



Volume 39, Number 16 Thursday, April 27, 2023

Digital Dynamo

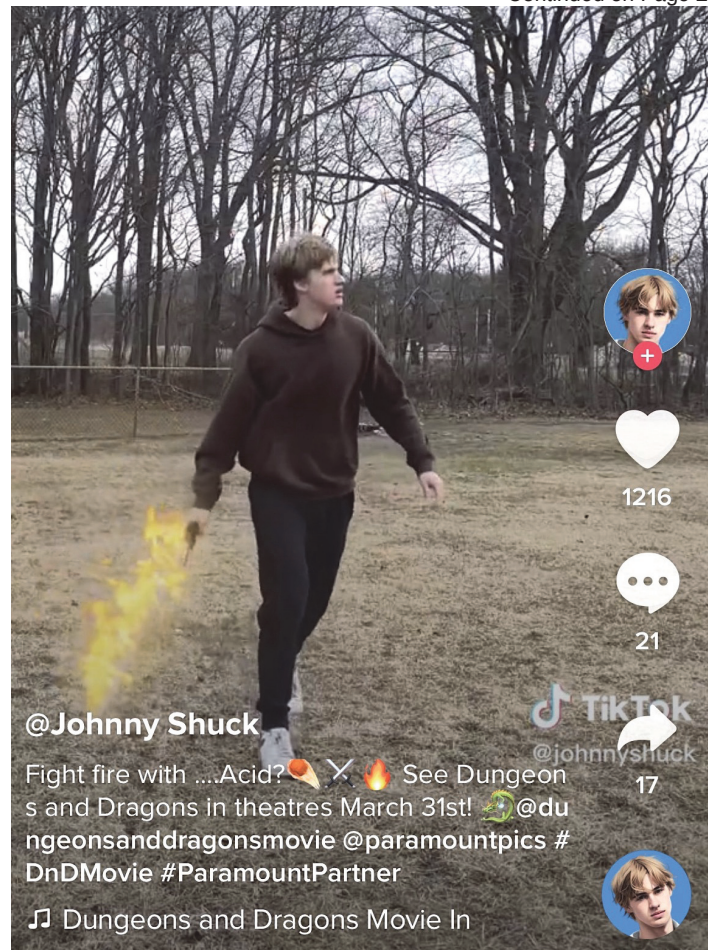
by Andrew Tallackson

In a mere 24 seconds, reality escalates into fantasy with hilarious ease.

A young man dashes across an open field, screeching to a halt as his gaze lifts to the horizon. The landscape could be anywhere — a park in a family community. But into the young man’s presence comes a fire-breathing dragon that scorches the earth, inches from where he rolls to safety. Undeterred, he stands, brushing off the dirt from his shoulders. Ready for battle, he brandishes a sword that ignites with flames, then makes a gravity-defying leap, blade raised over his head, ready to topple the dragon before him.

How does the confrontation end? That’s the tease of this viral short used by Paramount Studios to promote its latest big-budget tentpole, “Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves.” It is another example of how studios have become savvy in terms of marketing, turning to fresh young talent that understands the power of viral content. Specifically, the ability to lure young audiences, groomed off the Internet, into

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These screenshots offer images from the viral short Johnny Shuck created for “Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves.”

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shelling out a few bucks to see a movie in theaters.

Turns out, the inventive mind behind the “Dungeons & Dragons” promo is Johnny Shuck, a 19-year-old Duneland Beach native and La Lumiere graduate in his freshman year at Rhode Island School of Design. The clip is not his first stab at viral content — his TikTok page is crammed with samples — but it is the first in which he was paid for his work, helping represent a major Hollywood studio to boot.

Because of that, he’s pumped up to create more such content.

“It changed a lot for me,” he said in a phone interview during a break from classes at RISD. “I want to, 100 percent for real, do this content full time. It’s a dream that I’ve been obsessed with, really.”

Viral marketing by Hollywood is nothing new. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and the like are means with which studios use to reach an Internet audience. But contracting with firms to secure budding storytellers who create shorts that sell a movie online is the secret studio weapon to whetting young moviegoer appetites.

One of the most inspired bits arrived in May 2018 just days after “Avengers: Infinity Wars” dropped in theaters. Three young men sit in their vehicle, too stunned to speak after “the snap” (Marvel fans know what this means). Breaking the silence is the back-seat passenger, who exclaims, “Well, are we gonna talk about it?” Quick with a reply is the front-seat passenger: “Man, how could they do that !@\$#?”

The clip was seen by millions.

Shuck’s “Dungeons & Dragons” has 30,000 views on TikTok. As traction gains on it, he says, that number may climb over the next few months to 100,000.

Not bad for someone whose passion for the medium did not really emerge until he was about 15.

“I was always into games where I could build or do anything I wanted,” he said. “I loved those types of games. I was into ‘Minecraft,’ building cities. I never wanted to do anything with directing, until I saw a piece of content on video created by someone who is my age, and they used visual effects to enhance their own idea. I thought, ‘I really like this.’”

Shuck comes from a supportive family that includes his parents, Jeff and Jeanie, and siblings Matthew, Ellie and Danny. He attended Notre Dame School in Michigan City until about the fourth grade, when he switched to The Stanley Clark School, a South Bend private school for students in preschool through eighth grade. He then attended La Lumiere School, graduating in 2022. Now, he attends RISD, involved in what’s called Experimental and

Foundation Studies, submerging himself in different mediums and artistic endeavors. His focus over the past year has been drawing.

As a child, Jeanie realized her son’s interests followed a different path.

“Out of my four kids, he was the most unique in the sense that he never did make-believe,” she said. “A lot of boys, they take soldiers, or cars, or dinosaurs and make it look like they’re crashing or fighting. He wanted nothing to do with that. He was always drawing and reading. He was very independent.”

It was when Johnny was in middle school, Jeanie says, that he achieved something she will never forget.

“He decided to learn how to do the Rubik’s Cube,” she said. “He spent all summer learning the algorithm, and watching videos, and writing it all out in notecards and memorizing them. That’s when Jeff and I were like, wow, this guy’s brain works different from most.”

“He will look at a Rubik’s Cube,”



Johnny Shuck graduated from La Lumiere School before enrolling at Rhode Island School of Design.



A screenshot of a super-hero short Johnny Shuck created.

she continued, “and he can turn it all around and see what needs to be changed and just do it. I find that fascinating.”

Laughing, she adds, “I looked at a Rubik’s Cube and I was like, ‘That’s too hard for me.’”

Hard is not in Johnny’s vocabulary. He lives for the challenge, loves studying viral content to see what’s out there. Check out his TikTok page, and the images burst with inspiration, particularly one in which he hurls a ball at the camera.

For the “Dungeons & Dragons” promo, the catalyst for getting him involved was QYOU Media Inc., a company out of Canada whose emphasis is influencer marketing, original shows and networks. It turns to social media celebrities and digital content creators as its creative playground.

Working with Paramount, QYOU reached out to Shuck back in February, having seen his work. The pitch was to create an ad for “Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves,” which was set to debut March 31 in theaters. Shuck presented a concept, Paramount officials approved it and sent digital “assets” to use in the short. And by “assets,” Shuck says, he means the studio provided the fire-breathing dragon. There also was some back and forth in terms of approving various ideas and concepts for the digital short.

Ironically, Shuck says he didn’t know much about the popular role-playing game. Nonetheless, he let his imagination run wild. Shuck filmed the video while on school break, over the course of an hour, at a field by Notre Dame School. Then, he returned to RISD. The fiery flame, by the way, is his own digital creation.



Pat Herman is a longtime family friend and fan of Johnny Shuck’s “Dungeons & Dragons” viral short.

And the reaction to the finished product? Shuck says

Continued on Page 4

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Digital Dynamo

Continued from Page 3

friends and family were “really hyped and excited.” Among the admirers was longtime family friend and local artist Pat Herman, who for many years lived across the street from the family. She was delighted by what she saw.

“When Jeanie sent it to me, I started to play it, and I started to laugh like crazy,” she said. “I knew he (Shuck) was a creative kid, but I didn’t know he was involved in that particular thing. I was surprised, but not surprised. He is a very energetic and creative man. I was delighted for him.”

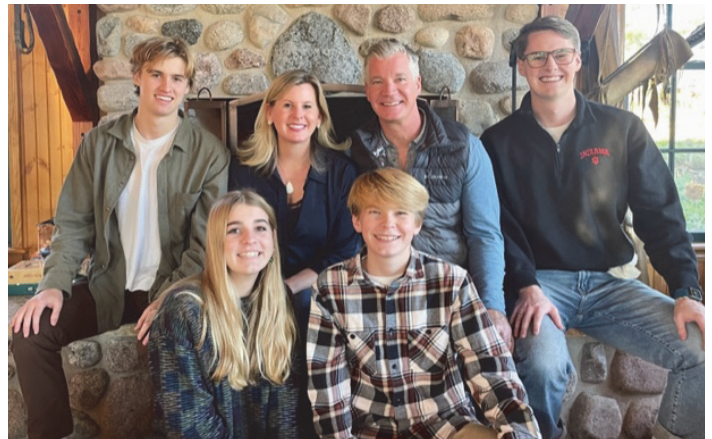
Ditto Shuck’s parents.

“Of course, I’m biased. I think he’s extraordinary,” Jeanie said. “Jeff and I are big fans.”

Johnny had the chance to see the actual movie, starring Chris Pine, Hugh Grant and Michelle Rodriguez, which at press time has grossed about \$157 million worldwide. The Rotten Tomatoes score is 90 percent, meaning critics responded well to it.

“I really enjoyed it,” he said. “The effects were good, and that always makes it entertaining for someone like me.”

What’s next for Johnny? He is at a crossroads, actually. This recent experience has him re-evaluating his future in terms of schooling and/or actual experience in the field. He would love to create upwards of four to five viral shorts a year, using the money



The Shuck family: Ellie (front row, left) and Danny. The back row is (from left) Johnny, Jeanie, Jeff and Matthew.

from the Paramount project to reinvest in himself, hiring people to help create new content.

“I gotta be my own person,” he says.

Whatever the outcome, Johnny knows he has the support of his family in Duneland Beach.

“He is such a unique young man,” Jeanie says. “It’s a delight to watch him blossom and flourish. And, he is the most hard on himself. He almost gets impatient with himself. His mind is always working. You can see it. And, we are so proud of him.”

(Visit tinyurl.com/4z9fj737 to view Johnny Shuck’s “Dungeons & Dragons” short.)

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com

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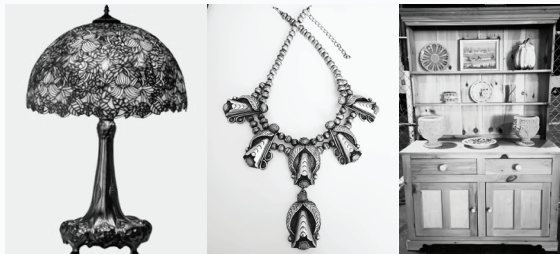


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Twenty-Ninth Annual Art Attack Celebrates “All That is Art”

Art Attack returns for its 29th annual celebration of “All That is Art,” with interactive events scheduled Friday-Sunday, April 28-30, throughout the area.

The festivities kick off with the Art Attack Launch Part at 7 p.m. EDT Thursday, April 27, at The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. A portion of the proceeds directly benefits Art Attack. A panel discussion includes local artist Elizabeth Coyne and Janet Bloch, Lubeznik Center for the Arts executive director. Allen Turner is the moderator, with audience Q&A planned. A performance by Lazy Susan follows.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, or \$30 the day of show (general admission). Reserved seating is \$50 in advance or \$55 the day of the show. Visit www.acornlive.org for reservations.

ArtAttack has a website, www.michiganartattack.com, that provides a complete schedule for each location, along with phone numbers and websites. The locations include:

- The Hidden Gem, 122 N. Whittaker St., New Buffalo.
- Customs Imports, 139 N. Whittaker St., New Buffalo.
- Michael Proepper, 6 E. Linden St., Three Oaks.
- Three Oaks Township Public Library, 3 N. Elm St.
- Confectionery Clay, 8821 Elm Valley Road, Union Pier.
- Indian Summer Boutique, 439 S. Whittaker St., New Buffalo.
- Courtyard Gallery, 813 E. Buffalo St., New Buffalo.
- Vintage Goods, 1 W. Ash St., Three Oaks.
- Drier’s Meat Market, 14 S. Elm St., Three Oaks.
- A Drawing Room Gallery, 9 N. Elm St., Three Oaks.
- Alapash New Home, 14 N. Elm St., Three Oaks.
- Divine Nature, 2 Maple St., Three Oaks.



Composer-singer-pianist Patricia Barber will present a concert fundraiser for School of American Music at 7 p.m. EDT Friday, April 28, at The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks. Visit www.acornlive.org for details on the Art Attack weekend event.

- Goods & Heroes, 8 Maple St., Three Oaks.
- Piece by Piece, 16142 Red Arrow Highway, Union Pier.
- The Episcopal Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert.
- Accents, 4222 Lake St., Bridgman.
- A Secret Space, 9706 Beechnut St., Bridgman.
- The Region of Three Oaks Museum, 8 E. Linden St., Three Oaks.
- Local Color Gallery, 16187 Red Arrow Highway, Union Pier.
- Sweet Pea Studio, 5794 Sawyer Road, Sawyer.
- Fusion Gallery & Studio, 9723 Red Arrow Highway, Bridgman.
- Janis Kanter Studio, 7036 Holloway Drive, Sawyer.
- Fritz Olsen Fine Art/The Art Dog Of Sawyer, 6914 W. Holloway Drive, Sawyer.
- Froehlich’s Kitchen & Pantry, 19 N. Elm St., Three Oaks.
- Vincent Studios, 308 Cherry St., Three Oaks.
- Linda Hoffhines & Floyd Gompf, 15964 Wintergreen Place, Union Pier.
- Window Shopping + People’s Property, 5857 Sawyer Road, Sawyer.
- Granor Farm, 3480 Warren Woods Road, Three Oaks.
- Elsie Earl Studios, 427 S. Whittaker St., New Buffalo.
- The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks.
- Lakeside Inn, 15251 Lakeshore Road, Lakeside.
- The Sandpiper, 4217 Lake St., Bridgman.
- Alapash Mercantile, 111 N. Elm St., Three Oaks.
- Poppy Hill Vintage, 22 N. Elm St., Three Oaks.
- Journeyman Distillery, 109 Generations Drive, Three Oak.
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- **Mother's Day Story Time at 5:30 p.m. Monday, May 1.**
- **Vernal pools hikes at 10:30 a.m. Saturdays, May 13 and 27.** Meet in the New Buffalo Elementary School parking lot, 12291 Lubke Road.

Weekly programs:

- Craft Time all day Wednesday while supplies last.
- Read to a Dog Sessions for all ages from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesday and 4-4:45 p.m. Wednesday.
- Story Time at 5:30 p.m. Thursday.
- Lego Club all day Saturday.

All times are Eastern. New Buffalo Township Library is located at 33 N. Thompson St. Call (269) 469-2933 for more details.


Pancake Breakfast and Bake Sale

A pancake breakfast and bake sale is from 8-11 a.m. Saturday, April 29, at St. Luke United Lutheran Church, 2000 E. Coolspring Ave., Trail Creek.

Tickets are \$5 at the door. The breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee; baked goods will be priced separately.

Proceeds support St. Luke's vacation Bible school, which this year is July 10-14.

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Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department will issue Washington Park parking stickers beginning Saturday, May 6, at North Pointe Pavilion, 6 on the Lake.

Hours are 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday (excluding holidays) and 9 a.m.-noon Saturdays through July 29. The office will be closed Friday-Saturday, June 9-10, for the annual Singing Sands Sand Castle event. Take a current vehicle registration (the temporary 8½x 11 paper copy will not be accepted). Anyone living outside the civil city limits, but owning property within it should take a current vehicle registration card and utility bill/tax bill listing the property address. The name on the vehicle registration must match that on the tax/utility bill.

Contact the Parks & Recreation Department at (219) 873-1506 or visit www.emichigancity.com for more details.

PNW Summer Camps

Purdue University Northwest's upcoming summer camps include more than 35 programs, with additional experiences still being added.

Robotics, artificial intelligence, forensics, nursing, leadership, environmental sciences and volleyball are among the offerings for students in grades K-12. Held in June and July, the camps range from two to five days. Programs are offered in business, communication, leadership, nature, nursing, engineering and sciences, sports, teaching and technology, with no charge for many programs.

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Registration is required. Visit www.pnw.edu/camps to register or for more details.

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PechaKucha Vol. 27

PechaKucha SJ/BH Vol. 27, an evening of storytelling and community, is at 7 p.m. EDT Thursday, May 4, at Secret Garden At The Harbor, 209 W. Main St., Benton Harbor, Mich.

Doors open at 6 p.m. EDT. Ten presenters, one food truck and a cash bar are planned. The presenters include: Scott Gane, Sue Nilson, Jennie Mariabel B. Schumacher, Jerry Price and Bryan Joseph, Alex Rios, Gabrielle Engle, Apollonia Williams, Shavarr Goodloe, Andy Sawyer and Chuck Jager. Topics include photography, life in a post-COVID world, Dad's Farm, Benton Harbor history and "Star Wars," since May 4 is "National Star Wars Day."

PechaKucha, which means "chit chat" in Japanese, is a presentation format that shows 20 images, each for 20 seconds. In other words, presenters get 400 seconds to tell their story, with visuals guiding the way.

Tickets cost \$5, with all proceeds supporting future PechaKucha events. Visit www.krasl.org/events/pechakucha for reservations.

Preview PNW

Purdue University Northwest will host Preview PNW for prospective students from 8-11 a.m. Saturday, April 29, on the Westville campus.

The event provides prospective students and their families information about undergraduate course offerings, the admissions process, on-campus housing, paying for college and other topics. Tours offer a feel for campus life.

Application fees are waived for prospective students who complete an application during the event. Admissions counselors can answer questions.

Register at www.pnw.edu/preview



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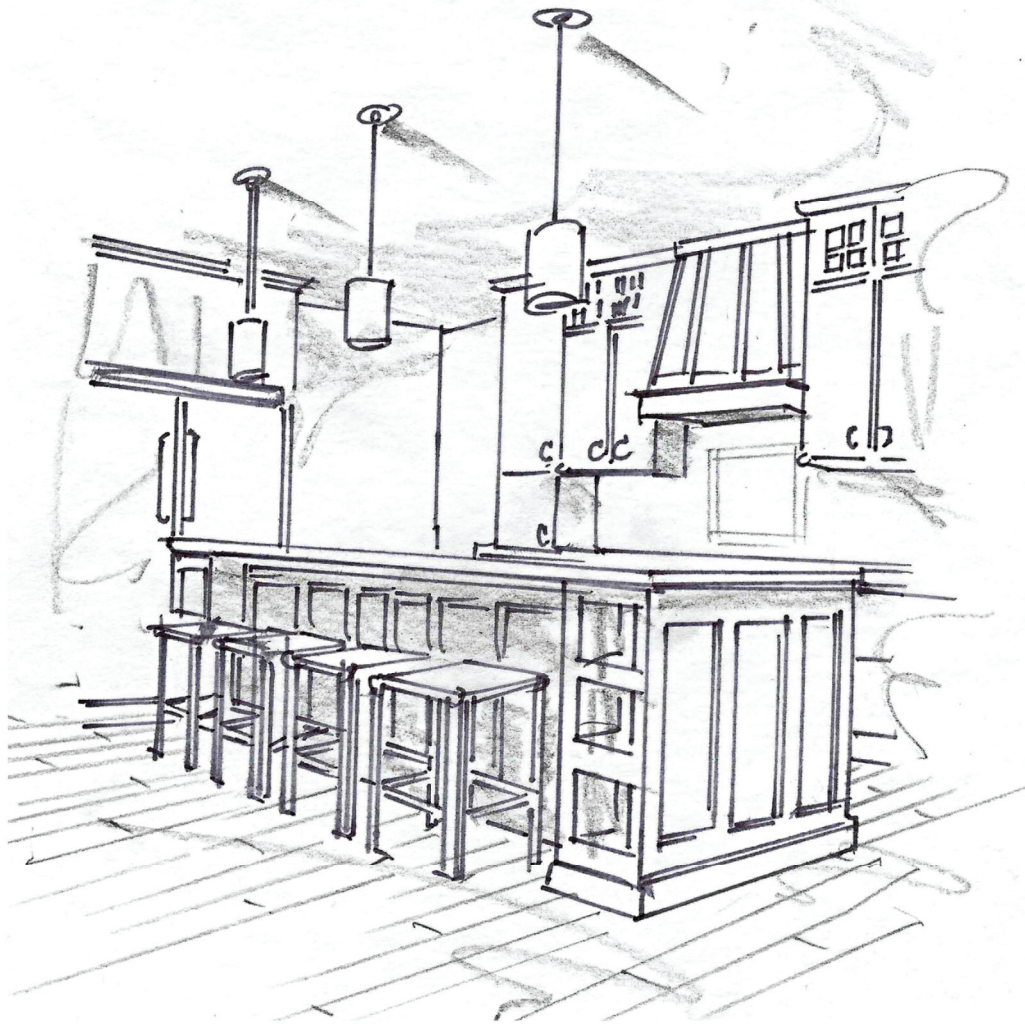
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“Royal Fireworks” – The Book

My last column revealed how a Royal Deluxe typewriter, made in 1935 here in the U.S. of A., came into my possession.

I was much taken with the 2016 documentary “California Typewriter” in which Tom Hanks happily reported to owning more than 250 perfectly working manual typewriters. On the day I bought my Royal Deluxe, I thought, “If Tom Hanks could have that many working typewriters and know how to use them all, why can’t I add to my little collection of one Remington Quiet-Riter, circa 1950s?”

Why not, indeed?

I discovered said Royal Deluxe at Harbert (Mich.) Antique Mall on New Year’s Eve, purchasing it that day after, of course, having a little chat with my dear wife, Natalie, about the need for another typewriter. The asking price was \$131.44, with tax. After an online search, Natalie realized similar models were going for a whole lot more, so she sent me back to the antique mall with the checkbook.

Our friend, Jim Roe, of Independent Copier in Stevensville, Mich., spiffed up my New Year’s gift, and I was soon writing the first draft of a *Beacher* column on that well-oiled little champion.

It had, and still has, its quirks, but I have adapted. For example, the tab settings are basically embedded, so the operator has to live with those. And the one I really like to live with is the paragraph tab. That’s not available, so I have learned to hit the space bar three times at the beginning of each new paragraph.

To keep from double-striking, I have to slow down and focus. Now, I’m not the fastest typist in the world, but I tend to get cranking when warmed up. So, now with the Royal Deluxe from 1935, I have to be mindful of my favorite slogan: EASY DOES IT!

The more I wrote, the more that way-cool machine wanted to be unleashed. It seemed to say, and I quote: “Why don’t we write a book together? One that begins in 1935 and goes from there.”

1935!!!

Hmm.

Bells were ringing. Familiar bells from my repeated reading of a “big book” about seminal events in 1935.

I listened.

Then I wrote the novella Royal Fireworks. Here are the opening chapters of my delightful collaboration with a true child of 1935:

“Bar Car Buddies”

The bar car.

That’s where you’ll find me on any and all business trips.

And I do make many a business trip because I got me a good job during these trying times: I sell supplies and such to hospitals. Just because the stock market crashed, and half the country’s out of



You never know what treasures await when you walk into an antique mall, especially before a major holiday.

Life With Charley

Charles McKelvy



work don’t mean that no one gets sick or banged up anymore and needs to go to the hospital. And, yeah, hospitals run out of dressings, and needles, and bedpans, and such and need good salesmen like yours truly, Daniel J. Swilley, to sell ‘em more.

So, it might be 1935, but I’m ridin’ the rails in the bar car, not the boxcar. On accounta I gots me a good job sellin’ what them whitecoats in the hospitals need. And, thanks to me, they get what they need when they need it.

All right: that’s about all the setup you need.

So let’s get on with the story:

I’m headin’ west on a rattler outta Philly and enjoying a sip or two of the legal-again good stuff in the bar car, when in walks this big galoot in a suit. I mean this gent must have played basketball in college because he could stuff the ball in the basket without a leap. He bellies up to the bar and tells the barkeep: “I’ll have what he’s having, and his next one is on me.”

That got my attention, so I went into my salesman mode and said in my best King’s English, “You’re a doctor, aren’t you?”

He turned that great big head of his and studied me through his classy spectacles. “Yes, as a matter of fact, I am. How did you know? No, let me guess: you’re a hospital-supply salesman. Yes?”

“Yes, indeed I am, Doctor—“

“Robert Smith. Just call me ‘Doctor Bob.’ All my friends do.”

“Well, Doctor Bob,” I said, offering my hand, “it’s a pleasure to meet you. And to share a drink or two with you.”

The good doctor gave me a friendly grin, and when the barkeep filled our glasses, he raised his and toasted our newfound friendship. “Down the hatch,” he said, draining his glass.

“Down the hatch,” I said, draining my glass.

And then we got down to what we both did best: some really serious drinking.

While ridin’ the rails.

In the bar car.

Not the boxcar.

Days passed, and then came the sales pitch.

The sales pitch?

Oh, it was a doozy, but first let me bring you up to that point:

For starters, I freely admit that my recollection of that little “whoopie party” with Doctor Bob in the bar car on that westbound train is more than a little hazy. Doctor Bob would buy a round and then I would buy a round, and so it went all the way into Ohio where Doctor Bob, at some point, announced that it was time for him to get off the train.

I know I said something brilliant, like, “But, Doc, we’re just getting warmed up.”

Doctor Bob agreed, but said there were some pretty serious folks waiting for him at the train station, particularly his wife, Anne, and some money man from New York he had only recently met.

So off the train he went, and on with the train I went. All the way to Chicago, where my pickins were good. Lots of big, busy hospitals where the purchasing agents were salivatin’ to see me.

And it was during one of those calls when I got a good tip: “A little birdie told me that it would be worth your while to make a certain stop in Akron, Ohio, on your way back to Philly.”

“Akron?!? That’s the competition’s territory.”

“Well, that little birdie tells me that a certain hospital in Akron ain’t exactly pleased with the service they’re getting from your competition.”

“So,” I said, “what are you sayin’?”

“Get thee to Akron, on the next departing train.”

So I got me to Akron on the next departing train, and when I hailed a taxi at the station, I told the cabbie, “Take me to this here St. Thomas Hospital.”

And once there, I made a cold call on the purchas-



It’s hard for me to write a story without a train (or two) in it.

ing agent, a no-nonsense little nun name of Sister Ignatia.

I pitched my sucker pitch, and she took a big swing and hit the ball way out over the centerfield wall. Clean out of sight.

Then, when we were done signing the biggest order I ever pitched, she smiled and said, “There’s a doctor I’d like you to meet.”

“Doctor?!” I don’t need no —excuse me, sister — any doctor.”

“Oh,” she said, with that irrepressible smile of hers, “I think you would do well to meet this one.”

To Be Continued



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“The Night Agent” — the Latest, and Worthy, Streaming Sensation

by Andrew Tallackson

John Grisham would approve.

Ditto Dan Brown, or the late Tom Clancy.

And anyone else, for that fact, who enjoys a good, old-fashioned chase.

It kills me, when something like “The Night Agent” becomes an instant smash. Studio officials start scratching their heads, overthinking and over-analyzing as to why this one particular movie, book or TV show clicked with the public. The explanation is simple. You can spice up entertainment with sex, violence and pricey effects, but in the end, all people want is a good story.

“The Night Agent,” Netflix’s 10-episode adaptation of Matthew Quirk’s 2019 novel, does not rewrite the conspiracy-thriller playbook. We’ve seen this before, many times, but rarely this enjoyable. Ten episodes, and not a wasted moment. It’s never dull, nor does it stop that often to catch its breath. What we get is an adrenaline rush of likable, smart characters trying to stay one step ahead of their pursuers. Heroes who rely more on brains than brawn, and villains sketched with such complexity, even the most despicable individuals get a backstory.

In “The Night Agent,” FBI Agent Peter Sutherland (Gabriel Basso) has a keen eye for even the slightest details. In the opening sequence, he notices a hooded subway passenger leave something beneath a seat before leaving. Turns out, it’s a bomb, but Peter’s fast actions limit the extent, and casualties, of the blast.

Fast forward in time, and Peter is a telephone operator in the White House, part of the “Night Action” program. The phone rarely rings, but one night, he gets one doozy of a caller: Rose Larkin (Luciane Buchanan), a cybersecurity entrepreneur whose aunt and uncle — Night Agents, unbeknownst to her — are attacked by assassins. They rush her out of the house, giving her the Night Action number to call.

Fearful for her aunt and uncle, Rose returns to the house, and the sequence in which Peter, by phone, coaches her through evading the assassins is a master class in suspense. Peter is remarkably composed, Rose galvanized by his guidance. It is the groundwork for one dynamite team.

Many TV shows start with a bang, then fizzle as early episodes feel like padding. Not here. Rather than bog down in exposition, ensuing episodes open with a bit of backstory for each character, even the villains. The resulting conspiracy traps Peter and Rose in one endless chase. Where “The Night Agent” one-ups the routine nature of the story is Basso and Buchanan. Basso’s Peter is the kind of character we don’t see much these days: the adult who’s still a Boy Scout at heart. A guy who firmly knows right



FBI Agent Peter Sutherland (Gabriel Basso) and key witness Rose Larkin (Luciane Buchanan) find themselves constantly on the run in Netflix’s “The Night Agent.”

from wrong and will not stop until those wrongs are righted. Buchanan’s Rose is not a helpless victim. She’s the brains of the operation. We see in Buchanan a woman whose mind is always racing, always leaping to the next possibility.

As a thriller, “The Night Agent” still believes in the power of a foot chase. Episode after episode finds Peter and Rose fleeing their pursuers, whether it be in public places or from hotel rooms. These chases often arrive after the two gain one more crucial piece of the puzzle.

And what pursuers! Assassins Ellen (Eve Harlow) and Dale (Phoenix Raei) show no mercy in the field, but in private, their conversations about a future for themselves, about starting a family, no less, suggest these people want out of their line of work.

Many other elements come into play, like by-the-book Secret Service agent Chelsea Arrington (Fola Evans-Akingbola), who is assigned to protect the vice president’s college-age daughter, Maddie (Sar-

ah Desjardins). We also have Oscar-nominee Hong Chau (“The Whale”) as Diane Farr, the White House chief of staff who may or may not be on Peter’s side. And D.B. Woodside as Erik Monks, a veteran Secret Service agent celebrated for taking a bullet for the vice president, but still fighting personal demons.

So, yes, a lot to juggle, and not all of it on point. Whenever the characters expound on the virtues of freedom and Democracy, the dialogue gets clunky. Some of the performances, like Christopher Shyer as the vice president, never rise above soap-opera tolerable.

But as the series arrives at its final three episodes, the tension, the suspense, are killer. We understand in far greater detail that not everyone involved in the government conspiracy is a willing participant. The performances subsequently take on a greater immediacy. For instance, Chau, as Farr, spends much of the series speaking in an oddly flat, detached manner. Late in the game, she



Oscar-nominee Hong Chau appears as the White House chief of staff.

has a scene where her character — overwhelmed, frustrated and angry — emits a silent scream that reminds us why this woman has an Oscar nomination. On top of that, a chase and shootout at a storage facility, one that ties together most of the characters, is edge-of-your-seat tense. The final episode shows everyone rising and falling amid potential catastrophe.

Netflix renewed “The Night Agent” within a week after it debuted: almost unheard of these days. Streaming services typically wait a month or so to decide if an audience exists. Clearly, Netflix had its answer. You can see why. The show is unstoppable.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com

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Here's One You Might Have Missed: "Emily the Criminal"

by Andrew Tallackson

NETFLIX



Aubrey Plaza finally gets the meaty role she deserves in "Emily the Criminal."

Throughout "Emily the Criminal," I was reminded of the last conversation Walter White has with his wife on "Breaking Bad." Walter stands before her, silent, blasted for suggesting his criminal activity began as an act of love for his family. Walter then cuts her off, bluntly, confessing, "I did it for me. I liked it. I was good at it."

Walter might have liked Emily Benetto, the anti-hero of the aptly titled "Emily the Criminal." Their journeys begin alike: frustrated by life, unexpectedly efficient at underworld activity. Had "Emily the Criminal" been about a man, though, it would have ended in a sickening thud of violence. But because it centers around a woman, it elevates itself into something entirely different.

I'd contemplated giving "Emily the Criminal" a watch last year. When one person suggests to me it's worth a look, it lands in my saved list. When three to four people urge me to watch it, and pronto, well, it's time to get cracking. And "Emily the Criminal" is frequently surprising and wholly original.

The crime thriller marks the feature debut of writer-director John Patton Ford, and he tapped someone you might not expect for the title role. Comic actress Aubrey Plaza, who has appeared in everything from TV's "Parks and Recreation" and "The White Lotus" to movies like "Scott Pilgrim

★ ★ ★ 1/2

"Emily the Criminal"

Running time: 97 minutes. Netflix. Rated R for language, some violence and brief drug use.

vs. The World" and "Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates." The women she plays are "out there" — loopy, detached, snarky.

No such performance here. Tough and unsentimental, she transforms Emily into a fascinating character study.

On one level, you could say Emily is a product of a disillusioned society. Trapped in a listless job with a catering company, riddled with leftover college debt, with no hope on the horizon. But Plaza plays her like a woman with a chip on her shoulder, and you can feel it in scenes when her temper flares during job interviews. That's how we learn she is a convicted felon: twice arrested for assault, then DUI. Like Delroy Lindo's character in Hulu's dynamite "Unprisoned," society won't give her a redemptive break. At the same time, Emily never owns up to her past. Shows any remorse. Hints that she's not the same person. In fact, she wears her checkered past like a screw-you badge of honor.

That's how she ends up with Youcef Haddad



Emily teams up with Youcef Haddad (Theo Rossi), who runs a scheme involving identity theft.

(Theo Rossi, “Sons of Anarchy”), who hooks her up with a new line of work: credit card fraud. I don’t know who will cringe more in the scenes where Emily learns the tricks of the trade: the casual viewer wanting better from the character’s sense of morality, or people who’ve experienced identity theft. But what “Emily the Criminal” efficiently depicts is how these schemes work: small at first, then bolder, the stakes higher.

And here, we discover, through Plaza’s pull-no-punches performance, that Emily is made for this life. The most dynamite scene, in fact, has Emily attacked by a couple onto her schemes...then she turns the tables on them. The payoff leaves you satisfied by the comeuppance delivered, but stunned by the fearlessness, the darkness within the character.

In fact, “Emily the Criminal” takes on a twisted feminist slant in how men in the film, when things fall apart, lack the spine for retribution. It is Emily who goes for broke.

Are we supposed to sympathize with Emily? Again, had the story been about a man, the film would punish its character for slipping into a life of crime. Pay the ultimate price. But here, the drama ends on such a perfect note, there is no other way you could resolve this story. There is a cyclical nature to crime, the movie argues. Cut off the head of one creep, and another one springs out of nowhere to replace it.

You may not care for Emily. One thing’s for sure, though. You can’t stop watching her.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com



I'm Greg Coulter and I understand the needs of Michigan City. Our city council needs to collaborate now more than ever—with the mayor, with our neighborhoods, with city employees, our community organizations and with our business community. With many new developments on the horizon, it is important to have a new and forward thinking voice on the city council. We need to all pull in the same direction so everyone has a place at the table. I have my eyes turned towards what we need to accomplish, not just continuing what we’ve been doing. Changes are coming to Michigan City and we need to be ready:

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Monday Musicale Student Concert

Winners in Monday Musicale's 2023 Student Awards Competition will present a free concert at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 30, at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

Auditions were held at the church for the first time since 2019. Nineteen candidates in grades 4-12 participated. Judges Deborah Beien, Sue Cassler, Carol Garrett, Dan McNabb and Felicia Thomas heard selections for piano, voice and flute.

JUNIOR DIVISION

Grade 4 Piano

- Avelyn Mills – first.
- Katherine Burden – second.

Grade 5 Piano

- Finley Romine – first.
- Elias Sawaya – second.
- Maren Rishaug – third.
- Amy Liana Carpenter – honorable mention.
- Evangeline Kotulski – honorable mention.
- Elisabeth Wireman – honorable mention.

Middle School Piano

- Samuel Burden – first.
- Elizabeth Giuliani – second.
- Jacob P. Wireman – third.

Middle School Instrumental

- Mya Moore, flute – first.

Junior Division Voice

- Evangeline Kotulski – first.
- Natt Kilbourne – second.
- Selah Branco – third.

Joy Carson Memorial Award

- Samuel Burden, piano.

Organ Lesson Grant for Pianists

- Maren Rishaug.

SENIOR DIVISION

Mildred Bowman Memorial Award

- Ella Crane, voice.

First Congregational Church Award

- MaryRose Cook, piano.

Past Presidents Award

- Iyanna Estes, voice.

Monday Musicale Award

- Joseph Giuliani, piano.

Senior Division honorees, plus first-place Junior Division winners, will perform their selections. Certificates, plaques and monetary awards will be presented. Donations to fund future scholarships will be accepted. Contact Ange Benz at (219) 874-3754 or Sue Cassler at (219) 362-1421 for more details.

"You Can't Take It With You"

Michigan City High School's Drama Club will present "You Can't Take It With You," by George Kaufman and Moss Hart, on Friday-Sunday, April 28-30, at the school auditorium, 8466 Pahs Road.

Times are 7 p.m. Friday-Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students.

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Indiana Dunes National Park

- **Bird Walk and Talk from 9-10:30 a.m. Thursday, April 27.** Join a ranger for a morning stroll while observing the vast array of bird life in the park. Meet at the parking lot north of U.S. 12 on Broadway Avenue, Beverly Shores.
- **Gardening at Chellberg Farm from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, April 29.** Wear comfortable clothes. Work gloves and equipment will be provided. Insect repellent and sunscreen are recommended. The Chellberg Farm parking lot is located at 618 N. Mineral Springs Road, Porter.
- **Woodland Wildflower Hike from 1-3 p.m. Saturdays in April at Heron Rookery, 1336 County Road 600 East, Michigan City.** Join a ranger to view woodland flowers. The Heron Rookery trail runs along the Little Calumet River, with the hike starting at the east parking lot. Passes are required.
- **Chellberg Farm Open House from 2:30-4 p.m. Sundays in April.** Rangers and volunteers will share the area's history as visitors tour the farmhouse and garden and visit the animals. Passes are required. The parking lot is off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter.
- **Drop-In Volunteer Program (Trash Trekkers) from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily in April at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center and the Paul H. Douglas Center.** Trash Trekkers is a no-hassle volunteer option that helps keep trails and beaches clean. Temporary passes are available. Visit tinyurl.com/2p83798v for more details.
- **Bailly/Chellberg History Hike from 1-2:30 p.m. Saturdays in April.** 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. Passes are required.

- **Miller Woods Hike from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Sundays in April at Paul H. Douglas Center.** The ranger-led stroll explores a rare black oak savanna, and offers views of Lake Michigan and Chicago.

□

May 24 is the deadline to apply for the National Park Service Teacher Ranger Teacher program.

K-12 teachers work in the park and learn about resources, participate in a lesson-planning webinar, develop at least one lesson to be used at school, assist the park with an educational project and increase understanding of place-based learning. Required is 240 hours participation June 12-July 30.

The University of Denver, a partner in the project, will pay a cash stipend to participants who pass all requirements. All questions can be submitted to IDNP Education Specialist Christine Gerlach at Christine_gerlach@nps.gov or (219) 395-1885. An application is at tinyurl.com/4rfrxbb6. An application request also can be sent directly to Gerlach.

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:

- **Mushroom Stroll from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, April 29.** Meet local mycologist Rob Hallock at the Wilson Shelter for a slow walk to better identify fungi in season. The hike is a partnership with Save the Dunes as part of the #CityNatureChallenge. All ages are welcome. Preregister through a link on the state park website.
- **Awesome Amphibians at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 29.** Learn about frogs, toads and salamanders during an easy walk.
- **Snakes Alive! at 10 a.m. Sunday, April 30.** Meet at the Nature Center to view snakes and learn more about them.

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.

Sousa Tribute Concert

"Sousa Tribute Concert," featuring Valparaiso University's Luce Concert and Chamber Concert bands, and the Valparaiso Community/University Concert Band, is at 4 p.m. Saturday, April 29, at the Chapel of the Resurrection, 1600 Chapel Drive.

Jeffrey Scott Doebler is the conductor. Works include not just those by Sousa, but also "Armed Services Medley," "America," "Great Gate of Kiev" and "Beau Monde." All seats are general admission for the free concert.



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Musical "Brothers" Concert



The LaPorte Community Concert Association will host the program "Brothers" at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 30, at the Kesling Intermediate School Auditorium, 306 E. 18th St., LaPorte.

Jim Witter and Ian Tanner are the performers, with Witter on vocals, piano and guitar, and Tanner on bass, guitar and vocals. Videos complement the music. The show features hits by "musical brothers" such as Lennon and McCartney, The Beach Boys and The Everly Brothers. Program highlights include: "Wake Up Little Susie" and "All I Have to Do is Dream" (The Everly Brothers); "Unchained Melody" (The Righteous Brothers); "If I Fell" (Lennon and McCartney); "The Sounds of Silence" and "Mrs. Robinson" (Simon and Garfunkel); "Crocodile Rock" (Elton John and Bernie Taupin); and "Your Mama Don't Dance" (Loggins and Messina).

The program is included in the LaPorte Community Concert 2022-2023 season ticket. The public can purchase tickets at the door: \$20 for adults and \$5 for students through high school. Call (219) 362-5292 or (219) 362-8262.



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LaPorte County Public Library has updated its curbside pickup service using meeScan.

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

- Coolspring Branch: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Main Library: Tuesday/Thursday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

□

Patrons are no longer charged daily overdue fines. Customers only will be charged for items they damage, lose or never return.

□

The following programs are planned:

- **Virtual Author Talk with William Kent Krueger (adults 19+) from 7-8 p.m. Thursday, April 27.** Krueger is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Ordinary Grace*. Advance registration is at <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/25415>
- **Getting Started with Microsoft 365 (adults 19+) from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 29, in the main library Study Cafe.** Learn the basics of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Take a laptop with Microsoft 365. A limited supply of laptops will be available.

- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, April 28, at the main library.** Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- **Family Pajama Storytime from 6-6:30 p.m. Monday, May 1, in the main library multipurpose room.** The program focuses on stories and songs. Guests can wear pajamas and take a favorite stuffed animal.
- **Make It! Weaving (adults 19+) from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, May 2, at the main library.** Make a small woven yarn project, and learn about advanced techniques to take up the traditional textile practice. Meet in the WiFi Garden, or the Multipurpose Room if raining.
- **Getting to Know Your Android Device (adults 19+) from 1-2 p.m. Tuesday, May 2, Coolspring Branch meeting room.** Take devices to the program.
- **Learn to Cook for One (adults 19+) from 10-11 a.m. Wednesday, May 3, in Meeting Room B at the main library.** Learn about nutrition and planning to cook for one.
- **Virtual Author Talk with Britt Hawthorne (adults 19+) from noon-1 p.m. Wednesday, May 3.** Hawthorne is a nationally recognized teacher and advocate. Advance registration is at <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/25907>
- **Crafty Kids (ages 6-11) from 4-5 p.m. Wednesday, May 3, in the main library multipurpose room.** Children learn new styles and techniques while developing fine motor and listening skills.

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

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American Red Cross

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

- Northwest Health Heart and Vascular Building, 901 Lincolnway, LaPorte, noon-5 p.m. Thursday, April 27.
- St. Paul Lutheran Church & School, 818 Franklin St., 2-6 p.m. Thursday, April 27.
- Conservation Club House, 1 Mill Pond Road, Union Mills, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 30.
- St. John's United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road, noon-6 p.m. Tuesday, May 2.

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.

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Come, Follow Me



June 11, 2023 ♦ 2:00 PM

City wide Corpus Christi Procession

All are welcome to join us for a citywide Corpus Christi Eucharistic Procession to honor our Lord from Queen of All Saints Catholic Church to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception (2 miles).

Michigan City Public Library

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

- **Toy Story Scavenger Hunt through April.** Find Woody, Buzz, Jessie and Mr. Potato Head in Youth Services. Clues are listed below each picture. Receive a prize for finding them all.
- **Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night at 5:30 p.m. Thursdays in April.** 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.
- **Makerspace: open lab hours from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in April.** 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.
- **Weekly Crafts for Kids & Teens weekly.** Each week offers a different project. Take-home craft kits are available, or create some in the Makerspace. Supplies are limited.
- **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.
- **Genealogists can answer questions** from 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. the last Saturday of the month.
(Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit www.mclib.org for more details.)

Free Clarinet Recital

Joe Clark, LaPorte High School band teacher, will present a free solo clarinet recital with fixed electronics at 7 p.m. Friday, April 28, at the school Performing Arts Center, 602 F St.

Clark also is a performer with LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra. Call (219) 362-3102, Ext. 61090, for more details.

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Harbor Country Hikers



Berrien County Parks Chief Naturalist Derek Pelc leads a program last year at Love Creek County Park.

Harbor Country Hikers will search for wildflowers in Love Creek County Park at 1 p.m. EDT Saturday, April 29.

Berrien County Parks Chief Naturalist Derek Pelc will lead a more than two-mile stretch of the park's trails. The hike is rated moderately difficult, with some hills, and attendees should dress for the weather and take plenty of water.

Trails at the park, 9292 Huckleberry Road, Berrien Center, Mich., showcase Michigan's ephemeral wildflowers, from trilliums and hepatica to Dutchman's breeches, toothwort and trout lilies.

Membership is preferred; however, the public is invited. Visit www.harborcountryhikers.com or the Facebook page Harbor Country Hikers for additional information.

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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

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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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In the Area

April 27 — Virtual Author Talk with William Kent Krueger (adults 19+), 7-8 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/25415>

April 28 — Free solo clarinet recital (Joe Clark, LaPorte High School band teacher), 7 p.m., LPHS Performing Arts Center, 602 F St.

April 28-30 — Michigan City High School Drama Club, “You Can’t Take It With You,” MCHS auditorium, 8466 Pahs Road. Times: 7 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$10/adults, \$5/students.

April 29 — Pancake breakfast/bake sale, 8-11 a.m., St. Luke United Lutheran Church, 2000 E. Coolspring Ave., Trail Creek. Tickets: \$5 at door.

April 30 — Monday Musicales 2023 Student Awards Competition free concert, 2 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Info: (219) 874-3754, (219) 362-1421.

April 30 — LaPorte Community Concert Association, “Brothers,” 2 p.m., Kesling Intermediate School Auditorium, 306 E. 18th St., LaPorte. Tickets @ door: \$20/adults, \$5/students through high school. Info: (219) 362-5292, (219) 362-8262.

May 2 — Make It! Weaving (adults 19+), 1-3 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

May 2 — Family Pajama Storytime, 6-6:30 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

May 3 — Learn to Cook for One (adults 19+), 10-11 a.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

May 3 — Virtual Author Talk with Britt Hawthorne (adults 19+), noon-1 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/25907>

May 3 — Crafty Kids (ages 6-11), 4-5 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Through April — Exhibits: “Works by Lydia Lemmons” & “Celebrating Our Depot,” The Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery, 525 S. Broadway. Hours: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays/11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays. Info: www.bsdepot.com

Through June 30 — Artwork by the Rev. David Kime, the Rev. Roque Meraz, Dr. John Wilhelm,

The Legacy Center Gallery at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 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.

Mondays in LaPorte — Weekly line dance lessons, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1130, 181 W. McClung Road. Cost: \$5. Beginner dance lessons, 2-3 p.m. Improver dance lessons, 3-4 p.m. Info: (219) 363-8301.

Tuesdays — Bingo, St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church, 109 Ann St. Doors open: 3:30 p.m. Bingo: 6 p.m. \$45 entrance fee (includes all cards). Info: (219) 336-3099.

Tuesdays in April — Makerspace: open lab hours, 3:30-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Thursdays — Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night, 5:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3045.

In the Region

April 27 — Bird Walk and Talk, 9-10:30 a.m., parking lot north of U.S. 12 on Broadway Avenue, Beverly Shores. Info: www.nps.gov/indu. (219) 395-1882.

April 27 — Super Smash Bros Tournament (ages 9+), 5-7 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Registration: (269) 469-2933.

April 27 — Art Attack Launch Party! A Celebration of Women Artists, 7 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$25 + \$4.50 convenience fee, \$50 + \$4.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 28 — Reception, 29th Annual Juried Arts Exhibition, 5-8 p.m., Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Exhibit runs through May 19. Info: www.artbarnschool.org, (219) 462-9009.

April 28 — An Evening with Patricia Barber, 7 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$100 + \$11 convenience fee. Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 29 — Mushroom Stroll, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 29 — Harbor Country Hikers, 1 p.m. EDT, Love Creek County Park, 9292 Huckleberry Road, Berrien Center, Mich. Info: Facebook page Harbor Country Hikers, www.harborcountryhikers.com org

April 29 — Awesome Amphibians, 2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 29 — “Sousa Tribute Concert,” 4 p.m., Valparaiso University Chapel of the Resurrection,

1600 Chapel Drive. Free.

April 30 — Snakes Alive!, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 29 — The Music of Pat Benatar, 8 p.m. EDT, Tickets: \$35 + \$5.50 convenience fee, \$60 + \$5.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 30 — Immersive Dance, Art and Music Fusion, 4 p.m. EDT, Tickets: \$25 + \$4.50 convenience fee, \$50 + \$4.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

May 1 — Mother's Day Story Time, 5:30 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

Through May 18 — Stephanie Samaitis Carnell exhibit, The Village Gallery @ Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso.

Through April 28 — Two exhibits, "Fiber Art '23" & CAC Youth Art Exhibition, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

Through April 30 — 2023 Community Student Art Exhibitions, Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: (269) 983-0271, www.krasl.org

Through May 14 — "Efflorescence: New Works by Ann Latinovich," The Center for Visual and Performing Arts, 1040 Ridge Road, Munster. Info: Brandon@SouthShoreArtsOnline.org

Through May 29 — "Built to Last: Studebaker Buildings Past & Present," 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: \$11 - adults, \$9.50 - seniors 60+, \$7 - youth ages 6-18. Info: (574) 235-9714, www.studebakermuseum.org

Through June 4 — Andy Sweet's "South Beach," Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: www.krasl.org/andy-sweets-south-beach

Through July 31 — "Budgie's Garden" Art Show, Front Street Crossing, 227 S. Front St., Dowagiac, Mich. Featured artist: Lisa Quinlan-Heibutzki (past collaborator with *Beacher* columnist Charley McKelvy).

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

Saturdays in April — Gardening at Chellberg Farm, 9 a.m.-noon, Chellberg Farm parking lot, 618 N. Mineral Springs Road, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Saturdays in April — Woodland Wildflower Hike, 1-3 p.m., Heron Rookery, 1336 County Road 600 East, Michigan City. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Saturdays in April — Bailly/Chellberg History

Hike, 1-2:30 p.m., Bailly/Chellberg parking lot off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

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

Vickers Theatre — *Now Showing*: "Syl Johnson: Any Way the Wind Blows." Not Rated. Time: 7 p.m. April 28. *Also*: "Showing Up." Rated R. Times: 4 p.m. April 28, 7 p.m. April 29-30. *Also*: "32 Sounds." Not Rated. Times: 4 p.m. April 29-30. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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Michigan City Urban Enterprise Association seeks a full-time executive director.

The full job description can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/3vbr7h5f>
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What Have We Done by Alex Finlay (*hardcover \$27.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 354 pages.*)

It was named Savior House, such a promising name for such a hellhole...

It was located in Chestertown, Pa., the armpit of America: a rundown, tired-looking town that has seen better days, but now given up.

No wonder the orphan's home was put in the old 19th century mansion: cold, drafty and run by uncaring staff — the perfect place for nightmares that come true.

Bullying and sexual harassment are common happenings the staff overlook.

The story begins with five teens — four boys and one girl — standing over a large hole in the woods. One of the boys utters the words none of them will forget: “*What have we done?*”

Ben, Jenna, Nico, Donnie and Arty make up the friends who have to run the gauntlet of their youth to survive Savior House. It will take 25 years for repercussions — revenge? — for each of them. Even with successful lives, none can outrun the past.

There was another girl, Annie, who Nico fell in love with, but she, along with several other girls from Savior House, disappeared without a trace.

The group even went to the police to press for an investigation into their disappearances. The police weren't interested. In fact, they even threatened them to keep their mouths shut.

It's a wonder the five ever got out of there alive, but they did....

Arty is the bookish type who grew up to become a wealthy tech mogul. Ben, the bookish one, is lucky enough to go to law school and become a lawyer and, soon, a judge. Recently, however, he was assassinated and no one knows why...or who did it.

Donnie becomes part of a successful rock band, Tracer's Bullet. Unfortunately, it leaves him a boozier and a has-been. Now, he's playing venues like a cruise ship the night a woman meets him on deck after a late show, forcing him to jump into the ocean. Luckily, he is picked up by a fishing boat.

Nico becomes producer of the TV reality show “The Miners” while hiding a gambling addiction. One evening, he is lured to the mine to meet someone when there is an explosion. Luckily for him, he is found before his oxygen runs out.

At 15, Jenna is recruited by The Corporation, a shadow assassin group, spending the past 25 years taking out the bad guys (so they tell her). Actually, she was sent to the group by the head of Savior

Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



House — Mr. Brood, a nasty stereotypical type who couldn't care less if his charges live or die.

Jenna's friends at Savior House were told she was adopted. Years later, she meets her husband and is now married and a stepmother to two children. Can you really just step away from The Corporation? One day, she is coerced into taking one more assignment if she wants to keep her family safe. When she sees who the target is, she takes a wild shot that misses him. Someone she knew in another life? Maybe. Jenna soon becomes the target of some other assassin. Apparently, her past employer isn't happy with her decision to withdraw from the business. Time to tell her husband the whole truth?

It is the national coverage Donnie receives while in the hospital, along with Ben's funeral, that bring him, Nico and Jenna in contact with each other.

The action is non-stop, and the story goes back and forth in time to show how each of the five is affected by Savior House.

“Jenna is struck by the fact that this house...instilled something in each of them that helped them reach their full potential.”

You could say this is the age-old question of nature vs. nurture, or the old adage “what doesn't kill you, makes you stronger.” There are red herrings, but there also is important knowledge gained from seeing how Savior House changed each one of them.

There's no slowing down in this story. It's action all the way and thinking on the run. Now, with them targeted one way or another, they have to accept that someone knows what happened 25 years ago and deal with it, once and for all.

The final confrontation takes them back to where it all began, and it's an exciting climax that reveals who their would-be executioners really are. But who will come out of it alive? That's the final question.

The final word: Finlay's books are skillful psychological thrillers to keep you glued to the pages. Minimal cursing.

His other two novels, both bestsellers, are The Night Shift (2022) and Every Last Fear (2021). These books have been translated into 17 languages, and a major limited TV series based on Every Last Fear is in the works.

Till next time, happy reading!





“One big happy family. When I think about family, of course I think about my immediate family... But I also always think of these incredible team members of mine. Each and every one of them is special to me. When I started Micky Gallas Properties back in 1996, I looked for people to join me that shared similar core values and ways of carrying themselves in business with honesty and integrity. I looked for how they not only treated their clients, but how they treated themselves. This industry is so relationship driven, and it was always important to me to find people that put the relationship piece first. Fast forward to merging with @properties Christie’s International Real Estate in 2018 and now 5 years later today, this team has stood by my side and has continued to grow. I truly would not be where I am today without them. It’s an honor and a privilege to get to work together and I cannot wait to see what the future brings for the Micky Gallas Group.

ONE THING IS FOR SURE... THIS FAMILY IS READY.”

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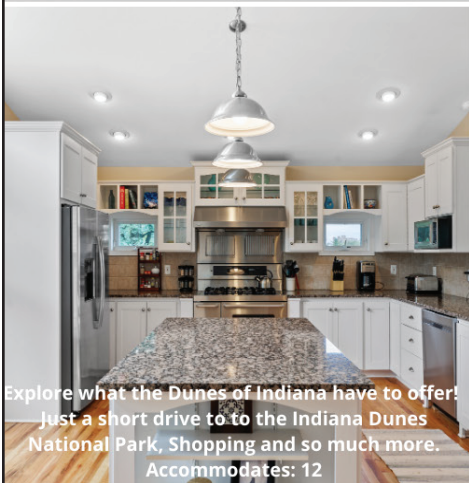


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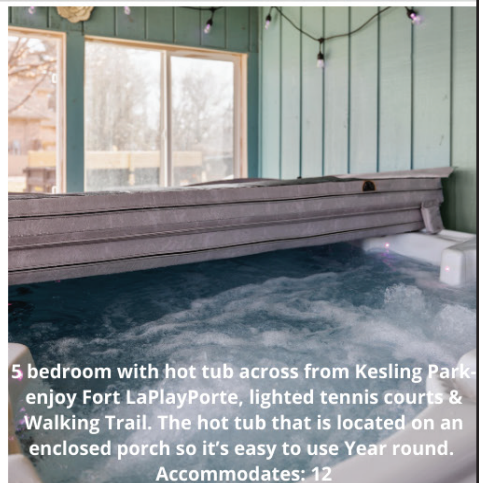
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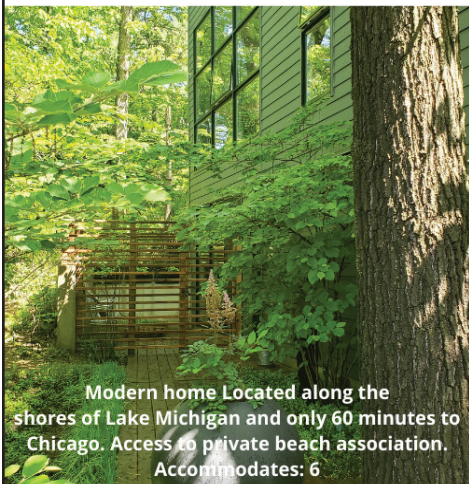
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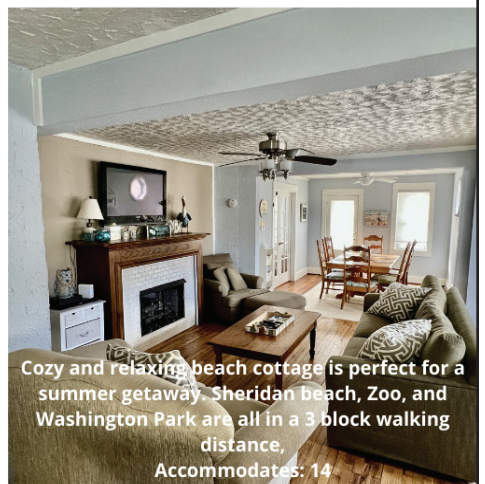
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