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About the Cover

Our gorgeous cover photo for this week's Thanksgiving edition was taken by Bob Wellinski along Duneland Beach Drive. Thanks to Town of Long Beach Deputy Clerk Deanna Carlson for the tip on where to find such a beautiful setting.

Lessons of Life, Love & Gratitude

by Kim Nowatzke



Elizabeth Kochvar shows off one of the 227 birthday cards she received from family, friends and community members for her 105th birthday on Oct. 22.

Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

sk 105-year-old Elizabeth Kochvar what the secret to her long life is, and she'll respond that she does not have one.

Family members, however, have their own ideas.

"She's always been very strong. She's weathered a lot of storms and tragedies. You never heard her complain," her 56-year-old granddaughter, Susan Stib, Grayslake, Ill., said.

In fact, one of the greatest lessons she learned from her is, "Even with a lot of adversity in your life, you don't have to let it get to you. Go with the flow."

Indeed, this resident of Rittenhouse Village at Michigan City for the past year has not only endured The Great Depression, but also seen two world wars, the Korean War and Vietnam. She lived through the Spanish flu and other flu strains, scarlet fever, polio and now CO-VID-19 – contracting it and surviving at age 104.

Her son, Tom Kochvar, tells the story of how when COVID-19 arrived, he took her to get a vaccination. Given her age, she was obviously at the front of the line for eligibility. Afterward, the two talked about the pandemic.

She told him, "I was born in 1917 at the height of the Spanish flu that was killing millions and there was no cure. However, we were more concerned about scarlet fever as it was sweeping through our family and communities. More people were dying of scarlet fever than of the Spanish flu."

March 2021 was the first time her grand-daughter, 43-year-old Jacqueline Piccini, San Mateo, Calif., saw her grandmother since the pandemic started.

"I asked her how her mother and her family made it through the Spanish flu and scarlet fever," Jacqueline said. "She told me they were a bunch of tough farm kids."

Granddaughter Michelle Lowe, 30, Terre Haute, also spoke of her grandmother's strength.

"Something that I have learned from my grandma is how to be strong," she said. "My grandma lost her husband, my grandpa George, before I was even born. Even



"My grandma lost her husband, my grand-children, Tom Kochvar and April Stib, on her Oct. 22 birthday.

Photo by Kim Nowatzke

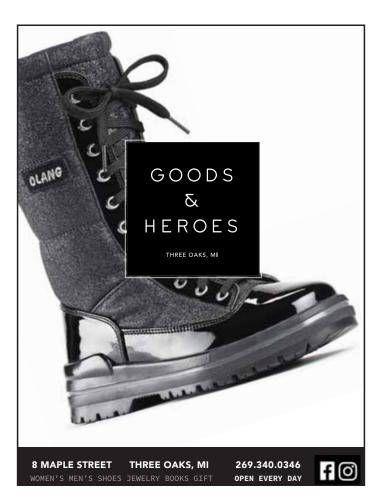
though her children were all adults by then, she never failed to take care of herself and her family. Even when I was young, I just always had the image of her being the strongest woman I knew. That is still true to this day."

Jacqueline has gleaned plenty from her grand-mother.

"At 105, she has lived through the good times and the worst of times, and she has never let it bring her down," she said. "She just keeps going."

And Elizabeth, who celebrated her momentous birthday at Rittenhouse with a small family gettogether, as well as a gigantic sign on the front lawn that read, "Happy Birthday 105th Elizabeth," con-





LESSONS OF LIFE...

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tinues to do just that, only slowing down in the last few years.

The middle child of 11 siblings, Elizabeth Allee was born Oct. 22, 1917, in the farming community of Francesville, Ind. During high school, she moved with her family to the neighboring Medaryville. She landed in Michigan City next, where she worked as a welder at Pullman-Standard. As part of the World War II effort, her job consisted of welding aluminum window frames for railroad cars carrying troops.

It was there she met her husband, George Kochvar. Together, they raised four children: Marietta (Walden), April (Stib), Tom Kochvar and Jerry Kochvar. After they were grown, she worked for Michigan City Area Schools at Joy Elementary, then Knapp Elementary, as a teacher's assistant in the special education department. As for George, after first working at a Michigan City Shell station a few years, he owned and operated George's Auto Service, 3019 E. Michigan Blvd.



George and Elizabeth Kochvar in 1972

The Kochvars' retirement years were spent as "snowbirds," alternating between Trail Creek and Tucson, Ariz., where Tom lives.

"It was the best of both worlds," April said. "If you asked her if she wanted to go, before you got it out of your mouth, she had her bags packed. She did like to travel."

She cited how Elizabeth went to Hawaii

for a great-granddaughter's wedding and the Dominion Republic for a grandson's wedding.

Visits to Tucson for two weeks doubled to four. Gradually, they were spending six months there each winter. Even after George's death at 68 in 1984, Elizabeth continued the tradition for decades.

"I would put her on the plane here and Tom would get her off the plane there," April explained.

But, purchasing tickets became complicated when she turned 100 and the airlines' computer systems couldn't recognize her age.

"People that age just don't fly," Tom surmised.

And, 103-year-olds still don't usually walk 1.5 miles a day.

But Elizabeth did.

In fact, walking and hiking appear to be one of the keys to her longevity.

"I did a lot of hiking in the mountains – as much

as three miles a day," Elizabeth admitted.

Walking with grandma is a vivid memory for her grandchildren.

"I remember when she would take us on hikes when she was in her 70s," 45-yeargrandson old Brooks Kochvar, Boise, Idaho, recalled. "She was part of a hiking club and would routinely take us on 10-mile



A young Elizabeth Kochvar with her children Tom, 3, and April, 8, in 1953.

trail hikes through a canyon. Her friends, who were younger, would joke that she would walk us all into the ground and probably live to be 100. Apparently, they underestimated her."

Jacqueline as well can't forget walks with her grandmother.

"Grandma has always been a *very* fast walker," she said. "When I was a kid, I would have to run to keep up with her. She only started slowing down in her 90s."

Granddaughter Kim Prokop, 58, who lives in Mattituck, N.Y., on Long Island, has the same memory of trying to keep up with Grandma.

"My grandparents used to hike the mountains of Arizona when they spent the winters there," she said. "When they were not hiking, they were walking. Every day. And not just to and from the mailbox. After my grandfather passed away, my grandma continued to walk. She was speedy, too! If you wanted to walk with her, you had to keep up!"

April said her mother belonged to a group that would hike on Mount Lemon in Tucson. One of her favorite spots was Rose Canyon. She kept up her habit of walking every summer when she returned to Trail Creek. Even today, she enjoys walking with help from a walker.

"She always made sure to get her exercise every day," Susan said. "I've seen how much that makes a difference."

Elizabeth also belonged to a horseshoe club in Arizona. In her 80s, she won a regional-level medal in the National Senior Olympics for horseshoes, and won a city title in the sport for several years.

It wasn't just physical exercise, however, that kept Elizabeth young. She knew the value of keeping her mind active and engaged.

"At night when others would watch a TV show,

Grandma was either puzzling or reading a book," Kim said. "Grandma was fond of crossword puzzles and cryptograms, working every one she could get her hands on."

Tom said his mother once told the story of how by high school graduation, she had read every book in the school library.

April said Elizabeth would play Mexican Trains (a game played with dominoes) with her Arizona friends and more recently added word finds.

"She was very competitive," April said. "We used to play Trivial Pur-

April said her mother learned how to use a computer, still emailing friends last year, and would play Free Cell and Mahjong on it.

"She loved how she was able to keep in contact with her friends and relatives," April said. "She especially liked being able to send funny jokes to everyone."

Hannah Ketterman, Rittenhouse's memory care director, is a firsthand witness to Elizabeth's sense of humor: "When we meet for our laughter/joke sessions, Eliza- Elizabeth, photographed at age 18 in 1935.



beth is eager to share her joke each time. What has four legs and no tail?' she asks and then answers, 'A table!' And, everyone gets a big kick out of her saving her 'same' joke!"

> Elizabeth isn't afraid of trying something new, either.

> "One winter while in Arizona," April shared, "she took a painting class, and to our surprise, she added another talent to her resume!"

> Other hobbies include quilting and gardening.

> "She always had a garden each summer and would can tomatoes, green beans, pickled beets and bread and butter pickles," April continued. "She was still canning vegetables right through the fall of 2021 at the age of 104. She loved sharing her canned goods with friends and relatives."

> Kim told the story of when her family came to visit, and she has just finished planting approximately 30 tomato plants when they arrived.

> "The next morning, we woke and all of the tomato plants were chewed off right at the base," she recalled.

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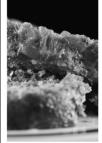


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LESSONS OF LIFE...

Continued from Page 5

"My grandma took one look and said, 'That's the cut worms. You have to plant them inside newspaper.' She and I got to work and replanted all of the plants together. It took us hours to finish, but she was out there with me the entire time."

Elizabeth was known for her cooking, too.

"While in Arizona for the winters, she used to make bran muffins," April said. "She always kept some batter in the refrigerator so that she could whip up some for the morning coffee hours, much to the delight of the residents in the park and her friends. They started buying the ingredients for her."

Some of Kim's fondest memories of her grandmother revolve around baking.

"She is a wonderful cook and baker," she said. "We lived down the street from my grandparents growing up in Trail Creek, and my sister and I were always trotting down the road to help grandma cook or bake. It always amazed me that she *never* had a recipe. She just added a 'pinch of this' or a 'bit of that.' She made the best fried chicken and the most amazing peach cobbler."

There's one story Kim and Susan will never forget. They were about 7 and 5 at the time.

"I'll never forget the day she was teaching my vounger sister and I how to make cookie dough," Kim said. "My grandma said it was very important to keep the beaters down in the bowl so that it didn't splatter. Next thing you know, she lifted up the mixer and

Elizabeth (front right) with her family in 2005.

the dough went flying everywhere. My sister and I were young and thought that was the funniest thing ever!"

"We were young," Susan added, "but it is so vivid." Michelle spoke of her grandmother being an "amazing cook," too.

"She cooked with her heart and did not follow any specific recipes, so I don't think I could replicate any of my favorites," Michelle said. "But everyone always talked about how amazing her food was!"

Jacqueline noted the generosity behind her cook-

ing skz they were readily available for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Recently, Susan asked for the recipe.

"I got the 'recipe' from her," Susan said. "She spouted off how she did it, and I made them."

Susan was surprised that the unforgettable noodles turned out fine: "Now, I'm the designated 'noodle maker."

Summer created many special memories, many about fishing.

"In the summers, she was visited by her grand-children, and one of their favorite things was to go fishing with Grandma," April said. "She would bait their hooks for them, but she always had to have a glove to put the wiggling worms on the hook. She never liked touching the worms with her bare hands. All of the grandchildren learned to catch and release. She would tell us about their fishing expeditions and laugh because she said that she didn't think that the grandkids caught on to the fact that when they would catch a fish and throw it back, they were catching the same little fish."

Susan recalled a special recipe to ward off bugs and a trick for soft hands.

"She would always make me drink this concoction of apple cider vinegar, honey and water to keep

mosquitoes away.

I later learned as an adult that it really works. And, she would make us put Vaseline on our hands and then wear socks on them to bed," she said with a laugh.

Jacqueline shared her favorite summer remembrances.

"We spent our summers in Three Oaks, Mich., with her at Bob A Ron campground. She took us fishing, let us

drive around the campground on golf carts, taught us how to run a cash register and played a lot of cards with us at night," Jacqueline said. "One summer we caught over 20 bluegills in the lake, and she froze them and at the end of the summer she cooked them all for us. The only time I recall the TV being on was maybe for 'Jeopardy,' where she knew almost all the answers. She also had us do chores which, for some reason, we were happy to do along-side her."

Brooks, too, remembers spending nearly a month

every summer with his sister, Jacqueline, at their grandmother's.

"Those were some of my favorite memories," he said. "While she taught us a lot in those summers, including how to fish and bake cookies and pies, more importantly, she taught us about hard work and getting things done."

One of Elizabeth's own fond memories involved meeting former President George W. Bush when he visited South Bend for a congressman's fundraiser.

"During his visit, she was able to shake his hand - not once - but twice," Tom shared. "Afterward, $_{
m she}$ told me that when she was a little girl, living on that farm in Francesville. that she never dreamed of seeing a president in person or shaking the hand of a president – let alone twice!"

Brooks related how several years ago when he became interested in his family tree, he sat down with his grandmother, who

was just past 90 at the time.

"She went through more than 100 family members dating back to the early 1900s," he said. "She gave incredibly vivid details of each one. It was like we were reliving those days. It turned out not only to be a lesson on our family, but a lesson in history as well. I feel blessed that I have been able to listen and learn from Grandma."

Elizabeth was still attending family reunions up until about 10 years ago. She had one remaining sibling, Jerry Allee, who passed away two weeks from his 95th birthday. Once, in his later years, as he and April discussed his sister's good health, he guessed that Elizabeth would live to be 104. Elizabeth's and Jerry's maternal grandfather lived to be 92, and Elizabeth remembers attending her paternal grandfather's 100th birthday party.

"I look at pictures of my mother's 100th birthday party and see how vibrant she was. She was still spunky," April said.

Today, Elizabeth has two remaining children, Tom and April, in addition to eight grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and three great-grandchildren living from as far as the west coast of California to the east coast of Long Island, N.Y. At least six of her descendants bare "Elizabeth" as part

of their names.

Tom spoke of how gratifying it is for the grandchildren to have a relationship with their grandmother. Susan mentioned how thankful she is that her daughter, 23-year-old Sydney, has been able to know her great-grandmother.

"She has been somebody I could always look up to," Susan said. "She wanted to be involved and doing things with the grandkids. She was active in everyone's life. Being present for everything – it just

> shows you how that can extend your lifetime."

> Jacqueline, too, is thankful for the relationship her children have with their great-grandmother.

"As a mother myself, it is really special that my children have been able to meet this person that has played a major role in my life and cared for me during my foundational years," she said.

April is grateful for all she's



Elizabeth Kochvar (far left) is pictured with her family around 1925.

learned from her mother.

"I'm thankful that my girls learned so many life lessons and that, with my mother's help, we are passing them on down to the future generations," she said.

Tom, who is 72, knows how fortunate he is to still have his mother here.

"It's quite a novelty," he said. "No one in my age bracket has parents that are alive. People say they would give anything to talk to their mom for an hour. I'm one of the lucky guys that can pick up a phone or go see my mom. People go through life never meeting someone that is 105."

Indeed, those who have the honor of meeting Elizabeth cherish the experience. In fact, she received 227 birthday cards this year.

"To know her is to love her. Her friends, family and acquaintances all care for her deeply," Jacqueline stressed. "I think it is the combination of keeping her body and mind active and the love that she has for others that have allowed her to live such a long and impactful life."

Brooks seemed to sum up the family's thoughts: "Our family is incredibly blessed and proud to have my grandma as its matriarch."



"Would it kill you to give the movie three stars... for your son?"

Thus the conundrum, suggested by my wife, after our son's semi-euphoric reaction to "A Christmas Story Christmas."

The 1983 original is rare perfection. A gentle mix of nostalgia and generous laughs, where you recognize a bit of your family in the characters.

Set 33 years after the original, "A Christmas Story Christmas" has none of the same magic, both as a sequel and as a Christmas movie. It's a fan service reunion special. You get to see what the actors look like now, with plenty of visual cues to the first film. Whereas last time the story felt effortless, here, you can feel the wheels grinding away.

But nostalgia is a mighty force, especially when it draws from something timeless. Meaning, there are moments here when you do smile, where it's good to be back with these characters.

Unfolding in 1973, Ralph Parker (Peter Billingsley) is a struggling writer living in Chicago with his wife, Sandy (Erinn Hayes, delightful), and his two children, Mark (River Drosche) and Julie (Julianna Layne). He's pushing his 2,000-page fantasy novel to publishers, none of which show interest. He's given himself a year to realize his dream, and the brutal end is near.

Then comes the call from home. His dad has passed away. Our affection for the late great Darren McGavin as "The Old Man" — the definitive lovable grump — is boundless. The mom, by the way, is now played by "Airplane" veteran Julie Hagerty, Melinda Dillon having retired from acting.

The movie earns its biggest laugh, particularly for anyone from this region, early. Driving back to Indiana, with steel mills on the horizon, Ralphie sighs, "Ah, back in Indiana." Without missing a



"A Christmas Story Christmas"

Running time: 98 minutes. HBO Max. Rated PG for language and some rude material/behavior.

beat, Sandy pipes in: "Yes, I can taste it."

Once home, Mom indicates The Old Man would not want everyone moping. Top priority: have the best Christmas ever. That's the springboard for director Clay Kaytis (Netflix's charming "The Christmas Chronicles") to cram as much fan service into one film as is humanly possible. Shot-for-shot updates of now-classic images from the original. Props and sets recreated as if untouched by time (the Higbee's Santa slide). Jeff Morrow's score, with all the old themes. Ralph's old pals, Flick (Scott Schwartz) and Schwartz (R.D. Robb), are still around. Ralph's younger brother Randy (Ian Petrella) is successful at something.

Now 51, Billingsley has the face of a man entrenched in middle age. But his eyes flicker with the mischief of his younger "Christmas Story" self. Ralphie still fantasizes about potential glory (some dream sequences work, others fall flat), and parents will laugh knowingly at how his children have the misfortune of injuring easily during vigorous play.

The screenplay, which Kaytis co-wrote with Clint Eastwood veteran Nick Schenk ("Gran Torino," "The Mule," "Cry Macho"), does not establish the same fanciful tone as the original. No full-on embrace of Christmas spirit until the very end.

Will you remember "A Christmas Story Christmas" next holiday season? No. Is it pleasant enough to pass the time? Yeah, sorta...

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com

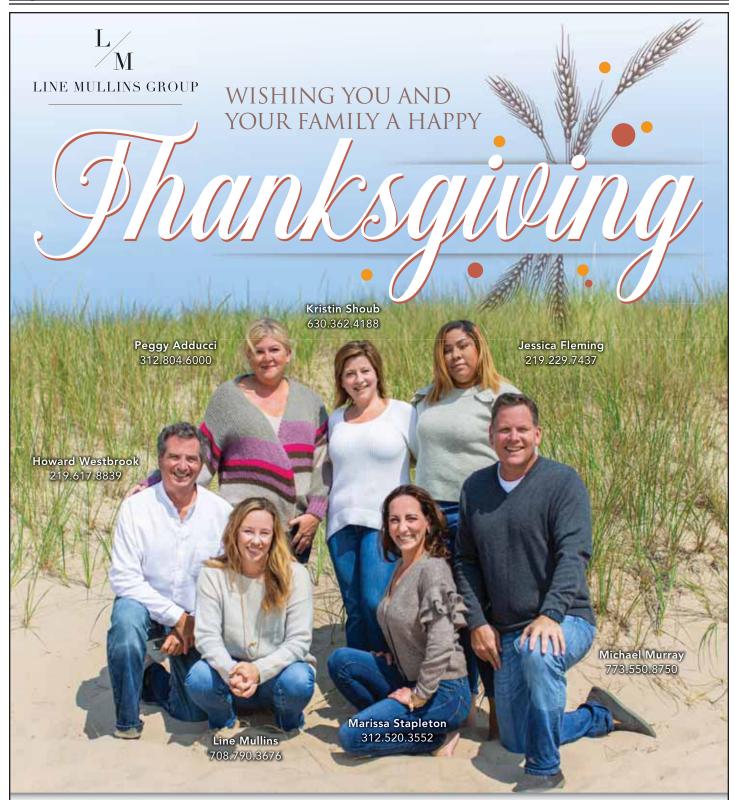


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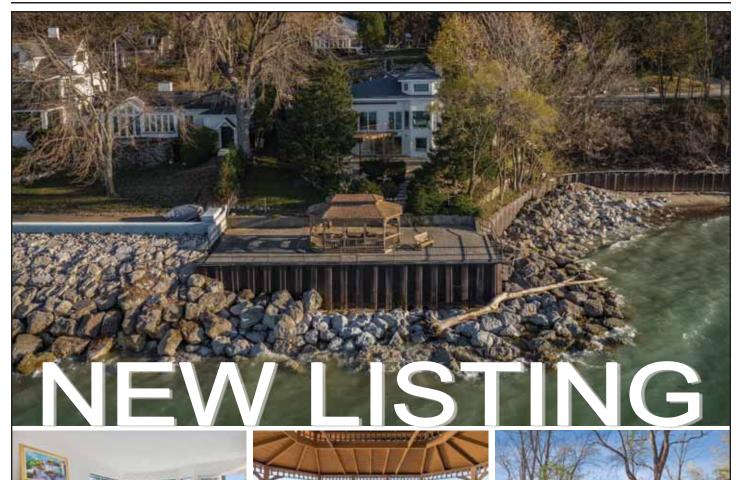
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Den Closet at MCHS Represents United Effort to Reach Students in Need

by Kim Nowatzke



Junior Willie Taylor (from left), Senior Jaden Hansen and Senior Travis Stottlemire assist Michigan City High School Special Education Teacher Amy Wojasinski-Labis with the new Den Closet.

Thanks to big-hearted teachers, staff, students and the community, Michigan City High School's Den Closet is meeting students' clothing needs.

It began this school year through the Healthy Culture Committee, which consists of MCHS teachers Adam Goebel, Elizabeth Stahl, Sara Long, Judy Kovalcik, Amanda Stolarz and Amy Wojasinski-Labis ("Wojo"). They saw the need to organize a room with clothing donations from teachers, support staff and community members who brought in gently used clothing, shoes, backpacks and other items. And, student volunteers stepped up to use their "Wolfpack" time to help organize the donations.

As explained by school counselor Linda Meyer, Wolfpack is an "advisory" period where students can obtain a pass to visit teachers and receive extra help, make up quizzes and tests, and other needs.

"Counselors can also go into Wolfpack classes and do guidance lessons — we recently helped seniors sign up for their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) ID — or pull students for small group lessons," she said.

Starting Oct. 24, the Den Closet began soliciting new and like-new items, such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, pants, shoes, undergarments, coats and gloves. The system to distribute these items to students in need is simple and discreet. Flyers were hung throughout the school, including in the restrooms. A student scans a QR code for an invitation to visit the Den Closet during Wolfpack. This can be done with a cell phone or Chromebook, which each student is assigned. Counselors and student success coaches also can scan the code for students.

Senior Travis Stottlemire considers himself one of the "lucky few" of about eight students who "help the MCHS community.

"There are a lot of people that have sent us a lot of items that will help the students that can't afford to buy new clothes," he continued. "We would like to give thanks to the people of Michigan City for helping students here at MCHS."

Senior Jaden Hansen is another student who donates Wolfpack time to Den Closet operations.

"I know a lot of families that need help that are going through issues," she said. "It just makes me feel better just helping to hang clothes so they can find things easier."

Wojo said the biggest need is T-shirts, sweat-shirts, sweatpants, socks and undergarments. Currently, there is no limit on the number of items a student can receive.

MCHS spirit wear is popular, and the Den Closet welcomes gently used clothes in this category. An Amazon wish list is at http://educateMC.net/wishlist,

through which the community can purchase items and have them delivered directly to MCHS.

Another volunteer, Junior Willie Taylor, said he supports the project because "it helps people that don't have enough money to buy these things."

Wojo, who volunteers as a tutor at Stepping Stone Shelter for Women, is keenly aware of issues students face.

"A lot of students might not have washing machines or dryers, which results in them not having clean clothes. We can help with that here," she said, explaining that washers and dryers are in the building for use in specific situations. The Den Closet can provide clothes when an unexpected need arises during school hours.

The Den Closet, Wojo said, is different from the Care Closet, which concentrates on personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and feminine products to students. It also operates under a discreet delivery system and is managed by the Open Door Adolescent Health Center within MCHS.

Wojo is grateful to Kohl's for its donation of hangars. She said these items, as well as clothing racks, are always appreciated.

Donated items can be dropped off at the MCHS office. Anyone needing assistance with transporting them to the high school should call Wojo at (219) 872-2044, Ext. 4334.





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Michigan City Public Library

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

The following programs are scheduled:

- Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29. Membership is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome. Also, the group has organized a local chapter of the Warm Up America Foundation. Volunteers are knitting and crocheting handmade squares (7x9 inch) that will be joined together to make full-size afghans.
- Among Us In Real Life from 4-6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30. Children and teens ages 10-17 can

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work with crewmates to complete tasks.

- Makerspace: open lab hours from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in November. Youth ages 6-17 can create with LEGO WeDo, Micro Bits, paper circuits and Ozobots. Children 12 and younger must have a parent or guardian attend with them.
- Story Time at 10 a.m. Wednesdays. Children birth to age 5 and adults will enjoy stories, songs and crafts. Check out previous story time videos through the library's YouTube channel, Facebook page and website.

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. It is closed Thursday for Thanksgiving.

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"Prancer" Program



The "Prancer" village model will be on display.

The Region of Three Oaks Museum will present an afternoon with John Hancock from 3-8 p.m. EST Saturday, Nov. 26, at Three Oaks Heritage Hall, 8 E. Linden St.

The event is part of the community's holiday festivities that includes a downtown Snowflake Stroll and tree-lighting ceremony at Carver Park.

Hancock will sign autographs and answer questions about the making of "Prancer," the 1989 Christmas classic filmed in the area and starring Sam Elliott, Cloris Leachman, Abe Vigoda and Rebecca Harrell. Three Oaks and New Carlisle factor prominently in the film.

The "Prancer" village model will be on display, depicting the village's main street as it appeared in the movie, complete with retro touches like older cars, a Christmas tree lot and snow. It was built by Don Bowman, who worked for the Federal Aviation Administration creating miniatures of airports around the country before retiring in LaPorte.

After it was featured in the movie, the model sat in the Three Oaks Library attic for many years until TROTOM board members Nick Bogert and Randy Miller restored the main three sections in 2020. Last year, Liz Thomas and Chuck Garasic added lights to illuminate it.

DVDs of the movie, packaged with TROTOM's documentary on the making of the movie, will be sold for \$15.



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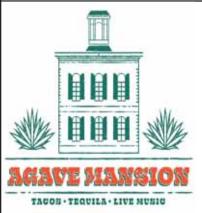
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Blanchett Mesmerizes, Even as "Tár" Falls Apart By the End

by Andrew Tallackson



Cate Blanchett stars as one of the world's greatest living composers-conductors in "Tár."

Cate Blanchett is a terrific actress, no question about it, but I find her rather cold. Maybe it's that she likes to play characters who emotionally wall themselves off from people. Possibly, it's that she overprepares for a role.

Take last year's "Nightmare Alley." She was called on to play the classic noir dame. She looked the part — hair slicked down, leggy gowns — but moved almost in slow motion, a curious choice on her part. Or consider the "60 Minutes" drama "Truth." She paced herself, as she spills juicy tidbits, like the female journalists of 1940s romantic-comedies. Reporters these days, even scummy ones that work for TMZ, don't carry themselves like that anymore.

But in "Tár," Blanchett consumes you in a way we haven't seen. No acting tricks. Instead, the performance feels like it's pouring out of her.

The casual viewer may find the pace sluggish in "Tár," like nothing is really happening. But this long-awaited third movie from writer-director Todd Field ("In the Bedroom," "Little Children") treats its title character almost like a lab experiment. We get to observe her, explore what makes her tick. And for the first 90 minutes of this 2 hour, 38 minute journey, I was captivated. The entire movie rests on Blanchett's shoulders, and she is a fascinating



Running time: 158 minutes. View on Demand, Vickers Theatre. Rated R for some language and brief nudity.

study in power, passion and control. Another plus: the movie is exceedingly knowledgeable about classical music and the people who bring it to life.

Then, as the title character's life unravels, so does the movie. First in little moments, then in the big ones. By the end, the movie is just a mess.

We learn the highlights of Lydia Tár's remarkable career as a composer and conductor early, during an interview with writer Adam Gopnik, playing himself, at The New Yorker Festival. As Gopnik rolls out Tár's accomplishments — mentored by Leonard Bernstein, Berlin Philharmonic's first female chief conductor — the movie establishes Lydia as the top of the food chain. Blanchett carries herself in the interview as someone whose love of classical music, particularly Mahler and his 5th Symphony, as infinite. Her knowledge, her intuition — Blanchett feels like the real deal.

Through Blanchett, in fact, we get a study in power. The accumulation of it, the way it infects personal

and professional relationships. When a conducting student, for example, makes a flippant remark about Bach's personal life, dismissing the composer because of it, Tar's response is cancel culture bait...although, she's not exactly incorrect. But she is somewhat of an anachronism, where she doles out behavior no longer acceptable, but in her mind, it is because she's the best.

She has a wife, Sharon (Nina Hoss), who plays in

the Berlin Philharmonic, and a young daughter, Petra (Mila Bogojevic). What's interesting about the Lydia-Sharon dynamic is, Sharon is well-aware of her wife's dalliances with attractive newcomers in the orchestra, but looks the other way, even as it eats at her emotionally.

Blanchett, who appears in every scene, pours out pages and pages of dialogue, and we're hypnotized by her. Blanchett plays Lydia like a woman unaccustomed to hearing the word "no." By and large, she's respectful, but snippets of aggression have a way of leaking out.

During the movie's final hour, Lydia's world collapses. Field relies on arty symbolism. Is Lydia going crazy, or is someone playing mind games with her? When Lydia jolts out of bed, hearing the relentless beat of a metronome, the heavy-handed symbolism is obvious: Time is ticking away at a once cushy life. When the big, public breakdowns arrive, the histrionics balloon way out of control, cheapening everything Blanchett brings to the film. The fi-



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The movie is exceedingly knowledgeable about the world of classical music.

nal scene can be interpreted numerous ways, but for me, it's a cheap shot.

Is Lydia a terrible person? Maybe. We have a good idea of the truth, but the movie withholds too many insights into her at the end.

I do like the movie, Blanchett's performance more so. She may take home a Best Actress Oscar, as early buzz indicates. After such a potent start, though, the movie isn't quite worthy of the actress herself.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com



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"Weird" Delivers Big Laughs While Spoofing Movie Biopics

by Andrew Tallackson



Daniel Radcliffe's comedic chops will surprise audiences in "Weird: The Al Yankovic Story."

Leave it to "Weird Al" Yankovic, king of the song parody, to lampoon movie biopics by playing fast and loose with his own life.

The effect is laugh-out-loud ridiculousness. And I'm not talking sporadic giggles, but full, seismic belly laughs. Yankovic, the music industry's answer to *Mad* magazine, is nowhere near interested in having his Roku Channel film, "Weird: The Al Yankovic Story," resemble the truth. He and Eric Appel, the director and co-writer, are preoccupied with being as outrageously stupid as possible. At poking fun at cliches. How else, then, can you explain a powerhungry Madonna, played by a screamingly funny Evan Rachel Wood, being called an "evil conniving succubus," not too long before taking over Pablo Escobar's Colombian drug cartel.

The movie's origins date back to Appel's 2010 "Funny or Die" fake trailer, using Yankovic's life to poke fun at musical biopics like "Walk the Line" and "Ray." Back then, it was Aaron Paul of "Breaking Bad" fame as Yankovic. Twelve years later, we have the last person believed possible to pull off the role: Harry Potter himself, Daniel Radcliffe. Honestly, he never seemed that great of an actor to me. I suppose he looked precisely how we imagined J.K. Rowling's



young wizard to be, so we just rolled with it. But here, he seems freed from any pretense of being taken seriously. When the musical parodies turn up, as when Yankovic whips up a spoof of Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust," his go-for-broke impression is wildly funny.

The whole aim of "Weird" is to start with a shred of truth, then poke fun at how every musical biopic, regardless of being lifted from "fact," slips into obvious cliches.

First, we must start with a hero or heroine who defies expectations. Here, it's that Yankovic's own family does not support his penchant for spoofing popular music. Rather than have the actors behave as if they know they're being funny, Appel has his cast play it straight. That's how we get Julianne Nicholson (the Emmy winner for HBO's "Mare of Easttown"), telling Al during a phone conversation, and with stone-faced seriousness, that his father "just wants you to know that he's definitely not

proud of you."

Musical biopics also have a simplistic way of depicting musical inspiration as plopping down in their creator's laps. Think Jennifer Hudson tinkering at the piano in "Respect," or Queen bassist John Deacon striking instant gold with the pulsing bass line of "Another One Bites the Dust." "Weird" wastes no time satirizing this trope, as when Yankovic's mother, lamenting her weight gain, sighs at dinner, then replies, "I'm fat. I'm fat. You know it."

The cameos in "Weird" are generous. Quinta Brunson ("Abbott Elementary") does a fairly spot-on Oprah Winfrey impression. Ditto Jack Black as Wolfman Jack.

But the performance that kicks "Weird" into high gear is Wood (HBO's "Westworld") as Madonna. Genius, I tell you. Decked out in "Desperately Seeking Susan" getup, like she just tumbled out of a

laundry basket, the actress has the performer down to the slightest tics. Her gum-smacking speech. The way she slinks through a room. And the dialogue between her and Al is hysterical:

Madonna: I was wondering when you were going to get around to parodying my song, "Like a Virgin." Weird Al: Is that...autobiographical?

Madonna: Oh, sure. Except for the fact that I've had a lot of sex.

There are plenty of moments like that. Like the scene where Yankovic's band lashes out at him when he turns up drunk to a show. Madonna's stone-faced reaction after they leave: "*They seem nice*."

Indeed, the film's depiction of Yankovic's descent into drugs and booze is in line with every musical biopic. We even get Weird Al soiling himself on stage like Bradley Cooper in "A Star is Born."

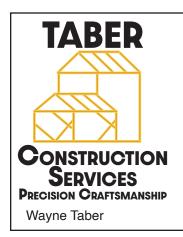
Yes, "Weird" is dumb. It was designed to be. And



like any parody, not all the jokes strike gold. But just as the movie takes on another tired trope — Al's reconciliation with his father — we get an animated retelling of his father's Amish past. Never mind that his father actually was Yugoslavian, it's an uproarious prelude to "Amish Paradise," his spoof of the Coolio hit from "Dangerous Minds."

"Weird" makes you long for the days when the guys behind "Airplane," "Top Secret" and the "Naked Gun" franchise were in full swing. This isn't up to that standard...but it sure comes awfully close.

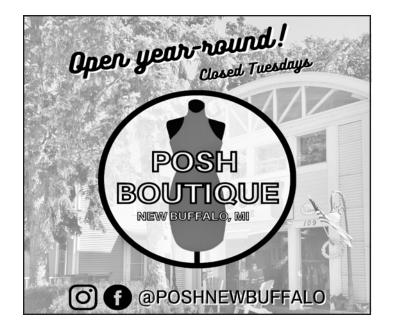
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Beacher Beacher November 24, 2022 November 24, 2022 Page 24

Stories from Notre Dame Elementary School third-graders on how to cook a turkey are a Thanksgiving tradition at The Beacher. They never fail to make us smile: a perfect start to the holiday season. Thanks to teacher Christina Schultz for sharing the stories with us. Enjoy!

Do you like turkey? I do. This is how I make a turkey. First, I buy a turkey at Walgreens.

Then, I will let the turkey thaw out. Then, I preheat the oven to 1,000 degrees fahrenheit. People may like it with stuffing but I don't. Finally, I cook the turkey for 1,000 hours for the best results, serve the turkey with a baked potato, green beans and cookies with my Dad, Emily, Papa, Nana, and more.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Catherine Conn

First I bought a turkey then I let it thaw out. Then my mom put it for 200 degrees.

I put some stuffing and some rosemary. I set it for 2 hours. After I got my turkey out and put salt and pepper on it. Then my mom made rice, mashed potato's, green beans and yellow noodles.

Then we eat are turkey, noodles, rice, green beans and mashed potatoes. Happy Thanksgiving.

Zoey Dusz

How do you cook your turkey? I am going to tell you how to cook it in the best way possible. I have never actually cooked a turkey, but I am going to tell you how I would. I am going to show you how my family and I cook a turkey.

First, I ask my dad if we can go to Al's to buy a turkey. When we get to Al's we go to the frozen section. When we get to the frozen section we pick out a medium sized turkey. Then when we get home we let it thaw out. Next, after the turkey is done thawing out, my mom seasons it. After she is done seasoning it she puts it in the oven. Then, when it is in the oven we prepare the side dishes. For side dishes we have stuffing and cram berry sauce. Now I am going to tell you about my favorite part dessert. For dessert we have apple pie, pumpkin pie, and vanilla ice cream.

That is what my Thanksgiving dinner would be like.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Seamus Dwver

Do you know how to cook a turkey? Well here's you how.

First you go to Walmart then you get the turkev.

That weighs 4444444444-444444444444 tons then.

You put that heavy turkey in the oven for 44444445555556666 minutes at 44444444444444 degrees Celsius after waiting for the turkey you stuff it with stuffing. Then make the mash potatoes. Then you cook the gravy

Finally you Bon appétit.

William Ebbesen

Do you know how to make a turkey let me show you how I cook a turkey? First make sure you go to the get

the turkey from walmart and get it a couple days later.

Next get the turkey and unwrap it then cook it for 320 degrees then wait for one hour.

Then take the turkey out and get cornbread and mashed potatoes. Last enjoy your food with your fam-

ily. Happy Thanksgiving

I am going to tell you how to make a turkey. First you have to catch a turkey then season the turkey with spicy pepper and oil. then you put the turkey in the oven at 39 degrees Fahrenheit.

You can stuff the turkey with deed bread crumbs. Then you check the turkey and oil on it.

Finally, you enjoy the turkey.

Piper Gatzka

Have you ever cooked a turkey? Let me tell you the best way to cook a turkey for your Thanksgiving. First, you get your turkey from your refrigerator and unwrap it. Also take the stuff out that is stuffed inside it. Next, I put the turkey on a pan and put some seasoning like garlic, onion powder, lemon juice, lime juice, salt, and pepper, also put lemons and limes on it and let marinate. Then, you put it in Armani Fleming the oven for 295 degrees. What for a

few hours and then take the turkey out. It smells delicious and tastes even better.

member B., 2027

Whimsical Weilnesday

Abby Gawat

Have you ever cooked a turkey? So I am going to do mine like this.

I go to the store and buy a 900 pound turkey and take it home. Next I wait for 24 hours. Then thaw it and get the stuff out. Next cook the turkey for 5 hours on 900 degrees. So I better watch some tv. Next get the turkey out. Wow it's hot. The next morning we eat our dinner.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Dexter Hart

First, I went to the store to get the turkey. It was about 30\$. I gave the cashier the money but she gave it back to me. I read it again and the price was 1,000,000,000,\$, Instead of 30\$ dollars. So I gave her the money

for the turkey. I went home to unwrap the turkey for dinner. I put some seasoning I put rosemary on and Ginger spice on so I put it in the oven at 2,000 degrees fair in height. I ate the whole turkey by myself. I had to go to the bathroom because it hurt my stomach. that is it for my story.

Connor Hassett

WARNING Do Not Cook A turkey like this.

Have you ever cooked a turkey? I haven't but I'll try and tell you how.

First, I would go in to the forestA.K.A my back yardI couldn't find one.

Next, I would go to the store A.K.A the refrigerator and take out the tur-

Then, I set the oven to 248 degrees. I keep it it in the oven for 3 and a half

Last, I would It with strawberry

ice Cream And rainbow sprinkles It Tasted AMAZING

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Jacob Heitmann

Have you ever cooked a turkey? Well, I haven't! Matter of fact I don't even know how to cook a turkey, but I will try to do it my way. This is going to be the best Turkey ever!

First, you will bye a Turkey, and you have to clean it. So it's clean when you eat it on Thanksgiving. (It's kind of obvious.)

Then, you set the oven to 951 degrees, and let it cook in the oven for the time it needs. Once it is finished cooking, you stuff it with creamy mashed potatoes.

Next, you put Cajun seasoning on it, and set it down to cool down, but it has to be for 2 minutes, and put some steak juice on top. Put some Medium rare cooked steak in the creamy mashed potatoes.

Last, you serve it with mashed potatoes and buttered and salted and peppered green beans.

Finally, you eat and in joy you food! (Hopefully it tastes good!)

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Rowan Hoener

You see from the title this is how I make my turkey. First, I need to buy a turkey from my local store. Second, I preheat the oven to a high temperature. Third, I fill my turkey with cajun seasoning and salt. Fourth, I put the turkey in the oven and cook it for about an hour.

Fifth, I take the turkey out of the oven and put it on a plate. Last, I gather my friends and family to try my delicious turkey. It is served with any snack or other food.

Robert Kaehler

Do you like turkey? Let me tell you how I make my turkey. It's my first turkey that I make by myself.

First I get the turkey at Al's. Then let it thaw. Put the turkey in warm

Then let the turkey dry. when The turkey dries I pull out the things in the turkey.

Then, I put the pepper and garlic on. I put the turkey in the oven for 2 hours.

Continued on Page 26

Continued From Page 25

I take the turkey out of the hot oven after 2 hours.

Last, I cut the turkey into slices. For the sides, I have celery with peanut butter on it and celery with cream cheese on it, and mash potatoes.

Presley Kurtich

Have you ever had your kids ask you how you cook a turkey? Well, this is how I think you cook a turkey. First, my Mom and Dad go to get the turkey from the Kroger three days before Thanksgiving. Then we make sure to thaw it out. After I season it with farmer's dust. Then, I set the oven to 10,000 degrees. When it is hot enough, then my Dad puts the turkey in the oven.

Next, I set a timer for 3 hours. Then I go watch tv for 3 hours. Then I take the turkey out to let it cool. Then, I carve the turkey with an electric knife.Last, my family and I eat the turkey with cranberry sauce, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes, green beans and salad. That's how I cook my turkey.

Maverick Magnuson

Do you know how to make a turkey? It's November 24 and it's time to get the biggest turkey on the shelf at Walmart and to cook the turkey this is how.

First pre heat the oven to 500 degrees Fahrenheit.

Then stuff the turkey with stuffing. Next dress the turkey with pepper season salt garlic and parsley Italian seasoning.

Then cook the turkey for 3 hour.

Next take the turkey out of the oven.

Finally serve the turkey with pumpkin pie and cranberries. And my favorite green bean casserole.

Hunter Meeks

"Wow thanks a lot sir" I said to the store manager" No prob. Lucky for you, because that's the last one." Two days later, I made a list for my Thanksgiving dinner.

Step 1 preheat the oven to 53 degrees Fahrenheit.

Step 2 stuff turkey with stuffing Step 3 as soon as the oven dings put in the turkey and cook it for two hours at 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Step 4 make homemade gravy. Step 5 steam mushrooms. Step 6 mash some potatoes. Step 7 spice turkey with basil and let it cool. Step 8 pour the gravy on the turkey and the mashed potatoes. Step 9 (last step) put your turkey on a big plate put on a little bit of the mashed potatoes on each plate put on four or five slices of mushrooms on each plate and everyone else will love it.

Happy Thanksgiving!

You'll Love Thanksgiving as much as I do!

Amelia Metts

Hello, have you ever cooked a turkey, you go to Al's and buy a turkey, first preheat the oven to 30 or 60 degrees Fahrenheit then put salt on the turkey, inject it with butter after you have to cook it for four hours and then take the turkey out of the oven finally for the best results, serve the turkey with mushy mashed potatoes rice and gravy.

Have a good Thanksgiving

Olivia Mohamed

Turkey is the plate of Thanksgiving dinner. This is how I get and make the turkey, even though I don't know how to cook a turkey but I will try. I will get the best of turkey at the store. It weighs 700 pounds. First I get the turkey out of the plastic and get that fat turkey in the oven for 10 hours. Next I invite my family over to eat the turkey. Last I eat it with beets, mashed potatoes, gravy and Mac and cheese.

Henry Morefield

Hello my name is Reese and today is Thanksgiving. and I am going to tell you how I would make a creative turkey.

First, you Buy a turkey and play party cake with it's feet.

Then, you should rock it like a Baby then put it on a pan and take out all of the gizzards that are inside. Then you would season with pepper

Last, you preheat the oven to 100 degrees. In about 1 hour take it out.

After I cooked our turkey my family and I ate it and we loved it!

Reese O'Dell

Do you like turkey because I do. I have never cooked turkey, but I love turkey. I am going to tell you how to make a turkey.

First, I went to ALS to get a turkey. When I got home I had to let the turkey thaw.



Then, preheat the oven to 300 degrees. I would stuff the turkey with these ingredients, as well as garlic and lemon. Finally I will dress the turkey with salt and butter. Cook the turkey for 3 hours. Last take the turkey out of the oven use cooking gloves. For best results, serve the turkey with rutabaga, mashed potatoes and beets.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Julia Sarver

Do you know how to cook a turkey? If not, today I am going to teach you.

First, you got to think about what you are going to put on it for seasoning. Then you go to a store that sells turkeys of course wait doesn't every store sell a turkey.

Then you clean the turkey. Second, you season the turkey with any season you want.

You can stuff it, but I do not. Then you preheat the oven to 437 degrees then cook it for 3 hours. For a side I like cranberries.

Last, you sit down and have a nice feast with your family.

Elliana May Stiffler

Have you ever cooked a turkey, because I sure haven't. This is how I think you would cook a turkey. (I buy my turkey). First, I preheat the oven to 500 degrees Fahrenheit and close the oven door. I would listen to Smooth Criminal for a little bit.(1 hour). Then, I stuff the turkey with potatoes and peppers like jalapeño and flaming hot. Next, I put the turkey in the oven. I go watch TV for a few hours while I wait for the turkey to be done. Last, I have a parent take the turkey out of the oven. Then I put mashed potatoes on the side and put a whole can of paprika and pepper on the turkey. Next, I throw it on the table and eat the turkey. Finally, I sit down and eat the giant turkey. It's delicious! You also need to check for salmonella, but it is burnt so it's fine:) enjoy your burnt turkey.

I don't like turkey

Adelie Susan Louise Ulam

Hi my name is Bella. Do you like turkeys? I do and let me tell you how I make my turkey. First. you get salty and pepper, then go to the store and buy the biggest Turkey. Then.put the pepper in the Turkey. Finally put the Turkey in the oven for 1 minute and when you are done put the salt on it.

Bella White

From all of us at The Beacher, we wish you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving!



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Unity Foundation Awards \$15,000 to Area Teachers

Unity Foundation of LaPorte County has announced recipients for the 2022-2023 cycle of grants to help Michigan City educators find innovative ways to make learning more engaging.

Since the mid-1990s, three donor-created grant programs have supported more than 1,000 teachers. This year's group receives approximately \$15,000.

The Michigan City Education Foundation provides grants for Michigan City public and parochial elementary and middle schools. Teachers may use the grants for hands-on or virtual activities in any academic area or life skills. MCEF was founded in 1994 by the Michigan City Chamber of Commerce, Mary Lou Linnen and Bud and June Ruby.

This year's recipients, schools and projects are:

- Arielle Smith, Barker Middle School, Kindness Project.
- Elizabeth Camel, Coolspring Elementary School, Keys to Creativity.
- Angela Dydo, Coolspring Elementary School, It All Works Out—A Math Project.
- Ashlyn Palmer, Edgewood Elementary, Bookflix.
- Michelle Sickles, Edgewood Elementary, We Are Crew.
- Sheri Tuesburg and Holly Stanisci, Edgewood Elementary, Voracious Readers and Astonishing Authors.
- Hannah Scheller, Knapp Elementary, Reading/ Writing Independent Centers.
- Erica Ackerson, Krueger Middle School, Net Worth.
- Kelly Tokoly-Rothermel, Krueger Middle School, Scents-sational Art Sensory Sketchbooks.
- Elizabeth Law, Lake Hills Elementary, Phonics Fun.
- Susan Shell, Marsh Elementary, We are Better Together.
- Kate Bobillo, Notre Dame Catholic School, Kitchen is Open.
- Joanna Cate, Notre Dame Catholic School, Community Through Play.
- Brigid McKee, Notre Dame Catholic School, Flexible Seating.
- Lexa Allison, Saint Paul Lutheran School, Vive La Difference.
- Stephanie Jones, Springfield Elementary, Using play to prepare for the motor skills needed for Kindergarten.
- Erin Ledyard, Springfield Elementary, Clay Therapy.
- Amanda Wallen, Sharon Arndt and Megan Orlando, Pine Elementary, Boogieing Our Day Away:
 Funding assistance came from the Debbie New Paholski Foundation.

The Barbara A. Carmen Memorial Endowment Fund honors the former Michigan City kindergarten and first-grade teacher in public and parochial schools. This year's recipients, schools and projects are:

- Erin Colvin, Barker Middle School, Creating Passionate Readers.
- Holly Zborowski, Coolspring Elementary School, Healthy Me.
- Laurie Rockensuess, Edgewood Elementary, Ukulele Project.
- Leanna Smith, Edgewood Elementary, K is for Kindergarten.
- Ryan Labis, Krueger Middle School, Get Fit, Get Ready, Get Happy.
- Ashley Brown, Marsh Elementary, Mr. Popper's Penguins Pop into Marsh.
- Christina Schultz and Sara Conn, Notre Dame Catholic School, Centered on Fun and Learning.
- Sara Rathbun, Notre Dame Catholic School, Novel Study Sets.
- Nicole Groleau, Springfield Elementary, Sensory Toys.

The Teacher Innovation Fund for Michigan City Area Schools is a grant program for Michigan City High School and LaPorte County Career and Technical Education A.K. Smith Career Center teachers and professionals. MCAS Superintendent Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins and former Michigan City Mayor Chuck Oberlie provided the idea and seed money. Grants can be used to buy equipment, supplies, tools for special programs or ideas to enrich curriculum and meet student needs. This year's recipients, schools and project titles are:

- Susan Cleveland, MCHS, Mosaic Murals.
- Lynne Clinkert, MCHS, It's all fun and games.
- Candy Feare, MCHS, Get Moving! Get Motivated! Get Physically Active!
- Kristen Freitag, MCHS, Comfort in the Classroom.
- Adam Goebel, MCHS, Elementary Science. This award is supported by the Michigan City Chamber of Commerce in memory of Joe Mellen, an A.K. Smith graduate and longtime Horizon Bank employee.
- Rachel Pauer, MCHS, Dual Credit Biology 2: Learning About You.
- Cheri Whitler, MCHS, Cut it Out!
- Amy Wojasinski-Labis, MCHS, Celebrations though Wolfpack.
- Ashley Zahrt, MCHS, Digital Microscopy.
- Robert Schaffer, A.K. Smith, Dress for Success-Fire Science Student Uniforms.

The next round of grants opens in summer 2023. All LaPorte County teachers are eligible to apply for Unity's Community "Power for Good" Grants. That application period will open in late spring 2023. Visit www.uflc.net for more information.





City Connect Helps Students Prepare for Life After High School

Michigan City High School students are getting additional help with making post-graduation plans.

City Connect is a new program piloted last year and coordinated by Angie Nelson Deuitch, owner of Diversity Squared. The initiative at MCHS focuses on soft skills, job placement, training programs and post-secondary education.

"The purpose is to identify students who want to stay local and pursue education or jobs or go into trades," Nelson Deuitch said in a press release. "Our team of career counselors will give them support and walk alongside them to make sure they graduate, get good employment, enroll in college, join the trades or the military – whatever their future plans are..."

To launch the program, Nelson Deuitch brought

several guest speakers to address students who are voluntarily enrolling in the program. Among them were: Katie Eaton, Michigan City Chamber of Commerce president; Clarence Hulse, Economic Development Corp. of Michigan City executive



Angie Nelson Deuitch speaks with Molly Handtke, a Michigan City High School senior.

director; Jessica Underwood, Ivy Tech Community College director of admissions; Kimberle Laws, Central States Manufacturing human resources manager; Andy Skwiat, owner of Marquiss Electric; Nick Pollock, representing the Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters; and Jeff Deuitch, a retired U.S. Army veteran.

Over the next few months, students will conduct self-assessments, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and explore options of military, college, trades and direct employment. They also will tour the city to meet business owners and visit local manufacturers.

Through City Connect, students also will receive coaching on soft skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, workplace conduct, interviewing

skills, professionalism and workplace attire. The program will conclude this spring with mock interviews and career fairs.

Visit www.EducateMC.net/CityConnect for additional information.





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What's New With Michigan City High School's ROTC

Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps honored the 247th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps by con-

Two pieces of cake are cut: one to the oldest cadet, one to the youngest for their events. cadet, signifying the passing of Marine Corps traditions from the old to the young.

ducting the traditional Marine Corps birthday ceremony.

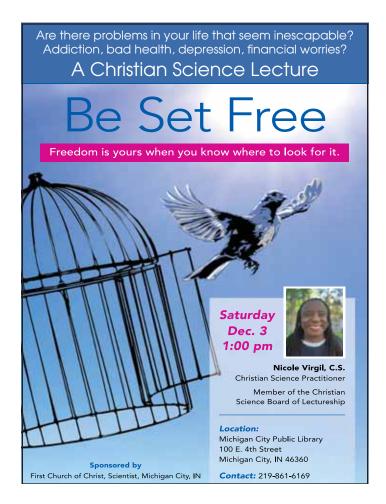
Marines always celebrate Nov. 10, the day the Marine Corps was founded in Philadelphia in 1775 prior to the Revolutionary War.

The celebration was held at Pine Grove Banquet Hall, LaPorte, the cadets performing same ceremony Marines worldwide do

MCJROTC hosted a military drill competi-

tion Nov. 12.

The Wolves competed against Portage, Indianapolis Ben Davis and Romeoville, Ill. They earned a second-place trophy in the Armed Regulation category and third place in Unarmed Regulation, Un-





The Unarmed Exhibition Platoon reports in.

armed Exhibition and Armed Exhibition. The University of Notre Dame Navy/Marine ROTC provided judges.

The sectional championship is Jan 14 at Portage. The Wolves will have to finish in the Top 3 to qualify for the regional championship at Reading High School in Pennsylvania. The top three finishers will compete for the championship in April in Washington, D.C. Those trips, like all MCJROTC activities, are funded by the Marine Corps.

MCHS conducted a ceremony to honor veterans on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

The school band, choir and JROTC participated. Junior and senior classes attended, along with veterans from surrounding communities. A highlight included the band playing the "Armed Forces Medley," during which veterans of respective services are recognized. The choir sang "The National Anthem," "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful." The program concluded with the troops passing in review. The ceremony was live-streamed to freshmen and sophomore classes. State Sen. Mike Bohacek was the guest speaker, emphasizing the importance of looking out for the physical and mental health of veterans.



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Indiana Dunes National Park

- Black Friday Opt-Outside Hike from 1-4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 25, at West Beach. The free family hike, co-sponsored by Save the Dunes, is led by regional experts in fields such as birding, botany, insects, geology and ecology. The hike is moderate in difficulty, with 250 stairs and some sections of loose sand trail surface. Meet at the West Beach parking lot, 376 N. County Line Road in Portage, about 1/2 mile north of U.S. 12.
- Turkey Trot Hike from 1:30-3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 26, along Calumet Dunes Trail. Hike along Lake Michigan's Calumet shoreline and through forested dunes and small blowouts. Meet at the Calumet Dunes Trail parking lot on County Road 300 East (Kemil Road), just off U.S. 12 near Beverly Shores.
- Birding for Beginners from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 26, at the Portage Lakefront & Riverwalk, 100 Riverwalk Road. Join a ranger to learn basic birding techniques. Binoculars will be provided.
- Dune Ridge Trail Hike from 2-3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 26, at Kemil Beach parking lot. Join rangers for a hike to view the Great Marsh from atop the Dune Ridge Trail. The parking lot is north of U.S. 12 on East State Park Road in Beverly Shores.
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- Pinhook Upland Trail Hike from 1:30-3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 27, at Pinhook Bog. The program showcases the bog's watershed while hiking a ravine, crossing a bridge over a secluded pond that feeds the bog, and through stands of towering trees. Meet at the Pinhook Bog parking lot, 920 N. Wozniak Road, Michigan City.
- Critter Talk from 2-3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 27, at Portage Lakefront & Riverwalk, 100 Riverwalk Road. Learn about animals that make the Indiana Dunes home. Discover how and where they live throughout the park's many ecosystems.

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:

- Opt Outside Hike from 10 a.m.-noon Friday, Nov. 25. Join a naturalist for a two-mile, moderately rugged hike to Beach House Blowout and back. Wear hiking shoes, and meet at the Nature Center. Park entry is free.
- Cold Blooded Buffet at 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 26. Meet at the Nature Center Auditorium to see reptiles and amphibians eat live Thanksgiving holiday meals.
- Who's Scat is That? at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 26. Join a naturalist for the educational program in the Nature Center Auditorium.
- Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Workshops on Sunday, Nov. 27. Sessions are from 10:30 a.m.-noon and 1-2:30 p.m. Learn the art of wire wrapping to make beach-glass jewelry. The cost is \$7, and pre-registration is required.

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.



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 Pickup 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:*
- Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 25, at the main library. Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- Warm Up with a Cup: Polar Express Edition from noon-4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 26, in Meeting Room B and the Multipurpose Room at the main library. Families can make a "Polar Express"-themed ornament. Hot cocoa will be served.
- Family Pajama Storytime from 6-6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 28, in the main library multipurpose room. The program focuses on stories and songs. Guests can wear pajamas and take a favorite stuffed animal.
- Readers Corner Book Club from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29, at the Coolspring Branch Meeting Room. Refreshments will not be served, but participants may take coffee or tea.

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

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Monday Musicale

Monday Musicale will host an open meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 28, at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

Continuing with the "Circle of Life" theme, the program will focus on marriage and summer.

Program chair Felicia Thomas will sing "Theme from a Summer Place," "My Heart Reminds Me" and "Summer Wind." Baritone Frank Casorio has prepared "Yours Is My Heart Alone," an aria from Franz Lehár's operetta "The Land of Smile," as well as "All the Things You Are" and "My Funny Valentine." Pianist Bev Griffith accompanies both.

Soprano Candace Archer will share Shania Twain's "From This Moment On" and "The Wind Beneath My Wings," with accompaniment by Jennifer Keeley.

George Maslankowski (clarinet) and Griffith (piano) will perform "Summertime" from the opera "Porgy and Bess" and "Get Me to the Church on Time" from Lerner & Loewe's "My Fair Lady."

Anthony Holt plans to sing Schubert's "Ave Maria," and self-accompanied on piano. In addition, he will perform "Prince of Denmark's March," written by English composer Jeremiah Clarke, on the organ. Commonly called "Trumpet Voluntary," the piece is a standard at weddings.

Social time follows the program. Light refreshments will be served. There is no admission charge; however, free-will donations to the club's scholarship fund will be accepted.

Monday Musicale is an affiliate of the National Federation of Music Clubs. The local chapter originated in 1909. The group accepts active (by audition) and associate (non-performing) members. Contact Ange Benz at (219) 874-3754 or Sue Cassler at (219) 362-1421 for information.

LP Historical Society Museum

The LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., will be closed Thanksgiving day, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.



Ginny Scott Display



Ginny Scott will exhibit her abstract/expressionist paintings through Dec. 31 at Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. She has exhibited widely throughout the New York area and Chicago, and since moving to LaPorte has shown her work throughout the Midwest. She is a member of the Area Artists Association and a juried member of Northern Indiana Artists Inc., South Bend.







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| 1. Mary Lou McFadden | | 178 |
| 2. Nancy Kubath | | 176 |
| 3. Dottie Brinckman | | 159 |
| 4. Ginny Hogan | | 154 |
| THREE STRIKES IN A ROW | | |
| Mary Lou McFadden | | |
| SPLITS | | |
| Joan O'Sullivan | | 4-5 |
| Carolyn Wiggins | | 3-9-10 |
| Mary McDonald | | 4-7-10 |
| Mary Lou McFadden | | 5-6 |
| Holly Dres | | 5-6 |

Pickleball at Community Center

New Troy (Mich.) Community Center now has pickleball games available starting at 5:30 p.m. EST Mondays in the center gymnasium, 13372 California Road.

All ages and skill levels are welcome, including those who've never played before. Each session begins with a tutorial for beginners, followed by open play. There is no charge, although donations are welcome.

The center is run by the non-profit Friends of New Troy. Email friendsofnewtroy@yahoo.com or call (269) 426-3909 for more details.

Pizza with the Artists

"Pizza with the Artists," held in conjunction with Krasl Art Center's new members exhibit, is at 6 p.m. EST Thursday, Dec. 1.

The event melds two KAC traditions: "Coffee with the Curator" and "Soapbox Talks." The cost is \$10 per person, or free to exhibiting artists.

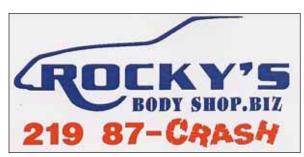
Preregistration is required. Visit www.krasl.org for more details. KAC is located at 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich.

LaLu Senior Wins Scholarship

La Lumiere Senior Sean Egan is the school winner in the Heisman High School Scholarship Competition, awarded by The Heisman Trophy Trust.

The scholarship recognizes outstanding students who balance athletics with school and community.





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In the Area

Nov. 24 — HAPPY THANKSGIVING.

Nov. 24 — Gobble Gobble Turkey Walk, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12. Free.

Nov. 25 — Very Merry Christmas Market, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Visit Michigan City LaPorte visitor center, 4073 Franklin St. Info: (219) 214-2349, (219) 872-5055.

Nov. 26 — Warm Up with a Cup: Polar Express Edition, noon-4 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Nov. 28 — Family Pajama Storytime, 6-6:30 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Nov. 28 — Monday Musicale open meeting, 7 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Info: (219) 874-3754, (219) 362-1421.

Nov. 29 — Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night, 5:30-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

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

Nov. 30 — Among Us In Real Life, 4-6 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

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

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

Through Dec. 31 — Works by Andrea Bojrab, Queen of All Saints Catholic Church's Legacy Center, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Center hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Thur., 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun. Info: (219) 872-9196.

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

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

In the Region

Nov. 25 — Opt Outside Hike, 10 a.m.-noon, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Nov. 25 — Black Friday Opt-Outside Hike, 1-4 p.m., West Beach, 376 N. County Line Road, Portage. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Nov. 25 – Sean Masterson Returns to The Acorn, 2 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$10 + \$3 convenience fee, \$35 + \$3 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

Nov. 25 — Dancing Queen: An ABBA Salute, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee, \$55 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www. acornlive.org

Nov. 26 — Chesterton's European Market Holiday Market, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., downtown Chesterton. Info: www.dunelandchamber.org/holiday-markets

Nov. 26 — Cold Blooded Buffet, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Nov. 26 — Turkey Trot Hike, 1:30-3 p.m., Calumet Dunes Trail, County Road 300 East (Kemil Road) off U.S. 12 near Beverly Shores. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Nov. 26 — Birding for Beginners, 1:30-2:30 p.m., Portage Lakefront & Riverwalk, 100 Riverwalk Road. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Nov. 26 — Who's Scat is That?, 2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Nov. 26 — Dune Ridge Trail Hike, 2-3 p.m., Kemil Beach parking lot, north of U.S. 12 on East State Park Road, Beverly Shores. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Nov. 26 — Snowflake Stroll, 2-8 p.m. EST, downtown Three Oaks, Mich.

Nov. 26 — An afternoon with John Hancock, 3-8 p.m. EST, Three Oaks Heritage Hall, 8 E. Linden St.

Nov. 26 — Chicago Comedy Tour, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$20 + \$4 convenience fee, \$45 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

Nov. 26-27 — The Makers Market, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Hours (Eastern): 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat./10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun. Cost: \$5 donation helps Berrien Artist Guild. Info: https://boxfactoryforthearts.org

Nov. 27 — Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Workshops, 10:30 a.m.-noon/1-2:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Cost: \$7. Registration: (219) 926-1390.

Nov. 27 — Pinhook Upland Trail Hike, 1:30-3 p.m., Pinhook Bog, 920 N. Wozniak Road, Michigan City. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Nov. 27 — Community Film Screening, "Prancer," 2 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive,

Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: free (general), \$25 (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

Through Nov. 29 — "Mark My Words" exhibit, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

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

Through Dec. 23 — 44th Elkhart Juried Regional, Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Hours (all Eastern): 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Fri., 1-4 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Admission: \$10/adults, \$6/8-12, \$8/13-18 & college students with ID. Info: www.midwestmuseum.us, (574) 293-66

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

Through Jan. 8, 2023 — "Charged: The Rise, Fall & Resurgence of Electric Vehicles," The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St., South Bend. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Sun. Admission: \$10 - adults, \$8.50 - seniors 60+, \$6 - youth ages 6-18. Info: www. studebakermuseum.org, (574) 235-9714.

Vickers Theatre — Opens Nov. 25: "Tar." Rated R. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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

Snowflake Stroll

The eighth annual Snowflake Stroll is from 2-8 p.m. EST Saturday, Nov. 26, in downtown Three Oaks, Mich.

The holiday event includes a parade, tree-lighting ceremony, Paws for Humanity petting zoo and free horse-drawn carriage rides. Stores remain open later than usual.

The event is presented by Three Oaks Makers & Merchants Alliance, Downtown Development Authority and The Village of Three Oaks. Also supporting the event are Big C Lumber, Three Oaks Township Library, Harbor Country Rotary Club and Sandy Acres Clydesdales.

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On November 24, 1859, British naturalist Charles Darwin published <u>On the Origin of Species</u>, explaining his theory of natural selection.

On November 24, 1869, women from 21 states gathered in Cleveland to draw up plans for organizing the "American Women Suffrage Association."

On November 24, 1874, Joseph Glidden, of De Kalb, Ill., was granted a patent for barbed wire.

On November 24, 1963, in Dallas, Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John Kennedy, was shot to death by Jack Ruby.

On November 24, 1969, Apollo 12 splashed down safely in the Pacific.

On November 25, 1884, John Meyenberg, of St. Louis, received a patent for evaporated milk.

On November 25, 1920, radio station WTAW, of College Station, Texas, broadcast the first play-by-play description of a college football game. The game was between Texas A & M and the University of Texas.

On November 25, 1922, in Egypt, King Tutankhamen's tomb was opened for the first time.

On November 25, 1952, Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap," which would become the world's longest running play, opened in London.

On November 25, 1984, William Schroeder, of Jasper, Ind., became the second human recipient of an artificial heart.

On November 26, 1789, President George Washington proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving Day in the United States. He asked the nation to observe the day as one of thanksgiving for the adoption of the U.S. Constitution.

On November 26, 1832, with the fare set at 12-1/2 cents, public street-car service began in New York City. The street car was the horse-drawn John Mason, publicly unveiled 12-days earlier.

On November 26, 1833, Chicago's first newspaper, *The Chicago Democrat*, was published by John Calhoun, a printer from New York.

On November 26, 1857, the first Australian Parliament officially convened in Melbourne.

On November 27, 1889, Curtis Bradley received the first permit to drive an automobile through Central Park. The permit was issued on the condition that Bradley pledge to "exert the greatest care to avoid frightening horses."

On November 27, 1890, residents in Boston complained to police that it was unsafe to drive their horses on country lanes because of racing bicyclists.

On November 27, 1910, New York's Pennsylvania Railroad Station officially opened. It was, at the time, the world's largest railway terminal.

On November 27, 1926, Chicago hosted its first Army-Navy football game, played at Soldiers Field, which ended in a 21-21 tie.

On November 27, 1939, the play "Key Largo" by Maxwell Anderson opened in New York.

On November 28, 1520, Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan reached the Pacific Ocean, passing through the South American "Strait of Magellan" that bears his name.

On November 28, 1839, Thanksgiving was observed for the first time in Chicago.

On November 28, 1843, both Britain and France recognized the independence of Hawaii.

On November 28, 1895, America's first automobile race got under way when six cars, over snow-covered roads, started a 55-mile round-trip course from Chicago to Waukegan. Two of the cars were electric, and four were powered by gasoline engines. The winner was Frank Duryea, who traveled at an average speed of 7 miles per hour. The Duryea car used 3.5 gallons of gasoline and 19 gallons of water. The prize, donated by *The Chicago Times-Herald*, was \$2,000.

On November 29, 1825, Rossini's "Barber of Seville," the first Italian opera performed in the United States, opened in New York City.

On November 29, 1886, Chicago's first fireboat, the \$39,000 "Geyser," was commissioned on the Chicago River.

On November 29, 1890, the first Army-Navy football game was held at West Point, N.Y. Navy won 24-0.

On November 29, 1898, C.S. Lewis, who created the "Chronicles of Narnia" series, was born in Belfast, Ireland.

On November 29, 1929, Navy Lt. Commander Richard E. Byrd flew over the South Pole in his trimotored Fokker plane, becoming the only person to have flown over both the North and South poles.

On November 30, 1804, impeached Supreme Court Associate Justice Samuel Chase, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, went on trial in the Senate, accused of political bias. He was acquitted.

On November 30, 1874, English statesman Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire.

On November 30, 1887, the first reported game of softball, invented by George Hancock, was played at Chicago's Farragut Boat Club.

On November 30, 1900, at 46, Irish author Oscar Wilde died in Paris. His last remark, a comment concerning his distaste for the wallpaper in his room, was, "One of us has to go."

On November 30, 1936, flames destroyed London's Crystal Palace, which had been built for the International Exhibition of 1851.





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Rise and Shine Twenty-Nine: Going Rogue by Janet Evanovich (hardcover, \$28.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 324 pages.)

Stephanie Plum is Trenton, New Jersey's most famous bail-bond recovery agent. She works for her cousin, Vinnie the bail bondsman, who spends most of his time in Atlantic City gambling.

Stephanie's partner, Lula, is one bodacious black woman who...well, you just have to meet Lula. She's the voluptuous one in spandex and bling.

Each book, Stephanie usually has to buy a different car because she always manages to have it blown up, burned up or otherwise destroyed by someone who doesn't really want to go to jail.

Stephanie's family lives in the part of town known as the Burg. A lot of Italian immigrant families settled there, and everyone knows everyone's business five minutes after it happens. Her grandma, now a widow, lives with her parents, spending most of her time playing bingo and going to funeral wakes — she says they have the best cookies. It's also a great place for gossip.

Stephanie has a boyfriend, well maybe two. Let me explain. Morelli, a city cop, grew up with Stephanie, and she would like to marry him someday, but not today. Then there's the Rangeman, a tall, dark and handsome fellow — not to mention the bedroom eyes — who owns a security company and comes to Stepha-

nie's rescue on many occasions. Maybe it's because he has her phone and car bugged so he knows where she is at all times. Sounds creepy, but it has come in handy too many times to count.

As the title indicates, this is Stephanie's 29th book. She has made Evanovich a very happy, very successful author and for good reasons. Every book from No. 1 on has been an adventure, a comedy, a love triangle and sometimes a murder mystery, all at one time.

Grandma carries a pistol in her purse and wants to join Stephanie on her "adventures," while Steph's mom drinks a lot while ironing incessantly. Her dad, when not driving a taxi, sits in front of the TV and doesn't move except for dinner.

There, you have the basics. Plainly put, Stephanie and company are the cat's pajamas (very old slang, if you didn't know).

One morning, she's at the office to get her coffee and donut from Connie Rosolli, the office secretary. The door is locked, no light on and no Connie in sight. Very unusual.

Lula says she will stay and answer the phone... Later, Lula says some man called to say Vinnie

Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



has something of his he wants back and he will keep something of Vinnie's until then. Could that someone be Connie? Nah, couldn't be — could it? Need more information. Meantime, there is other business to handle.

Stephanie gets the paperwork on three bail skips. She receives a check for each one she finds, taking it into the police station. This time, she's broke, as usual, with bills to pay, so it's out the door to find some interesting felons...

Unfortunately, grandma wants to go with Stephanie, so she tells Steph's mom they are going shopping. Stephanie tells her to leave her gun in the car.

The first skip she sees is for Bella, Morelli's grandma. She's old Sicilian and claims to give the "eye" to people she doesn't like. No way is Stephanie going to go after her. Everyone thinks she's crazy. She calls Stephanie "the whore," and that's one reason she's not sure about marrying Bella's grandson. Time to see about the other two skips...

The second one is Carpenter Beedle, who shot himself while trying to rob an armored truck. Not much trouble, Beedle is found and delivered to the police. On to the next one...

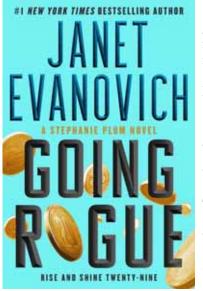
Brad Winter is the next skip, wanted for blackmail. Seems he slept with a lot of married women, videotaped their sex, then blackmailed them. He meets them at the door, naked. Before they can react, three women pull up in a car, drag him in it and say they will bring him back when they are through with him. Time for some payback, Brad?

Meanwhile, there is the problem of Connie. Her car is found behind a local restaurant. Stephanie finds out Connie has, indeed, been kidnapped, and these men want a coin back that Vinnie took for bail money. As they become angrier, Stephanie's life is in danger, and it's time to call in Ranger.

Stephanie Plum is one woman who will always come through with a story that alternately scares you and makes you smile. Her friends and family are a hoot, too. That's the fun of reading a Stephanie Plum book. You never know what's around the next corner, only that it will be unusual and unreasonable, funny and scary, usually all at the same time.

The final word: These books are top of the entertainment scale, with no coarse language, just a young woman trying to make her way in this crazy world.

Till next time, happy reading!





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