” food drive. Students and MCAS staff are collecting food, and the community is invited to participate.

Donations of non-perishable food items will be collected at Ames Field from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Dec. 10, to benefit The Salvation Army food pantry.

The food drive is a tradition, held right before the holidays every year, to benefit those in need. Last year, it generated more than 4 tons of canned goods and other non-perishable items.

At Ames Field, 2501 Franklin St., students and staff volunteers will collect items from those driving through. Monetary donations also will be accepted.

The collection drive will have an element of com-



Top photo: The MCHS concert band is shown performing during the 2019 “One City, One Sound.”

Bottom photo: The Michigan City High School Student Council surrounds a traveling trophy awarded to the school collecting the most food during the annual district-wide food drive.

petition. All MCAS schools will compete to claim a traveling trophy to display over the next year. Food will be weighed and credited to the donor’s Michigan City school of choice. The school collecting the most food (based on weight, adjusted for school size) will get the trophy.

In conjunction with the food drive, the MCHS National Honor Society is collecting new (or nearly new) books for children and teens through Operation Bookworm. The community is invited to donate books by dropping them off at any MCAS school building through Dec. 9.

Books collected will be donated to The Salvation Army for distribution during the holidays.



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Holiday at the Pops Returns to LaPorte Civic



Associate Conductor Chuck Steck and LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra, featuring Illumination, during a previous Holiday at the Pops.

LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra will present the 28th Annual Holiday at the Pops at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St.

The concert will feature the LaPorte High School Mixed Chorale, directed by Tom Coe, singing "The Musicological Journey Through the Twelve Days of Christmas," as well as Irving Berlin's "White Christmas." Also featured is the choral group Illumination, under Becky Osborn's direction, singing several carols in addition to "Spirit of Christmas." Leading the LCSO is Music Director Dr. Carolyn

Watson and Associate Conductor Chuck Steck. The evening concludes with a Tran-Siberian Orchestra arrangement of "Carol of the Bells," followed by the traditional closing selection of "Silent Night" performed by the orchestra and audience.

□

Table seats at press time were sold out; however, a number of balcony tickets are available. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$5 for 12 and younger. Tickets can be purchased by visiting "HOLIDAY AT THE POPS" at www.lcso.net, or at the Civic and Roxy Music, 1012 Lincolnway, LaPorte.



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The 13th Annual Madrigal Concert is at 3 and 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11, at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Presented by the church's music department and local entertainers, the concert is held in the sanctuary, with doors opening 30 minutes before each program. The cost is a free-will offering to support the church's Downtown Soup Kitchen, which serves meals five days a week to those in need. Call (219) 872-7200 for more details.

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The library is changing overhead lighting to LED fixtures. They will feature automatic ambient lighting, centralized controls for turning on and off and conservation in unoccupied public areas. The library will remain open during all phases of the project, but reserves the right to close if necessary. Areas under the work zone will be closed. The goal is to minimize closure time to its collections and services. The meeting rooms will close while work is done.

The following programs are scheduled:

- **Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in December.** Membership 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. Also, the group has organized a local chapter of the Warm Up America Foundation. Volunteers are knitting and crocheting handmade squares (7x9 inch) that will be joined together to make full-size afghans.
- **Christmas Angels Among Us at 2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8.** Call Ange Benz at (219) 874-3754 for

more information.

- **Duneland Stamp Club at 4 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8.** The club meets the second Thursday of each month. New members are invited.
- **DIY Terrariums! from 3:30-5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 9.** All supplies to make a terrarium are provided; however, registration is required because the class limit is 15 children ages 10-17. Register through the website.
- **Santa Stuffie Sleepover! on Dec. 13-14.** Children can drop off stuffed animals before 5 p.m. Dec. 13, then pick them up by 8 p.m. Dec. 14, learning what types of hijinks occurred.
- **Story Time at 10 a.m. Wednesdays.** 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.



A Food & Mitten Drive runs through Jan. 3 to benefit Interfaith Community PADS. Needed are non-perishable foods, hygiene products and bedding. To decorate the holiday tree, take mittens, gloves, hats and scarves. Collected items will be donated to PADS to assist families in need. Call the group at (219) 276-7582 for a full list of requested items.



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- 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. (Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit www.mclib.org for more details.)



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“She Said” Ranks With the Best Movies About Newspapers

by Andrew Tallackson



Jodi Kantor (Zoe Kazan, from left) and Megan Twohey (Carey Mulligan) team up with editors Dean Baquet (Andre Braugher) and Rebecca Corbett (Patricia Clarkson) to confront Harvey Weinstein over the phone in “She Said.”

James L. Brooks must have had some prophetic vision when he released “Broadcast News” back in 1987. At the time, he feared journalistic integrity was getting sidelined by the notion of news as entertainment. That we no longer preferred the day’s events presented objectively. We wanted some element of the theatrical.

So, when a movie comes along that invites comparison to “All the President’s Men,” what we’re really doing is celebrating the notion that investigative journalism isn’t dead. There are still people out there, fighting to make sure the truth gets revealed.

It was only a matter of time before the story of Miramax co-founder Harvey Weinstein, and the sexual-abuse allegations leveled against him, hit the big screen. The source for “She Said” not only is the *New York Times* investigation by reporters Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, but also their 2019 book of the same name. What’s surprising is how, considering the heated subject, the movie maintains a level head. Like the best movies about journalism, and I would also include “Spotlight” and “Shattered Glass” in that category, this is a story about the process, the exhaustive persistence of brave individuals in their dogged pursuit of the truth.

We savor movies like “All the President’s Men” and “Spotlight” because we know the outcome. What we want are the specifics of how journalists arrived



“She Said”

Running time: 129 minutes. Rated R for language and descriptions of sexual assault.

at that point, when the facts finally hit the press.

What “All the President’s Men,” “Spotlight” and now “She Said” offer is a study in power. How those in control abuse it, and how inner circles become enablers, hiding deplorable behavior from the rest of the world.

What makes “She Said” trickier is that director Maria Schrader (the superb Netflix miniseries “Unorthodox”) and screenwriter Rebecca Lenkiewicz are dealing with a still taboo subject: inappropriate sexual misconduct. We still live in a world where the accusers are tried in the court of public opinion first, shamed for bringing the subject to light.

That might explain why “She Said” encountered a frosty reception in theaters. Audiences apparently do not want to see a movie about Harvey Weinstein. That is a shame, because “She Said” not only succeeds as cinematic journalism, but as a movie that explores how men exploit power.

What the movie does so well is, through Kantor (Zoe Kazan) and Twohey (Carey Mulligan), we see the best in journalism. How, in the heat of the mo-

ment, they keep asking questions. A source makes a vague comment, the ensuing questions become more pointed until the truth reveals itself. We see Kantor and Twohey doing the hard stuff. Leaving the comforts of their offices and meeting sources face to face, in some cases traveling abroad to meet with people. And in the actresses portraying those targeted by Weinstein, we understand why these women never came forward. They are petrified still, as if awaiting the next crushing blow.

In a bold move, Ashley Judd appears as herself, sharing her story with Kantor and being the first celebrity to come forward on the record. While not visible on screen, Gwyneth Paltrow contributes her voice to phone conversations used in the film.

And by the end, the film triumphantly shows everyone at *The New York Times* never releasing what they have early: verifying facts and sources, await-



"She Said" depicts the targets of Harvey Weinstein's actions — Jennifer Ehle (center) appears as a former intern — as still fearful of any repercussions.

ing confirmation of key details, respecting sources that aren't ready to come forward.

A movie like "She Said" is important not only because of how well it's made, but because it can ignite conversations about the need for change. And what "She Said" has to say is of the utmost importance.

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“Devotion” Brings to Light a Remarkable Friendship Amid Korean War

by Andrew Tallackson



Ensign Jesse Brown (Jonathan Majors, left) and Lt. Tom Hudner (Glen Powell) gradually become close friends in “Devotion.”

The trailer for “Devotion” doesn’t quite do it justice. It preps you for an earnest TV movie about a black naval officer fighting racial injustice at the dawn of the Korean War. And to some extent, the movie delivers just that.

The title, however, is lifted from Adam Makos’ 2015 book whose full description gets more to the heart of the story. Devotion: An Epic Story of Heroism, Friendship and Sacrifice. Yes, devotion to one’s country gets covered here, but this is more about the remarkable bond between two men in a time of war.

Director J.D. Dillard, a self-professed Navy brat, certainly is the right person to tell this story. Working from a straightforward script by Jake Crane and Jonathan A. Stewart, Dillard has an eye for the details of military life, particularly naval aviators. Rarely has a film captured the prickly descent of a fighter craft onto an aircraft carrier with the taut uncertainty that “Devotion” achieves.

The film’s stars, though, are Dillard’s ace in the hole: Jonathan Majors (HBO’s “Lovecraft Country”) as Ensign Jesse Brown and Glen Powell (“Tom Gun: Maverick”) as Lt. Tom Hudner. These two create a rarity: a friendship that feels genuine.

Majors, in fact, surprises you in his approach to Brown. The actor is painfully reserved. As a black

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“Devotion”

Running time: 139 minutes. Rated PG-13 for strong language, some war action/violence and smoking.

naval officer, Brown may symbolize progress, but it’s on his terms. Refusing, for instance, to take the racial bait from white officers. Speaking fluent French to gain access to a casino in Cannes. And in a devastating scene unlike anything we’ve seen before, Brown stands before a mirror. Having compiled a list of every racist taunt hurled his way, he spews out the same epithets. It’s meant to remind him of where he’s come, and galvanize him against the future. Majors, who surprises us with each new role (in Marvel’s “Loki,” he was a quirky revelation), is ferocious here.

We prepare for Powell to invest Hudner with simplified white idealism. And, indeed, the “Maverick” actor goes about the role that way. *At first*. But the moving transformation arrives after Hudner leaps to Brown’s defense against racist white officers. Brown is not appeased, saying Hudner’s behavior is triggered more by patronizing white guilt. “*Just be my wingman*,” Brown asks.

It is the film’s most powerful moment. Brown

doesn't need saving. For him, what matters is knowing someone has your back.

The aerial sequences of "Devotion put much of the film's \$90 million budget to use. They may not have the flashy kick of "Maverick," but the effects ground the story in another layer of realism. An attention to detail, although Chanda Dancy's score spirals out of control during these scenes, bordering on schmaltz.

The film's length is another issue. At nearly 2 hours, 20 minutes, the pace tends to slacken when the action leaves the skies, the dialogue afforded Thomas Sadoski as commanding officer Dick Cevoli too stiff and preachy.

But in the last act, as Brown, Hudner and Brown's wife Daisy (Christina Jackson, powerful, especially in her final scene) find their bond tested by war, all three actors are superb, giving the film everything they've got. The movie shows us what true devotion



Christina Jackson is particularly affecting as Brown's wife, Daisy.

means, and we are moved. Considerably so.



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The Inspiration Behind This Wacky “Christmas Road Show”

You might wonder how an overheard ditty at a swimming class could lead to fashioning a year-round, mixed-media art installation titled: “Christmas Road Show.”

I wonder as well.

Allow me to explain.

When I returned to teaching swimming — after a long absence — late last year, I looked to the veteran instructors and sought to model my methods after them. And what a double whammy as a seasoned teacher had her young charges hop in the shallow end of the pool. She instructed them to wave their arms in circles underwater and join her in singing, “*The wheels on the bus go ‘round and ‘round. The wheels on the bus go ‘round and...*”

You get the round idea. I got the idea not only for my own students, but also for a broken wheel I had hanging in our back storage room.

(All right, it’s basically our bike shed, but we have lots and lots of other “stuff” in there, including a step ladder and an ironing board.)

I “broke” that wheel whilst riding to the pool in nearby Bridgman, Mich.

How, you say?

Well, I “dropped” one of the panniers, or side bags, and stuffed a towel in it. In the course of riding the nine miles or so to the pool, the bag had come loose and was entangling itself in the rear wheel. Yes, I broke a spoke or two that day. And, yes, when I later took my bike in for repairs at Bike Stop Cycling in Michigan City, they said it was time for a sturdier, new wheel.

“But keep the old one,” they said. “For backup.”

Well, backup eventually became “Christmas Road Show,” and let me tell you how, right now:

I mounted that wounded wheel on the wall in the bike shed, soon noticing it needed some festooning. If you have ever been in my office, you know I am all about festooning. Always have been, always will be.

But what to festoon said wheel with, right?

Right.

Not so sure at first, but then I gave a pint of my precious O negative to the American Red Cross at a local drive. The nurse thoughtfully wrapped my giving arm with a sporty red elastic band. She said to take it off after an hour or two. And I did. And then, I thought of that wounded wheel in the bike-shed window.

Hmmm.

Wrap, wrap here.

Wrap, wrap there.

And suddenly, a work of art was in the works.

Who knew, right?

I certainly did, because I am one of those un-



“Christmas Road Show” is my mixed-media work. Alas, it is not for sale.

school artists who works with what he finds. Wherever and whenever.

And when the American Red Cross presented me with my red wrap of courage, I knew where I was headed with my wounded wheel: all the way to a “Christmas Road Show.”

Getting there is — not was, but is — proving to be such fun. Especially when, one shopping day, my wandering eyes happened to alight on some bright red-and-green object in the crafts aisle of one of our big ol’ box stores. They were what I used to call “pipe cleaners.” They came in assorted colors, and they were available for purchase that very day. So I sprang for a few packages, and off I went with my

wounded wheel.

Then, my beloved Aunt Cynie, who is quite the artist in her own right, sent me her annual Christmas gift: a hand-crafted ornament. For Christmas 2021, she sent me a miniature pair of snowshoes, knowing of my love of floating on top of the snow with really big shoes.

Bingo!!

Snowshoes soon festooned my festive “Christmas Road Show.” And it went north from there, practically to the North Pole itself, when Natalie suggested I bring my project in from the unheated bike shed and mount it permanently in our comfy, cozy, art-lined, climate-controlled living room.

Life With Charley

Charles McKelvy



“Christmas Road Show” is now artfully suspended inside a side window and twinkles ever so brightly with the battery-powered “fairy lights” I bought just for it, just before Christmas.

I continue adding found objects to “Christmas Road Show.” Objects such as the red, elastic wrap I wore home from the latest blood drive. I am particularly partial to the white, and sometimes red, twist-‘ems that seal certain packages, particularly bread. And, of course, I labeled my wheel of art using my handy Remington Quiet-Riter manual typewriter. I, of course, composed the first draft of this article on said writing machine.

I’ll leave “Christmas Road Show” alone for a day or two, but then I’ll see a “bare” spot and fill it in with a twist-‘em or red-or-green pipe cleaner. Sometimes, I’ll even twist pipe cleaners of different colors together for dazzling effect.

I’m lovin’ it, and so is Natalie. Even Flyboy the cat seems to respect the piece. So far, at least, he hasn’t tried to claw it apart, even though it is suspended in his favorite window for birdwatching.

“Christmas Road Show” has earned a rightful place in our living-room art gallery, along with original works by such utterly original artists as my late uncle, Kenneth Macfarlan Jr. I know Uncle Kenny would approve of my work, and that he would want me to share it with others. So, perhaps, I might take “Christmas Road Show” on a road trip to Bike Stop for Christmas 2022. I’ll want it to be a surprise, of course, so please don’t tell them. All right?

And now that I have the right word count, I’ll bring this sled in for a rooftop landing by citing the Monty Python movie “The Meaning of Life.”

Remember that classic?

If you don’t, check it out at your earliest convenience, because the film makes a fine, final point of the fact “that every day is Christmas in Heaven.” They make the point in a full production number worthy of any stage and/or screen. I know that point has stuck with me, and it certainly informs my on-going wheel of Christmas, “Christmas Road Show.”

And so, thanks to that wacky work of art hanging in our living room, I can truly say that every day is Christmas in our little slice of Heaven.

Florence Pugh is Riveting in Complex “Wonder”

by Andrew Tallackson



Florence Pugh stars as a nurse investigating reports of a girl who has not eaten for four months in “The Wonder.”

I have not read Emma Donoghue’s books, but the film adaptations of “Room” and now Netflix’s “The Wonder” suggest it’s time to get started.

Her stories are unlike anything else. Worlds where women fight tooth and nail against suffocating male control, and in the most extreme, unfathomable conditions.

“The Wonder” is not as devastating as “Room” (2015), which won Brie Larson an Oscar and introduced us to the formidable Jacob Tremblay. Chilean director Sebastián Lelio makes a few baffling choices. But for the most part, “The Wonder” is riveting, propelled by another commanding turn from Florence Pugh, who has yet to give a dull performance.

She plays Elizabeth Wright, an English nurse, who served in the Crimean War, who arrives in a small Irish village in 1862. Her assignment: observe a young girl who has not eaten in four months, but is none the worse for wear. Is it, as many in town believe, anorexia mirabilis? In other words, holy anorexia, where the girl is fasting, yet sustained by her faith. Visitors come daily, words like “miracle” and “wonder” uttered in her presence.

As a nurse, Elizabeth is skeptical. Wounded by her own past, she’s been ordered not to intervene, just observe. Her orders come from a self-appointed male tribunal, and they are unflinching in their insistence she do nothing. Again, just observe.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“The Wonder”

Running time: 108 minutes. Netflix.

Rated R for some sexuality.

Lelio, whose 2017 movie “A Fantastic Woman” won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language film, treats the story like a moody psychological drama. The film’s colors by cinematographer Ari Wegner (an Oscar nominee for last year’s “The Power of the Dog”) are dark and foreboding. The Irish countryside has never looked this bleak, but it’s the right tone. Nothing in the life of young Anna (haunting newcomer Kíla Lord Cassidy), the 9-year-old girl in question, suggests any comfort or support.

The mystery of Anna’s existence steadily propels this intensely quiet film. Is something supernatural at play...or does her weakening condition have Earthly explanations? When we learn the truth, in a haunting, devastatingly acted scene, Pugh’s performance takes on a startling command. An immediacy conveyed not by overacting, but by an almost maternal urgency with which Elizabeth carries herself. Elizabeth’s desperate struggle to fight for Anna amps up scene by scene, the movie becoming a feverish race for survival.

If Lelio had allowed the power of the story, alone,



A journalist, William Byrne (Tom Burke), tries to uncover the truth behind 9-year-old Anna (Kila Lord Cassidy, right).

to carry itself, “The Wonder” would have stood tall against “Room.” However, he makes a bizarre choice in how he opens and closes the film: bookends that mute the film’s power. The score by British musician Matthew Herbert is another demerit. Sometimes, it drips with dread. Other times, it’s like a 5-year-old took control of his instruments.

Stylistic moves, it seems, intended to remind you that you are watching a movie. Not sure what Lelio was thinking. Donogue’s story is potent enough. No need to be this arty.


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Unity Foundation Awards \$265,000 in Grants

Unity Foundation of LaPorte County is supporting area nonprofit and community-service agencies with its most recent round of "Power for Good" Community Grants, totaling more than \$265,000 for 91 local projects.

This surpasses past grant amounts for Unity. The money will help local organizations provide access to education, literacy, prevention and supportive services. This year, Unity increased the funding available for projects from \$3,000 to \$5,000 grants. Eligible organizations could apply for up to two grants. The applications were evaluated by a committee from throughout LaPorte County.

The 2022 recipients and their programs/projects are:

- Advancing Christ's Kingdom Ministries, Michigan City.
- American Red Cross-Northwest Indiana Chapter.
- Anam Cara Stables Inc.
- Anthony Adams House.
- Arts for Learning.
- Arts in the Park.
- Boys & Girls Club of LaPorte County.
- Catholic Charities.
- Center Township Trustee-LaPorte County.
- Citizens Concerned for the Homeless Inc.
- City of La Porte.
- City of LP Mayor's Council for Veteran's Affairs.
- Community Food Pantry of Galena, Hudson, Kankakee and Wills Townships Inc.
- Dunebrook Inc.
- Dunes Arts Foundation.
- Family Advocates.
- Fly High Youth Services Inc.
- Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana.
- Goodwill Industries of Michiana Inc.
- HealthLinc – Community Health Center.
- Healthy Communities of LaPorte County.
- Helping Our People Excel.
- Hoosiers Feeding the Hungry.
- Independent Cat Society.
- Interfaith Community PADS.
- Friendship Botanic Gardens.
- Intrepid Phoenix.
- Lubeznik Center for the Arts.
- Junior Achievement of Northern Indiana.
- LaPorte County Meals on Wheels.
- LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra.
- LaPorte Little Theatre Club.
- LaPorte County Family YMCA.
- LaPorte County Habitat for Humanity.
- LaPorte County Drug Free Partnership.
- LaPorte High School.
- LaPorte Lake Association.
- LaPorte Salvation Army.
- Leadership LaPorte County Inc.
- LETSGO City.
- Michigan City Area Schools.
- Michigan City Fire Department.
- Michigan City First United Methodist Church.
- Michigan City High School.
- Michigan City Holiday Meals.
- Michigan City Soul Steppers Drill Team.
- New Prairie Education Foundation.
- New Prairie High School Robotics.
- Open Door Community Alliance.
- Paladin.
- READ LaPorte County.
- REAL Services.
- Reins of Life.
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Michiana.
- Sacred Heart Food Pantry at St. Mary.
- Service League of Michigan City.
- Shirley Heinze Land Trust.
- The Social and Learning Institute.
- South Central Jr. Sr. High School.
- Stepping Stone Shelter for Women Inc.
- Supplemental United Food Pantry (Hanna).
- The Community Reserve.
- The Pax Center.
- Trinity Episcopal Church.
- United Way of LaPorte County.
- Washington Park Zoo.
- Westville Police Department.
- Worthy Women Recovery Home.
- Yana Service Club Inc.
- Youth Service Bureau of LaPorte County.

More information on the grantees and grants can be found at www.uflc.net

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- **Bird Feeder Talks from 10-11 a.m. Thursdays, Dec. 8, 15 and 22, at The Park Connection Office, located off the Chellberg Farm parking lot.** Learn from volunteers and local bird experts about birds that remain in the dunes area during winter. The parking lot is on Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20 and 12, Porter.
- **Cinematography Basics Using Apple Technologies from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Dec. 10, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** Park volunteer Ron Seman will highlight basic techniques using different iPhone modes. He'll then head to Chellberg Farm so visitors can practice what they've learned. Dress for the weather, and take a fully charged iPhone.
- **Art in the National Park from 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** Learn how to paint a dunes-inspired painting with an artist from The Art Barn School of Art. Supplies are included. The class is limited to 20. Call (219) 395-1882 to register.
- **Holiday Sing-along with the Browns from 3-4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** Musicians Susan and Garry Brown will lead the program sponsored by the Friends of Indiana Dunes

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.

Downtown Cookie Walk

LaPorte's Downtown Cookie Walk is from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Dec. 10, with collectors tins available for \$15.

Visitors can use the tins to collect cookies from downtown shops. They are available at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, HotSpot Cafe and Downtown Delights in LaPorte.

Reins of Life Express

The Reins of Life Express, a train ride that heads around the Michigan City facility, 9375 W. County Road 300 North, is from 5-7 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Dec. 9-10.

The event is sponsored by GAF and the South Shore Line. Cost: \$5 for children and \$10 for adults.

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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 Pick-up from the bottom of the screen (or calling the library location). An appointment no longer is needed. Add the parking space on the app if picking up from the main location. Enter information in the instructions box if picking up holds placed on more than one account, or if needing additional assistance. A staff member brings held items to the vehicle. Customers using the app receive updates as their requests are processed. Returns can be placed in book drops and be checked in within 24 to 72 hours. At this time, there is no limit to the number of items customers can reserve and pick up during curbside.

- Coolspring Branch: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Main Library: Tuesday/Thursday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).
The following programs are planned:
- **Coolspring Storytime from 1:30-2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Coolspring branch.** The interactive program includes singing, dance and rhymes.

- **Author Talk — Hangin' with the Gnomies: How Rudger Rump Was Born from 6-7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Main Library Meeting Room B.** Local author Scott Simerlein will discuss his new fantasy novel, Rudger Rump and the Mage of Ages, including the writing and publishing processes.
- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 9, at the main library.** Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- **Teen D&D from 5-7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12, at the main library Meeting Room A.** Online registration is required.
- **Family Pajama Storytime from 6-6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12, in the main library multi-purpose room.** The program focuses on stories and songs. Guests can wear pajamas and take a favorite stuffed animal.
- **Page Turners Book Club from noon-1 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 13, in the main library Meeting Room B.** Refreshments will not be served, but guests can take coffee or tea.
- **Virtual Author Talk with Nicole Eustace (adults 19+) from 11 a.m.-noon Wednesday, Dec. 14.** The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Nicole Eustace will discuss her award-winning book Covered With Night. Register at <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/20964>
- **Gingerbread Stories and Fun from 4-5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14, at the Coolspring branch.** The program involves stories and a craft.

LaPorte County Public Library is located at 904 Indiana Ave. The Coolspring Branch is located at 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Visit www.laportelibrary.org for more details, including programing through the Exchange building.



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American Red Cross

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

- Indiana Department of Transportation, 315 E. Boyd Blvd., LaPorte, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8.
- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12.
- LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. Indiana 2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14.
- Northwest Health Heart and Vascular Building, 901 Lincolnway, LaPorte, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 15.

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.

Westchester Public Library

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

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

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

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

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Jingle Berry Bash

Karaoke, live music, a Christmas raffle, kid's crafts and a visit from Santa are on tap for Jingle Berry Bash from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12, at Wana Pizza, 1601 Lincolnway, LaPorte.

The restaurant sponsored the event to raise money for LaPorte's Arts in the Park.

Featured artists include carols with Carol Loveless on piano at noon, Joan Davis and Donovan Diedrich from Roxy Music at 1 p.m., followed by Bret and Kyle Oscarson at 2:30 p.m. Kids carols begin at 3:30 p.m., and The Blue Sky Band (Ted Taylor, Sandy Young, Tom Edwards) performs at 4:30 p.m. Santa arrives at 6:30 p.m.

Children can make Jingle Berry Bash ornaments while adults browse raffle items. Tickets will be sold for \$20 throughout the event. Email contact@artsintheparklaporte.com to preorder. Handmade centerpieces by Gail Novak are on sale for \$20.

The Christmas raffle drawing is at 6:30 p.m.

Historical Society Museum

LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., will offer free admission Tuesday, Dec. 13, to all veterans and active duty military as a way to honor National Guard Founding Day.

A form of ID is required as proof of veteran or active military status. Acceptable forms include: Affairs Card, Indiana Veterans Card, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion or a driver's license with Veterans ID.

Call (219) 324-6767 for more details.

Holiday Pancake Breakfast

Families can visit with Santa Claus during the Holiday Pancake Breakfast from 8-11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, at St. Luke United Lutheran Church, 2000 E. Coolspring Ave., Trail Creek.

Tickets, which are \$5, can be purchased at the door or in advance at www.stlukeunitedlutheran.org. Call (219) 879-9415 for more details.

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Nov. 22, 2022

TEAM STANDING

	WON	LOST
1. Striking Beauties	34	10
2. Lady Strikers	27	17
2. Pin Pals	27	17
2. Spare Me	27	17

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES

	SCORE
1. Mary Lou McFadden	195
2. June Salmon	156
3. Deb Frederick	150
4. Ann Bogart (series)	405

THREE STRIKES IN A ROW

Mary Lou McFadden

SPLITS

Deb Frederick	2-7
Holly Dres	5-6
Terri Bekkan	7-9
Mary Lou McFadden	4-5

Nov. 29, 2022

TEAM STANDING

	WON	LOST
1. Striking Beauties	36	12
2. Lady Strikers	30	18
2. Pin Pals	30	18

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES

	SCORE
1. Mary Lou McFadden	175
2. Deb Konicek	168
3. Carolyn Wiggins	164
4. June Salmon	163
5. Dottie Brinckman	162
6. Nancy Kubath	155
7. Deb Frederick	150
8. Diana Holt (series)	404

SPLITS

Kathy Staninger	5-7-9, 2-7
Mary Lou McFadden	3-9-10, 2-7

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Harbor Country Hikers

Harbor Country Hikers will screen an award-winning documentary on the Grand Kankakee Marsh at noon EST Saturday, Dec. 10, at New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

The marsh once covered 1,500 square miles across Indiana, from South Bend into eastern Illinois. Known as the "Everglades of the North," it was a hunter's paradise. Presidents Teddy Roosevelt and Benjamin Harrison both hunted there, as did Prince Albert Edward. Prominent Hoosiers and Chicagoans also visited. In the 1920s, however, the meandering Kankakee River, which created the marsh, was straightened and dredged to improve navigation, and the marsh was drained for farmland. Except for a few protected areas, the Grand Kankakee Marsh is no more.

A discussion follows the film, which runs about an hour. The program is free.

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In the Area

Dec. 8 — Coolspring Storytime, 1:30-2 p.m., Coolspring library branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Dec. 8 — Christmas Angels Among Us, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 874-3754.

Dec. 8 — Duneland Stamp Club, 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Dec. 8 — Author Talk — Hangin' with the Gnomies: How Rudger Rump Was Born, 6-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Dec. 8-11 — "The Holiday Channel Christmas Movie Wonderthon," Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Thur.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$17/adults, \$10/children 12 & younger, Dec. 8/\$12. Reservations: (219) 874-4035, www.footlightplayers.org

Dec. 9 — DIY Terrariums!, 3:30-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Registration: www.mclib.org

Dec. 9-10 — The Reins of Life Express, 5-7 p.m., Reins of Life, 9375 W. County Road 300 North. Cost: \$5/children, \$10/adults.

Dec. 10 — Holiday Pancake Breakfast, 8-11 a.m., St. Luke United Lutheran Church, 2000 E. Coolspring Ave., Trail Creek. Tickets: \$5, at door or www.stlukeunitedlutheran.org. Info: (219) 879-9415.

Dec. 10 — LaPorte's Downtown Cookie Walk, 10 a.m.-noon. Tins: \$15, available at LaPorte Civic Au-

ditorium, HotSpot Cafe, Downtown Delights.

Dec. 10 — LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra Holiday at the Pops, 7 p.m., LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. Balcony tickets: \$15/adults, \$5/12 & younger. Reservations: www.lcso.net, the Civic, Roxy Music, 1012 Lincolnway, LaPorte.

Dec. 11 — 13th Annual Madrigal Concert, 3 & 6 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Free-will offering. Info: (219) 872-7200.

Dec. 12 — Jingle Berry Bash, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Wana Pizza, 1601 Lincolnway, LaPorte. Info: contact@artsintheparklaporte.com

Dec. 12 — Family Pajama Storytime, 6-6:30 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Dec. 13 — Page Turners Book Club, noon-1 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Dec. 14 — Virtual Author Talk with Nicole Eustace (adults 19+), 11 a.m.-noon, through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/20964>

Dec. 14 — Gingerbread Stories and Fun, 4-5 p.m., Coolspring library branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Through Dec. 30 — Holidays at Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Sun., 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri., closed Monday. Admission: \$16.50/adults, \$10/children & seniors, free/children 2 & younger, active military, veterans. Info: www.barkermansion.org

Through Dec. 31 — Ginny Scott abstract/expressionist paintings, Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St.

Through Dec. 31 — Works by Andrea Bojrab, Queen of All Saints Catholic Church's Legacy Center, 1719 E. Barker Ave. 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. Info: (219) 872-9196.

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

Mondays in Michigan City — Bingo, Moose Family Lodge 980, 2107 Welnetz Road. Doors open/8:30 a.m., early birds/9:30 a.m., regular Bingo/10 a.m.

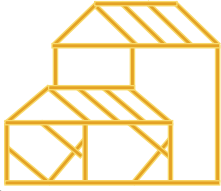
Thursdays in December — Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night, 5:30-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

In the Region

Dec. 8, 15, 22 — Bird Feeder Talks, 10-11 a.m., Park Connection Office off Chellberg Farm parking lot, Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20/12, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Dec. 9 — The Bergamot: A South Shore Christmas, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$40 + \$6 convenience fee, \$65 + \$6 convenience fee (reserved). Reserva-

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Dec. 10 — Cinematography Basics using Apple Technologies, 10 a.m.-noon, Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Dec. 10 — Harbor Country Hikers (free documentary screening), noon EST, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

Dec. 10 — Art in the National Park, 2-4 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Registration: (219) 395-1882.

Dec. 10 — Bryan Lubeck Christmas concert, 7 p.m. EST, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Reserved cabaret seating/\$25. General admission: \$20/advance, \$25/door. Reservations: www.ticketstripe.com/bryanlubeck

Dec. 10 — Heartache Tonight - A Tribute to the Eagles, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$40 + \$6 convenience fee, \$65 + \$6 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

Dec. 11 — "It's a Wonderful Life" free holiday viewing party, 3 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Reservations: www.acornlive.org

Dec. 11 — Holiday Sing-along with the Browns, 3-4 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Dec. 11 — "Christmas at Copshaholm," 4-7 p.m. EST, The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Tickets: \$15, \$10/members, \$5/youth 6-17, free/5 & younger. Reservations: www.history-museumSB.org, (574) 235-9664.

Dec. 15 — Acorn Holiday Open Mic Night featuring Abbie Thomas, 7 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Performer Inquiries: openmic@acornlive.org

Through Dec. 13 — Fine-arts photographer Erin Roark, The Village Gallery @ Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso. Gallery hours: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Info: (219) 465-1591, www.pinesvillage.org

Through Dec. 23 — 44th Elkhart Juried Regional, Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S.

Main St., Elkhart. Hours (all Eastern): 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Fri., 1-4 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Admission: \$10/adults, \$6/8-12, \$8/13-18 & college students with ID. Info: www.midwestmuseum.us, (574) 293-66

Through Jan. 8, 2023 — Annual members' exhibit, Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: (269) 983-0271, www.krasl.org

Through Jan. 8, 2023 — "Charged: The Rise, Fall & Resurgence of Electric Vehicles," 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.

Through Jan. 12, 2023 — Annual Members' Exhibit, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Free artists' reception: noon-2 p.m. Dec. 10. Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

Mondays — Pickleball, 5:30 p.m. EST, New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road. Free, donations welcome. Info: (269) 426-3909, friendsofnewtroy@yahoo.com

Vickers Theatre — *Now Showing*: "The Banishes of Inisherin." Rated R. Times: 3 p.m. Dec. 9-11, 6 p.m. Dec. 12. *Also*: "The Menu." Rated R. Times: 6 p.m. Dec. 9-12, 3 p.m. Dec. 12. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.



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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On December 8, 1829, the first tavern license in Chicago was issued to Archibald Caldwell. A night's lodging cost 12 1/2 cents, with three meals a day costing 25 cents.

On December 8, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln announced his plan for reconstruction of the South.

On December 8, 1941, one day after the bombing of the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, the United States and Britain declared war on Japan.

On December 8, 1966, the United States and Russia agreed on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons in outer space.

On December 8, 1980, John Lennon, one of the original Beatles, was shot and killed outside his New York apartment building.

On December 9, 1793, Noah Webster published *The American Minerva*, New York's first daily newspaper.

On December 9, 1884, Chicago's Levant Richardson received a patent for ball-bearing roller skates.

On December 9, 1889, President Benjamin Harrison attended the gala opening of Chicago's Auditorium Theatre.

On December 9, 1907, the first Christmas Seals were placed on sale in the post office at Wilmington, Del. The proceeds (as they are now) were devoted to the campaign against tuberculosis.

On December 9, 1972, *Life* magazine, after 35 years of publishing, announced it was folding.

On December 10, 1869, the Territory of Wyoming authorized women to vote and hold office.

On December 10, 1901, on the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death, the distribution of the Nobel Prizes was made for the first time.

On December 10, 1917, in an area outside the Nebraska city of Omaha, Father Edward Flanagan founded Boys Town.

On December 10, 1931, Jane Addams became the first American woman to become (co-recipient) of the Nobel Peace Prize.

On December 10, 1936, King Edward VIII announced he was abdicating the British throne to marry American-born Wallis Warfield Simpson.

On December 11, 1719, the first recorded New England sighting of the Aurora Borealis took place.

On December 11, 1816, Indiana became the 19th state to join the Union.

On December 11, 1901, Guglielmo Marconi received the first radio signal sent across the Atlantic

Ocean. The signal traveled from England to Newfoundland, a distance of approximately 2,000 miles.

On December 11, 1909, the first public showing of movies in color was achieved by running film through red and green screens. Many of the viewers complained of headaches.

On December 11, 1921, Chicago's Thomas "Terrible Tommy" O'Connor (convicted of killing a police detective) escaped from Cook County Jail four days before he was to be hanged.

On December 11, 1936, upon the abdication of King Edward VIII, the Duke of York became the British ruler, taking the title of King George VI.

On December 12, 1792, in Vienna, Ludwig van Beethoven, 22, paid 19 cents for his first music lesson from Franz Joseph Haydn.

On December 12, 1870, South Carolina's Joseph Raney became the first black man to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

On December 12, 1889, Boston's George F. Grant was granted a patent for a golf tee.

On December 12, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson arrived in France, becoming the first sitting president to visit Europe.

On December 12, 1925, the nation's first motel, which went by the name of the Motel Inn, opened in the California city of San Luis Obispo.

On December 13, 1769, New Hampshire's Dartmouth College received its charter.

On December 13, 1927, Yehudi Menuhin, a 10-year-old child violinist, made his successful New York debut in Carnegie Hall. After the triumphant recital, he was asked what he would like next. "Some ice cream," was his reply.

On December 13, 1928, George Gershwin's "An American in Paris" premiered in New York's Carnegie Hall.

On December 13, 1978, the U.S. Mint issued the ill-fated "Susan B. Anthony" dollar.

On December 13, 1993, the space shuttle Endeavour returned from its mission to repair the Hubble Space Telescope.

On December 14, 1799, at his home in Mount Vernon, Va., George Washington died at age 67.

On December 14, 1902, the cable ship Silverton set out from San Francisco to lay the first cable from the mainland to Honolulu. On Jan. 1, 1903, the cable was ready to transmit messages.

On December 14, 1910, a \$10 million gift from Andrew Carnegie established the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The purpose was to work toward peace through research, publications and other educational activities.

On December 14, 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundson made the first recorded visit to the South Pole, beating out Robert F. Scott.

On December 14, 1972, after three days of exploration, the Apollo 17 astronauts blasted off from the surface of the Moon.

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Jingle All the Way by Debbie Macomber
(small hardcover, \$20 retail in bookstores and on-line; also available in paperback, eBook and audiobook. 235 pages.)

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, most of us don't have a lot of time for reading. However, there is a solution: A group of authors that writes compact, hardcover books with holiday themes that are feel-good novels, bringing all the wonderful things about the season to light.

Say what you will about rom-coms, but its popularity is witnessed by the millions of books sold each year by a number of dedicated authors....

Besides Debbie Macomber, I would recommend Jenny Colgan, Nora Roberts, Anne Perry, Janet Dailley, Robyn Carr, Joanne Fluke and Richard Paul Evans (the godfather of all Christmas novelists). Pour a glass of wine, curl up in your favorite chair and prepare to be transported to a place and time where the snow sparkles, the fireplace glows and romance is in the air.

However, the story may not be all apple pie and presents around the tree. It will have serious moments, but still provide respite from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives.

This book is not Macomber's most recent. It was published in 2020, but I was engaged with the unique location from Page 1. December along the Amazon River may not be a festive destination pre-Christmas, but it is the most imaginative setting for romance, if you can ignore the obvious pitfalls of the jungle. Such fun! Let me introduce you to Everly/Daisy Lancaster...

"She was different from her siblings: her sense of drive, her need to excel and be the best. Like her father had often said, she had the middle-child syndrome."

Daisy grows up on a small Indiana farm. Her siblings include two older sisters, Rose and Lily (sense a pattern?), and twin brothers Jeff and John, younger than her. All have chosen conventional paths — spouses and children — something for which Daisy hasn't had the time nor the inclination.

After college, Daisy and her friend, Jack Campbell, form a partnership to open Easy Home, an online real-estate company. The years are good, thanks in large part to Daisy's total devotion to the job, and her innate ability to sense trouble and quickly deal with problems. Jack takes full advantage of this and lets Daisy, now calling herself Everly (*"who will take a CEO seriously named Daisy?"*), bear the brunt of the business.

On this day late in November, Everly has had it with her assistant, Annette, who happens to be Jack's niece. She's incompetent, but Jack refuses to do anything about it. After threatening to fire An-

Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



nette, Jack says Everly is stressed and should take off the whole month of December to decompress.

Everly finally sees the sensibility of that, and Annette tries to make nice, saying she will book her a fantastic cruise filled with sun and fun. After all, if Jack has a problem he can't handle, there is always email onboard the ship. Right?

Before Everly can think this through, Annette had taken care of all the details, and Everly is on her way to O'Hare Airport and, maybe, on to the sunny beaches of Brazil.

Because of weather delays out of Illinois, Everly just makes the cruise ship before it leaves the dock. She doesn't have time to notice that this ship is much smaller than the cruise ships she has seen in brochures and on TV. Her "stateroom" is much more austere than she imagined — where's the fancy amenities and furniture? She soon finds out there are only 40 passengers on this cruise. Really?

Asher Adams introduces himself to Everly at the pre-dinner mixer. He's the ship's naturalist and very easy on the eye. Is her attraction to him due to the many hours she puts in working? Hours when she could have been on the town having fun?

Here's when Everly finds out what Annette has done to her...

Asher says this cruise is a two-week learning adventure down the Amazon River — you know — rainforest and jungle? He gives daily lectures on the flora and fauna, and a day is set aside to hike into the jungle to a tribe of friendly natives. It's all in the brochure Annette conveniently forgot to give her!

Oh, there will be adventure for Everly, now called Daisy, because that's the name on her passport.

Can Everly become Daisy again? Who will come back from this misadventure? The Chicago super exec or the farm girl she once was? Of course, she has a few mishaps along the cruise. There will be deadly creatures, getting lost in the jungle and a dip in the Amazon (not planned). But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Daisy and Asher fall for each other, but realize they both live entirely different lives — she in Chicago, he in his jungle.

You will smile at Everly/Daisy's story, rooting for her and Asher to get their act together. What will it take?

The final word: Funny and charming — what more can I say?

Till next time, happy reading!



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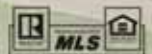


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