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# A Second Career

by Kim Nowatzke



Jo Presser is photographed by *The Beacher's* Kim Nowatzke in front of a large quilt she made out of all the T-shirts she obtained from races.

Looking back on the joyous journey of her life, 93-year-old Jo Presser is thankful for each step along the way – some at a faster pace than others.

Gaining a second wind after retiring at 60, this vibrant Rittenhouse Village of Michigan City resident spent the next two decades traveling across the globe making unforgettable memories as an acclaimed avid racewalker.

The holder of five national racewalking titles, Presser competed in 12 marathons (26.2 miles), as well as five races: a 12-hour race, 24-hour race, two 50-mile races and a 50K (31 miles) event.

Presser vividly recalled her first marathon at 61 in Honolulu. She joined a group traveling with renowned local runner-writer Hal Higdon.

“That was the easiest one I’d ever done,” Presser said, explaining she “overtrained” in preparation for the race.

Typical training for Presser would entail walking at least five miles a day, but she would up that to 20 miles while training for a marathon. Leaving from her former Edgewood home on Boyd Circle, Presser would walk to Washington Park beach and back, adding three miles closer to home to complete her 20-mile goal.

Presser actually outwalked some runners in that first race. Because designated racewalk competitions were hard to find, she often would participate as a racewalker in running competitions. And, be-

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## A Second Career

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cause she began her career as a female racewalker at 60, competitors were few and far between. Many times, she would be the only female — racewalking or running — competing in her age category.

Why did she choose walking over running?

“I was a faster walker than a runner,” she explains. And, “...It just made me feel so good. It was a thing that I did every day that made me happy.”

When she first began racewalking, her pace averaged 12 minutes per mile. When theoretically turning in her walking shoes at 80, she was maintaining a 12-13 minute per mile pace.

Born Joan Trees on Oct. 7, 1928, to Barrett and Isabelle Trees, Jo grew up on a small farm in Charlottesville, Ind., 25 miles east of Indianapolis. With one brother, Philip Trees, this self-described “tomboy” enjoyed staying physically active with farm chores and hanging out with the boys. This was long before Title IX (outlawing discrimination against individuals on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities) was passed.

“It was awful,” she said. “I wasn’t active in sports because we weren’t allowed. Girls weren’t supposed to do things like that. They thought that women were fragile and might get hurt — like you would get hurt for life. They said you might not be able to have kids.”

She went on to attend Ball State University with her best friend, Rosella Heifner, whose father, a teacher, died when the girls were in the third grade. Carrying on his legacy, Rosella chose teaching as her major, but Jo almost did not.

“At first, I didn’t want any part of teaching, but when I found out that I didn’t have to teach kids in their seats, I loved every part of it,” she shared with a laugh and contagious smile.

Ball State holds a special place in her heart, too, as she met her husband of 60 years, Richard Presser, there.

“He was in my freshman English class and waited until the last day of class to ask me out,” she said, laughing.

They were married during her sophomore year of college. The two moved to Michigan City in 1950 after finding jobs here. Richard worked for Michigan City Area Schools for 37 years as a math teacher and math coordinator at the administrative level. Jo taught kindergarten at Long Beach School for one year before their first child, Kenneth Douglas, was born. After taking off 10 years to raise him and his younger sister, Jody Sue, who was born three years later, she returned to work as a physical education teacher at a brand new Barker Middle School for 10 years, then as a counselor at Rogers High School, beginning there the same year the school opened in 1971. Jody followed in her parents’ footsteps, teaching special education for MCAS for 42 years.

For Jo’s job at Rogers, she earned her master’s degree in counseling. At first, she found it difficult to locate a nearby program, but eventually reached her goal by attending classes on nights and weekends at The University of Notre Dame.

“I loved Notre Dame,” she said. “I loved going over there. I had good classes.”

It was while at Rogers High School that she and her friend, Jo Novak, a principal’s secretary there, began walking the halls after school. While at Albion College in Albion, Mich., for a fitness week event, they met a woman from a Toledo YMCA who racewalked in the Senior Olympics (a multi-sport event designed for those 50 and older from the United States).

Presser retired from MCAS in 1987 and began what she called her “other life” of racing.



Taken around 1945, Jo is pictured with her brother, Philip Trees, and parents: Isabelle and Barrett Trees.



Soon after, she and Novak talked to Higdon, who was involved in the Dunes Running Club, to find out the possibility of starting a Dunes Walking Club. After getting the go-ahead, the club devoted to walking debuted with 18 members and remained active for seven years.

She and friends attended racewalk clinics in New York and Boulder, Colo., gaining knowledge from experienced and accomplished athletes.

"The sport is so small that you can meet Olympians all the time," she explained.

Presser's first race was a 5K at a national park; she was 61.

"Because of my age, I won the race! I remember saying to Jo (Novak), 'If I'd known I was going to win, I would have shaved my legs,'" Presser recalled, laughing.

Another race sticks in her mind.

At the Walt Disney World Marathon, she completed a half marathon to win a Donald Duck medal. Then, she earned a Mickey Mouse medal after finishing a complete marathon. She aimed to add a Goofy medal to her collection.

"You run a half marathon one day and a whole marathon the next day to get it," Presser explained.



Jo presses on at the 17th Honolulu Marathon on Dec. 10, 1989.

Unfortunately, at 80 she wasn't able to reach her goal when a back cramp forced her to stop at mile marker 22.

But, Presser related, "(About three to four years later) One of my twin grandsons, Jeff, did it and gave me his Goofy medal."

She estimates she participated in 200 races over the next 20 years. Her second career allowed her to travel to faraway lands such as Australia, where she fondly recalls "marching in with our countries just like in

the Olympics" during the World Games. There were races in Holland, Ireland, Bermuda, Finland and Barbados. Within the U.S., she raced in events in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Tampa, Toledo and Indianapolis. A highlight of her racewalking years included carrying the torch for the Pan American Games when it traveled through Long Beach in 1987.

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## Lake Michigan High Water Level has Passed?

January precipitation on Lake Michigan and streams that feed the lake was low, inflow from Lake Superior to Lake Michigan was low and outflow to St. Clair River was high. So Lake Michigan is projected to remain at least 2 feet below the record highs set in 2020.

Winter is the lowest level for Lake Michigan, so the next month or two should start to bring back some beaches. But the water level normally gets 1 foot higher by June so, while the relative level is 2 feet less than the same month in 2020, the water levels will begin to rise from February through June, then go back down. The normal cycle between January low and June high is a difference of 1 foot.

So it may not feel like the high water times have passed until fall.

Most of us who have been near the lake for more than 40 years will tell you the last high water was in 1986-1987. The last low was in the early 2000s. With regular exceptions of a few years, the cycle from high to low and then back to high takes about 40 years. This complete cycle has happened in fewer than 40 years (1987-2020 was 33 years).

The next few years should be times of *reliction* (exposure of sand that was under the water to the air) and *accretion* (sand blowing back onto the beach). If history repeats itself, the beaches will come back over the next two to five years.

I had lunch with a professor from Hope College who studies the Great Lakes. He said their latest hypothesis is that strong storm winds create changes in beach levels, as well as the water level of Lake Michigan. He agrees with me that we are probably on a downward trend for the next 15 years. But the storms?

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## A Second Career Continued from Page 3

She first caught the travel bug in 1963 when the government sent her husband to Mombasa, a coastal city in southeastern Kenya along the Indian Ocean, to teach new math curriculum to the locals. At the time, Kenya had just become an independent country.

"The government only paid for my husband. We decided to borrow the money (so the rest of the family could go, too), and it was the best decision. What a trip! What an opportunity!," Presser exclaimed.

She described it as her first "travel trip." In addition to their time in Africa, which included going on a safari, the Pressers spent three days each in London, Paris, Geneva, Rome and Athens.

"The kids were 10 and 13 – the perfect ages!," she said. "They could carry their own suitcases."

A dog lover, Presser owned an 8-year-old retired racing Greyhound appropriately named Nike. He was the last dog she owned, and after living the last few years of his life with her son, Nike died at 13.

"We always had a dog except when we were in college," Presser said as her thoughts turned to happy memories of a Great Dane, Goldendoodle, cocker spaniel, soft-coated Wheaten Terrier, German shepherd, Scottish terrier and more.

On Sept. 11, 2008, Richard died from double pneumonia at 83; he and Jo had been married for 60 years.



Jo and her husband, Richard, met in a freshman English class at Ball State University and were married 60 years.

"He had never been in the hospital except when he was 12 with appendicitis," Presser said. "Sept. 11 is a sad day for everyone."

Presser moved to Rittenhouse at 92.

"Ever since they built this place, I knew I would live here someday," she said in her matter-of-fact, upbeat way. "I watched it while it was being built and thought, 'Someday I'm going to live there.'"

In addition to Jeff Ward, she has another grandson, Jim Ward, and a granddaughter, Jillian DeWalt. Presser also is the proud great-grandmother to four great-granddaughters.

Besides racewalking, Presser was an avid gardener and volunteered in the soup kitchen at First Unit-



Jo Presser receives one of many medals as a racewalker at the World Master Games in 1994.

ed Methodist Church for 30 years every Thursday. Presser has always enjoyed reading and uses a Kindle for that now. She continues to reap the benefits of her sewing hobby because directly above her bed hangs a large quilt she machine stitched out of all the T-shirts she obtained from races. She still enjoys card games weekly at Michigan City Senior Center – a testimony to years of playing Bridge, Euchre and Pinochle. And, you can catch her still walking with her walker down the halls of Rittenhouse.

Does Presser hold any secrets to a long life? She believes the years committed to racewalking contributed to her youthful physical and mental health.

"I just think that you have to stay active to stay healthy," she said, adding that she was very "careful with everything" when it came to her diet, and "cut out sweets almost entirely."

"I became somewhat of a health nut when it came to my eating."

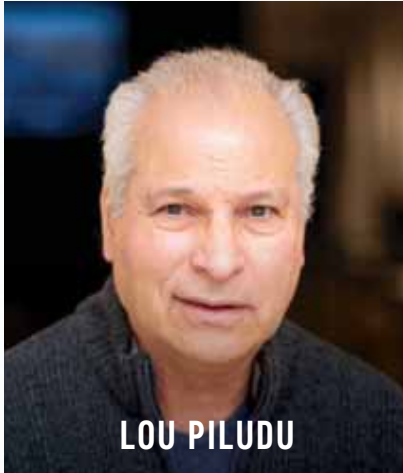
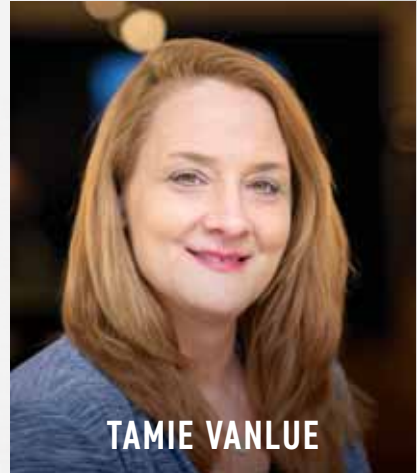
Clearly goal-oriented, Presser decided to climb Mount Baldy on her 75th birthday. She accomplished this every year for the next 10 years until the area was closed to the public in 2013 after a 6-year-old boy fell into a sinkhole, surviving because of a pocket of air left by decaying trees.

Presser summed up her 93 years with, "Life has been good to me. I liked my jobs. I have a good family, and everything worked out."

"Who would have thought I'd ever do anything?" Presser continued from a heart full of humility rather than a lack of self-confidence. "I'm always surprised about everything that has happened to me. Everything has gone better than I thought."



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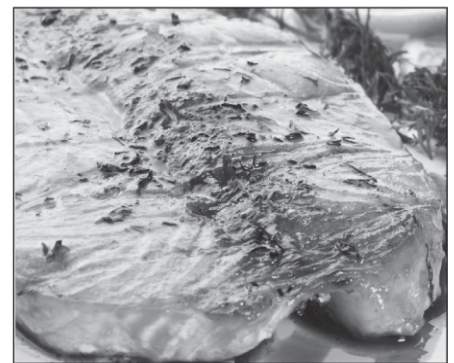
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## LaPorte Little Theatre Club



The cast of "Clue" at LaPorte Little Theatre Club.

LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St., will present "Clue," based on the 1985 comedy murder-mystery, on March 4-6 and 11-13.

Directed by Matt Robinson, the cast includes:

- Wadsworth: Alexander Bonner.
- Col. Mustard: Scott Lenig.
- Miss Scarlet: Katy Gartland.
- Mrs. Peacock: Patty Nocek.
- Mrs. White: Andrea Bertsch.
- Professor Plum: Max Principe.
- Yvette: Makenna Blair.
- Mr. Green: Bryan Redeagle.

Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$17 for adults, \$16 for seniors and \$13 for students.

Visit [www.laportelittletheatreclub.com](http://www.laportelittletheatreclub.com) for reservations or more information.

## Museums for All

The Studebaker National Museum and The History Museum have joined more than 800 museums across the country in the Institute of Museum and Library Services' "Museums for All."

The program encourages people of all backgrounds to visit museums regularly, so it supports those receiving food assistance (SNAP) benefits. Visitors who present their EBT card at the museums, which are adjacent to each other, receive free admission. Hours are (all times Eastern) 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Oliver Mansion tours are included in admission.

The History Museum is located at 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Call (574) 235-9664, Ext. 231, or visit [www.historymuseumSB.org](http://www.historymuseumSB.org) for more details.

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## Black History Month Contest Celebrates Naomi Anderson

The Michigan City Human Rights Commission has partnered with Michigan City Mainstreet Association's Celebrating Naomi Anderson Project Team to present its 2022 Black History Month contest for students.

The entry deadline is Monday, March 14. Rules are available at the Michigan City Human Rights Department website and on the Michigan City Human Rights Commission & Department Facebook page.

"During the past two years, our community has discovered an exceptional unknown daughter of Michigan City, born at a time when the voice of a black woman in America was unheard," Project Team Member Dale Cooper said in a press release.

This year, primary learners (grades K-3) can submit works of art, upper elementary and middle-schoolers (grades 4-8) essays or poetry and high-schoolers (grades 9-12) short videos – all centered on Anderson's life and legacy.



The contest is open to public, private, parochial and home-schooled students within the Michigan City Area Schools district. Prizes of VISA cash cards range from \$25-\$75 for elementary students, with \$50-\$100 awarded to middle- and high-schoolers.

This is the first time the annual contest has centered on an African American born, raised and educated in Michigan City.

Anderson was born in Michigan City in 1843. At the time of her birth, her family was one of two black families in Michigan City, born to free black parents. Despite restrictions based on gender and race, she became an advocate for children, a voice for women of color to vote and a human-rights activist for those

afraid to speak up for themselves.

Contact the Michigan City Human Rights Department at (219) 873-1429, Ext. 2019, or by email at [tgeorge@emichigancity.com](mailto:tgeorge@emichigancity.com) for more details.

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## Indiana Dunes National Park

Indiana Dunes National Park and Indiana Dunes Tourism have partnered to offer Drop-In Volunteering, a no-hassle option for those looking to help.

Opportunities are available nearly every day and include stewardship, restoration and park cleanup.

From 9 a.m.-noon the third Saturday of each month, meet at the Park Connection Office next to the Bailly/Chellberg parking lot. Projects vary by season, but can include working on invasive species, land and building restoration, or preparing for special events. Visit [www.indianadunes.com/volunteer](http://www.indianadunes.com/volunteer) for this month's details.

From 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily, stop by Indiana Dunes Visitor Center or the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education for the "Trash Trekkers" program. Grab a bag at either center and help keep beaches and trails clean.

No formal commitment is necessary; simply drop in at any location. Dress appropriately for the work: wear comfortable outdoor clothing and depending on the season, take sunscreen, bug spray and water. The national park will provide gear and training to anyone interested. Call the Park Connection office at (219) 221-7098 or visit [www.indianadunes.com/volunteer](http://www.indianadunes.com/volunteer) for additional details.



The National Park Service has approved an Indi-

ana Dunes National Park entrance fee that begins March 31.

The new revenue will help fund the Marquette Greenway Bike Trail, visitor services, parking and transportation improvements for a park that has seen attendance increase from 1.7 million visitors to more than 3 million since its 2019 name change.

The fee only affects the national park, not Indiana Dunes State Park. Costs vary depending on the method used to enter:

- The per person/walk-in/bike-in/boat-in rate is \$15 (up to a maximum of \$25 per family).
- Motorcycle pass is \$20.
- One- to Seven-Day Vehicle Pass is \$25.
- Annual Pass is \$45.
- Commercial Fee for a Motor Coach (Bus): up to \$100.

Holders of the following federal land passes will not pay an entrance fee: Annual Pass, Senior Pass, Veterans, Military and Gold Star Family Pass, Fourth Grade Pass, Access Pass (for permanent disability) and Volunteer Pass.

The Entrance Pass (1-7 days) and Annual Pass will be available at: Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education, seasonally at West Beach Entrance Station or online at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). The Annual Pass will be available March 1 and the Entrance Pass on the first day fees are collected: March 31. There are plans to have local vendors such as gas stations, or other retailers near the park sell passes. More information will be available when vendors are confirmed. Call (219) 395-1882 or visit [www.nps.gov/indu](http://www.nps.gov/indu) for more detail.

*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.*

## Indiana Dunes State Park

*The following program will be offered:*

- **Runnin' with the Irish 5K Race from 8:30-11 a.m. Saturday, March 12.**

St. Patrick Catholic School, Chesterton will host the 22nd annual pre-spring event. Participants can walk or run on park roads. Visit [www.runsignup.com/irish5k](http://www.runsignup.com/irish5k) to register. Park roads will be congested before and during the event.

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

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## Community Concert Association

The next LaPorte Community Concert Association program, "The Chipper Experience," is at 7



Chipper Lowell

p.m. Tuesday, March 8, at the Kesling Intermediate School auditorium, 306 E. 18th St., LaPorte.

Award-winning comedian and magician Chipper Lowell has been described as an "artistic cyclone of talent and comedy," according to a press release. He uses magic tricks to get the audience involved, along with a quick and clean wit.

The program is included in the season ticket package. Tickets, also available at the door, are \$20 for adults and \$5 for students through high school. Call (219) 362-5292 for more information.

## Volunteer Expo Vendor Applications

Vendor applications are available through April 15 for Leadership LaPorte County's "Volunteer Expo," which is from 4-7 p.m. Thursday, April 28, at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds Community Building.

Nonprofits seeking volunteers are encouraged to reserve booth space. Early bird reservations cost \$25 before March 15. Afterward, the cost is \$30. Call (219) 325-8223, email [info@leadershiplaportecounty.com](mailto:info@leadershiplaportecounty.com) or visit [www.leadershiplaportecounty.com](http://www.leadershiplaportecounty.com) for an application or more information.

Booth reservations are available to any non-profit. Examples of non-profit needs include board positions, committee members, event helpers or general volunteers.

When contacting Leadership LaPorte County, groups should include specific information about volunteer opportunities, including age restrictions, requirements and task descriptions.

The goal of the event is to raise awareness of local organizations providing services, and connect youth and adults to those organizations needing assistance. Admission is free.

## Home & Lifestyle Expo

Builders Association of LaPorte County will host its Home & Lifestyle Expo on Saturday-Sunday, March 5-6, at Blue Chip Casino Hotel, 777 Blue Chip Drive.

Times are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. Professionals will be present from home building, remodeling, maintenance and gardening. Specific areas include kitchens, baths, floors, doors, heating and cooling, sunrooms, patios, yards, furnishings and crafts.

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## You Will Never Forget “My Best Friend Anne Frank”

by Andrew Tallackson



Anne Frank (Aiko Beemsterboer, left) and Hannah Goslar (Josephine Arendsen) defiantly approach Nazi officers in “My Best Friend Anne Frank.”

We know her story.

The brief life of Anne Frank and her remarkable diary has moved millions on stage, in films and on television. A legacy defined by hope amid the unthinkable.

Now comes a film like “My Best Friend Anne Frank” which tells her story from a different perspective, and it’s like we are meeting her for the first time. The result is an experience that consumes you. You don’t have the words, the ability to speak, after the images fade to black.

The new Netflix film — the first in Dutch cinema to tackle Anne’s story — is based on Alison Leslie Gold’s Memories of Anne Frank: Reflections of a Childhood Friend. The source is Hannah Goslar, who is still alive, at 93, and living in Jerusalem. She was best friends with Anne in Amsterdam. Josephine Arendsen plays Hannah, or Hanneli, as she is called, and Aiko Beemsterboer is Anne. The story alternates between scenes in the exchange camp at Bergen-Belsen and life before Hanneli’s family is arrested by Nazis.

This is an Anne we haven’t seen before. Before her family retreated to the attic that would serve as



### “My Best Friend Anne Frank”

Running time: 103 minutes. Netflix. Rated TV-14

their hideaway. As played by Beemsterboer, this is an Anne like every other girl her age. Bursting with life. A bit boy crazy. Mischievous. Devoted to a fault to Hanneli. Arendsen plays Hanneli as the more introverted of the two. Bright, less open to Anne’s antics, but willing to go along for the ride.

Director Ben Sombogaart stages these early moments between Anne and Hanneli in daylight. Bursting with color. With life. The color starts to drain from the images as Nazis burst into homes, arresting families without warning, tossing their belongings onto the street. Hanneli and Anne talk of fleeing to Switzerland, and when Hanneli arrives at Anne’s apartment one day, the family gone, their belongings left behind, she mourns the loss of their friendship. That her friend has abandoned her.

We, the viewer, know *exactly* where Anne is. Armed with that knowledge, information Hanneli lacks, the dread mounts. We know what awaits.



Sombogaart holds nothing back in his recreation of Bergen-Belsen. He saturates the colors so all that remains are muted grays. Conditions at the exchange camp were somewhat better than what Anne experienced on the other side, but for Hanneli and her sister, they were bleak nonetheless. Scrambling for food. Surrounded by people plagued with disease and infection. Her only communication with Anne is through the hay-filled barb wire fence, where she hears her friend's cries for help.

Here, Arendsen's performance as Hanneli takes on a quiet power. In the film's most pivotal scene, she chooses staying at Bergen-Belsen over fleeing because she doesn't want to abandon Anne. In that moment, the boldness Arendsen gives Hanneli is like watching the transition from child to adult, and under the worst case imaginable. We are moved, even as Hanneli's decision tears at your heart.

Anyone familiar with Anne's story knows that she and her sister, Margot, perished at Bergen-Belsen. Sombogaart dares to go where few filmmakers have tread before him. He gives us a scene, at the end, where Hanneli creates an opening in the fence so she can see Anne one last time. And see Anne, we do. Beautiful hair gone, shaved to the skull in ravaged extremes. Emaciated from starvation. Bruises and sores scattered across her face. The image destroys you. *It absolutely destroys you.* I was unable to speak after "My Best Friend Anne Frank" drew to a close.

We learn through the post-credits scene that Hanneli became a nurse, that she and her sister,



The movie is unflinching in its depiction of life at Bergen-Belsen.

Gabi, had many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, which they considered their retaliation against Hitler. That Anne's diary reached a global audience, for Hanneli, was satisfying.

Yes, "My Best Friend Anne Frank" is painful. But like Anne's diary, it offers a message of hope, a testament to a friendship unbroken by hatred.

You will never forget it.

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



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## It's Not Oscar Material, But "The Deep House" is Pretty Scary

by Andrew Tallackson

"The Deep House" is the type of thriller no one makes anymore, but with a bonkers twist: It's a haunted house movie set underwater.

Crazy, I know. When the French import clicked onto my radar late last year, my initial reaction was, uh...no. Streaming, however, has a way of reinvigorating titles in danger of slipping into obscurity. "The Deep House" developed a cult following through View on Demand, and now, it's streaming for free through Paramount+.

The story introduces its characters as one of the most enduring tropes in horror movies: the clueless idiots. No fatal detour through mutant redneck country, though. Instead, we have social media-savvy New York couple Ben (James Jagger) and Tina (Camille Rowe). They travel Europe seeking reputed haunted houses to live stream through their YouTube channel. She's charming: a likable American who speaks fluent French. He's a pushy Brit, goading Tina into new conquests when she'd prefer a brief respite.

The latest tip sounds like a doozy: a former sanatorium in southwest France located at the bottom of an artificial lake created in 1984 to prevent flooding. They arrive disheartened to discover the lake is an overcrowded tourist trap. A local, Pierre (Éric Savin), says he knows exactly where to find the house.

Rule No. 1 in horror movies: Never, *ever*, trust the creepy local who claims to have your best interests at heart. Then again, there would be no movie if Ben and Tina used their brains. "The Deep House," co-written and directed by Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury, is savvy enough to infuse a few sly touches. Like Ben bragging to Pierre that his underwater drone uses 4K technology, Pierre staring at him like he's just spoken in Swahili.

When Tina and Ben strap on their diving gear and slip beneath the surface, "The Deep House" kicks into high gear. The movie is a low-budget triumph of cinematography (Jacques Ballard) and production design (Hubert Pouille). Old abandoned houses are unsettling by nature because we catch glimpses of their former selves. The life that flourished there. This submerged find has a gated entry, conveniently locked. Rooms with furniture in place. Mundane objects like dishes and appliances on countertops.

All of it practically in mint condition.

When ghostly beings emerge in haunted houses, they typically glide across surfaces, unrestricted by gravity. So, the notion of the house being underwater works to the story's benefit.

The tension in "The Deep House" jacks up as Ben and Tina unearth, room by room, what transpired in the facility before the area was flooded. The im-



Pierre (Éric Savin, right), leads a young couple, Ben (James Jagger) and Tina (Camille Rowe), to the location of a submerged house in "The Deep House."



### "The Deep House"

Running time: 85 minutes. View on Demand, Paramount+. Not Rated.

ages are disturbing without being graphic. Instead, freakish sights leap out at Ben and Tina. In a stroke of genius, the film piles on additional threats. The couple's oxygen levels drop, striking dangerously close to empty. With time running out, you have these nightmarish figures emerging from the inky blackness of the lake, and with Tina completely losing it as she's having trouble breathing. The intensely claustrophobic finale never lets up, achieving a fever pitch of genuine terror.

"The Deep House" is not art. It will not win any Oscars. Considering how fried your nerves are by the end, clearly, it's done something right. Keep watching, by the way, to the very end, once the credits finish. The last scene proves there's always work to be done whenever fresh meat arrives.

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



# And the Nominees Are...

## PICTURE

- ☐ "Belfast"
- ☐ "CODA"
- ☐ "Don't Look Up"
- ☐ "Drive My Car"
- ☐ "Dune"
- ☐ "King Richard"
- ☐ "Licorice Pizza"
- ☐ "Nightmare Alley"
- ☐ "The Power of the Dog"
- ☐ "West Side Story"

## DIRECTOR

- ☐ Paul T. Anderson, "Licorice Pizza"
- ☐ Kenneth Branagh, "Belfast"
- ☐ Jane Campion, "The Power of the Dog"
- ☐ Ryûsuke Hamaguchi, "Drive My Car"
- ☐ Steven Spielberg, "West Side Story"

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## ACTRESS

- ☐ Jessica Chastain, "The Eyes of Tammy Faye"
- ☐ Olivia Colman, "The Lost Daughter"
- ☐ Penélope Cruz, "Parallel Mothers"
- ☐ Nicole Kidman, "Being the Ricardos"
- ☐ Kristen Stewart, "Spencer"

## SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- ☐ Jessie Buckley, "The Lost Daughter"
- ☐ Ariana DeBose, "West Side Story"
- ☐ Judi Dench, "Belfast"
- ☐ Kirsten Dunst, "The Power of the Dog"
- ☐ Aunjanue Ellis, "King Richard"

## ACTOR

- ☐ Javier Bardem, "Being the Ricardos"
- ☐ Benedict Cumberbatch, "The Power of the Dog"
- ☐ Andrew Garfield, "Tick, Tick ... Boom!"
- ☐ Will Smith, "King Richard"
- ☐ Denzel Washington, "The Tragedy of Macbeth"

## SUPPORTING ACTOR

- ☐ Ciarán Hinds, "Belfast"
- ☐ Troy Kotsur, "CODA"
- ☐ Jesse Plemons, "The Power of the Dog"
- ☐ J.K. Simmons, "Being the Ricardos"
- ☐ Kodi Smit-McPhee, "The Power of the Dog"

## Rules for The Beacher's Beat the Editor Contest:

Check one box in each category. Only one entry per person. Entries from *Beacher* employees will not be accepted. Forms can be dropped off at *The Beacher* or submitted by mail to: The Beacher, Attn: Oscar Contest, 911 Franklin St., Michigan City, IN 46360. Only scanned copies will be allowed by email to [drew@thebeacher.com](mailto:drew@thebeacher.com). The deadline is noon Friday, March 18. Editor Andrew Tallackson's picks will appear in the March 24 edition, before the March 27 telecast. Those who beat his picks will be placed into a drawing. First place receives a \$25 Swingbelly's gift certificate and an AMC movie pass. Second place receives an AMC movie pass. If no one beats him, readers with the most correct picks will be placed into the drawing. The winner will be revealed in the April 7 edition.

Name:

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## Fantasy Elements Sabotage “The Sky is Everywhere”

by Andrew Tallackson

Lennie Walker (Grace Kaufman, left) and Joe Fontaine (Jacques Colimon) share a magical moment in “The Sky is Everywhere.”

“The Sky is Everywhere” is one seriously confused movie. It takes a serious topic, teen loss and grief, and treats it as cartoonish flights of fancy, but still wants you to be moved by the end. It fails.

The new Apple TV+ film is based on a 2010 Young Adult novel by Jandy Nelson, who also wrote the screenplay. Having not read her work puts me at a loss. Apple is pushing the movie hard, promoting it to teens as a film that speaks directly to them. The same youthful audience, however, that made “The Fault in Our Stars” a justifiable smash probably will give up on “The Sky is Everywhere” after about 20 minutes. Adults may follow suit.

In the film, Lennie Walker (Grace Kaufman) is an unfortunate magnet for tragedy. Her mother left the family at an early age. Lennie and her sister, Bailey (Havana Rose), moved in with their grandmother (Cherry Jones) and uncle (Jason Segel). Lennie never seemed to mind because Bailey was her everything. They two were inseparable. I use the past tense to refer to Bailey because, as we learn, she collapses during rehearsals for “Romeo & Juliet,” the sudden death caused by heart arrhythmia. Lennie subsequently retreats into music (she plays clarinet in the high school band) and poetry.

And, apparently, an overactive imagination. That, unfortunately, is *not* made clear simply as a

★ 1/2

### “The Sky is Everywhere”

Running time: 103 minutes. Apple TV+. Rated PG-13 for language, sexual references and drug use.

storytelling device. For a good 20 minutes or so, I was like, what the heck is going on with this movie? The director, Josephine Decker, stages these fantasies in exaggerated extremes. Students fainting like dominoes after seeing a cute boy. Chintzy animation in the background. Uncomfortable close-ups. Confused, I hit pause on the movie. The movie’s description states Lennie’s reliance on imagination helps her cope with tragedy. That would have been nice to know within the story itself. Instead, it’s like watching a movie spinning out of control.

In any event, Lennie finds herself thrust into a love triangle – what Young Adult tale *doesn’t* have one? — that includes Bailey’s former boyfriend, Toby (Pico Alexander), who is a brooding bore, and skateboarding band prodigy Joe Fontaine, played by Jacques Colimon, who looks like an extra from “High School Musical.”

Do we care about these three? Not really. The thrust of “The Sky is Everywhere” is something that should speak to teens, specifically a depressed, dev-



astated young woman trying to restore the joy in her life. How music can be a retreat from reality *and* a cathartic form of healing. And how families can reconnect by being open and honest.

There is nothing open and honest moment about “The Sky is Everywhere.” There are no scenes or dialogue that ring with truth. Instead, it has an erratic performance by Kaufman, who shouts at everyone. A love triangle with no chemistry from the actors. And adult performers like Jones and Segel who are reduced to ineffectual dopes.

Even the musical elements collapse. Kaufman certainly didn’t have to know how to play clarinet to be cast in the role. Editing can solve that dilemma, achieving the illusion of plausibility. At the very least, though, make it look like Kaufman knows what she’s doing. There are scenes in “The Sky is Everywhere” where some pretty powerful sounds come from her instrument, but the actress’



Lennie (Grace Kaufman) and Joe (Jacques Colimon) both have a love of music.

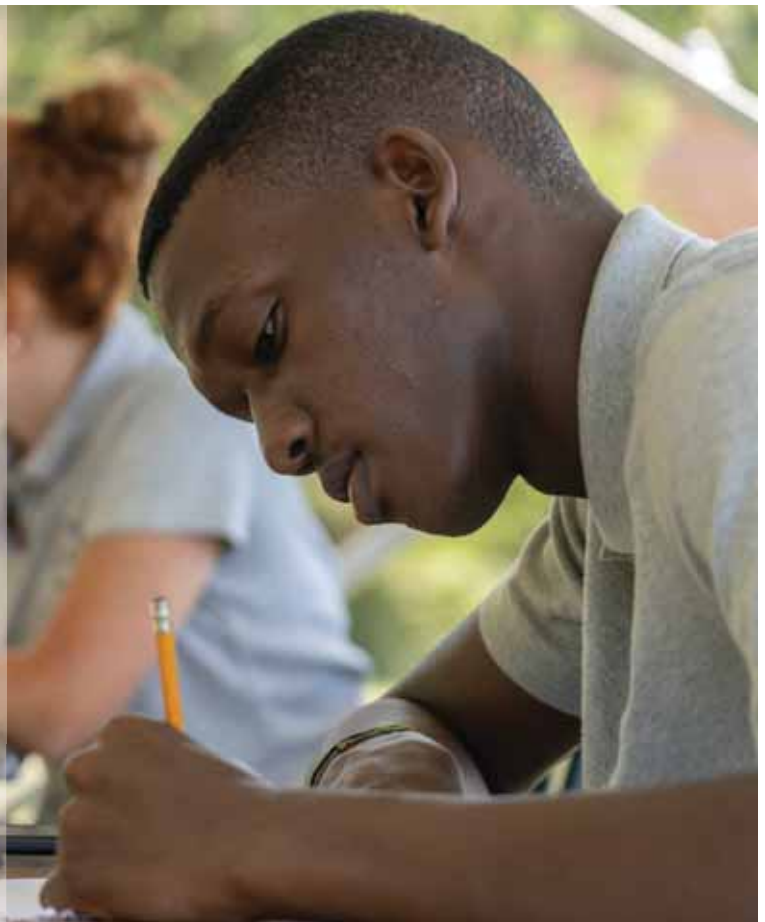
fingers are never moving. She just holds her instrument.

So much for believability. Then again, that is not the movie’s strong suit. It makes one false move after another in hopes that, by the end, everything is hunky-dory. It is not. It’s a mess.

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

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## Harbor Country Hikers

Harbor Country Hikers will celebrate its 100th scheduled hike at 2 p.m. EST Saturday, March 5, at Jens Jensen Preserve in Sawyer, Mich.

Nearly five years old, the group has held planned hikes, usually twice a month, since 2017. It also has led hikes sponsored or co-sponsored by other groups, formed a hiking program for New Buffalo Elementary School students and held “flash hikes” — informal, spontaneous walks, often on weekday evenings.



The Jens Jensen Preserve, maintained by Chikaming Open Lands, is a popular, heavily wooded hiking venue in Sawyer, Mich.

HCH Treasurer Bob Mueller, who co-founded the group with President Pat Fisher, will kick off the March 5 program with a brief history of the group, and a quick biography of the early 20th century landscape architect and preservationist for whom the preserve is named. Fisher then will lead a 1.5 mile hike through the preserve and adjacent Pepperidge Dunes Nature Sanctuary.

Jens Jensen Preserve is a high-quality beech-maple forest with stands of oak, black gum and tulip poplar trees and seasonal wetlands. Together with Pepperidge Dunes, it forms 45 acres of woodlands and is part of an important corridor for migratory birds. The hike is rated moderately physically difficult, and is expected to last about two hours.

Those who attend should dress for the weather, wear a warm cap and sturdy shoes or boots, and take plenty of water. Depending on the weather, there may be wet or icy patches on the trail.

HCH follows CDC and Michigan COVID guidelines, and face masks are optional. The group encourages membership, but everyone is welcome, including children accompanied by an adult. An all-terrain Rollator — a wheeled walker with oversized tires — is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Make a request by email to harborcountryhikers@gmail.com. Visit [www.harborcountryhikers.com](http://www.harborcountryhikers.com) for more details.

## 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 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. March 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:

- March 16 — Hop, Drop and Roll.
- March 30 — Flower Power.

### 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.

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## LCSO in the Spotlight



Mary Steck

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

Mary Steck is in her 33rd year of playing with LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra. She joined in 1984 as a New Prairie High School student. She studied sociology, philosophy and intercultural relations at Hanover College while remaining active in bands and orchestra.

Upon returning to LaPorte, she married Chuck Steck in 1989 and has been immersed in the LaPorte music scene. She also has played for 32 years with LaPorte City Band, with St. Joseph (Mich.) Municipal Band and Elkhart County Symphony Orchestra, as well as other area bands, orchestras and musicals. She has been an avid supporter of music in LaPorte Community Schools Corp., having been a music parent, part of the marching band pit crew for more than 20 years and teaching beginning oboe and bassoon in the middle schools. She has been a private oboe instructor in the LaPorte area since 1993, and has had an active studio with students from many area high schools and middle schools.

Mary and Chuck have two adult sons, Matthew, Indianapolis, and Drew (Mackenzie), Kirkwood, Mo. Mary has been active in her church, Bethany Lutheran, having spent many years in children's ministry and the church choir. A breast cancer survivor, she says she is "living proof" of how love, faith, music, laughter and friendship can uplift a family. She also enjoys, boating, walking, cooking and day trips with Chuck in their convertible.

## Michigan City Public Library

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

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

*The following programs are scheduled:*

- **Needle Arts Club from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Mondays in March.** Membership to the group, formerly known as the Knit Club, is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome.
- **Virtual Dungeons & Dragons from 3-5 p.m. Wednesday, March 9.** Youth ages 12-18 can play through Zoom. New players must sign up prior to receiving a free player's kit at <https://bit.ly/33naKDf>. Advance registration is required. Contact Miss Dana in Youth Services at [dwolf@mclib.org](mailto:dwolf@mclib.org) or (219) 873-3045 for more details.
- **March Madness Book Tournament for Kids & Teens through March 31.** Stop by Youth Services to vote for a favorite book.
- **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 through 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.

□

*Two new services are available:*

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

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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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## Dig the Dunes Makers Market

Dig the Dunes will join forces with local businesses for the first "Makers Market" from noon-6 p.m. Saturday, March 5.

Participants can visit each location in any order. Those who get five stamps on a Makers Market card are entered in a raffle. Get all six and receive a gift at Trail Stop at Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk.

The lineup is:

- Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., Michigan City. Guests can make mixed-media collage notebooks and custom buttons for \$5. Free snacks and coffee will be available, and visitors can tour the new exhibit "LatinXAmerican."
  - Over Yonder! Dunes Gift Shop, 12 E. Dunes Highway, Beverly Shores. Guests will paint beach stones with Deb Lines. The \$10 cost includes all materials.
  - Goblin & The Grocer, 1 W. Dunes Highway, Beverly Shores. Angie Jackson will teach the art of cocktail making. The cost is \$10. Children can hang out in the restaurant and have a snack and kiddie cocktail.
  - Pieces of Jayde, which celebrates its new location at 1587 Calumet Road, Chesterton. Visitors can make a wire-wrapped pendant for \$10.
  - Ash & Aspen, 206 S. Calumet Road, Chesterton. Guests make a wooden gnome for \$10.
  - Dig the Dunes Trail Stop, 1000 Riverwalk Drive, Portage. Trail Stop will be open at noon, but a wine and chocolate tasting is from 3-6 p.m. Show the Makers card and get in for \$15. The regular price is \$20. Guests can make macrame key chains with a Dig the Dunes charm for \$10.
- Visit <https://digthedunes.com> for details.

## Noon Time Talk Series

The Noon Time Talk Series continues with a film at 12:20 p.m. EST Thursday, March 3, at Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart.

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



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## Art Barn School of Art

- **Spring Glass Workshop from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, March 26.** Instructor Mindy Milan will provide an introduction to warm glass or glass fusing. Participants 14 and older will create jewelry, small plates, garden stakes and candle holders. Visit [www.artbarnschool.org](http://www.artbarnschool.org) for details.
- **The Opportunity Enterprises exhibit through March 25, with a reception from 6-8 p.m. Friday, March 11.** Held during National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, the annual exhibit features student work. All purchases benefit the artists, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting Art Barn and OE programming.



*Art Barn School of Art is located at 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Call (219) 462-9009 or visit [www.artbarnschool.org](http://www.artbarnschool.org) for more details.*

## Greek Food/Pastry Sale

The Greek Food and Pastry Drive-up Sale is from noon-6 p.m. EDT Friday-Saturday, April 8-9, at The Annunciation & St. Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church, 18000 Behner Road, New Buffalo, Mich.

Order forms will post on the church Facebook page or at <https://stparaskevifest2020.square.site/>

They also may be obtained by calling the church office at (269) 231-9052. The deadline is March 31.

Friday's offerings will include homemade pastries, pork kabobs and appetizer-sized cheese or spinach pitas. Saturday's offerings will include homemade pastries, gyros, pork kabobs and appetizer-sized cheese or spinach

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## American Red Cross

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

- Purdue University Northwest, 1401 S. U.S. 421. Westville, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday, March 8-9.
- LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. Indiana 2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, March 9.

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.

## KAC Youth Day Camps

Registration is open through March 28 for Krasl Art Center's youth art camps that run from 9 a.m.-noon EDT Monday-Thursday, April 4-7.

Space is limited for the in-person classes taught by local artists at KAC's studios, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Enrolled students receive COVID policy updates beforehand. Masks are required for all participants, and KAC staff and faculty are required to be vaccinated.

The cost is \$45 (\$35 for KAC members), and scholarships are available. Register online at [www.krasl.org/education/youth/camps/](http://www.krasl.org/education/youth/camps/) or by calling (269) 983-0271.

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## In the Area

**March 4** — Slow Stitchers Club (All Ages), 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Meeting Room A @ LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**March 5** — First Saturday Art Class, Long Beach Community Center, Room 13, 2501 Oriole Trail. Cost: \$10. Advanced registration required. Info: [longbeachactivities@gmail.com](mailto:longbeachactivities@gmail.com)

**March 4-6, 11-13** — “Clue,” LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$17/adults, \$16/seniors, \$13/students. Reservations: [www.laportelittletheatreclub.com](http://www.laportelittletheatreclub.com)

**March 5-6** — Builders Association of LaPorte County Home & Lifestyle Expo, Blue Chip Casino Hotel, 777 Blue Chip Drive. Times: March 5/9 a.m.-5 p.m., March 6/9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free admission. Info: (219) 326-0624, [www.balc.org](http://www.balc.org)

**March 7** — Needle Arts Club, 5:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

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

**March 8** — Page Turners Book Club, noon-1 p.m., Meeting Room B @ LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**March 8** — Pajama Time, 6-7 p.m., Coolspring Branch library meeting room, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**March 8** — LaPorte Community Concert Association, “The Chipper Experience,” 7 p.m., Kesling Intermediate School auditorium, 306 E. 18th St., LaPorte. Tickets: \$20/adults, \$5/students through high school. Info: (219) 362-5292.

**March 9** — Virtual Dungeons & Dragons, 3-5 p.m., through Michigan City Public Library. New player registration: <https://bit.ly/33naKDf>. Info: [dwolf@mclib.org](mailto:dwolf@mclib.org), (219) 873-3045.

**Through March 25** — Indiana Historical Society exhibit, “Securing the Vote: Women’s Suffrage in Indiana,” LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

**Through March 31** — Local artist Kristy Kutch, The Legacy Center Gallery @ Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Legacy Cen-



ter hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Thur., 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun.

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

**Saturdays** — Turn Up Dance Fitness with Stacy G., 8:30-9:30 a.m., Long Beach Community Center, 2501 Oriole Trail. Cost: \$5 paid at class.

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

### In the Region

**March 3** — Noon Time Talk Series, 12:20 p.m. EST, Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Admission: \$5, members/free. Info: (574) 293-6660.

**March 4-6** — Ken Ludwig's "The Game's Afoot," Elkhart Civic Theatre @ Bristol (Ind.) Opera House, 210 E. Vistula St. Times (Eastern): March 4&5/7:30 p.m.; March 6/3 p.m. Tickets: \$22, seniors (62+), students/\$20. Reservations: [www.elkhartcivictheatre.org/tix](http://www.elkhartcivictheatre.org/tix), (574) 848-4116.

**March 5** — Harbor Country Hikers, 2 p.m. EST, Jens Jensen Preserve, Sawyer, Mich. Info: [harborcountryhikers@gmail.com](mailto:harborcountryhikers@gmail.com), [www.harborcountryhikers.com](http://www.harborcountryhikers.com)

**March 5** — Dig the Dunes "Makers Market," noon-6 p.m. Info: <https://digthedunes.com>

**March 5** — An Acorn Evening with Terri Hemmert: Hosted by Janet Davies, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. General seating/\$25, reserved seating/\$50. Info: [www.acornlive.org](http://www.acornlive.org)

**Through March 25** — "Finding (Me)aning," Red Cup Café, 115 Broadway, Chesterton. Info: [programs@chestertonart.org](mailto:programs@chestertonart.org)

**Through March 25** — Opportunity Enterprises exhibit, Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Reception: 6-8 p.m. March 11. Info: (219) 462-9009, [www.artbarnschool.org](http://www.artbarnschool.org)

**Through March 26** — "Shadow, Mooring + Undercurrents," Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: (219) 926-4711, [www.chestertonart.org](http://www.chestertonart.org)

**Through May 28** — "University of Notre Dame: The Fabric of a Global University," The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Tickets: \$11/adults, \$9.50/seniors (60+), \$7/youth (6-17), free/members. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat./noon-5 p.m. Sun. Info: (574) 235-9664, [www.historymuseumSB.org](http://www.historymuseumSB.org)

**Vickers Theatre** — *Starts March 4*: Oscar-nominated animated/documentary/live-action shorts. Check website for detail. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: [www.vickerstheatre.com](http://www.vickerstheatre.com), (269) 756-3522.

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

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**873-0858.** A sad note of passing while watching a "M\*A\*S\*H" rerun, I learned of the passing of fellow actor Sally Kellerman. The world will not be the same without Hot Lips Houlihan. Namaste, Lefty.

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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:*

- **Slow Stitchers Club (All Ages) from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday, March 4, in Meeting Room A in the main library.** The monthly fabric crafting session allows participants to take a project, share ideas and learn new skills.
- **Intro to Microsoft Word (Adults 19+) from 10-11:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 8, in Meeting Room B in the main library.** Learn about the program from library staff.
- **Page Turners Book Club from noon-1 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, in Meeting Room B in the main library.** Refreshments will not be served, but guests can take coffee or tea.
- **Pajama Time from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, at the Coolspring Branch meeting room.** The library story time invites children ages 2-5 to wear pajamas during the program.

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

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## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

**The Maid by Nita Prose** (hardcover, \$27 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and audiobook. 286 pages.)

*"I'm a maid, not a gossip, thank you very much. I'm paid to keep my mouth shut and return rooms to a state of perfection. I pride myself on getting the job done and then disappearing without a trace."*

That's Molly Gray speaking. She's a maid at the Regency Grand Hotel — "a 5-star boutique hotel" — with 20+ rooms for rent. Other workers call her Molly Maid, or Molly the Mutant, Roomba the Robot or the Formality Freak...and think that's just hilarious. They make fun of her way of talking — slow and precise. See, Molly doesn't process thoughts and words like most of us. She sees things in black and white, taking words at their absolute meaning. Navigating the complexities of human interaction is a process Molly must face every day.

Mr. Snow, the hotel manager, taught her KISS — "...which isn't what you think. It stands for Keep it Simple, Stupid...He was suggesting that sometimes I overexplain, which I've learned can be annoying to others."

Molly also realizes she's not a very good judge of character and "sees the truth too late."

The pure joy of reading this book is that Molly is our narrator, making us see the world through her eyes — sometimes hilarious, always entertaining.

She was raised by her grandmother, who taught her a lot about the world. Some of it was put into simple words easy to remember, like "zip your lips and use your ears," or "the devil makes work for idle hands," or "the longer you live, the more you learn."

Knowing the world will be hard for Molly to navigate, Gran also reminds her — "People are a mystery that can never be solved." Isn't that the truth?

Molly loves her job at the Regency, but going home to an empty apartment is hard, now that her Gran had passed away. But she has several friends at the hotel who understand her and don't make fun of her: Mr. Preston the doorman, Juan Manuel, a dishwasher, and Rodney Stiles, the bartender and object of Molly's schoolgirl crush. But are they really her friends? Only time will tell.

No one who knows Molly would believe she one day would be charged with the murder of a guest at the Regency. Not even the ones who make fun

of her regularly can see her killing someone. So, when Molly is accused of killing Mr. Black, a guest...well, it is just beyond reality. Here's what happened...

Two of the hotel's special guests are Mr. and Mrs. Black. He's very rich, and she's young, beautiful and his second wife. Her name is Giselle, and she treats Molly with respect, even talking to her and seeing she gets a big tip. But even Molly can spot the bruises she carries, that Mr. Black is not a nice person. In fact, he is not a kind and gentle soul.

There are probably any number of people who would like to see him six feet under.

One morning, heading out on her rounds, Molly spots Giselle running out of her room obviously crying. Molly walks into Black's suite and finds him on the bed — quite dead — a bottle of pills spilled on the floor next to him. Suicide or murder? Molly calls for help...

The police call her in for a "statement." Molly is confident her story will help police find the murderer, not knowing the finger will be pointed at her. After all, to the police — who have a viable suspect in front of them — why look any further? Especially when testimony of some of her "friends" makes her look guilty, and the police don't understand Molly's way of speaking because, in her simple way,

she has no idea she will be charged with murder. Good golly, Miss Molly! What to do?

It's obvious from the start she's incapable of murder — so it's time for her to solve the murder herself. She can do it...can't she?

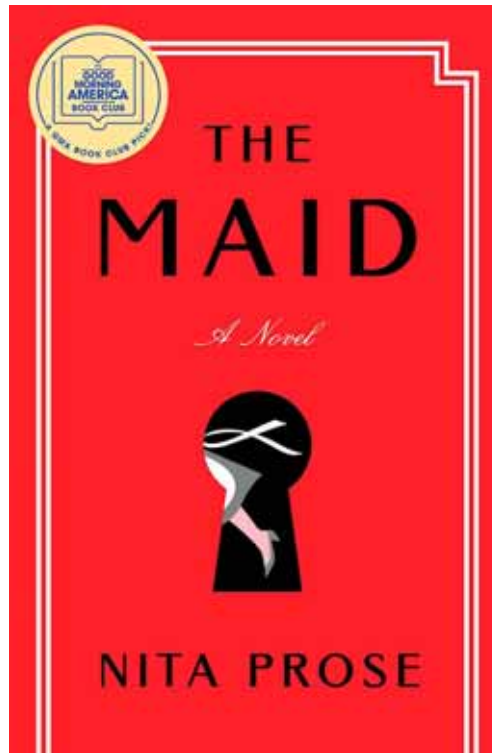
The real predicament here is whether or not Gran's life teachings finally shake something in Molly's mind to make her realize who's really a friend indeed for a friend in need. She now is in charge of her own destiny.

Molly is a real treat. Wouldn't we all be better people with Molly's simple look at life and Gran's life-affirming lessons? The story moves along smoothly, and — spoiler alert! —the butler didn't do it.

The Maid is pure reading joy from beginning to end.

Nita is a longtime editor who lives in Toronto, Canada. Visit her on Twitter and Instagram: @NitaProse or at [nitaprose.com](http://nitaprose.com)

Till next time, happy reading!





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