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# A Servant Leader

by Edmund Lawler

Garth Taylor's grand vision of a scaled-down version of Chicago's famed Old Town School of Folk Music, reimagined in Harbor Country, never would have been realized without a little help from his friends.

Taylor's brainchild — The School of American Music in Three Oaks, Mich. — celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. The small nonprofit with about 100 students, a dozen teachers and an ambitious schedule of community musical performances, student recitals and hundreds of classes is poised to keep the music playing for at least another decade.

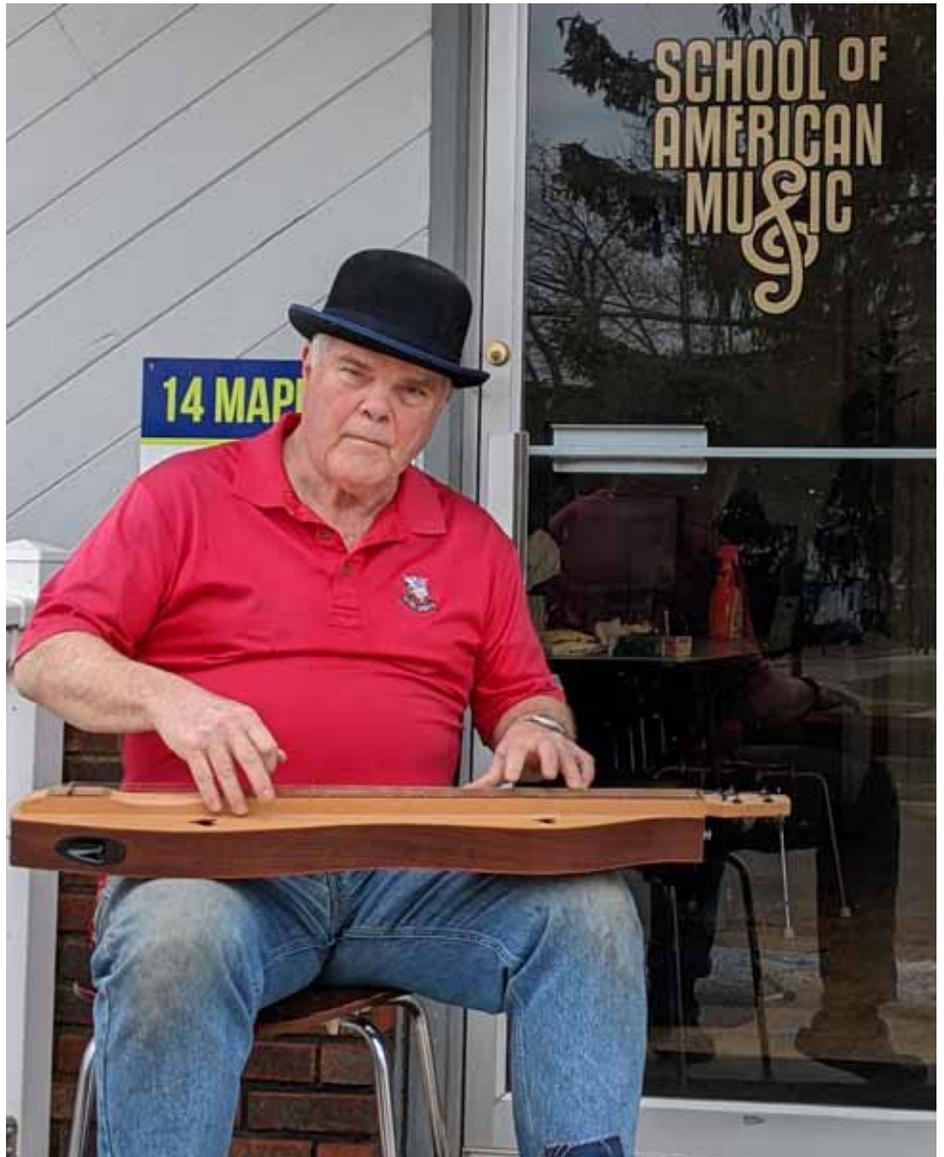
Bob Mueller, treasurer of the Friends of the New Buffalo Township Library, describes Taylor as "a very bright man who has surrounded himself with talented people on his board. It's a strong, active board that nicely supplements Garth's skills. It's a working board where everyone has things to do."

Mueller applauds Taylor for "bringing some good music to a community that just hasn't had much before. There are several parts to SAM. The school, itself, is the most important part. Then there are performance groups that often form ad hoc. And then there are outside performers that bring music to the community."

Mueller adds, "I don't think Garth is ever happier than when he's making music and performing in front of a group. He just comes alive when he's performing on stage. I think if he had his druthers, that's what he would do."

Muller sheepishly recalls mis-introducing Taylor as "Garth Brooks" at a library event. And one of the librarians went one better by mistakenly calling him "Garth Vader." Tay-

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Garth Taylor is photographed by *The Beacher's* Ed Lawler playing a mountain dulcimer, which he teaches at The School of American Music.

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lor, who has an infectious laugh and a hearty sense of humor, took no offense to either fumble.

Only adding to the confusion is that Garth is not Taylor's first name. It's David, the name of his father, a Canadian engineer who settled into Minneapolis along with his wife, Lynn, shortly before David Garth Taylor was born. Except for a summer job at a Minnesota steel plant when he was 16, where the foreman called him David, he's always gone by Garth.

At 11, Taylor decided his career ambition was to be a major league baseball player. Of course, many are called, but only an infinitesimal few are chosen. He would not be among the infinitesimal few to crack a big-league lineup, but baseball did play a role in his future — specifically, baseball cards that statistically chart a player's performance.

"I had a very large collection of baseball cards that I would update every year," Taylor recalls while chatting at Infusco, the Sawyer, Mich., coffee shop not far from the Harbert home he shares with his wife, Susan. Their adult son, Blake, lives in southern California.



The Taylor family 2008 Christmas card featuring Garth with his wife, Susan, and their son, Blake.

"I kept records of what the baseball teams were doing and the players' averages," he said. "I enjoyed the fact that all this was written down and systematized. There was something intriguing about it, maybe the tidiness or the orderliness of it."

In addition to statistics, Taylor had an affinity for music. He began playing the trumpet in grade school. But when the Beatles invaded America, Taylor brought his trumpet while in ninth grade to a music shop and swapped it for an Epiphone acoustic guitar, an instrument more suitable for a passionate fan of the Fab Four. One of his fondest memories is bringing his guitar to scratch out songs on three-hour bus rides to high school debate tournaments.

While in high school, he presented to his guidance counselor a list of a dozen colleges he was considering.

"She said the first 11 schools are OK," he recalled, "but she said I should not go to University of California-Berkeley because of its 'creeping Communism.'"

Despite her dire warning about a reputedly Marxist institution, Taylor happily spent the next four years in Berkeley, a hothouse of cultural ferment.

"Minnesota is a wonderful place to be a child, but the dialog over social issues was a little constricted," Taylor says. "I wanted to learn more about the full spectrum of what was going on with the Vietnam War, free speech and other issues. I wasn't necessarily committed to one side or the other. I just wanted a greater variety of input."

It was at UC-Berkeley where he experienced his career epiphany.

"My senior year, there was a ballot initiative for community control of police, to have a community board to review police behavior," he said. "I took a class in social psychology where students put together a before/after survey to measure people's response to a police ride-a-long program."

The professor asked if anyone wanted to analyze the data.

"I volunteered, and this ended up being the eureka! moment of my professional life," he recalls. "In my psych classes, I had been reading about attitudes and opinions, but now I was actually doing it. I analyzed all the data with nothing other than a giant coding sheet and a large ruler to make sure I didn't lose my place in the columns of data.

"I spent hundreds of hours on it, but I didn't care. I loved it every single step of the way, even though it was tedious."



Garth Taylor at Berkeley in 1971 with a friend's infant son.

Having discovered his career path, Taylor enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Chicago, home of the storied National Opinion Research Center.

"I worked at the NORC where I learned to write grants, conduct survey projects and write reports," he explains. "These were long hours, but I loved it. We used to look forward to weekends because you could work all day without being interrupted."

In addition to his work at NORC, "I taught stats and public policy at University of Chicago to grad students learning mathematical data analysis techniques," he says. "Computers were just becoming available. They were not even an office tool at that point, but a research tool. I just rode on that wave."

Upon earning his doctorate, Taylor rode the wave north to Madison, where he taught at the University of Wisconsin. But he was not there long because he was invited to return to the University of Chicago to teach grad students. It was a flattering appointment, but he realized he didn't want to be a professor. His heart's deepest wish was to work beyond the walls of academia as a public-opinion pollster. And he did.

"For three years, I was the director of research for the Chicago Urban League. I wanted to get management and public policy experience. There, I got the chance to write reports that were going to be put into practice – not sit on a shelf," he explains.

"Then I learned of a new organization called the Metro Chicago Information Center that was going to do public policy survey research."

The new organization that would produce public-opinion polls on quality-of-life measures was funded by some of the big foundations like MacArthur, McCormick-Tribune and the Chicago Community Trust. He directed a staff of 20 analysts and about 40 interviewers.

"They were looking for an executive director to write grants and contracts, design surveys, collect

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## A Servant Leader Continued from Page 3

data and write up reports,” Taylor says. “It was a very good fit. I did it for 20 years.”

Toward the end of his career, Taylor returned to the classroom to teach a class on nonprofit management at DePaul University’s School of Public Policy.

One night a week for five years, Taylor shared with his graduate students lessons he learned as a nonprofit executive on servant leadership. The job of a servant leader, he explains, is to show the way and figure out what needs to be done before giving people the guidance and rewards as they learn the task.

Taylor retired in 2010.

“When I retired, it came down to: What are you going to do with the rest of your life? I went through a several-month Vision Quest, inventorying personal skills and asked: Where do I want to be? Where do I want to go? and What do I not want to do anymore?”

Two things were left.

“Music,” he says. “I really wanted to be musically involved somehow. The other was nonprofit management. So, I thought, organization management and music? How about a music school! What if we had something like Old Town School of Folk Music here?”

Several years before he retired, some seeds were planted for what would grow into his dream of a local, nonprofit music school.

“Some of the first people I met in Harbor Country were Terry and Lorraine Hanover. They had a woodworking business called Center of the World,” Taylor explains. “They loved it when I would play music. And pretty soon, I was teaching guitar on Saturday mornings at their store. The experience allowed me to develop my own way to teach music and understand the local market: How many people were interested in learning what instruments? What price point was affordable?”

He also gained a lay of the land by forming a small jug band that performed at area farmers’ markets and other Harbor Country events.

“In 1995, Judy Racht was planning the first-ever Outsider Art Festival at her schoolhouse gallery in Harbert,” he says. “She said it would be great to

have a jug band for it.”

Taylor rounded up some of his more advanced guitar students and quickly assembled a band called **Patent Medicine**. They worked up 30 songs, entertained at the festival and stayed together for 20 years.

And then along came SAM, which was incorporated in the winter of 2012 as an 501(c)(3) nonprofit. A decade later, SAM has two sites: the second floor of Three Oaks Township Public Library and its own Arts and Education Center, the former Three Oaks village hall acquired in 2015 and completely refurbished. It houses a large recital room that doubles as a recording studio. There’s a smaller, separate, state-of-the-art recording studio, as well as its attached outdoor Spring Creek Stage facing Dewey Canon Park. The stage was donated by local philanthropist Allen Turner.

Marge Spears, one of SAM’s founding board members, says Taylor has a knack for attracting talent.

“He’s a people person,” she said. “Once you get on his radar screen, he’s going to get you involved somehow. He has created an *esprit de corps* on the board that clearly understands the school’s goals and its mission.”

Spears adds that Taylor has recruited “a dedicated team of teachers who don’t want the school to ever go away. They enjoy the students who are motivated and excited about music.”

While she says she loves music, Spears admits she lacks the skill to make it. But with a Wall Street background, Taylor enlisted Spears to serve as the board’s accounting and finance expert, as well as corporate secretary for the school’s first four years.

“What I like in a nonprofit is someone who makes a deci-

sion. And Garth makes decisions, even if you don’t always agree with the decision,” she says. “Garth is a character, a larger-than-life kind of guy. He’s also a visionary. He said, ‘We need the Old Town School of Folk Music out here, but we need our own version of it.’”

Taylor says, “SAM is built totally around public demand. If we can’t demonstrate value, if we can’t get students to sign up for classes, then we should not be in business. And it has to be affordable. That’s why our prices for lessons are 50 percent less



Garth Taylor performs on guitar with a student.

than what comparable lessons would cost at Old Town and other schools. We wanted to serve the people who live here full time, so we had to be at the right price point.”

The school has a generous scholarship program, in some cases offering up to a 90 percent discount on lessons for students lacking the means to afford the full price.

SAM’s partners are churches and schools. It has produced all-school assemblies, and it’s worked with community arts organizations, government organizations and other non-profits. SAM’s performers have played at farmers’ markets, as well as at free concerts at River Valley Senior Center.

SAM’s teaching philosophy is based on educating



SAM’s choral group performs in 2017 on the Spring Creek Stage in Three Oaks, Mich.

the brain, Taylor says. “The right side is language processing, the left side is motor skill,” he continued. “The reason it takes a long time to learn music is because these parts of your brain are not used to working together. As you learn more music, the two sides of the brain learn to communicate with each other. The part of the brain that connects the left and the right side gets bigger and stronger because it is exercised and challenged.”

He says studies have found that students who learn music get better at working with other people.

“They are more generous, they are more socially oriented, they are more cooperative,” he explained.

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Garth Taylor and Donna Mitchell perform in 2019 at an elementary school assembly.

“Performers are usually with other people when they create music. A recital, for example, is a communal experience. They create a shared, enjoyable social space. Music and society are linked.”

The day will come when Taylor no longer will be the president, and Donna Mitchell no longer the executive director, of SAM. Both are in their 70s, and a transition lies over the horizon. To lay the groundwork for the transition into SAM’s next decade and beyond, the school in 2020 launched a 10-year, \$500,000 endowment campaign called the Future Fund to help guarantee the nonprofit’s financial viability in the years ahead.

Taylor is heartened by the generosity of donors who have opened their wallets so wide, the origi-



Garth Taylor at his “office” at Infusco Coffee Roasters in Sawyer, Mich.

nal fundraising timeline has been halved. It’s now projected the \$500,000 will be raised by 2025, according to Taylor.

In the meantime, SAM will celebrate its milestone this year on the strength of its industrious 12-member board, generous donors, its cadre of dedicated teachers and a body of students eager to master their next note.

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## Michigan City Public Library

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

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

- **Virtual Dungeons & Dragons from 3-5 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 12 and 26.** Youth ages 12-18 can play through Zoom. Stop by Youth Services to pick up a free player's kit. Characters, dice, maps and notebooks are provided. Miss Dana can teach people how to play. Advance registration is required. Contact Dana in Youth Services at [dwolf@mclib.org](mailto:dwolf@mclib.org) or (219) 873-3045 for more details.
- **Duneland Stamp Club at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 13.** The club meets the second Thursday of each month. New members are invited.
- **Needle Arts Club at 5:30 p.m. Mondays, Jan. 17, 24 and 31.** Membership to the group, formerly known as the Knit Club, is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needle-point, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome.
- **Grab and Go Crafts for Kids & Teens.** Free take-home craft kits are available at the Youth

Services desk while supplies last. Contact the Youth Services department at (219) 873-3045 for more information.

- **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/](http://www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/) Visit Youth Services to get the craft! The program is aimed at children through age 5. Contact the Youth Services department at (219) 873-3045 for more details.

□

Volunteers are needed for the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program at least one day a week during tax season (February-April). The IRS provides some training, and helpers must pass the VITA test through the intermediate level. Testing and training are online. Call (219) 873-3049 for more details.

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*Two new databases are available:*

- Newspapers.com World Collection contains historical newspapers from the 1700s-2000s, including thousands of well-known regional, state and small local newspapers in the United States and other countries. Visit [tinyurl.com/4f8kfo3v](http://tinyurl.com/4f8kfo3v) and log in with a library card number.
- Fold3, a military-records database powered by Ancestry.com. It provides access to military records, including stories, photos and personal documents. Visitors can combine records found there with personal effects to create an online memorial for someone who served. Visit [tinyurl.com/58cnu2vn](http://tinyurl.com/58cnu2vn) and log in with a library card number.

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



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## Legacy Center Gallery

The Legacy Center Gallery, located inside Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, will showcase work by local artist Kristy Kutch through March 31.

The Michigan City native has taught art classes around the world. Having worked in colored pencil since 1986, she enjoys portraying flowers, fruit, the Indiana Dunes and its Lake Michigan beaches. She wrote the books [Drawing and Painting with Colored Pencil](#) and [The New Colored Pencil](#), and is featured on four instructional DVDs.



Kutch

Legacy Center hours are 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays. The building is located at 1719 E. Barker Ave. Visitors should enter through the doors off Esther Street.

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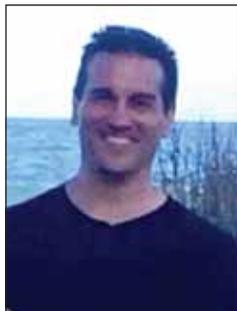
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## Studebaker National Museum Receives 1964 Studebaker Gran Turismo Hawk

The Studebaker National Museum has received a 1964 Studebaker Gran Turismo Hawk as a gift to its permanent collection.

The vehicle was formerly owned by Brooks Stevens, an industrial designer who handled Studebaker's styling program from 1962-1964.

After falling sales in the late 1950s-early 1960s, Studebaker considered discontinuing the Hawk after the 1961 model year. New Studebaker president Sherwood Egbert, however, felt it was a key part of Studebaker's lineup and commissioned the Milwaukee-based Stevens to redesign it for 1962.

Working on a minimal budget, Stevens gave the new Gran Turismo Hawk a more formal and upscale appearance. He eliminated the '61 Hawk's tailfins and added a Thunderbird-inspired squared-off roofline. The new silhouette, combined with a rede-



signed interior, boosted the aging Hawk.

The gift to the museum came from Ron and Betty DeWinter, Mishawaka. It was purchased new by Stevens and equipped with the optional black vinyl "sport roof," supercharged R2 engine, disc brakes and Power-shift automatic transmission. It was part of his private museum in Mequon, Wis. The DeWinters acquired the car when the Stevens' collection was sold in the early 1990s.

The museum is located at 201 Chapin St., just west of downtown South Bend. Hours are (all times Eastern) 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8.50 for seniors 60 and older and \$6 for youth ages 6-18. Call the museum at (574) 235-9714 or (888) 391-5600 or visit [www.studebakermuseum.org](http://www.studebakermuseum.org) for more details.

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### Lions Club Supports Groups



The Michigan City Lions Club, during its annual holiday awards luncheon Dec. 1, presented checks to support five local groups. They were: Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, The Salvation Army, Stepping Stone Shelter, Interfaith Community PADS Program and Michigan City Housing Authority. Pictured is club president Irene Rosevear presenting a check to Maj. Dale Simmons of The Salvation Army.

### Dunes Summer Theatre Auditions

Dunes Summer Theatre will hold auditions for its 2022 summer season from 1-4 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 22-23, at The Holdcraft Performing Arts Center, 1200 Spring St.

The summer schedule is:

- “Next to Normal” (May 27-June 12).
- “God of Carnage” (June 17-July 3).
- “Grand Night for Singing” (July 15-31).
- “Broadway at the Dunes Cabaret” (Aug. 12-14).

Proof of vaccination and masks are required. Visit [www.dunesARTS.org/theatre](http://www.dunesARTS.org/theatre) or email [dunestheatre@gmail.com](mailto:dunestheatre@gmail.com) for more information.

### Polish-American Cultural Society

Polish-American Cultural Society of Northwest Indiana, Michigan City Chapter, meets at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 19, at St. Stanislaus Kostka School, 1506 Washington St

The Rev. Wally Rakoczy will explore the Polish language, customs and culture. There is no membership fee, and meetings are open to the public. Use the entrance between the church and school; signs direct visitors to the ground-level meeting room.

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### Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

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

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

JS

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## LCSO in the Spotlight



Theo Smith.

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

New student apprentice Theo Smith has played the tuba for more than six years. The son of Maria and Andy Smith, he is a Long Beach resident and a junior at Lu Lumiere School, where he is a member of the La Lu Jazz band, led by Bryant Williams. He studies under Richard Watson (Valparaiso University, LCSO's principal tuba) and Scott Tegge (University of Illinois, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra).

Smith is a CYSO member who was selected for the Indiana All State Honor Band. His hobbies include soccer and instrument repair and resale. He has two older brothers who play sousaphone in the Northwestern University Marching Band.

## City Reveals Special Events Schedule

The city's 2022 special events schedule is highlighted by a new three-day festival to kick off the summer and the return of beloved traditions.

The Singing Sands Sand Sculpting Festival is planned June 3-5 at the lakefront and beach. The centerpiece is a professional sand-sculpting exhibit and competition, drawing well-known sand sculptors to participate. The event will include live music by local and regional acts. Local food vendors, as well as art, craft and merchandise booths, round out the festivities.

The Kiddie Parade returns June 25 along Franklin Street in the Uptown Arts District. That evening, Michigan City's harbor comes alive through lights and music with the return of Venetian Night. Boat owners will decorate their boats and parade through the harbor and around the pier.

The Michigan City Patriotic Parade is Saturday, July 2, along the Franklin Street route, and the annual Fireworks Spectacular is Monday, July 4. The LaPorte County Convention & Visitors Bureau will host the AquaX Jet Ski races July 9-10, then the Great Lakes Grand Prix on Aug. 3-7, including the Taste of Michigan City presented by the Michigan City Main Street Association.

Oktoberfest, one of Michigan City's most well-known and long-standing traditions, returns to Washington Park on Labor Day Weekend. It will feature live music stages, local and regional food vendors, and art, craft and merchandise vendors.

The holiday season includes the Annual Festival of Lights Celebration, which complements the Festival of Lights in Washington Park presented by the Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department. It includes the Festival of Lights Parade, the lighting of the official Christmas Tree and the Festival of Lights Celebration, including the annual Chili Challenge.

Contact Terry Greetham for more details at [tgreetham@emichigancity.com](mailto:tgreetham@emichigancity.com)

## "Disney's Frozen Jr."

Centerstage Youth Theatre will present "Disney's Frozen Jr." on Friday-Sunday, Jan. 14-16, at Michigan City High School's auditorium, 8466 Pahs Road.

The 60-minute musical, based on the 2013 Disney film and 2018 Broadway adaptation, will be performed at 7 p.m. Jan. 14-15 and 2 p.m. Jan. 16. Designed for middle school-age performers, it includes 35 students and is directed by Becky Tiedeman. Popular songs include the Oscar-winning "Let it Go," "Do You Want to Build a Snowman?" and "Love Is an Open Door," as well as new songs from the Broadway show.

Tickets, which are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and children 5 and younger, are available at the door.

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## Harbor Country Hikers



Harbor Country Hikers members are photographed during an early 2021 hike at the New Buffalo Area Schools Nature Study Trails.

Harbor Country Hikers will walk some of the deepest, least-traveled trails at New Buffalo Area Schools' Nature Study Trails at 2 p.m. EST Saturday, Jan. 15.

The goal is to study the behavior of crows — the “watchers of the woods.” HCH President Pat Fisher will kick off the event with a brief talk about crows' behavior and superstitions surrounding them, before leading a two-mile walk through the nature trails' 60 acres. There are more than four miles of trails altogether, through prairies, forested uplands and a variety of wetland habitats. Highlights include marshes, hardwood forests, seasonally wet flatwoods filled with inundated shrub swamps and vernal pools.

The Nature Study Trails abuts Chikaming Open Lands' Turtle Creek Preserve and the City of New Buffalo's Turtle Pond Nature Preserve.

HCH membership is encouraged, although the public is invited. The trails are located behind the school on Lubke Road. The group follows CDC and local COVID guidelines, and face masks are optional. A Rollator, a specialized walker with oversized wheels, is available on a first-come, first-served basis by emailing harborcountryhikers@gmail.com.

Visit [www.harborcountryhikers.com](http://www.harborcountryhikers.com) or Harbor Country Hikers on Facebook for more details.

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## COVID Market Numbers

I did some stats in Michigan that surprised me. There was a boom in 2020's 4th quarter (9/1-12/15) like I had not seen in 40 years, then a kind of “bust” in 2021. I wondered if my “Indiana Lakefront” market had the same up and down numbers these past three years. Because Greater Northwest Indiana Association of Realtors gives me a cooperation statistic, I could determine how many houses were sold “in house” (same brokerage) and how many were “cooperative” sales with other brokerages for the past three years.

### Sales Volume Numbers for my Indiana Lakefront

Yr.	Units sold	Med Price	\$Vol	DOM
19	52	\$417k	\$26.2 M	102
20	75	\$513k	\$41.4 M	92
21	45	\$500k	\$30.0 M	31

### Cooperative numbers

2019	Units	\$V	2020	Units	\$V
Coop	28	\$10M	Coop	45	\$23.4
inhouse	33	\$17M	Inhouse	39	\$19.2
2021	Units		\$Vol		
Coop	38		\$26 M		
Inhouse	11		\$7.7 M		

Sorry for the odd table for Coop/In house.

COVID created a boom market in 2020 as city folk fled the urban world for a house or condo with a vacation setting and good Internet. Good takeout food easily obtained from places like Café Gulistan added desirability. Along came September 2021 with corporate calls to return to work and school, and the marketplace dropped lower than 2019 in units and lower than 2020 in median price and \$Volume. We had fewer houses to sell because the boom emptied the inventory of houses for sale.

The cooperative/in house stats also are interesting as they relate to the inventory and number of buyers calling real estate agents. Lowest cooperation was 2019, highest by a huge percentage this last year.

Final thought: Christmas to New Year's 2021 created a sudden surge of buyers. COVID resurgence and canceled airline flights are my guesstimated reason.

What is next? The lake continues down 2 feet from 2020.

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## Ignore the Haters! “Don’t Look Up” is a Hilarious, Scathing Satire

by Andrew Tallackson



Scientists Randall Mindy and Kate Dibiasky (Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Lawrence, back) try to persuade a vain president, Janie Orlean (Meryl Streep), and her aide (Jonah Hill), that Earth is in a dire situation in “Don’t Look Up.”

“Don’t Look Up” is “Deep Impact” played for dark laughs, a scathing satire that argues when the end comes, we probably deserve it.

This is the third film in a row for writer-director Adam McKay where politics and denial are his targets (2016’s “The Big Short” and 2018’s “Vice”), not Will Ferrell and fart jokes (“Step Brothers,” the “Anchorman” movies). “Don’t Look Up” is just as uneven, but this one made me laugh the most. The humor is wicked. The big-name cast isn’t intimidated by itself. The message is brutal...and rightly so. McKay holds up a mirror to society, and while the answers are obvious, we need to hear it.

Streaming on Netflix, the movie opens like “Deep Impact” (1998). That film, if you recall, saw a comet barreling toward Earth, the only hope being the crew aboard a space shuttle. In McKay’s film, Michigan State University grad student Kate Dibiasky (Jennifer Lawrence) discovers a curious object in Earth’s trajectory. With help from her professor, Randall Mindy (Leonardo DiCaprio), they make the startling realization that in six months, a comet will result in an Extinction Level Event, wiping out everyone on Earth.

The public’s reaction is where “Don’t Look Up”

★ ★ ★ 1/2

### “Don’t Look Up”

*Running time: 138 minutes. Netflix. Rated R for language throughout, some sexual content, graphic nudity and drug content.*

draws blood. What McKay and writer David Sirota show is that these days, we couldn’t care less about pending tragedy. If we’re going to die, then we better look good in the media and, more than ever, social media. In the interim, we distract ourselves by focusing on celebrities and catty social-media memes.

McKay downplays DiCaprio’s and Lawrence’s good looks, disguising them as nowhere near camera friendly: Lawrence with a nose ring and severe hair, DiCaprio as a dumpy, panic attack-prone professor. And in the presence of Tyler Perry and Cate Blanchett — outrageously funny as overly caffeinated morning talk-show hosts — Randall and Kate enter the court of public opinion. She’s deemed too sour, and the target of petty memes. He is reinvented as the sexy middle-aged professor. The news-show hosts, in fact, are more interested in pop star Riley Bina (a hilariously in-your-face Ariana Grande) and her breakup with, and I love the name, DJ Cello

(Scott Mescudi) than the extinction of the human race.

The White House is useless, as embodied by the vain president, Janie Orlean. She's played by Meryl Streep in one of her best comedic performances because she doesn't force it. Instead, she creates a woman who can't think beyond herself or the latest pollings. At one point, in fact, she postpones meeting with Kate and Randall so she can enjoy her birthday cake.

We also get Mark Rylance's Steve Jobs-like weirdo who wants to mine the comet for materials that will aid his telecom company, regardless if most of Earth is eradicated in the process.

As long as "Don't Look Up" bounces between its dysfunctional oddballs, it exists as comic satire of the highest order, with huge laughs squeezed between ones that make you knowingly smile. But the film, which clocks in at nearly 2 hours, 20 minutes, uses its second half to go after the previous administration, drawing parallels between the approaching comet, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. How tragedy becomes politicized, and exploited, by politicians. How turning a deaf ear to solutions is championed as cutting-edge political strategy. All excellent points...but the laughs drain away. McKay could have chopped 15 minutes or so from the length and still made his point. Case in point: Timothée Chalamet plays yet another self-important slacker, but he's dead weight. Just another famous face added to the hefty ensemble.

Thankfully, when it appears "Don't Look Up" has overstayed its welcome, becoming downright de-



Cate Blanchett and Tyler Perry are outrageously funny as TV morning talk-show hosts.

pressing, a mid-credits scene involving Streep and Rylance delivers the best punchline of any comedy last year, followed by a laugh-out-loud final shot courtesy of Jonah Hill. Civilization may be at an end, but as long as we can still tweet a video selfie, all is right with the world.

Correct?

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# Season 4 of “Cobra Kai” Reinvents and Top Itself

by Andrew Tallackson

Some TV shows make a huge splash, sustain the buzz for another season or two, then collapse into a groove where fatigue settles in, where you're bored by the familiarity of it all.

“Cobra Kai,” on the other hand, reinvents itself season after season. Right as it could go stale, it shifts gears, catches you by surprise. That is what we get in Season 4, which dropped New Year's Eve on Netflix. The laughs are not as abundant — that honor goes to seasons 1 and 3 — but that's OK. It is the most rigorous, the most intensely focused and the most wisely observant. Season 4 puts its characters through the ringer, where they're forced to examine the consequences of their actions. You still care about these people. They're not the same as they were when the show began.

For the unfamiliar, “Cobra Kai” is a tricky balancing act of nostalgia, sequel and reboot. It revisits characters from “The Karate Kid” franchise, but with a twist. The villain is now the hero. Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka, an actor whose comedic skills age like vintage wine), defeated by newcomer Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) in the 1984 original, is on the path to redemption: defined by the losses of his past, determined to reinvent himself.

We also meet the next generation, specifically Daniel's and Johnny's children and their pals. They find themselves ensnared not just by typical teen drama, but the fear of repeating the same mistakes as their parents.

At the end of Season 3, Johnny and Daniel took “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” approach, uniting through Daniel's Miyagi-Do *dojo*. The plan: train a scrappy group of underdogs to rid Cobra Kai — Johnny's former *dojo* — of John Kreese (Martin Kove, in full scowling pitbull mode), who wrestled it away from Johnny.

As Season 4 opens, we know Johnny and Daniel teaming up won't go down easy. Oil and water, these two. Daniel is influenced by his late mentor's Zen-like philosophy. Johnny, trapped in '80s cave-man mentality, prods his students with language that flips PC cancel culture the bird.

The humor of the past three seasons clashed Johnny's cluelessness with today's cell-phone obsessed Facebook generation. I still say the show's most brilliant exchange involved Johnny's response to a student who told him he's “on the spectrum.” Oblivious of anything to do with autism, Johnny's blunt reply was simply, “OK, I don't know what that is...but get off of it.”

The laughs aren't as generous in Season 4, and



Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka) and Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) are at increasing odds in Season 4 of “Cobra Kai,” now streaming on Netflix.

I worried that “Cobra Kai” had lost its subversive edge. Then, it struck me. You cannot base an entire series on a one-joke conceit. We get it, that Johnny is stuck in the past...but by embracing social media in Season 3, he'd begun the reluctant journey into the modern era.

Now, Johnny and Daniel must contend with a much darker threat. Kreese is not just out for blood. He's recruited an old Vietnam buddy to finish off Miyagi-Do for good. That would be Terry Silver, played by Thomas Ian Griffith in a potent return to the character introduced in the third “Karate Kid” picture. Back then, the character was a silly cartoon: an over-the-top bad guy with a hyena cackle. Here, Griffith grounds Terry in more polished realism. He's moved on with his life, courted success as a businessman, but Kreese is like PTSD that won't loosen its grip. A bit of the old Terry takes over, hatching plans far more severe than Kreese could have imagined.

It sounds like action-movie hokey, but the reason

“Cobra Kai” is so much smarter, so much more complicated, is that it blurs the distinction between good and evil. For instance, you can't entirely fault Tory Nichols (Peyton List), a thorn in the side of Samantha LaRusso (Mary Mouser), because the writers invest her with a flawed humanity. We understand why she behave the way she does, and her unexpected bond with Sam's mother, Amanda (Courtney Henggeler), is an affecting example of an adult sifting through hurt to offer compassion.

And by depicting Sam as the frequent aggressor, not Tory, “Cobra Kai” offers its most probing exploration. What we see is how children, in many cases, are the product, and reflection of, their parents. How adults carry themselves as parents, how attentive or astute they may or may not be, has a dangerous trickle-down effect. We witness that in Daniel's son, Anthony (Griffin Santopietro), who now is the type of school bully Daniel feared in his youth. If parents want explanations for the actions of their children, the show argues, they need to stop, catch their

## Up Next

by Andrew Tallackson

During *The Beacher's* two-week holiday, I enjoyed plenty of rest and time with family and friends.

The downtime also afforded opportunities to catch up on TV and movies. I have an arsenal of reviews ready to run in upcoming editions, including “Being the Ricardos,” “Licorice Pizza,” “The Lost Daughter,” “The Rescue,” “Swan Song,” “The Tender Bar” and “The Tragedy of MacBeth.”

Our Jan. 20 edition will feature my picks for the Best in Television from 2021, followed by my favorite films of 2021 in the Jan. 27 edition.

breath and hold up a mirror to themselves. Then, only then, can the dialogue to understanding begin.

The most heartbreaking story arc, in fact, shows how bullying creates bullies among the tormented. We see that in Kenny Payne (Dallas Dupree Young), the object of frequent cyber-bullying by none other than Anthony LaRusso. Sweet, but meek, Kenny enlists in Cobra Kai under the tutelage of Johnny's estranged son, Robby (Tanner Buchanan). But the brutal spirit of Cobra Kai sinks its teeth into Kenny. By the climactic tournament, he's lost his humanity, reduced to just another Cobra Kai drone.

I mentioned earlier the show's ability to reinvent itself. The last 10 minutes of the final episode deliver one heckuva sucker punch. A twist so unexpected, you gasp first, then laugh from the shock of it. “Cobra Kai” not only pulls the rug out from beneath you, but it also amps up the conflict for next season.

Unreal, how “Cobra Kai” tops itself season after season. It's one of the best shows streaming today.

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

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## “No Way Home” May Be the Best Spider-Man Yet

by Andrew Tallackson



Spider-Man (Tom Holland) tries to clean up the mess he created, with help from Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch), in “Spider-Man: No Way Home.”

“Spider-Man: No Way Home” is good.

Like, “Avengers: Endgame” good.

Like, gotta hit the theater pronto for another viewing good.

This is Marvel in peak form. Looking back on 2021, it was wildly uneven. A year of experimenting (“Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” “The Eternals”) and comfort zones (“Black Widow,” “Venom: Let There Be Carnage”).

“No Way Home,” by comparison, is grand entertainment. Something truly special. You have to admire director Jon Watts and writers Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers for consistent high quality, starting with “Homecoming” (2017), then “Far From Home” (2019) and now “No Way Home,” which may be the best yet. The most engaging, the most emotional. And, a reminder that Tom Holland as the webslinger is the heart and soul of this franchise.

“No Way Home” picks up where “Far From Home” left off. Quentin Beck (Jake Gyllenhaal), in a post-humorous social media post, blows Spider-Man’s cover as Peter Parker, in turn blowing up his private life. Early in the film, Peter, MJ (Zendaya) and Ned (Jacob Batalon) push through throngs of people at school. As proof these films haven’t lost their comedic edge, one onlooker asks MJ if she plans on hav-



### “Spider-Man: No Way Home”

*Running time: 148 minutes. Rated PG-13 for sequences of action/violence, some language and brief suggestive comments*

ing Peter’s “Spider babies.”

Instant celebrity, though, comes with a price. Peter, MJ and Ned are denied admission to MIT, which argues the controversy is not what the school needs. Peter, proving where roads paved with good intentions head, stops by Dr. Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) to see if he can tinker with time to erase being outed. Turns out, it’s not that easy. During Strange’s spells, Peter keeps adding key people whose memory of him he doesn’t want squashed. The interruptions fry the spells, opening up the multiverse — universes parallel to our own.

When the earliest trailer for “No Way Home” dropped, my concern was that it would be another one of those time-tinkering movies where no one knows Peter, that he has to re-establish relationships before saving the day. I loathe those plots. They tear apart characters we enjoy seeing together before arriving at the inevitable. One of the “Shrek” movies tried that approach...and failed. But

here, Peter gets to keep his friendships with MJ and Ned, along with Aunt May (Marisa Tomei), as he cleans up his own mess.

With Holland representing the third Peter Parker since 2002, following Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield, resurrecting heroes and villains from previous films could have been lazy fan service. Instead, “No Way Home” does something clever: It treats the worlds established by the other actors as part of the multiverse. Different timelines parallel to the one established by Holland and company.

The scene where Alfred Molina’s Doctor Octopus (from 2004’s “Spider-Man 2”) emerges from the multiverse is spectacularly epic in every way. Staged like a disaster movie amid stalled highway traffic, Peter bobs and weaves through vehicles, feverishly trying to save lives as Doc Ock zeroes in for the kill. The action works better than most Marvel outings because Watts, as director, squeezes in genuine heroics with humor and, in terms of the effects, the best money can buy.

Molina’s heavy isn’t the only one who arrives. We get the likes of Willem Dafoe’s Green Goblin (from Maguire’s 2002 debut), Jamie Foxx’s Electro (from Garfield’s second Spidey effort) and Thomas Haden Church’s Sandman from “Spider-Man 3,” Maguire’s final outing. By the time this review runs, it no longer will be a spoiler that Maguire and Garfield slip back into their Spidey suits. The thrill of seeing this trio together comes from three distinctly different approaches to the character, the actors clearly enjoying being together.

In fact, the best twist to “No Way Home” is that Holland’s Parker becomes attached to the villains making life hell for him. They are human beings corrupted by greed, power and technology. He believes they can be saved, rather than banished to certain death. When was the last time a movie saw its hero try to redeem his aggressors? Seriously. Was it “Return of the Jedi” (1983)? By doing so, the film ups the emotional ante. There is much more at stake than just wiping out the latest threat. That means the finale of “No Way Home” is almost as lump-in-the-throat affecting as “Endgame,” with Holland and Zendaya pushing every button they can to make the finale soar.

Speaking of Holland and Zendaya, I appreciated the quieter scenes between them. The moments when Peter risks losing his cool, and MJ calmly steers him



The chemistry between Tom Holland and Zendaya is still the most potent element of the series.

back into focus. The look of relief on Holland’s face reiterates the sweet bond between the two actors.

Marvel has stated its intention to keep the franchise alive with more films. That’s fine...but how they intend to top “No Way Home” may be impossible. It’s darn near perfection.

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



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## “Matrix” Sequel Can’t Justify Its Existence

by Andrew Tallackson



Keanu Reeves and Carrie-Anne Moss return as Neo and Trinity in “The Matrix: Resurrections.”

Prepping for “The Matrix: Resurrections” required revisiting the original trilogy. It had been a while. My recollection was, the first film was a gonzo classic, the sequels half-baked projects that should have been one film, not two.

Turns out, I was half right.

The original is just that: a rare original. Dystopian sci-fi that rewrote the playbook as a reality bending, gravity defying adrenaline boost. Ironically, time has been kind to the sequels. Viewed together, they are a cohesive whole. And when the sentinels breach Zion in “Revolutions,” the epic spectacle holds its own with anything in “Star Wars,” “The Lord of the Rings” or “Avatar.” We also appreciate the bold casting, where the ensemble was dominated by actors of color not because of weary tokenism, but to reflect the world in which we live.

Eighteen years later, we have “The Matrix: Resurrections,” with key players back, young new faces and half the Wachowski writing-directing team – Lana – returning. Bad buzz dismissed it as the sequel no one asked for, and true, Hollywood is in a creative funk. Rather than introduce new ideas, it wipes the dust off aging franchises, hoping nostalgia will lure audiences back into theaters...and

★ ★ 1/2

### “The Matrix: Resurrections”

Running time: 148 minutes. In theaters, HBO Max.

Rated R for violence and some language.

make a few bucks in the process.

Early in “The Matrix: Resurrections,” there is scathingly hilarious dialogue where the film slams itself for being exactly what it is: a studio-imposed cash-grab disguised as a nostalgic reboot. That Lana Wachowski is meta enough to admit this pumps you up. Sadly, she falls prey to her own assessment. For all the bonkers action, “Resurrections” cannot justify why it should exist.

Neo (Keanu Reeves) and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) sure looked dead by the end of “Revolutions,” although the movie hinted we might see Neo again. To Wachowski’s credit, she finds a way to do just that without undoing what the trilogy achieved.

Neo is back to being Thomas Anderson, now a video-game creator whose popular “Matrix” trilogy of games is based on faint recollections of his past. His memory appears largely wiped out. Ditto Trinity, who is now Tiffany: married, with two teen boys.



Jada Pinkett Smith returns as an older version of Niobe.

Neo watches her from afar, somehow convinced he belongs with her.

Wachowski has fun introducing flickers of the old Matrix coinciding with mysterious attempts to concoct a new one. And we wouldn't have a fourth film, would we, if Neo didn't get lured back to the grungy underworld beneath the shadowy "reality" orchestrated by the Matrix. Man and machine, for the most part, have learned to coexist because of what Neo and Trinity achieved. That Neo wants to connect with Trinity is perceived as a threat by the evil sorts plotting the new Matrix.

I won't spoil who the bad guys are. Suffice it to say, they are no surprise nor a legitimate threat, backed up by enough new ideas to warrant a sequel. Can anything top Hugo Weaving's dispassionately robotic Agent Smith? Probably not, but in "Resurrections," the stakes aren't high enough to make us care, to persuade us that, yes, the world needed another "Matrix" movie.

In terms of technology, we are not that far removed from the trilogy so that today's effects overshadow the past. The groundbreaking visuals of the trilogy hold up well, including the "bullet time" effect that "Resurrections" playfully kids. What we see now, well, we've seen it before.

What caught me off guard is that "Resurrections" ultimately is a love story. Neo's unflinching journey to bring Trinity back as he once knew her. Time has not dampened the chemistry between Moss and Reeves. Moss, aging gracefully and looking better than ever, knows how to command a scene. Reeves, reinvigorated by the "John Wick" franchise, settles back into Neo like he never skipped a beat. These two are dynamite together.

Will time be kind to "Resurrections"? Likely, it will be remembered as a footnote to greater success. But Moss and Reeves? The history is still there, the screen presence, as a couple. Find these two another franchise. Maybe a romantic comedy, even.

But another "Matrix" movie? Nah.

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## Indiana Dunes State Park

The following program will be offered:

- **South Shore Line: The Way to the Dunes on Thursday and Saturday, Jan. 20 and 22.**

The Midwest Rail Rangers, a partner with Indiana Dunes State Park, will present an on-board educational program that includes IDSP.

The eastbound program on South Shore Train 7 departs Chicago-Millennium Station at 8:45 a.m. Passengers can board at any of the five stations located in Chicago, as well as Hammond, East Chicago, Gary/Chicago Airport, Gary/Metro Center, Miller, Portage/Ogden Dunes, Dune Park or Beverly Shores. Eastbound programs terminate at Michigan City-Carroll Avenue at 10:27 a.m. Westbound programs are aboard Train 116, which originates at Michigan City-Carroll Avenue at 10:55 a.m.

Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Look for the car with yellow signs on the inside (normally towards the middle of the train). No reservations are needed. A regular train ticket is required. Visit [www.mysouthshoreline.com](http://www.mysouthshoreline.com) for more details.



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

## Indiana Dunes National Park

The National Park Service and Friends of Indiana Dunes are sponsoring a food drive from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Jan. 15, in honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Take canned or other non-perishable items to parking lots at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center or Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education. In most years, the park offers a program and volunteer project during the holiday; however, due to COVID-19, NPS is avoiding an indoor program.

Volunteers will be posted in the parking lots, with those donating able to stay in vehicles. Items collected will be distributed through area food banks.



The National Park Service and Indiana Dunes Tourism have partnered to offer regular, no-hassle volunteer options for those looking to help at IDNP.

Opportunities are available almost daily and include stewardship, restoration and park cleanup.

Volunteers, for instance, can stop from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. any day of the week at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center or Paul H. Douglas Center for the "Trash Trekkers" program. It involves helping keep beaches and trails clean.

Dress appropriately for working outside; wear comfortable clothing and shoes, and take water. The park will provide gear and training.



The National Park Service has created an audio version of Indiana Dunes National Park's official map and guide, making it accessible to visually impaired visitors.

The audio description can be accessed by visiting [tinyurl.com/2p82t2rx](http://tinyurl.com/2p82t2rx), or by downloading the UniDescription mobile app for Apple and Android devices. Downloadable audio files are available as well. The apps target people who are blind, visually impaired, print dyslexic or who prefer learning through sound. Local and other park employees, including a legally blind staff member — facilitated the project alongside a fully blind, experienced volunteer who has assisted other national parks' audio-described brochures.

The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is at 100 N. Lake St. in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Call (219) 395-1882 or visit [www.nps.gov/indu](http://www.nps.gov/indu) for details.



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**In Memoriam**

Stephen Haile Bradford was born Sept. 11, 1953, in New Bedford, Mass., to George Leroy Bradford and Alice Buckingham Bradford. The family later moved to Michigan City, where he spent most of his childhood.



Steve attended Long Beach Elementary School beginning in kindergarten and graduated from Elston Senior High School in 1973. He was the driving force behind two recent and well-attended Long Beach Elementary School class reunions. He delighted in reconnecting with his childhood friends.

Steve graduated from Western Michigan University with a degree in aviation, later earning a master's degree in commercial aviation from Delta State University. He was a professional airline captain with a 30-year history of demonstrated success in leadership positions. He also was a founding father and first president of the U.S. Airline Pilots Association.

In his professional positions, Capt. Bradford established and maintained the highest professional standards for his crew and his union, especially during turbulent periods of management/labor negotiations. He was responsible for ensuring the timely, safe and efficient integration of three airline pilot groups during a merger that created the largest airline in the world, American Airlines.

Capt. Bradford died suddenly, Dec. 27, 2021, in his McMurray, Pa., home. He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Sally; their two children, Daniel and Emily; and three sisters, Judith (Ronald) Druener, Panama City, Fla., Alexa Bradford (Delton Simmons), Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Elizabeth Bradford, Seattle.



**Prayer to the Blessed Virgin**

(Never known to fail.)

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

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



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## Led Zeppelin Show



Uptown Social, 907 Franklin St., will present "Kashmir: The Live Led Zeppelin Show," on Friday, Jan. 21. The group's mission is to capture the energy of a Led Zeppelin show. Doors open at 6 p.m. Opening band The Dead Licks performs at 7 p.m., followed by Kashmir at 8 p.m.

Tickets, which range from \$29-\$59, can be purchased at [www.uptownsocialmc.com/live-entertainment](http://www.uptownsocialmc.com/live-entertainment)

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## LaPorte County Parks



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

### Nature's Tiny Tots

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

The free program is from 10-11 a.m. at Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Dates are Jan. 24, Feb. 7 and 28, March 14 and 28, and April 11 and 18.

Masks are required for 3 and older. Call (219) 325-8315 at least one week in advance to register.

### Joyful Movement Easy Exercises for All Ages

The free, low-impact program is at 8:30 a.m. Jan. 18 and 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15 and 22, and March 1, 8 and 15 at Luhr Park Nature Center.

Participants can sit or stand for exercises that involve stretching, meditation and balance. Pre-registration is required one week in advance for each date to reserve a seat and avoid cancellation.

### Parent & Child Discovery Days

The program includes arts and crafts, games and snacks. All activities are related to the topic. Programs are appropriate for children 3 to 8, with an adult required to participate. Times are from 6 to 7:15 p.m. at Luhr County Park. The cost is \$5 per child/per program. Pre-registration and payment are required at least one week in advance or until full, whichever comes first. The schedule is:

- Jan. 26 — Flying Fun.
- Feb. 9 — Night Watch.
- Feb. 23 — Game Night.
- March 16 — Hop, Drop and Roll.
- Mar. 30 — Flower Power.

### Feed the Birds this Winter

The free program, which involves making a bird feeder, is from 1-4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, at Luhr Park Nature Center.

No pre-registration is required. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

### Field Trips

Formal educators, Scout leaders and groups can schedule a free organized program for students or group at any county park. The programs on various topics meet state standards and patch requirements. Visit [www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org) for sample programs. Email [natureniki@csinet.net](mailto:natureniki@csinet.net) or call (219) 324-5855 for details.

## Virtual MLK Day Event

Purdue University Northwest will host a free virtual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration from 8:30-9:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 17, through PNW's YouTube channel.

The program's theme is "Social Justice Begins with Me."

Nicky Ali Jackson, PNW associate professor of Criminal Justice, is the keynote speaker. Her teaching and research focus on incarceration, wrongful convictions, domestic violence and sexual assault. She founded the Willie T. Donald Exoneration Advisory Coalition, which connects exonerees with resources and advocates for criminal justice reform in Indiana. This past August, she received the Sagamore of the Wabash.



Jackson

Michigan City Police Chief Dion Campbell will emcee the celebration, a post he previously held in 2017. He has served with MCPD for 22 years, having worked in the patrol division, detective bureau and as a school resource officer for Michigan City High School before being appointed chief.



Campbell

Kenneth Holford, PNW provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, will deliver opening remarks. Vocalist Jenne Carey will provide

the musical interlude.

Visit [www.pnw.edu/mlk-celebration](http://www.pnw.edu/mlk-celebration) for more details.

## New LCA Marketing Manager

Northwest Indiana native Samantha Bean is the new marketing manager at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St.

Bean is a graduate of Indiana University-Bloomington, where she double majored in journalism and communications. Most recently a member of Franciscan Health's marketing department, she brings 10 years of marketing and communications experience to LCA. With a strong background in graphic design, writing, public relations and project management, she also will oversee efforts of the front desk and Gallery Shop staff.



Bean

Born and raised in Northwest Indiana, Bean has a passion for the arts. In 2019, she appeared as Audrey in LaPorte Little Theatre Club's production of "Little Shop of Horrors." She also was involved in LTC's 2021 production of "High School Musical."





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# American Red Cross

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

- Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1237 E. Coolspring Ave., 3-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 13.
- St. John Kanty, 7012 N. County Road 600 East, Rolling Prairie, 1-6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 18.
- Marquette High School, 306 W. 10th St., 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 18.

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](http://www.redcrossblood.org) for more details.

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## Unity Scholarship Applications

Unity Foundation of LaPorte County is accepting applications for the 2022 cycle of scholarships and awards, the deadline being Friday, March 25.

Scholarships average more than \$2,000 each. In addition to graduating high school seniors and continuing college students, many are open to adults seeking a professional certificate or associate, undergraduate, graduate or doctoral degree.



Unity Foundation of LaPorte County

For the 2021-2022 school year, Unity awarded more than \$330,000 in scholarships to approximately 150 students.

Unity's General Scholarship Application simplifies the process by allowing students to apply for many scholarships through one application. The form, eligibility requirements and additional information are available at [www.ulfc.net/scholarships](http://www.ulfc.net/scholarships). Applicants should begin the process early.

Also, community members can nominate deserving individuals for two specialty awards:

- Diane Kay Bamberth Memorial Award: Bamberth was a devoted wife, mother and friend dedicated to community service and local events. The award goes to a LaPorte High School graduating senior pursuing a four-year undergraduate degree who exemplifies humility, tenacity and strength of character during adversity.
- Jan Nona Environmental Stewardship Award: It honors students or "teachers inspiring students" in the Michigan City area who, like Nona, become involved in environmental issues in the community. The recipient must be a resident of LaPorte or Porter counties. It will be paid to the recipient, or college or university, on behalf of the recipient or to a recognized charity of the recipient's choice.

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## JROTC Supports School Over Break

Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps supported the school by providing the Color Guard for the basketball game against Penn and helping with the Dec. 23 wrestling tournament.



Cadets move wrestling mats from the gym balcony to the main floor.

The military drill team is practicing for its Feb. 26 competition in Portage. The meet is a precursor to the regional championship on March 12 at Purdue University-West Lafayette. The winner there will compete in April in the championship in Orlando, Fla. The trip, like all MCJROTC activities, is at no cost to the student; instead, it is

covered by the Marine Corps.

Cadets will conduct middle-school presentations Jan. 19. Efforts were canceled last year due to COVID-19. That, like other COVID factors, had a detrimental effect on enrollment. The Marine Corps requires a school have an enrollment of at least 100 cadets to maintain the program.

"We have some really great kids who make up for our enrollment being less than 100," Master Sgt. Jeff Benak, the Marine instructor, said in a pres release. "A great example of that is that we will be able to support MCHS hosting the boys regional basketball tournament and compete in the MCJROTC Regional Drill Championship at Purdue on the same day."

Benak and Senior Marine Instructor Maj. Tom McGrath are planning for MCHS's week-long summer leadership camp at St. John's Northwestern Military Academy in Delafield, Wis.



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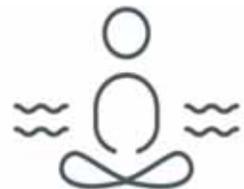
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### Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

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

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# Upcoming Events



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## In the Area:

**Jan. 13** — Duneland Stamp Club, 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Jan. 13** — Author Event: Bill Nelson, 6-7:30 p.m., Meeting Room B @ LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Jan. 14-16** — Centerstage Youth Theatre, "Disney's Frozen Jr.," Michigan City High School's auditorium, 8466 Pahs Road. Times: 7 p.m. Jan. 14-15/ 2 p.m. Jan. 16. Tickets: \$10/adults, \$5/students & children 5 and younger, @ door

**Jan. 15** — The National Park Service/Friends of Indiana Dunes food drive, 9 a.m.-noon, parking lots @ Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter, Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education, 100 N. Lake St., Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Info: [www.nps.gov/indu](http://www.nps.gov/indu), (219) 395-1882.

**Jan. 15** — Harbor Country Hikers, 2 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Area Schools' Nature Study Trails, Lubke Road. Info: [www.harborcountryhikers.com](http://www.harborcountryhikers.com)

**Jan. 17** — **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S BIRTHDAY**

**Jan. 17** — Purdue University Northwest free virtual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration, 8:30-9:30 a.m., PNW's YouTube channel. Info: [www.pnw.edu/mlk-celebration](http://www.pnw.edu/mlk-celebration)

**Jan. 17** — Teen D&D, 5-7 p.m., Meeting Room A @ LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Jan. 17, 24, 31** — Needle Arts Club, 5:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Jan. 18** — Joyful Movement Easy Exercises for All Ages, 8:30 a.m., Luhr Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Free. Pre-registration: [www.laportecountyparks.org](http://www.laportecountyparks.org), (219) 325-8315.

**Jan. 18** — Bingo, 5-6 p.m., Long Beach Community Center, 2501 Oriole Trail. Free. Limited to 15 participants.

**Through March 31** — Local artist Kristy Kutch, 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.

**Tuesdays** — Tai Chi for Health and Relaxation, 3-4 p.m., Long Beach Community Center, 2501 Ori-

ole Trail. Sliding fee paid at time of class

**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/Buffalo).

### In the Region

**Jan. 13** — PechaKucha 20x20 St. Joseph/Benton Harbor Vol. 22, 7-9 p.m. EST, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Tickets: \$5 (\$6.94 after fees). Reservations: [tinyurl.com/2p88hsdx](http://tinyurl.com/2p88hsdx)

**Jan. 19** — Jethro Tull's Martin Barre/Aqualung 50th Anniversary Tour, 7 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$75/general, \$125/reserved. Reservations: [www.acornlive.org](http://www.acornlive.org)

**Through Jan. 15** — Annual Members' Exhibition, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Gallery hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat. Info: [www.chestertonart.org](http://www.chestertonart.org), (219) 926-4711.

**Through Jan. 17** — Krasl Art Center annual Members' Show, "Resiliency Redux," KAC, 707 Lake Blvd, St. Joseph, Mich. Info: (269) 983-0271.

**Through Jan. 20** — "An Eclectic Collection," acrylics by Joyce Dille, 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: [www.pinesvillage.org](http://www.pinesvillage.org), (219) 465-1591.

## 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.

The weekly deadline to submit listings for Upcoming Events is noon Thursday

# Business cards



the **Beacher Business Printers**

911 Franklin Street • Michigan City  
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email: [beacher@thebeacher.com](mailto:beacher@thebeacher.com) • <http://www.thebeacher.com>

**CLASSIFIED****CLASSIFIED RATES - (For First 2 Lines.)**

1-3 ads - \$8 ea. • 4 or more ads - \$6.50 ea. (Additional lines- \$1 ea.)

**PHONE: (219) 879-0088 • Email: [classes@thebeacher.com](mailto:classes@thebeacher.com)****CLASSIFIED ADS MUST BE RECEIVED BY****9 a.m. FRIDAY PRIOR TO THE WEEK OF PUBLICATION****PERSONAL****Urgently Needed:** personal home health care for MS patient.

Waterford area. Feb. 5-15. 7-9 a.m. Pay is \$40 per day.

**Call Kevin at (219) 879-4038****PERSONAL SERVICES****THE LAUNDRY DROP.** A wash-dry-fold service for your busy lifestyle.

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Union Pier, Mich. **Call (269) 231-5469.****BUSINESS SERVICES****8-10-12-15 & 20 yard dumpster rentals****Lakeshore Rolloff and Demolition • (269) 426-3868****THE BOOKWORM, 11576 W. U.S. 30, Suite B, Wanatah**

Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Daily/Closed Thurs. &amp; Sun.

January Special: Art and world history/biography books, 50% off.

**(219) 733-2403 • [www.bookwormwanatah.com](http://www.bookwormwanatah.com)****Lefty's Pro Shop extends New Year's hope  
for a healthy prosperous 2022.**Freeze Buster Special! All golf sets 50% off. Free pair of golf shoes or windbreaker with every in-stock sale. Call 1 (219) 873-0858. Lefty's staffers – Olive, Joanne and Pogo - are here to help you say goodbye to the Big Lie and prepare the Good Lie in the short grass. Spring break is just a wedge away. **Call us at 1 (219) 873-0858.****HOME HEALTH – CAREGIVERS****COMFORT KEEPERS****Providing Comforting Solutions For In-Home Care**

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**Bridget 219-241-9341 or email****[BridgetsQualityCleaning@yahoo.com](mailto:BridgetsQualityCleaning@yahoo.com)****OLD FASHIONED WINDOW CLEANING • (219) 945-9520**

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**Lakefront-Residential-Commercial • Free Estimates****Window Cleaning, Gutter Cleaning, Pressure Washing****Haro's House Cleaning: Daily, Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly,****One Time. Free estimate. Insured. (219) 249-2239,****[harohousecleaning08@gmail.com](mailto:harohousecleaning08@gmail.com)****WONDERFUL CLEANING LADY.** Thorough, honest, reliable. Excellent references, reasonable rates. Bonded/insured. **Call (269) 469-4624.****HANDYMAN-HOME REPAIR-PLUMBING****H & H HOME REPAIR • [skipnewman4444@yahoo.com](mailto:skipnewman4444@yahoo.com)****We specialize in:** • Carpentry • Finished Basements • New Baths • Decks •

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**Bob @ (219) 400-0455. Text for fastest response****B&B Handyman Services****Brandon Beyer • (219) 243-3873****Fully Licensed and Bonded**

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Doors, windows, trim, walls. Specialty applications possible. We leave

houses clean and tidy every day. 40+ yrs. exp. Very reasonable. **We****would be very appreciative to work in your home.****Call me at (219) 393-0529.****LANDSCAPE-Lawns-Clean Up, Etc.****HEALY'S LANDSCAPING****(219) 879-5150 • [dhealy5150@gmail.com](mailto:dhealy5150@gmail.com)**

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Mowing, edging, trimming, lawn care, mulch. Spring & fall cleanup.

License and insured. Call (219) 229-3642

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Miller Pizza By the Beach, 1012 N. Karwick Road, is taking applications for employment. Apply within. No phone calls, please.**

**Oak Woods Manor-Independent Senior Living** is looking for reliable employees for full- and part-time shifts for resident assistant, wait staff and cook, all shifts, weekends and holidays. Flexible schedules, salary range starting at \$10-\$17 depending on experience, shift and position. Must have COVID-19 vaccination and booster. **Please call Chuck or Tina at (219) 362-6600.**

**Dentist to perform services in LaPorte County.** Full-time position. Provides routine and emergency dental services, including diagnosis and treatment plans, general restorative procedures, crown and bridge construction, removable prosthetics, uncomplicated endodontics and minor oral surgery. Initiates and interprets X-ray and lab studies. Administers and prescribes anesthetics and medications. Refers patients for specialty care to other clinics programs or outside agencies as appropriate. Conducts follow-up patient care. Provides dental and oral health education to patients and families. Assists in reviewing clinic productivity, scheduling procedures and establishing guidelines for care and treatment. Teaches and trains patients and staff on illness prevention. Assists with in-service and ongoing training of clinic staff. Dental degree or foreign equivalent, required. Indiana dental license required. **Email resumes and cover letter to Chris Beebe, [cbeebe@healthlincchc.org](mailto:cbeebe@healthlincchc.org) at HealthLinc, Inc., 2401 Valley Drive, Valparaiso, Indiana 46383.**

**The Beacher has an opening for a full-time print salesman effective immediately.** The position entails working with individuals and businesses on print needs ranging from business cards and flyers to brochures, letterheads, copies and other materials. The position also involves interacting with walk-in customers and their print needs. Must have a vehicle.

The salaried position includes benefits. **Stop by The Beacher, 911 Franklin St., with a resume or call (219) 879-0088 if interested.**

**GARAGE SALES, ESTATE SALES, ETC.**

**Notice of Public Sale of Personal Property**

Notice is hereby given that the self-storage units listed below will be sold on a public website by competitive bidding ending Jan. 28, 2022 @10 a.m. at [www.lockerfox.com](http://www.lockerfox.com) for the property at:

**Storage Solutions**  
4901 U.S. 12  
Michigan City, IN 46360  
(219) 872-4247

No. 913 — Eric R Hoppe  
No. 232 — Cadis Acker  
No. 028 — Paul Drescher  
No. 124 — Paul Drescher

Payments must be made with cash only and paid at the facility within 72 hrs. All goods are sold as is and must be removed at the time of payment. Sale is subjected to adjournment.

**WANT TO BUY**

**WANTED:** I buy all types of antiques and collectibles, including toys, advertising, military items and more. **Call Matt at (219) 794-6500.**

**Wanted: Fishing tackle.** Buying all kinds of fishing tackle. Tackle boxes, lures, reels, collectibles, toys, misc. **Call/text (219) 873-6568.**

**REAL ESTATE**

**COMMERCIAL – RENTALS/LEASE/SELL**

I'm **MARIUS KASNIUNAS, a Realtor with Century 21-Affiliated,** licensed in IL and IN. Offices in Long Beach, Michigan City and Orland Park, IL. I'm here to professionally assist you in your residential or commercial real-estate needs

**Call/Text (708) 966-9077.**

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**1BR apt. at the beach,** 3BR home near beach, individual rooms for rent in nice home. Available daily, weekly, monthly. Furnished. Available through May. **Call Barry Tharp at (312) 593-1861.**

**2BR, 1BA unit available for rent at the highly desirable Long Beach Pointe development.** Be the first tenant to enjoy this COMPLETELY RENOVATED unit! This corner GROUND FLOOR unit is as close as you can get to the available street parking. Treat yourself to maintenance-free living so you can enjoy more time at the on-site community pool and walks to the beach.

**Contact Jamie Sule @ (312) 810-8660 for more information.**

**Save the Dunes**

Two Michigan City residents now are serving on the board of Save the Dunes, one of Northwest Indiana's oldest environmental organizations.

Elected to the positions at December's annual membership meeting are:

- **Angie Nelson Deutch** – A certified diversity professional who launched a consulting firm in 2017 focused on improving diversity and inclusion in the region.
- **Nancy Moldenhauer** – She rejoins the board after serving a previous six-year term that concluded in 2018.

Visit [www.Savedunes.org](http://www.Savedunes.org) for more details.

**Support those who advertise in the Beacher!**

**Tell them you saw their Ad!**



**Prayer to the Blessed Virgin**

(Never known to fail.)

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

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

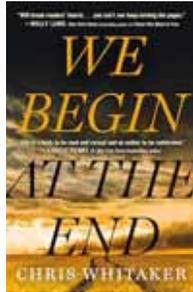


## Off the Book Shelf

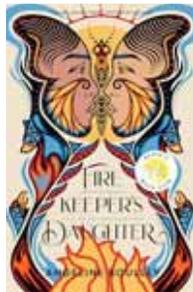
by Sally Carpenter

**Top 10 of 2021** — Just to be clear, I loved all the books I reviewed last year, but here are 10 that, for one reason or another, stand out among all the great books published in 2021. I hope you got to read at least one of them.

**We Begin at the End by Chris Whitaker** — Winner of the Gold Dagger for Best Crime Novel (UK) and Best International Crime Fiction (Australia), this is at the top of the list. She calls herself “the outlaw” Duchess Day Radley, maybe with good reason. No 13-year-old should go through the things she has seen and done. And now, the man who killed her 7-year-old sister years ago is out of prison and headed back to town. But what happens when she learns what she thought she knew is a lie. Hard lessons, but that’s what out-laws have to live with.



**Firekeeper’s Daughter by Angeline Boulley** — Drug overdoses are on the rise within Sugar Island’s Ojibwe in far northern Michigan. Daunis Fontaine, 18, is the narrator of this absorbing tale of her life in the white world (her mother) and Indian world (her father). She is determined to find out from where the drugs killing her friends are coming. The search is more dangerous than she expected. This one definitely ties with Whitaker’s book for the year’s best.



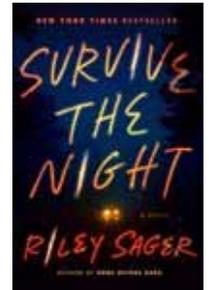
**Who is Maud Dixon? by Alexandra Andrews** — Can something be too good to be true? Florence Darrow is about to find out. This is a psychological story of a woman about to fulfill her wildest dream, but at what price? Just when you think you have it figured out, you don’t.

**The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah** — A best-selling author brings us another powerful story, this time about the Great Depression. Elsa Wolcott will marry, be deserted by her husband and travel from Texas to California to save her family during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. In the end, she will show us the hope and courage of a generation of men and women who refused to give up or give in.

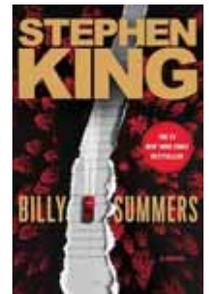
**The Children’s Blizzard by Melanie Benjamin** — This is the most heartbreaking novel I read in 2021. Based on true facts, it revolves around an unusually strong blizzard that hit mid-America in 1889. Two sisters, both teachers in prairie schools — one in Nebraska, the other in the Dakota territory — have class when the snow starts falling. How each one handles the situation will direct the path of the rest of their lives.

**Blacktop Wasteland by S.A. Crosby** — This story definitely takes us to the seedier side of town and asks the question, “Can you outrun your past?” Beau Montage is a “wheelman” for criminals in the day — one of the best, to be sure — but has forsaken that life for one of family and a legit business. A great story of how the past can suck us back in and the question remains — Is its siren song too strong to resist?

**Survive the Night by Riley Sager** — How many times has your mother told you not to take a ride with a stranger? Shy Charlie must leave campus after her roommate is murdered. Josh offers her a ride, she accepts and almost immediately regrets her decision. But what can she do on a deserted highway in the middle of the night? A psychological read that puts a capital T in thriller.

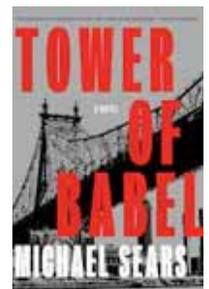


**Billy Summers by Stephen King** — Billy is a killer for hire, but he will only kill those who’ve done really bad things and deserve to die — rationalization at its finest. While waiting for his next mark to show up, Billy has a bad feeling he’s being set up. Before he can figure out what’s going on, he gets involved with a young woman thrown from a van outside his apartment. Game changing? How about life changing? As the climax nears, you can’t help but feel dread and hope at the same time. After a few so-so novels, King hits it out of the ballpark with this one!



**Hour of the Witch by Chris Bohjalian** — It’s not easy being a woman in 1662 Massachusetts colony, especially when Mary Deerfield decides to divorce her abusive husband. How could she even think to do this?! Perhaps she’s a witch! This novel’s characterization and meticulous research into the time and place seal it as one of the best historical fictions of 2021.

**Tower of Babel by Michael Sears** — Queens, N.Y. A place of jumping on the bandwagon and a place of being pushed off. Ted Molloy, once a high-profile lawyer and now a foreclosure profiteer, finds himself looking at a property that could make him a lot of money, until his partner shows up dead the next day. What’s the connection? Mobsters and politicians in each other’s pockets...is there anything new under the sun?



Till next time, happy reading!



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