



Volume 38, Number 11 Thursday, March 24, 2022

The Secrets to Longevity

by Kim Nowatzke

Every weekday morning, when the doors open at LaPorte County Family YMCA, a local legend walks in for his hour-long workout. He's 93-year-old George Blue — a world champion weightlifter.

"George and I see each other here every day at 6 a.m. I open the door for him. He is a ray of sunshine. He comes in every day singing and happy. He comes in saying something positive," YMCA membership specialist Melanie Ledgerwood said.

Program Director Kathy Workman agrees.

"He's a motivator to everyone in the morning," she said. "He's a positive shining light. To see him at that age plugging away is amazing."

Blue's workout may vary a bit each day, but there's no doubt his focus is strength training in the weight room. It's what has sustained him for 60-plus years. He mixes a combination of military lifts, bench presses and curls (but no deadlifting because his "knees are shot"), in addition to training on the weight machines.

"I work for my whole body," he said. "I believe as we age, you should take care of your body. For me, the best way is to do weightlifting."

Blue said fellow YMCA members are awe-

struck in the gym when he picks up a 100-pound dumbbell in his hand and starts to swing it. He's often asked questions and gently offers advice.

"He works hard. I'm surprised at what

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George Blue, 93, exercises with the biceps curl machine with 100 pounds in the weight room at the LaPorte County Family YMCA Michigan City Elston Branch.



George Blue's cake for his 93rd birthday, celebrated by friends at the LaPorte County Family YMCA Michigan City Elston Branch

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he can do. He's been great. He's taught me a lot of things and straightened me out on a few things," friend and fellow senior Don Beese said. Together with his wife, Ann, Beese met Blue at the YMCA while regularly working out.

"I admire his persistence," Ann added. "He's got a good attitude every day."

With a wide smile, Blue relays how some are skeptical when he offers a tip, or they find out about his claim to championship status, but when he provides proof through a photograph, they exclaim, "You ARE for real!"

Born in Boonville, Ind., near Evansville, Blue became a Michigan City resident in 1984. Around age 30 and weighing only 145 pounds, he started his weightlifting journey to bulk up.

"I decided that I wanted to exercise some and build muscle and strength," he said. "Back in those days, weightlifting was the thing.

The more I worked out, the more I watched the scales go up."

Blue remembers a time when powerlifting wasn't as popular and mainstream as it is today.

"For years, weightlifting wasn't recognized in America," he said. "As the years went by, Americans became stronger as weightlifting became more popular. People didn't want to do Olympic lifting and got into powerlifting. When I first started training, it was brute strength power. That began to catch on. It became very popular. I decided that I could do it,

too. Back then, that was all they would do. It was quite a thing."

Olympic weightlifting, he explained, consisted of the clean and jerk, the snatch and the military press (this was technically dropped in 1972), while the bench press, squat and deadlift made up powerlifting.

Powerlifting competitions at first were hard to find; however, Blue eventually began to compete. But, it was the World Association of Benchers and Dead Lifters competition on July 26, 2003 – when Blue was 74 – that earned him his world championship status. Weighing 220 pounds at 5' 11", he deadlifted (loading a bar off the ground to the level of the

hips in a standing position) 480.6 pounds. This was the top lift ever recorded in the 220-pound Master Men 68-74 class.

Later that year on Dec. 10, 2003, Blue shattered his own record by lifting 501.50 pounds. He set another record the following year, on July 17, 2004, weighing in at 242 pounds in the Master Men 75-79 age

bracket by deadlifting 507 pounds. Later, on Nov. 10, 2004, he earned his last record when, weighing in again at 220 pounds, he deadlifted 479.50 pounds in the Master Men 75-79 age bracket.

It wasn't at an official worldwide championship at the time, Blue said, but he deadlifted the most in his early 40s at a tournament in Indianapolis. Weighing 181 pounds at the time, he deadlifted 650 pounds.

"Another guy from Tennessee, Bob Peoples, was 181 pounds, too, and could lift the 650 pounds, too,"



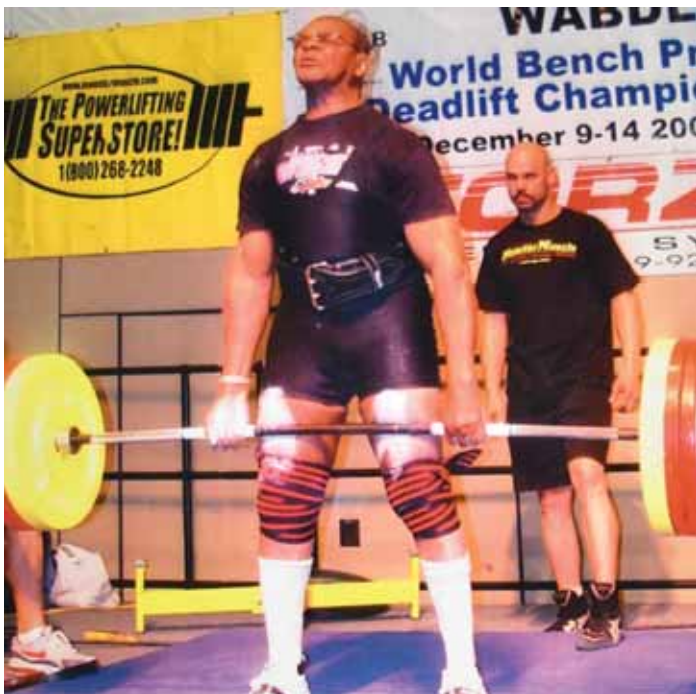
Kathy Workman, the LaPorte County Family YMCA Michigan City Elston Branch program director, takes a moment to celebrate George Blue's 93rd birthday.

he said. "I had a lot of respect for him, and he had a lot of respect for me."

Blue recalled watching two disabled men weightlifting at the second world championship — sights he would never forget. As he watched a double amputee be strapped to the weightlifting bench so he could perform his lift, Blue said, "I learned quite a bit from just that. That took a lot of heart."

Blue also witnessed a blind man competing that day.

"I thought to myself, 'If this blind guy or a man without legs can do this, you can do better than what you have been doing.' It really does something to your mind. You remember that. It gives you a lot of encouragement," he said. "I'm thankful that I did see it. I knew it would follow me to the grave. It taught me to respect people. It was very important to me. I'm glad I was there to see it because I never would have believed it."



George Blue makes a weightlifting world record on Dec. 10, 2003, when at 74 he deadlifted 501.50 pounds in the Master Men age category of 68-74. He was 220 pounds.

Blue shared another unforgettable memory, this one from 2004 and at his last meet.

"I learned something from a girl. That woman spotted 600 pounds. She was 245 pounds and a gym owner," he said. "When you see stuff like that, it gives you encouragement. I've learned a lot from seeing things like that."

Blue said he didn't get involved with any other sports, but "I did fall in love with weightlifting."

In the past, he worked out at the former Northwest Athletic Club in Michigan City. He moved to the LaPorte County YMCA Long Beach Branch for about 10 years, then switched to the Elston Branch when it opened in 2015 because it is closer to home.

Continued on Page 4

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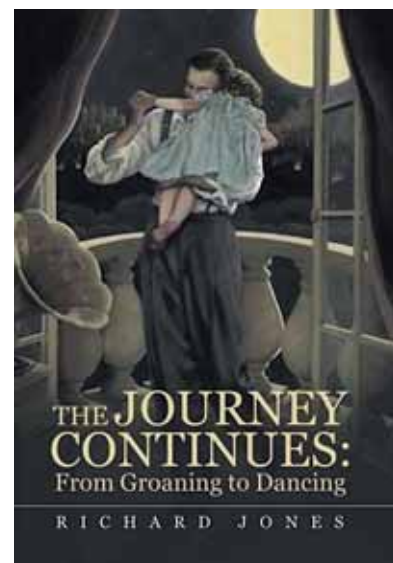
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The Secrets to Longevity Continued from Page 3

Bobbi Petru was the branch's program director at that time and remembers Blue being on hand to help show others how to use the equipment. Now a volunteer instructor, she attended a small birthday celebration for Blue at the YMCA the day after he turned 93 on March 6.

So did Ed Woodland (fondly known as "Poopsie" by his friends), who met Blue about five years ago while out with drinking partners at the former Ryan's Irish Pub in Michigan City. Ed, who is retired,

parts of your body. Today, a lot of people believe they have to exercise, but they don't want to. You can find the time. If you want to play around, don't waste the time. Be serious. I had to work hard to get to where I'm at."

Does Blue plan on quitting his daily trips to the Y anytime soon?

"I want to keep it going as long as I can," he replied.

(Editor's note — Kim Nowatzke took the photos at George's birthday celebration, and of him exercising at the YMCA.)



George Blue (center) celebrated turning 93 on March 6 at the LaPorte County Family YMCA Michigan City Elston Branch with (front row, from left) Melanie Ledgerwood and Lauren White, and (back row, from left) Ed Woodland, Ann Beese, Will McCorkle, Martha Ware, Bobbie Petru and Don Beese.

helps out Blue by driving him to doctor appointments, or to the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions.

"Between mowing the lawn and shoveling snow, it gives me a break," he said, smiling.

They can often be seen out on the town together on weekends, where Blue is somewhat of a social magnet.

"It's like having a puppy with you," he said, laughing. "He likes to cut a rug with the girls."

The Beeses also offered their birthday wishes to their friend, along with others.

"That was beautiful. Thanks everybody for coming. I've never seen anything like it before," Blue told all those present.

What advice for others does this 93-year-old have?

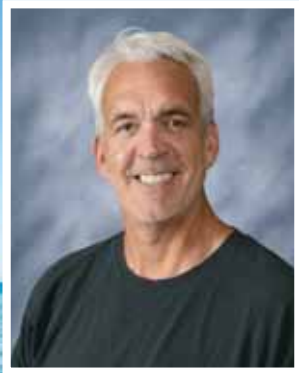
"Get off your butt and find time — I don't care what kind of a job you have. Find some kind of an activity," he said. "I recommend weightlifting and bodybuilding. As far as I'm concerned, that's one of the secrets of longevity. You are training so many



George Blue is photographed by *The Beacher's* Kim Nowatzke outside of the LaPorte County Family YMCA Michigan City Elston Branch, where he works out every weekday morning.

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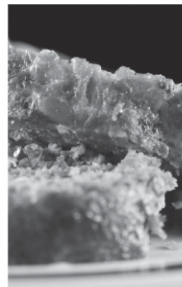


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Friends of Indiana Dunes Native Plant Sale

April 9 is the deadline for submitting pre-sale order form with the Friends' 26th Annual Native Plant Sale, which is from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, April 23, in the Friends of Indiana Dunes office, 1000 W. Oak Hill Road, Porter

More than 90 native plant species will be available, including woodland flowering plants and ferns; dry, medium and wet prairie flowering plants; grasses, shrubs and trees. Also planned are hard-to-find woodlands and ferns. Plant varieties come in pots and are native to Northwest Indiana, Northeast Illinois and Southwest Michigan.

Pre-sale ordering is recommended because a limited quantity of each species is ordered from the supplier, Possibility Place Nursery. Every year, several varieties will have completely sold out to pre-sale customers. Orders are filled in the sequence in which they are received. Forms are available to print at www.dunefriends.org.



Friends' volunteers Kathy and Peter Wilder, Porter, fill pre-sale orders.

org. A link is available on the Friends Facebook page. Copies also are available at the Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center and Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.

Open shopping of all plant material is available the day of the sale. Gardening consultants can answer questions about native plants and specific habitats. Take photos with proposed native garden sites. Free leaflets on planting, and the many benefits of going native, will be available. All profits support the Friends of Indiana Dunes.

The office is near Chellberg Farm, with parking immediately to the north at the National Park's headquarters complex. Admission is free.

Contact Chair Angel Gochee-Goins at (219) 707-3617 or email angel@dunefriends.org for additional information.

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LOK Young Artists Expo

Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., and the Lindsey O'Brien Kesling Wishing Tree Foundation seek artists ages 7-18 to participate in the ninth annual LOK Young Artists Expo.

Quality artwork of any style and media is welcome. Submissions do not have to be framed nor mounted; LCA will do that for the artists.

All artists must schedule a portfolio review before submitting work with LCA Education Director Nelsy Marciano. The informal review can be in person or online. All reviews must be scheduled by Fri-

day, May 6, by contacting Marciano at nmarcano@lubeznikcenter.org or (219) 874-4900.

The Young Artists Expo will be on display in the NIPSCO Education Studios on May 27-July 8. An opening celebration is from 5-8 p.m. Friday, June 4.

The event is a collaboration between LCA and the foundation. The latter has a dual mission: carbon monoxide education and supporting young people in achieving their highest potential.

Visit www.LubeznikCenter.org for more details.

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Harbor Country Singers



Audience members sing along with Harbor Country Singers at a previous library program.

Harbor Country Singers will lead a sing-along featuring hits of the 1960s-1970s at 6:30 p.m. EDT Tuesday, March 29, at New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

The repertoire will include songs like "King of the Road," "Me and Bobby McGee," "Sounds of Silence" and "Henry VIII." Ron Spears, a guitar instructor from The School of American Music, will provide accompaniment. HCS will provide music and lyrics, while the Friends of the New Buffalo Library, the program sponsor, will provide snacks and drinks during intermission.

A program through The School of American Music, HCS is supported by a Pokagon Fund grant. It leads sing-alongs year-round. Admission is free, and face masks are requested.




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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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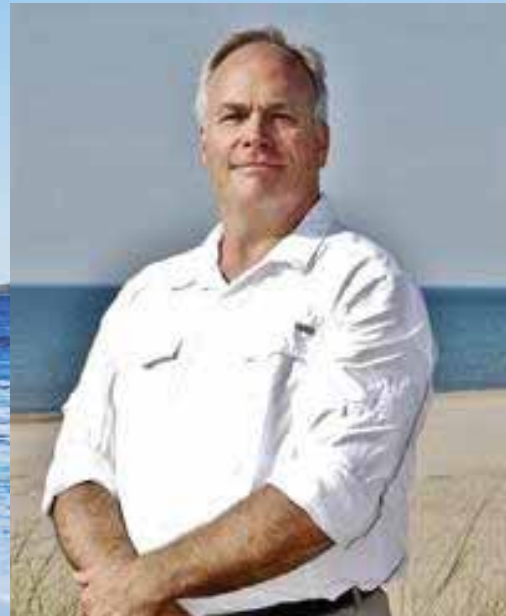
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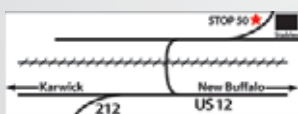
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Innovate WithIN Region 6 Finals

A Michigan City High School student is a finalist in the Innovate WithIN Region 6 Finals, which Purdue University Northwest and the Society of Innovators at PNW will host from 1:30-5 p.m. Monday, April 18, in Alumni Hall at the Hammond campus.

Innovate WithIN is a pitch competition for aspiring high school innovators and entrepreneurs. Student contestants have an opportunity to win \$25,000 in funding, tuition and other prizes.



Eleven teams were selected from more than 400 applicants to compete live in the Northwest Indiana Region 6 competition for a chance to win \$1,000 and participation in the state finals. That includes "SimaraJae Creations" by Simara Jenkins of MCHS.

PNW is offering additional incentives to participants and winners of Innovate WithIN who enroll at the university:

- A one-year (non-renewable) full tuition scholarship to first-place winners (at the NWI regional competition), once the winner is enrolled as a full-time student.
- A one-year full tuition and room and board scholarship to first-place winners at the state competition, once the winner is enrolled as a full-time student.
- A \$250 book scholarship to any IWI participant who registers as a full-time student at PNW.
- Students whose teams place (first, second or third) at the regional and/or state competition can intern with the Society of Innovators or the NWI Small Business Development Center, if they enroll as a degree-seeking student at PNW.

Visit pnw.edu/innovate-within or email admissions@pnw.edu for more details.

Book Signing

Rick Jones, of Trail Creek, will hold a book signing for The Journey Continues: From Groaning to Dancing from 1-4 p.m. Saturday, March 26, at The Pax Center, 605 Washington St., LaPorte.

Hard covers and soft covers will be available. Books also are available on www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com



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Michigan City Public Library

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

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

The following programs are scheduled:

- **Angels Among Us at 2 p.m. Thursday, March 24.** Ange Benz, who leads the discussion, can be contacted at (219) 874-3754.
- **Author William Hazelgrove, One Hundred and Sixty Minutes: The Race to Save the RMS Titanic, at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 26.** Hazelgrove's latest offers a different spin on the ship's fateful tragedy.
- **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.
- **Great Decisions at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 28.** The foreign-policy discussion program returns for its 24th season. The discussion is Myanmar and ASEAN. Reading material is available at the circulation desk.
- **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/. 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.

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

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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

(Never known to fail.)

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

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

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“The Adam Project” Has Big Laughs, Big Heart

by Andrew Tallackson



Adam Reed (Ryan Reynolds, right) encounters his 12-year-old self (Walker Scobell) after traveling back in time in “The Adam Project.”

“The Adam Project” is so punch-drunk on pop culture, it frequently recreated the thrill of going to the movies back when I was a teen. That was the mid-’80s, when Spielberg, Lucas and Zemeckis were cranking out movies everyone had to see opening weekend. The kind worth standing in line for because they looked cool. Stories involving space or time travel.

The director of “The Adam Project,” Shawn Levy, knows a thing or two about nostalgia. He’s a driving force behind Netflix’s “Stranger Things,” a love letter to everything Stephen King and Steven Spielberg. And, having scored a hit with last summer’s “Free Guy,” he knows how to control a PG-13 Ryan Reynolds.

“The Adam Project,” which just debuted on Netflix, does not have the emotional pull of a truly great Spielberg movie, but it does capture the feel of what experiencing his early movies was like.

Credited no less to four writers, the movie is what Hollywood calls “high concept,” meaning it’s easy to describe, or sell, to the public. Like, for instance, “Snakes on a Plane.” Four words, you know what you’re getting.

“The Adam Project” is “Back to the Future” with Ryan Reynolds. He plays fighter pilot Adam Reed who, in 2050, travels back in time to save the future. Time travel has ruined the future, and he needs to

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“The Adam Project”

Running time: 106 minutes. Netflix. Rated PG-13 for violence/action, language and suggestive references.

return to a pivotal moment in 2018. Somehow, he’s landed four years earlier, where he crosses paths with his 12-year-old self, played by Walker Scobell, who does a good job aping Reynolds’ trademark snark. The 12-year-old Adam hasn’t recovered from the death of his father (Mark Ruffalo), taking out his aggression on his workaholic mother (Ruffalo’s “13 Going on 30” costar Jennifer Garner).

So, we have the classic Spielberg child: a symbolically lost and abandoned boy. When the young Adam steps deep into his forested backyard, investigating strange sounds, Levy intentionally films the scene like the opening passages of “E.T.,” complete with glowing red lights amid the brush.

The two Adams connect, right as other key players enter the fold. Like the adult Adam’s missing, time-traveling wife. She’s played by Zoe Saldana (“Avatar,” “Star Trek”), who makes a classic Zoe Saldana entrance, kicking as much ass as possible. We also get the villain, Maya, the former creative partner of Adam’s father. She’s played by Catherine Keener, an appropriate choice since the actress has

not voluntarily smiled in a movie since 2005's "The 40-Year-Old Virgin."

As a director, Levy does not get much credit because his movies ("Real Steel," the "Night at the Museum" trilogy) make tons of dough. There is something to be said about a guy who knows how to make you smile. The way Maya's team folds in and out of the action is a badass triumph of editing and effects. And amid all the gadgetry, Levy stages a forest chase akin to the airborne bike sequence in "Return of the Jedi," a weapon that resembles Darth Maul's double-sided lightsaber in "The Phantom Menace," a fighter jet pursuit like "Independence Day," even a sly nod to Reynolds' own "Deadpool."

I maintain the best Ryan Reynolds is an R-rated Ryan Reynolds because it unleashes the full comic beast within. But with this film and "Free Guy," Levy is a good fit for Reynolds because the two find humor and heart amid the spectacle. All the actors, in fact, have the right touch: light, silly and big-hearted.

Strangely enough, I wasn't moved by the big "Field of Dreams" finish. That Costner picture is one of my all-time favorites – heck, I've been to Dyersville, Iowa, to see the field itself – but as a film geek, I was more aware of what Levy and his actors were trying to recreate than being touched by it.

I was affected by Saldana, though, by what she brings to the love story. She gives her scenes with



Zoe Saldana is in full kick-ass mode as Adam's time-traveling wife.

Reynolds, and her epic confrontation with Maya, everything she's got. She, I suspect, would have been right at home in an '80s Spielberg picture.

Spielberg, himself, likely will smile at "The Adam Project." The movie is one big wink to his early days, and our fondness for the '80s. And it works.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com




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And the Oscar Goes to...

by Andrew Tallackson

Academy voters, please prove me wrong.
Please. I mean it.

Astound us with upsets that not only discredit my top two predictions, but also make *Beacher* readers chuckle as to how off-base those guesses were.

You see, the same nominees have stomped through awards season racking up trophies. And while that's good news in the acting categories, it is disconcerting in terms of Best Picture and Director.

More on that later.

A lot of good films this year. Strong performances. That means this year's Academy Awards, which airs Sunday, March 27, on ABC, may spread the love around, with no one film delivering a clean sweep. It's been a while since we had one of those: a "Titanic" or "Lord of the Rings" that rallied everyone behind it.

A big thanks to Swingbelly's as the new sponsor of our "Beat the Editor" contest. The first place winner receives a \$25 Swingbelly's gift certificate and a \$25 AMC gift card. Second place receives a \$25 AMC gift card. Winners will be announced in the April 7 edition. Thanks, too, to all our faithful readers who submitted ballots this year.

So, let's get to it, my predictions:

Best Picture

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

So many incredible films here. The intimate family sagas of "Belfast," "CODA" and "King Richard." An invigorating new vision of "West Side Story." The deeply moving "Drive My Car."

For some reason, though, critics have been frothing at the mouth over "The Power of the Dog" since it launched on Netflix. Maybe I need to see it again. It's intriguing, pretty...and patience-testing slow. That "1883" star Sam Elliott stirred the pot, bashing it as a "piece of s---" only seems to have rallied the troops behind it. So, look to "The Power of the Dog" to grab the evening's top prize.

Best Director

The nominees: Paul Thomas Anderson ("Licorice Pizza"); Kenneth Branagh ("Belfast"); Jane Campion ("The Power of the Dog"); Ryûsuke Hamaguchi ("Drive My Car"); Steven Spielberg ("West Side Story").

There was major moviemaking in "West Side Story," a sure sign that Spielberg, at 75, is showing no signs of slowing down. Branagh's resume of Hollywood blockbusters helped place a visually arresting spin on familiar territory. Hamaguchi found a



"The Power of the Dog" appears to have a lock on Best Picture and Director.

sneaky way to weave "Drive My Car" into your heart.

Doesn't matter...because the Oscars have "The Power of the Dog" on the brain. **Campion** is one for the record books: the only woman to be nominated twice in this category. She's racked up trophy after trophy for this film. And yes, "The Power of the Dog" contains potent images. The Academy will not hesitate to crown her a winner.

Best Actor

The nominees: 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").

A three-horse race between Garfield, Smith and Washington. I'd be content if any of these three won. Garfield took home a Golden Globe, and Washington has late-in-the-game love...but this is **Smith's**

night. All you have to do is see "King Richard" to know that. The performance is ferocious. Smith has paid his dues. All roads have led to this.

Best Actress

The nominees: Jessica Chastain ("The Eyes of Tammy Faye"); Olivia Colman ("The Lost Daughter"); Penélope Cruz ("Parallel Mothers"); Nicole Kidman ("Being the Ricardos"); Kristen Stewart ("Spencer").

Back when "Spencer" was released, Stewart was the frontrunner. In many ways, she deserves it. None of the hair-tugging dopiness from her "Twilight" days. You forgot you were watching a performance. But the movie, itself, met with a lukewarm reaction. The nomination is seen more as validation of Stewart's talent. **Chastain**, however, just racked up a SAG award for playing Tammy Faye Bakker. The movie, itself, is *eh*. All surface, no depth. But



Expect Ariana DeBose to win for Best Supporting Actress.

Chastain is phenomenal, embodying Bakker not as camp, but as the genuine article. Even a playful, girlish giggle rings with truth. Like Smith, Chastain has paid her dues. It's time for a win.

Best Supporting Actor

The nominees: 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").

Oscar voters love an underdog, and there are plenty here, especially Smit-McPhee, whose performance has a few tricks up its sleeves. But **Kotsur** won a SAG award, and his win would be an Oscar milestone for a deaf male actor ("CODA" costar Marlee Matlin won for 1986's "Children of a Lesser God"). A win, by no means, is a patronizing gesture. There was nothing sentimental about Kotsur's performance. He was filled with joy, anger, resentment: a full range of emotions. If he loses, it would mark the first major upset of the night.

Best Supporting Actress

The nominees: Jessie Buckley ("The Lost Daughter"); Ariana DeBose ("West Side Story"); Judi Dench ("Belfast"); Kirsten Dunst ("The Power of the Dog"); Aunjanue Ellis ("King Richard").

No contest: **DeBose** has won virtually every prize. So much joy to her performance. That Rita Moreno won in the same category, for playing the same character, in the same movie...is not lost on Oscar voters. Thing is, Ellis should not be in this category. The performance, every bit as memorable as Smith's, belongs in the Best Actress category. She rose from the neglected ranks of superb black actresses to deliver a career best. She won't win, but let's hope the nomination is the entry point to meatier roles.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

Pixar Reinvents the Coming-of-Age Tale With “Turning Red”

by Andrew Tallackson



Meilin “Mei” Lee (voiced by Rosalie Chiang, right) fears how her mother (voiced by Sandra Oh) will react to her new appearance in “Turning Red.”

In “Turning Red,” Pixar has recovered its mojo with a lively, risky tale whose message will click more with adults and teens than the little ones.

Critics, and audiences, tend to place every Pixar movie on a pedestal, as if the computer-animation giant can do no wrong. For me, though, the last three pictures (“Luca,” “Soul,” “Onward”) were tepid at best. Gorgeous – would we have it any other way? — but showing signs of fatigue. We know a Pixar film will look great, but the stories now tread where other animators ventured before them.

“Turning Red,” on the other hand, pushes boundaries. A sexist undercurrent plagues reviews that dismiss the fantasy elements as cutesy metaphors for a girl getting her period. That cave man mentality needs to be retired. There is more going on here – much more – than crudely simplistic analysis.

Director Domee Shi, a Pixar veteran who helped concoct the story and script, is an invigorating adrenaline rush of a storyteller. In introducing 13-year-old Chinese-Canadian Meilin “Mei” Lee (voiced by Rosalie Chiang), the look of the film replicates the character’s exuberant personality. Rapid editing, eye-popping colors, boisterous music.

Mei loves life. Her friends. Boys. Especially her family. Her parents preside over the family temple

★ ★ ★ ★

“Turning Red”

Running time: 100 minutes. Disney+. Rated PG for thematic material, suggestive content and language

to their ancestor, Sun Yee, opening it up to the public for tours.

How refreshing, to see a close-knit family like the Lees. Mei is on the cusp of young adulthood. The critical turning point arrives when Mei goes nuts over tickets for the boy band concert 4*Town. It’s 2002, by the way, right at the height of pop groups like Backstreet Boys and NSYNC.

Mei wakes up the next morning, shocked and terrified to discover she’s transformed into a giant red panda. And when her father remarks he’s surprised her Panda arrived sooner than they expected, Mei flips out. Her parents knew about this, but never warned her?

Mei’s panda transformations arrive whenever she gets emotional. The fact that the panda is red, that Mei’s parents lament her “getting it” so soon – you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to catch the metaphor here.

Mei’s mother, Ming (voiced by Sandra Oh), is

a classic helicopter parent. Following her daughter, embarrassing her in front of friends...and enemies. For example, convinced her daughter has begun menstruating, she waves feminine hygiene products at her...and for everyone at school to see.

"Turning Red," however, uses Mei's panda not for cheap laughs. Instead, what the film captures is that precise moment when a daughter crosses the threshold into womanhood. When a mother no longer is the center of her daughter's universe. Where a mother can feel her daughter slipping away.

Mei not only embraces her panda, but also exploits it, becoming popular at school and, in the process, raising \$800 to buy 4*Town tickets for her and her friends. The unexpected treat of "Turning Red," by the way, are the three 4*Town songs written by Billie Eilish and her insanely talented brother, Finneas O'Connell. The songs so perfectly ape Boy Band anthems, they very well could have been performed by the likes of Back-



The movie's boy band, 4*Town, is a dead-on spoof of groups like Backstreet Boys and NSYNC.

street Boys or 98 degrees.

By the end, "Turning Red" is not about a girl and her period, as tasteless reviews dub it. More, it is a sweet generational tale where a teenage girl carves out an identity for herself while discovering she has more in common with her mother than she believes.

This could have been a bold misfire, but through Domee Shi and crew, it is Pixar perfection.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

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Electric Car Exhibit



"WIRED: The Rise (and Fall) of Electric Cars" runs through Oct. 2 at The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St., South Bend. More than a century of electric automobiles are on display, including a 1901 Ryker Torpedo race car, a 1992 GM EV1 Impact Electric and examples of Studebaker passenger and commercial electric vehicles. 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 \$6 for youth ages 6-18. Call (574) 235-9714 or toll free at (888) 391-5600 for more information, or visit www.studebakermuseum.org

Noon Time Talk Series

The Noon Time Talk Series continues with a film at 12:20 p.m. EDT Thursday, March 24, 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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A Notice to Our Readers

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

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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 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 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.

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 30 — Flower Power.

DIY Campground Grandma

Meet Roxy Wiley, the author of "DIY Campground Grandma," from 9-10 a.m. Wednesday, April 6, at Luhr County Park.

Learn tips to create and launch themes, surprises, crafts and photo tips.

Birds, Frogs and Bugs Oh My

Hunt for birds, frogs and bugs, and learn their sounds, from 4-5 p.m. Tuesday, April 12, at Luhr County Park.

Binoculars will be provided. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call to reserve a spot.

Earth Day Celebration

The event, which features Ranger Laura and other environmental booths, is from noon-3 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at Michigan Public City Library, 100 E. Fourth St.

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 for sample programs. Email natureniki@csinet.net or call (219) 324-5855 for details.

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Indiana Dunes National Park

- **Drop-In Volunteer Program from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily until March 31.** Trash Trekkers helps keep trails and beaches clean as part of the drop-in program, a no-hassle volunteering option. Visitors can receive trash bags at the Visitor Center front desk or Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education. Visit tinyurl.com/2p83798v for details.
- **Bailly/Chellberg History Hike from 1-3 p.m. Saturdays in March.** Explore the grounds of both historic homes, and learn about early settlers and farmers who came to the region in the 1800s. Park at the Bailly/Chellberg parking lot off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter.
- **Miller Woods Hike from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Sundays in March at Paul H. Douglas Center.** The ranger-led stroll explores a rare black oak savanna, and offers views of Lake Michigan and Chicago.
- **Trout Trek from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, March 27, at Heron Rookery, 1336 County Road 600 East, Michigan City.** Explore the Little Calumet River flood plain with a ranger, and look for trout species in the east arm of the river. Meet in the east parking lot. Prepare for muddy conditions.



The National Park Service has extended the Public Comment Period on the “Marquette Greenway

Trail – Salt Creek Connection” environmental assessment through Sunday, March 27.

Comments must be submitted at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/indu>

The National Park Service proposes to grant a right-of-way easement to the City of Portage, Department of Parks and Recreation, to construct a trail through IDNP in Porter County. This section of the trail will connect the Portage Marquette Greenway Trail to the Burns Harbor Marquette Greenway, which was recently funded and is under construction. The Salt Creek Connection will become part of the overall Marquette Greenway Trail: a three-state trail initiative to build a 60-mile-long trail from Chicago to New Buffalo, Mich. The route will allow several access points to Lake Michigan and connect two noncontiguous sections of IDNP.

The Action Alternative will allow Portage to construct an Americans with Disability Act-compliant, 10-foot-wide asphalt trail with 2 feet wide earthen shoulders. Once completed, Portage will maintain the trail, including vegetation control, trash and snow removal, and maintenance of the trail surface.

The Environmental Assessment evaluates a No Action Alternative and an Action Alternative. No Action describes the current condition if the city does not construct the trail through the park. Action involves granting the easement for the city to construct the trail segment. The assessment complies with the National Environmental Policy Act.



The National Park Service plans eight prescribed fires this spring at IDNP.

Approximately 944 acres will be burned through long-term restoration and hazard fuel reduction efforts. Clear management goals and objectives are established for each site. Before burning, set conditions must exist, including ideal wind speed and direction and relative humidity. Weather conditions are monitored to ensure the fire is completed safely.

Near the center of the park, a 547-acre fire is planned just south and east of Dune Acres. The Howes Prairie/Lupine Lane prescribed fire is one of the oldest at the national park. Managers conducted the first one there in 1986.

In Porter, the west half of Mnoke Prairie will be burned. The 56-acre parcel is at the extreme west end of Beam Street.

Near Ogden Dunes and Portage, the park will burn 150 acres in and around Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk. On the west and south side of Ogden Dunes, parallel to U.S. 12, 95 acres are targeted. Inside of West Beach, two parcels will be burned. The first, along the south side of the entry road, and on the north side of Long Lake, is approximately 31 acres. An additional 11-acre piece along the boundary line on the east of side of West Beach will help

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reduce the threat of wildfire to Ogden Dunes.

An online map of the planned areas can be found at <https://bit.ly/INDUSpring2022Fires>



The National Park Service has approved an IDNP 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. The Annual Pass is available now 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 for more details.

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

Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs will be offered:

- **Naturalist Station from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, March 26.** Meet a naturalist outside the Nature Center to see native reptiles and amphibians.
- **Beach Mysteries Table from noon-2 p.m. Saturday, March 26.** Stop by the Nature Center to watch a naturalist explore items that wash up on beaches.
- **Spring Saunter at 10 a.m. Sunday, March 27.** A naturalist picks a route where signs of spring are visible.

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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Call for Artists

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

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

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

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

Basic Boating Course

Michigan City Sail and Power Squadron will present its Basic Boating Course from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesdays, April 5-May 10, at B&E Marine, 31 Lake Shore Drive.

Registration is at 6 p.m. April 5. The cost of the text and materials is \$35, with families welcome. The program meets the state-specific and National Association of State Boating Law Administrators requirements for certification. A Marine Electronics Course will be presented later.

Course descriptions and information can be found on the Facebook page for Michigan City Power Squadron. Contact Larry Fleck at flecklj@gmail.com for more details.

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TEAM STANDING	WON	LOST
1. Lady Strikers	19	9
2. Gutter Busters	16	12
3. Pin Ball Wizards	15	13
3. Dolls With Balls	15	13
HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES	SCORE	
1. Kathy Osborne	180	
2. Dottie Brinckman	178	
3. Lisa Albers	171	
4. Carolyn Wiggins	167	
5. Pat Collado	149	
SPLITS		
Nancy Klausner	2-7	
Susie Lutz	5-7, 5-6-10	
STRIKES		
Dottie Brinkman	3	



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

Youth Art Month 2022

Elkhart's Midwest Museum of American Art will present the 42nd "Youth Art Month 2022," its annual exhibit of work from four area high schools, through Sunday, April 10.

The event is held in conjunction with National Youth Art Month. This year, 128 students were selected to exhibit 168 works in all media. The schools are Concord High School, Elkhart Area Career Center, Elkhart High School and Northridge High School. A \$500 Art Scholarship Award, named in honor of Phillip Monteith, went to Lauren Rutledge of Elkhart High School.

The museum is located at 429 S. Main St. Hours are (all times Eastern) 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 1-4 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for college students, \$8 for students (ages 13-18) and \$6 for students (ages 8-12).

Call (574) 293-6660, visit www.midwestmuseum.us or email info@midwestmuseum.us for more details.

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LCSO in the Spotlight



Jae-Sung Lee and Sohyun Yoon.

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

Sohyun Yoon is a violinist from South Korea who has been an LCSO member since 2010. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in violin performance and music education from universities in Seoul before attending Indiana University-South Bend to further her violin performance studies.

Under the direction of members from the Avalon String Quartet and Euclid Quartet, she completed the Artist Diploma, Performer Diploma and another master's degree in violin performance, with a full scholarship throughout her studies.

In addition to LCSO, she has performed with various ensembles, including South Bend Symphony Orchestra, Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra and Symphony of the Lakes. She is married to LCSO's associate concertmaster, Jae-Sung Lee, and they perform together as members of the Northside Quartet.

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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.

State ISSMA Winners



Five Michigan City High School band students recently competed in the Indiana State School Music Association State and Solo Ensemble Festival held at North Central High School, Indianapolis. Ashley Sparks and Kyra Krachinski both received gold (Kyra with piccolo and flute), while Emray David and Alaina Kotaska received silver. Sparks, Krachinski and Sophia Barczak received gold with distinction in the trio ensemble. Pictured are (from left) are Kotaska, Sparks, Barczak, Krachinski and David.



American Red Cross

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

- Northwest Health Heart and Vascular Building, 901 Lincolnway, LaPorte, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday, March 29.
- Michigan City Fire Training Center, 2510 E. Michigan Blvd., 12:30-5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 29.
- La Lumiere School, 6801 N. Wilhelm Road, LaPorte, 1-5 p.m. Wednesday, March 30.

Donors must be in good general health and feeling well, at least 17 (16 with parental consent) and weigh at least 110 pounds. Call (800) 733-2767 or visit www.redcrossblood.org for more details.

Conservation Open House

Berrien County Conservation District will hold its first free "Conservation Open House" from 5-8 p.m. EDT Wednesday, March 30, at Countryside Academy, 4800 Meadowbrook Road, Benton Harbor, Mich.

The public is invited to meet the staff and ask questions to the conservation district and area organizations. That includes: Friends of the St. Joseph River; Two Rivers Coalition; Sarett Nature Center; MSU Extension; Berrien County Farm Bureau; Southwest Michigan Planning Commission; Chikaming Open Lands; West Michigan Sustainable Business; Berrien County Parks; Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians; Harbor Country Hikers; National Grape Cooperative; Countryside FFA; Friends of Berrien County Trails; the SWxSW Corner Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area; Michigan Department of Natural Resources-Parks and Recreation Division/Warren Dunes State Park; and Berrien County Conservation District. At 7 p.m. EDT is the presentation of "Farmer of the Year" and "Environmental Stewardship" awards.

Call (269) 471-9111, Ext. 3, 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/> gyros. They also may be obtained by calling the church office at (269) 231-9052. The deadline is March 31.

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LCSO in Performance



LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra performed with guest cellist Hannah Collins (pictured here with Dr. Carolyn Watson) on March 13 at Michigan City's Holdcraft Performing Arts Center. The season's final concert, "Film Fest!," celebrates composer John Williams. Visit www.lcso.net for tickets or additional information.

Westchester Public Library

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

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

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

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

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In the Area

March 24 — Angels Among Us, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 26 — Friends of Beverly Shores Pop Up Sale, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., 100 Brown Ave., Suite 100, Chesterton. Info: wagnercasa44@gmail.com, (219) 299-6998.

March 26 — Book signing, Rick Jones' The Journey Continues: From Groaning to Dancing, 1-4 p.m., The Pax Center, 605 Washington St., LaPorte.

March 26 — Author William Hazelgrove, One Hundred and Sixty Minutes: The Race to Save the RMS Titanic, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 26 — Naomi Anderson: The Suffragist, 3-4 p.m., Meeting Room B @ LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

March 27 — Trout Trek, 1-3 p.m., Heron Rookery, 1336 County Road 600 East, Michigan City. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.

March 28 — Great Decisions, 6:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 29 — Readers Corner — Book Club, 6-7 p.m., Coolspring Branch Meeting Room, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

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.

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/Buffalo).

In the Region

March 24 — Open Mic Night with Abbie Thomas, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Free; donations welcome. Performer inquiries: openmic@acornlive.org

March 26 — Naturalist Station, 10 a.m.-noon,

Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

March 26 — Beach Mysteries Table, noon-2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

March 26 — The Music of Ella & Billie, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: general/\$35, reserved/\$60. Reservations: www.acornlive.org

March 27 — Spring Saunter, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

March 29 — Harbor Country Singers sing-along, 6:30 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Free.

March 30 — Berrien County Conservation District free "Conservation Open House," 5-8 p.m. EDT, Countryside Academy, 4800 Meadowbrook Road, Benton Harbor, Mich. Info: (269) 471-9111, Ext. 3.

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

Through March 25 — Opportunity Enterprises exhibit, Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Info: (219) 462-9009, www.artbarnschool.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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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Genealogical Society Bus Trip

April 9 is the reservation deadline for the bus trip to Allen County Public Library sponsored by LaPorte County Genealogical Society and Michigan City Public Library.

The trip is Wednesday, April 27. A Cardinal bus with Wi-Fi leaves Michigan City at 7 a.m. in front of the former Marquette Theatre near Marquette Mall, with a 7:30 a.m. pickup at Kabelin's Ace Hardware in LaPorte. It leaves Allen County Public Library at 4 p.m. Masks are recommended on the bus, but not at ACPL.

The \$25 reservation per person is payable to LaPorte County Genealogical Society c/o Patricia Harris, 164 Riviera Drive, Michigan City, IN 46360-6800. Call (219) 872-3273 for more details.

Part of the registration process involves signing a form that those attending will not hold the Genealogical Society, Michigan City Public Library nor the bus company liable for contracting COVID and/or any of the resulting health issues.

10-Digit Dialing Now Mandatory

Ten-digit dialing is official for Indiana, Illinois and Michigan residents.

Those affected are: Indiana residents with (219) and (574) area codes; Illinois residents with (309) (618) and (708) area codes; and Michigan residents with (616), (810), (906) and (989) area codes.

A 10-digit call requires the three-digit area code and seven-digit telephone number, even when calling someone in the same area code. The change does not affect a current telephone number.



Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

Sierra Six by Mark Greaney (hardcover, \$28 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 511 pages.)

His name is Court Gentry, aka Violator, aka Sierra Six, aka The Gray Man. One thing you should know: he doesn't work and play well with others. He's a lone wolf who's smart with an intuitive way at looking around him and assessing the situation... He's also a CIA assassin.

In other words, someone you want on your side, no matter the circumstances or location, but not someone to sit down for small talk.

In this, the 11th book about The Gray Man, the story goes back to a time when Court is "asked" to join a ground branch ops of six men who infiltrate terrorism around the world. At 25, Court has made a name for himself with the CIA, but as a loner. Can he hack working in this paramilitary group called Golf Sierra, where he will be responsible for the lives of others besides himself?

Because of his youth and calm demeanor, the other members of the Sierra team don't take him seriously. Zack Hightower, leader of the team, is Sierra One, the other four men are Sierra Two, Three and Four, with Sierra Six, the point man, now Court. They have lost two number sixs in the past few months and are skeptical to embrace a man they know nothing about — a man whose skills or lack of them might save them or get them killed. Even Hightower isn't able to read his past service record with the CIA.

Court is not a ladies man, as obvious interest in him by a CIA analyst shows — it's innocent and somewhat comical. I love their awkward conversations! Of course, any hint of love is bound to fail... maybe.

Court never walks away from a job and accepts his assignment, even though Hightower tries to get him reassigned.

Learning to work with a team is not in Court's purview, so grueling days of training with the other four men are not fun for any of them. But finally, the day and the assignment come around and, ready or not, Golf Sierra is out to capture or kill a wanted terrorist — Murad Khan, former Pakistani military major committed to killing Americans and Indians alike. His "dirty bombs" are filled with radioactive waste to contaminate an area for years to come.

After a fierce and thrilling battle, it is determined that Khan was killed in a helicopter crash while trying to escape. While a success, the fighting is not without its casualties, and Court leaves Golf Sierra and the past behind. Or does he?

What's different about this installment in the series is how it goes back and forth in time to show how something that happened 12 years ago with the Sierra team still haunts him today. It involves a visit from the dead, you might say...

The back-and-forth time frame employed by the author is not new. In fact, I've noticed it has become a favorite style of many authors. In this case, the constant switching from 12 years ago to the present is necessary to the story and tension as you learn how the past has caught up with Court, and how Greaney leaves a cliffhanger at the end of each chapter — frustrating, but in a good way. It makes for an exciting read.

In the present, Court is a freelance operator sent to the Turkish embassy in Algiers to set a listening device. Instead, he sees a ghost of the past — Murad Khan — the terrorist from 12 years ago who was reported dead. The assignment now changes as Court must make sure this terrorist is finally dealt with permanently. Like I said, he makes his own

rules.

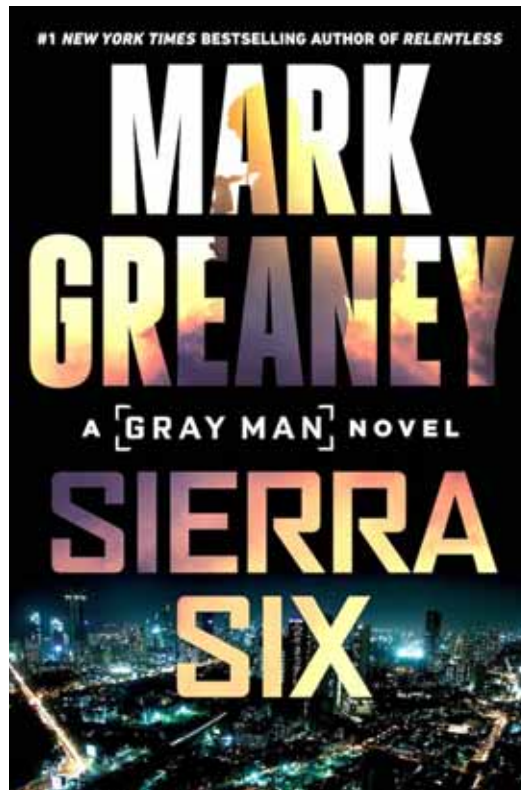
And what does Khan have up his sleeves this time? It may all end on the 32nd floor of a downtown building in Mumbai. Did I mention, there's a monsoon on its way, too?

Absolutely no one does military thrillers better than Greaney. He does extensive research and travels for his books, and it shows. His fight scenes are action with a capital A. The story rings true. As the past and present come closer together, you see what motivates Gentry and makes him a force to be reckoned with; he needs to rectify what has been one of the most disappointing times of his career.

It also shows how Gentry has matured over the past 12 years. Older and wiser? Time will tell. Is it just another day in the war on terrorism? Or is this much more personal for him?

You'll stay up late reading this one — it's addictive.

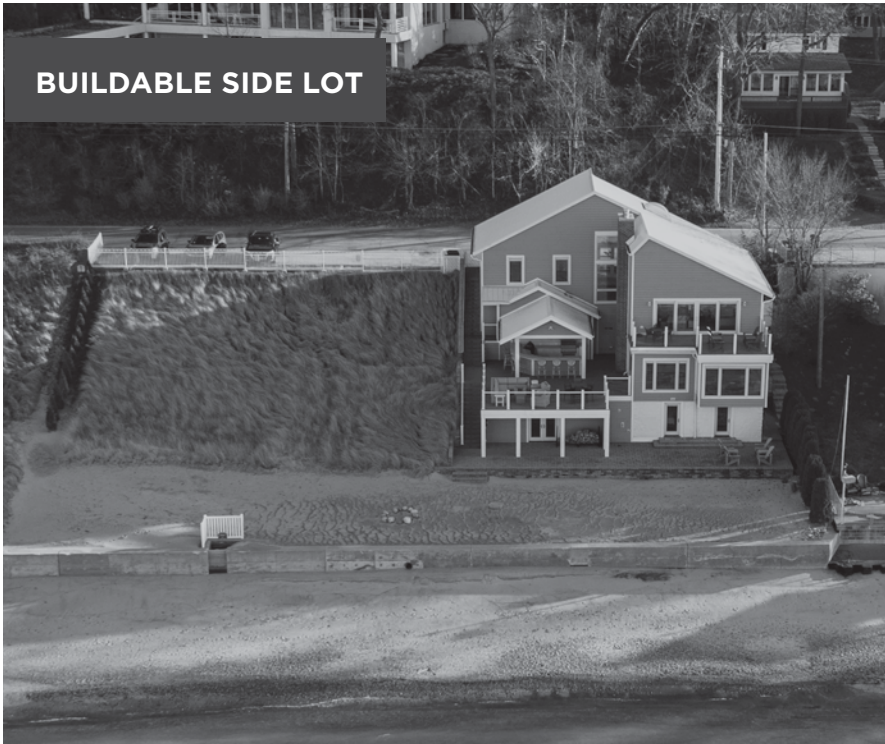
Till next time, happy reading!



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