



Volume 39, Number 7 Thursday, February 23, 2023

Happy Trails

by Kim Nowatzke

Walking through the grocery store and not hearing “There’s Nature Niki!” or “Hi Ranger Laura!” will take some getting used to.

That’s because chief naturalist Niki Schmutte and recreation-education programmer Laura Moyer will soon retire from LaPorte County Parks. Schmutte’s last day is March 2, while Moyer’s is April 6.

Interacting with children is one of the biggest things they’ll miss about their jobs.

Moyer, for instance, created Nature’s Tiny Tots — a popular year-round program for toddlers/pre-

schoolers — the year after she began her position in October 2007.

“It’s exciting to start with the little kids and see them learning things,” she said. “It’s exciting to see how they can’t wait to come to ‘school,’ as they call it. You get to see them grow up over the years.”

After nearly three decades, Schmutte’s interactions with local youth have been plentiful as well. In her position, she began meeting students right in the classroom in 2017. She presented “Reptiles and Amphibians Oh My!” to area first- and second-graders, “Pollinators Plus” to second-graders and



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Laura Moyer (left) and Niki Schmutte are photographed at the Luhr County Park Nature Center, where their offices are located. Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

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“Owls and More” to third-graders.

In 2022 alone, Schmutte, saw more than 5,000 children through 144 school group programs, either in the classroom or at a LaPorte County park, breaking a school and group-program record and an attendance record.

“Those are really fun,” Schmutte said. “They get all excited and say, ‘Nature Niki is here today!’ Their eyes light up. They typically ask, ‘Do you remember my name?’”

While some programs are tailor-made to meet state standards, there is a lot of flexibility in the subject matter.

“We don’t have rigid program requirements,” Schmutte explained. “I really like that my job has a lot of variety, and we can change according to what is popular at the time.”

Moyer agreed, saying she appreciates her job’s flexibility.

“It’s nice that we can be creative,” she added.

Many children who attend programs do so after a visit from Schmutte to their classroom or field trip to one of the parks.

“Kids will say they want to come to Luhr Park and visit,” she said.

Moyer added, “They come in and say, ‘I brought Mom and Dad or Grandma and Grandpa.’ It’s exciting that we had an impact and they want to come here.”

Over the years, Moyer and Schmutte have worked not only with school groups, but also other youth organizations such as Girls Scouts and Boy Scouts. Sch-

mutte said she will miss the Parent Child Discovery Days the most, held monthly on Wednesday evenings for 75 minutes. In her 29 years, she carried out about 580 programs. Accompanied by a parent or grandparent, those who attend can enjoy snacks, arts and crafts and presentations. Popular themes have been “Oh Deer!,” “Let It Snow,” “Water Water Everywhere” and “Where Did They Go?” Sometimes, Cornelius “Corny,” the corn snake that lives at Luhr County Park Nature Center, is the center of attention.

Another favorite event is Family Fishing Nights held monthly spring through fall. The three-hour free program includes the use of poles and bait.

“So often, I get kids that have never fished,” Schmutte said. “When they get that first fish, their eyes light up. Just teaching them fishing and relaxing is exciting.”

But, it’s not just children who enjoy LaPorte County Parks events. There’s the monthly Healthy Lifestyles Group (formerly Senior Lifestyles Group) that Moyer started. Over the years, she invited different speakers, such as medical professionals, to talk about different subjects. Popular topics covered heart disease, Medicare, diabetes, recycling, eating clean and gardening.

“We have so many regulars that you get to know them well,” Moyer said.

She will never forget walking into a dark movie theater once and hearing an older woman call out, “Hi Ranger Laura!”

She appreciates the different businesses and organizations, such as LaPorte County Public Library and LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District, that have partnered with the parks de-



Niki Schmutte introduces students to a snake at Red Mill County Park.



Laura Moyer (left) and Niki Schmutte are retiring after 15.5 and 29 years of service, respectively, with LaPorte County Parks.
Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

partment for various programs.

Katie Sarver, intrinsic coach and manager for Northwest Health’s Community Programs and Wellness Outreach, often collaborated with Moyer for the Healthy Lifestyles program.

“Working with Laura over the years with her Healthy Lifestyles program has been a fun and enlightening experience,” she said. “She’s creative, kind, knowledgeable, caring and an all-around amazing person to know. Her passion and enthusiasm for educating anyone she comes in contact with is contagious. I’m excited for this next chapter of life for Laura, but I will sure miss working with her, sharing stories and helping her develop impactful community programming. I’m beyond blessed to be able to call Laura my friend.”

Darlene Sturken says she will miss Schmutte. She and her husband, Jack, participated in the popular two-day Pioneer Days at Creek Ridge County Park soon after it began in the early 1990s. While he blacksmithed, she focused on creating wooden bead necklaces with the children.

“Jack and I both enjoyed working with her. She’s a fun lady,” Darlene Sturken said. “We got started with Pioneer Days when Dick Reel encouraged us to participate, and she took us in under her wing. I hope she has a good time in retirement.”

Events are a big part of Moyer’s and Schmutte’s positions; however, there’s so much more that falls under the umbrella of their responsibilities.

“A lot of people don’t think about all the behind-the-scenes jobs that we do,” Moyer admitted.

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Happy Trails

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For example, as recreation and education programmer, Moyer not only assisted Schmutte with the researching, coordinating, implementing and presenting of environmental programs, major festivals, interpretive programs and outdoor recreational programs. She also handled public relations, including press releases, feature articles, trade show booths and radio and TV appearances.

"Throughout her time, she developed well-attended programs, many which we hope to continue after she is gone," LaPorte County Parks Superintendent Jeremy Sobecki said. "Her knowledge and expertise in programming will be hard to replace."

Less obvious tasks included developing and maintaining environmental displays, and assisting in maintenance and upkeep, including the care of living animals, at Luhr County Park's Nature Center.

Moyer has 36 years of experiences in local government entities. She began as an office assistant with the Michigan City Street Department, then worked for the Law Enforcement Division of Indiana Department of Natural Resources as a telecommunications operator. She next served as office and budget manager at the Indiana Department of Transportation. She was born and raised in Michigan City and is an Elston High School graduate.

Moyer has been with her husband, Jeff, for 20 years and lives in LaPorte with their Havanese dog, Bandit. She has been active in volunteering for the American Cancer Society and the Indiana Donor

Network. Diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease in 1997, she is passionate about research efforts for a cure and treatment of the deadly disease. She is former chairs and founders of the PKD Foundation Northern Indiana Chapter and local PKD Walk.

Moyer lost 16 family members to the disease beginning with her maternal grandfather in 1940, in addition to her mother, Lois New, and in February 2022, her sister, Debra Paholski. On Dec. 9, 2011, she received a kidney transplant from a living donor.

"It began with a Good Samaritan and included 40 people coast to coast, including my husband," she said. "His sacrifice guaranteed my getting my new kidney in a "kidney chain" (pairing exchange)."

For Niki, the decision to retire is mixed with nostalgia, as she has seen LaPorte County Parks grow and blossom over nearly three decades.

"I'm the only one that has been here this long. At one point, I was the youngest, but still here the longest," she noted, adding her office has been in three different locations.

Born and raised in Fort Wayne, she graduated from Homestead High School and earned her bachelor's degree in recreation management at Bluffton College (now Bluffton University) in Bluffton, Ohio. After graduation, she worked for the Clark County Parks Department as a program coordinator for 18 months. She responded to a job posting for her current position, which brought her to LaPorte, where she currently lives.

Over the years, she has watched LaPorte County Parks grow and change.

"We've never stayed stagnant," she said with



Laura Moyer leads a pond study field trip at Luhr County Park.

pride. "It's been a really cool experience to see our parks department grow and change over the years. Our entire staff gets a say and is able to help make decisions on the direction we are going. Our opinions are valued in the parks department."

When she began in February 1994, Creek Ridge and Luhr were the only two developed sites in the parks system. Nothing was developed at Bluhm, and Red Mill County Park wasn't added yet.

"I remember looking at Red Mill, which has 108 acres and a state-dedicated nature preserve," Schmutte recalled. "As I overlooked the wetlands when we were deciding to purchase it from the Girl Scouts, I remember thinking, 'Oh my gosh. We have to get this property.' It was exciting.

We could now do larger-scale programs inside."

When Schmutte started as chief naturalist, there were only four full-time staff members. Now, there are eight, so it wasn't uncommon for all four to work together on the same program.

"I will still jump in and mow, paint, take down walls...I remember staining the Novak Shelter at Creek Ridge County Park at 10 p.m. the night before its grand opening."

Her job duties have changed over the years to

include supervisory roles, in addition to being responsible for community environmental education, interpretive programs, festivals and special events.

She assisted the park superintendent with developing wildlife, forest and wetland habitat improvement, and with developing grant applications for park programming, development and enhancement.

"Niki started with LaPorte County Parks back before I graduated high school! She has continued

to grow and expand programming in schools and in our parks throughout her career," Sobecki said. "I cannot believe how energetic and excited she has maintained in these 29 years. She will be sorely missed by park visitors and school children of LaPorte County."

Schmutte coordinated and directed Nature Center activities. Another aspect of her job is publishing and editing a quarterly newsletter to promote environmental and park programs. Whereas she used to send out 200 copies by U.S. mail, she now emails more than 3,000.

It's just one example of how technology has had one of the biggest impacts on her job and the parks system. She said it's not uncommon now to see the

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Open House

The public is invited to a retirement open house to honor Nature Niki and Ranger Laura from 1:30-4 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at Luhr County Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Refreshments will be served.



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public using apps on phones to identify trees and plants.

“Technology has helped me so much over the years,” Schmutte said. “It makes my job easier and frees up more free time to do more. What a blessing to have technology to research and create the kiosks – both indoors and outdoors.”

Yet, both Schmutte’s and Moyer’s positions have had their difficult aspects.

“The challenging part has been getting enough volunteers to put on large events like Pioneer Days and the former Haunted Trail at Luhr,” Schmutte said.

COVID, of course, had its set of challenges.

“We had to think way out of the box with virtual tours and programs,” Moyer said.

Schmutte has racked up an impression list of awards in the past 29 years.



Niki Schmutte holds her 2012 Outstanding Professional award from the Indiana Parks and Recreation Department.

In 2009, she received the Master Interpretive Manager Award from the National Association for Interpretation in the Great Lakes region of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Ontario. She’s been a past recipient of the 2012 Outstanding Professional Award from the Indiana Park and Recreation Association. From

the Environmental Education Associates of Indiana, she received the Joe Wright Award to “recognize specific achievements in the field of environmental education” and The Howard Michaud Award for her “long-term devotion, dedication and contribution to environmental education in the state of Indiana” (www.eeai.org).

In November 2022, she received The Sam Carman-Warren Gartner Cornerstone Award, also from EEAI. While still in high school, she started attending EEAI conferences, assisting treasurer Doug Waldman. She served on the EEAI board in various leadership positions and helped with conferences.

“Doug Waldman was my high school environmental education teacher,” she explained. “He got me interested in this field and is the reason I am doing what I am. He is a great mentor and friend.”

This month, Schmutte and Moyer will receive the Conservation Educator of the Year Award from the LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District. At the March 7 LaPorte County Parks board meeting, the two also will receive the Outstanding Park Service Award.



Laura Moyer is all dressed for a Mom and Son Dance.

In addition to other awards, Moyer has received the Joe Wright award from the EEAI in 2008.

Schmutte looks forward to “moving out of the area to enjoy lake life in a different location.” Her hobbies include fishing, boating, kayaking, puzzles and playing Pokémon GO. Moyer enjoys camping, hiking, traveling, kayaking and antiquing. She looks forward to retiring with Jeff in a new location that has been a longtime goal.

Yet, the excitement is bittersweet as she says goodbye.

“This is my favorite job out of all of my jobs,” she said. “I wish I would have started here sooner.”

She wrote in a goodbye message to park staff and board, human resources and park patrons, “I have had an amazing career and tenure as ‘Ranger Laura.’ It has been an honor and privilege to work alongside you in educating your children. It has been said that you become successful only by helping others become successful. I determined then and there to make as much of a difference as I could. This has never been just a job. Over the years, so many of you have touched me in ways I can’t begin to express my gratitude. I am a better person because of this experience, because of all of you. I want to thank you all for the amazing opportunities this last 15.5 years has afforded me. I can never re-pay all you have given to me, and I will never forget you.”

Schmutte feels equally blessed.

“I have enjoyed the ride, and what a ride it has been!,” she said. “I will leave with enough memories that will last me a lifetime. My goal on this journey was to make a difference, and I hope I have. When I think about the LaPorte County Parks, I will always have a smile on my face. Woohoo!”

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“Ant-Man” is Fun, But Missing the Silly Charm of the Original

by Andrew Tallackson

What I appreciated about “Ant-Man” (2015) was that, yes, it’s a Marvel movie...but at the same time, it *wasn’t*. It was sort of the slacker third cousin crashing the Marvel party. The key elements were there — the unlikely hero, the scientist turned villain — but the movie wasn’t psyched about it. It was just content to be silly, the title character ideally suited to Paul Rudd’s laid-back snark...and with a climactic sight gag involving Thomas the Tank Engine that was spectacularly funny.

Eight years later, we have the third entry in the series, “Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania.” It’s not a Marvel movie. It is a “Star Wars” movie with Marvel characters, downplaying laughs for action. You are disappointed...at first.

Early in the film, we see Rudd’s Scott Lang/Ant-Man taking a leisurely stroll, all to the tune of the “Welcome Back Kotter” theme on the soundtrack. Returning director Peyton Reed appears game to preserve the quirky tone. Then, Scott, his daughter, Cassie (Kathryn Newton), his girlfriend Hope/the Wasp (Evangeline Lilly), and her parents, Hank (Michael Douglas) and Janet (Michelle Pfeiffer), are sucked down in the Quantum Realm, a whole world unto itself. Here, the story essentially jettisons the laughs and becomes a full-blown Marvel movie. Plot takes control before leading to a gargantuan, “Avengers: Endgame” climax with an insane amount of effects.

By existing almost entirely in the Quantum Realm, that means the most inspired creation of the franchise, Michael Peña’s motormouth hipster, Luis, is AWOL. What we do get, and what makes for engaging visuals, is the movie’s apparent tribute to everything “Star Wars.” The Quantum Realm is filled with a whole host of slimy, otherworldly creatures that invade every nook and cranny of the screen. There’s even a bar scene with shades of the Cantina sequence from “A New Hope.” And, the movie’s villain has a Darth Vader(ish) way of moving people about solely with the flick of a wrist.

Kang, the villain, is the movie’s way of introduc-

ing the new Thanos. He is played by Jonathan Majors (“Devotion,” Marvel’s Disney+ series “Loki”) in a performance unlike most comic book villains. He speaks in a defeated tone designed to elicit sympathy, but a seething desire for revenge has a way of sneaking to the surface. It’s an extremely controlled performance, impressive in how it never veers into camp nor inflated theatrics.

But we also get a cameo by Bill Murray that, for



Scott Lang (Paul Rudd, left) faces off against Kane (Jonathan Majors) in “Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania.”



“Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania”

Running time: 125 minutes. Rated PG-13
for violence/action and language.

the first time in his career, feels like a paycheck-cashing appearance. This is the guy who was in “Zombieland” for all of five minutes, but made you laugh just as hard, maybe harder, than the rest of the movie. Here, he’s a curious bit of dead space. Ditto the return of a previous villain, brought back to life as a floating head, that may be one of the biggest misfires of any Marvel movie.

The movie’s big finish is just that. Big. Thing is, it’s achieved largely through green-screen technology, meaning the actors are standing in front of a screen, with the effects inserted in post-production. As such, there is a flatness to the action that strips it of the immersive effect of something like “Avatar: The Way of Water” or the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy.

I was never bored by “Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania.” Reed, as a director, knows how to pace a story, to keep it lively. The cast is still engaging, even if they don’t really engage with each other like they once did. I’m giving the movie a mild recommendation because, as a Marvel outing, it entertains. But as an “Ant-Man” sequel, it needs to recapture its charm before proceeding further.



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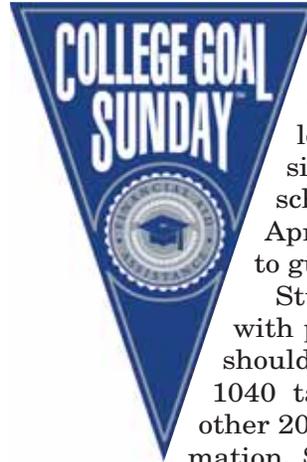
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College Goal Sunday

Financial-aid professionals will help college-bound students and their families with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 26, at Purdue University Northwest, Technology Building, Room 219, 1401 S. U.S. 421, Westville.



The form is required to be considered for federal and state grants, scholarships and Federal student loans at most colleges, universities and vocational/technical schools. It must be filed by the April 15 state priority deadline to guarantee state aid.

Students are asked to attend with parent(s) or guardian(s), who should take completed 2021 IRS 1040 tax returns, W-2 Forms and other 2021 income and benefits information. Students who worked should take income information. Students 24 or older may attend alone and take a completed 2021 IRS 1040 tax return, W-2 Form or other 2021 income and benefits information. Students and parent(s) are encouraged to apply for U.S. Department of Education FSA IDs at www.studentaid.gov before logging in to the event.

Volunteers will walk through the online form line by line and answer individual questions. All sites offer FAFSA online capabilities, and many have Spanish interpreters.

Students also may win one of five \$1,000 scholarships by submitting a completed evaluation automatically entered in a drawing. The winners will be notified in the spring and scholarships sent directly to the higher education institution selected by the winning students.

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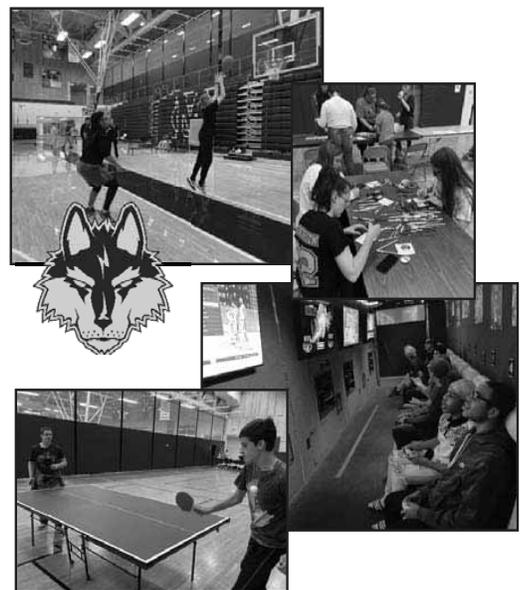
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Valparaiso Oldtime Dance Society will host a family dance from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 26 at Barker Hall at Trinity Church, 600 Franklin Square. Admission is \$8, \$4 for 14 and younger and \$20 for a family. Masks are required.

Lenten Fish Fry

The Queen of All Saints Knights of Columbus Council 12951 will host its annual Lenten Fish Fry from 4-7 p.m. starting Friday, Feb. 24, and continuing for six consecutive Fridays at the church off Barker Avenue.

The dinner includes three pieces of fish or 21 shrimp along with cole slaw, bread and butter, baked or French-fried potatoes and free coffee.

The cost is \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors. "Season Passes" are available for all six dinners at \$85 for adults and \$67 for seniors. Cash, checks and credit/debit cards are accepted.

Proceeds benefit Queen of All Saints Parish and School and the community. Visit <http://qas.org/kofc> and choose Fish Fry Tickets from the menu.

"Bulls" Investors Meeting

An informational meeting for anyone interested in becoming an investor in the upcoming movie "Bulls" is Thursday, Feb. 23.

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Notice to Poets

The Village of Three Oaks Poetry Board seeks original poetry to consider for the official position of Village of Three Oaks Poet Laureate.

Upon selection and appointment, the individual receives a \$500 honorarium and holds the title for the 2023-2024 calendar year.

In addition, a Junior Poet Laureate for youth 12 and younger receives a \$250 honorarium.

The submission deadline is March 31, 2023, and must include: name, address, email address & telephone number. The poetry board will reserve the right to publish the submitted works.

Submissions of (3-5) original poems should be made to:
Poetry Board
P.O. Box 153
Three Oaks, MI 49128
or email to info@harborarts.com

The Poet Laureate is a program of Harbor Arts

La Lumiere News

La Lumiere School Senior Ashlynn Shade will join the nation's best high school basketball players March 28 to compete in the annual McDonald's All-American game.

Shade is La Lumiere's first girls basketball player to achieve the status, and the only Indiana basketball player in this year's event. She was one of 24 out of 100,000 student-athletes chosen. This season, she averages 25 points, 10 rebounds and six assists per game.



Shade

"There have been so many great athletes that have been a part of this tradition, whether that be NBA or WNBA, and I am super excited about the opportunity," Shade said in a press release. Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, Candace Parker and Maya Moore were McDonald's All-Americans.

Shade officially received her All-American jersey at La Lumiere's Feb. 10 girls basketball game. After graduating, she will compete at the University of Connecticut.

The McDonald's All-American game is March 28 at Toyota Center in Houston.

The Winter La Lu Players will present Laurie Brooks' "Triangle" through Thursday, Feb. 23.

The free performances are at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22, and 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23.

The dual-setting play connects events leading to The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911, and the bedroom of two stubborn present-day sisters, populated with ghosts, blackmailers and would-be lovers.

Performances, held in the Fine Arts Building on campus, 6801 N. Wilhelm Road, are supported by the La Lumiere Arts Council.

Michigan City Video Fest 2023

The Michigan City Video Fest is accepting submissions for the event held the first weekend in May, with times and venues announced later.

Priority goes to regional makers and subject matter, the top concern being the highest quality material available. However, videos from both coasts, as well as from Europe and Australia, have debuted in the festival. All genres will be considered, such as animation, documentaries, music videos, commercials and trailers. The preference is videos shorter than 5 minutes, but invitations may be extended for longer ones. There are no prizes or awards.

Submission forms, requirements and more details are available at <http://MCVideoFest.com> and [Facebook.com/MCVideoFest](https://www.facebook.com/MCVideoFest)

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Michigan City Art League

Michigan City Art League has unveiled its spring session of classes.

The lineup is:

- March 2: Susan Ballew will demonstrate custom matting and framing techniques. Students may take a small piece to be matted and framed, as well as watercolor supplies to create a small painting.
- March 9: Dori Huber will demonstrate acrylic painting as students create a 16x20 work. Canvases will be available for \$2 each.
- March 23, 30: Paul Ortega will present the "Art of Love" using watercolor and resin.
- April 6: No class.
- April 13, 20: Bill Cavalier will present pen and ink drawing.
- April 27, May 4. Jane Cowley will present "Loosen up your Style with Acrylics."
- May 11: Betsy Fleek will present "Birds: Part II." Using watercolors, learn how to add color and detail to bird paintings. Take an unfinished painting from last session or try a new one.
- May 18: Suzie Rosso will highlight techniques for drawing the figure.
- May 25: Last class (social time). Take art for a critique. An art auction and snacks are planned.

Annual membership dues are \$25, and each semester class fee (12 weeks of classes) is \$35. Classes are from 6:30-9 p.m. Thursdays in the Queen of All Saints Catholic School cafeteria, 1715 E. Barker Ave. Membership and class fees may be paid to the Art League, P.O. Box 9720, Michigan City IN 46360, or the first day of class. Arrive by 6:15 p.m. because spots fill up quickly. All skill levels are welcome. Required materials will be listed and emailed. Some supplies will be available and some sold for a small fee.

Contact Kadie O'Connor at (219) 214-2349 or Kd3627@hotmail.com for more details.



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Monday Musicale

Monday Musicale will present the program “Having Children,” hosted by George Maslankowski, at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

Performers include Maslankowski on clarinet, pianists Dennis Brittain and Bev Griffith and Debra Sawyer on voice and harp. Sue Cassler and Felicia Thomas will present a medley of vocal duets, while Dan Moser will sing and play banjo, guitar and bass.

There is no admission charge; however, donations can be made to the scholarship fund.

Monday Musicale’s Student Awards Competition is Sunday, April 16. Students in grades 4-12 may audition in the following divisions: keyboard (piano or organ); instrumental (strings or winds); voice; and musical theater (choreographed vocal presentation). Adults may compete for the Guerrucci Award for improvisation on a hymn, or apply for an Organ Lesson Grant for Pianists. A form and brochure with complete information are available on the Monday Musicale Michigan City Facebook page or by contacting Cassler at susan.cassler@comcast.net

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“Argentina, 1985” Takes Powerful Look at the “Trial of the Juntas”

by Andrew Tallackson



Julio César Strassera (Ricardo Darin, center) and Luis Moreno Ocampo (Peter Lanzani, far left) recruit young graduates and inexperienced lawyers for their monumental case in “Argentina, 1985.”

“Argentina, 1985” represents the new breed of foreign film. Used to be, you had to slip into a different mindset as the viewer. Today, the next generation of filmmakers is telling stories having been groomed on a steady Hollywood diet.

“Argentina, 1985,” now streaming on Prime and nominated for Best International Feature Film, recounts the true story of the “Trial of the Juntas,” the legal attempt to prosecute high-ranking military officials involved in mass genocide. That may sound difficult, but the movie is Hollywood all the way. It is an underdog legal thriller, with surprising levity, where a scrappy team takes on the trial of the century. There are elements of “Bridge of Spies,” “Erin Brockovich” and “Reversal of Fortune,” with director/producer/co-writer Santiago Mitre staging the proceedings with a square, old school approach.

Indeed, this powerful movie is a reminder that the line between Hollywood and “international” cinema is forever blurring.

As the film begins, it’s not yet been two years since Argentina’s last dictatorship was overthrown, a democratic government now in control. When the military courts decide not to press charges against officials accused of crimes against humanity, the government steps in, corralling public prosecutor Julio César Strassera to lead the way. He’s played by Ricardo Darin in a performance that defies convention. Typically, you get the attorney who puts

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“Argentina, 1985”

Running time: 140 minutes. Prime.

Rated R for language.

the law over family, all leading to the big scene where the distraught wife calls him out for ignoring his children. Here, it’s the opposite. Julio, wickedly played by Darin like he’s just chewed through a bottle of Tums, is terrified by the assignment, to the point of being so paranoid, he is convinced his daughter’s new boyfriend is a military mole. Ironically, it is his family that insists he grow a pair. Step up and do what’s right.

In the “old days” of foreign films, “Argentina, 1985” might have taken a harder-edged approach. Depict scenes of actual kidnapping and torture. Mitre, however, is almost family friendly. He embraces the scruffy legal-eagle approach. With senior lawyers too fearful to touch the case, Julio and deputy prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo (Peter Lanzani) recruit a ragtag band of young graduates and inexperienced lawyers. This group is so motley, they’re almost cuddly. Can-do idealists ready to take on the system. And Mitre piles on the expected embellishments: handwritten death threats, bullying phone calls, car explosions. Everything required to amplify how important the case is.

It is when the trial begins in 1985, as Julio and his team bring forth witnesses, that “Argentina, 1985” grabs you with an emotional pull that never relents. The most devastating is a woman, with zero ties to any guerilla activity, who recounts being dragged from her home and forced to give birth in deplorable conditions. No courtroom histrionics, no cheap emotions, just a woman mustering every bit of courage to speak the truth.

Much of the humor of “Argentina, 1985” comes from the older Julio getting reality checks from his younger team. I am reminded of the scenes of him trying out his closing argument, the detached looks on everyone’s faces, as if he’s just read to them from a tax audit. If he’s going to win this case, they argue, he must hammer home the point of the trial. And that, he does. Julio’s closing argument begins almost procedural, then, sentence by sentence, emerges as a stirring plea for humanity, closing with the words *nunca más*, which translates to “never again.” How Mitre captures the reaction, first in silence, then through emerging cries of support, we are reminded of a point in time, some 40 years earlier, when genocidal horror pushed a certain people to the brink of extinction. The power of the performances, the images, I broke down, choked up.

Mitre has taken a subject that needed to be told and staged it in a way that speaks to audiences wherever across the globe they see it. It may not



Julio César Strassera (Ricardo Darin, left) antagonizes his legal opposition during the trial.

stand a chance against “All Quiet on the Western Front” at the Oscars. That film was a monumental achievement. But it, too, tells a difficult story in the most human way, and with nearly the same impact. It deserves to be seen.

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Civil Rights Activist/Gary's First Black Mayor Was a Michigan City Native

by William Halliar

Among the more famous individuals born and raised in Michigan City was Richard Gordon Hatcher, Gary's first black mayor who served five terms (1968-1988).

Hatcher was born in Michigan City on July 10, 1933, during the height of the Great Depression. His father worked at the Pullman plant while his mother did factory work to support the family. Their home was in the segregated neighborhood called The Patch. The youngest of 13 children in a struggling household, he grew up introverted with a stuttering problem and slight blindness in one eye. Despite these disadvantages, he worked hard and excelled in his studies. He loved athletics and became a prominent track and football star in high school.

After graduating from Elston High School in 1951, he received an athletic scholarship to attend Indiana University and enrolled that fall. He must have made a positive impression on his peers and adults in the community: Local churches, even siblings, helped with his expenses.

Hatcher excelled through the rigors of college life and study, even as he continued with track practice and a part-time job. While a sophomore, he became interested in politics and the civil rights movement. He joined the local NAACP chapter. During that time, he helped organize a protest against a segregated local restaurant, launching his career as an activist.

In 1956, Hatcher, recognized on IU's dean's list, received a bachelor's degree in business and government. The degree was awarded with honors in criminal law. He went on to receive a Juris Doctorate from Valparaiso University School of Law in 1959.

Politics and activism were his callings, and he set his cap to join the fray. His initial venture was in 1958 when he lost his first bid in a Democratic primary, coming in fourth as candidate for Michigan Township Justice of the Peace. In 1959, he was admitted to the bar and decided to make Gary his home base for future political endeavors. He set up a law practice and won a high-profile extradition case that earned him the position of Lake County deputy county prosecutor.

Hatcher was elected to the Gary City Council in 1963 and soon to president, making him the first and only first-term councilman to attain that post. In this position, he continued to champion civil rights.

In 1966, a group of Gary citizens recruited Hatcher to run for mayor. That same year, Vice President Hubert Humphrey invited him and several others to the White House to discuss African-American complaints over the slow progress of civil rights under then President Lyndon Johnson.



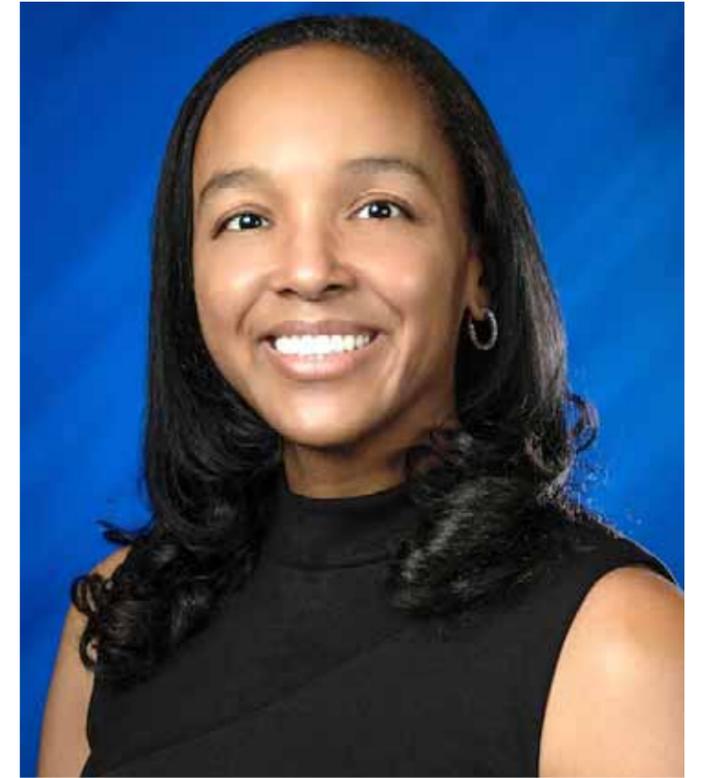
Richard Hatcher served five terms as Gary mayor, from 1968-1988.

In 1967, Hatcher agreed to make a run for mayor under the banner of his campaign slogan, "New Freedom." In the primary election, he challenged incumbent mayor Martin Katz and won by just 2,300 votes. He went on to win the general election to become, that year, one of the first African Americans elected as mayor to U.S. cities of more than 100,000 people. He shared this honor with Cleveland mayor Carl Stokes.

One interesting aside is a story told by his friend, Jesse Jackson. Although many famous entertainers wanted to perform at Hatcher's inauguration, he insisted a little-known group from Gary have the honors...so the Jackson Five performed that day.

Hatcher went on to serve five terms as mayor. Among his accomplishments was to reduce illegal gambling in the city to near zero. He also worked to purge his police department of corruption and cronyism. He was known to use innovative approaches to begin solving the city's problems. Hatcher became known as a trailblazer and was credited for changing the face of politics for future generations.

He is credited with being one of the first mayors of a major city to use federal funds to build affordable public housing. After several terms in office, he had managed to ensure that many of the city's department heads were black, including the police and fire departments.



Ragen Hatcher followed in her father's political footsteps. She is now a member of the Indiana House of Representatives.

Infrastructure improvement was high on Hatcher's "to do" list, as he began to resurface crumbling streets and provide regular garbage pickup for poorer neighborhoods. Remembering the struggles of his youth, he worked to create job-training programs for underprivileged teens.

In addition to his mayoral responsibilities, Hatcher remained keenly interested in civil rights. He organized the National Black Political Conventions in Gary in 1972 and 2016.

Karen Freeman-Wilson, the Gary mayor from 2012 to 2019 recalled, "He literally opened the door to black political empowerment on the local level, state level and federal level. He sent a message across the country, and he gave rise to other black mayors in small and big cities."

Hatcher served as vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 1981-1985 and served as committee chairman for Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential bid.

Even with all these efforts, Hatcher could do nothing about the Gary steel industry, which began to decline even as he first took office. Steel mills began to reduce workforces; some closed altogether. Workers who relied on the mills to support their families were forced to move from Gary to seek other em-

Continued From Page 21

ployment. The city's population declined, and with the lack of other opportunities, crime increased.

Homes were abandoned until nearly one third of the buildings in the city became vacant and decaying. As stated in a post on www.BLACKPAST.org, "as a result, Gary became the national symbol of post-industrial America."

Ragen Hatcher, who followed in her father's political footsteps, is now a member of the Indiana House of Representatives. She said after his death that her father "always did what was right even if it was not an easy fight to win."

In addition to Ragen, Hatcher and his wife, Ruthellyn, had two daughters, Rachelle and Renee. Ragen Hatcher told *The Beacher* she remembers her father fondly. He was a family man, always home for dinner no matter how busy he was with matters at City Hall. Ragen would often tag along with her father as he spent days in his office.

He was sometimes chided by peers because he had daughters, no sons, to which he would quip, "My girls can do anything that your boys can do."

Ragen fondly remembers visiting Michigan City, where her aunts and uncles lived, while she was growing up in Gary.

"We would play on the beautiful beach and hold our family reunions there," she said.

She recounts the year her father was elected mayor, and the controversy over an African American running for such an important office in a major city.

Just as she is proud of her father, Ragen Hatcher remembers, "He was always proud of his girls."

After his many terms as mayor, he took a teaching position at Valparaiso University. While there, he encouraged his daughters to obtain law degrees. He told them, "If you graduate from law school, you will never have to worry about supporting yourself. After you graduate with that degree, you can do anything that you want to do." Each of the girls ended up following their father's advice, becoming lawyers in their own right.

After Ragen graduated from law school, a position



Richard and Ragen Hatcher, photographed together.

opened on the Gary City Council. Richard Hatcher encouraged his daughter to "go for it," and she won the seat. Regan suspects his ulterior motive was to keep his oldest daughter close to home.

Because of shared civil rights goals, the Hatcher family remained close with the family of the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"Their family visited us often, and we are still close," Ragen says, "but we thought that we were a normal family and dad was just dad."

Richard Hatcher partnered with Jackson in founding Operation People United to Save Humanity.

In 1988, after Hatcher left the mayor's office, he founded his own consulting firm in Gary: R. Gordon Hatcher & Associates. He also began teaching political science at Roosevelt University in Chicago and law at Valparaiso University.

Ragen speaks with pride of her father's accomplishments after he left the mayor's office. He co-founded TransAfrica, which worked to change America's policy toward Africa, and to free Nelson Mandela in 1990.

In 1989, Hatcher worked as a Fellow at the Institute of Politics of Harvard's Kennedy School. He taught a course at Cambridge University in England and a political science course at Roosevelt University. In 1991, he threw his hat in the ring for Gary mayor, but was unsuccessful.

Hatcher died Dec. 13, 2019. In his lifetime, he wrote numerous articles about urban affairs, civil rights, politics and law. He received several awards and honors for his dedication to bettering the community. His passion for politics and civil rights will not be forgotten.

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Meet Edmund Lawler

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Title: Correspondent.

Years with *The Beacher*:
Since 2018.

What I love about my work:
I get to meet and interview interesting, accomplished people in the area.

Favorite story/assignment and why: I especially enjoyed profiling Angeline Bouley, the best-selling author of "Firekeeper's Daughter." A Native American raised in New Buffalo, Angeline shared her fascinating life story with me and our readers.



Favorite movies: "Apocalypse Now" directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

Favorite books/authors: Ken Kesey's "Sometimes a Great Notion."

Favorite singers/music: Jeff Tweedy of Wilco.

Favorite TV shows: "Succession" and "Schitt's Creek."

TV shows I'm watching now: travel-related programs.

Favorite food: Tacos.

Favorite pro sports team:



Photo by Bob Wellinski

Chicago White Sox.

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THE
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The People
Paper

Bill Nighy Achieves a Career High in “Living”

by Andrew Tallackson



We cinephiles have a soft spot for Bill Nighy. He carries himself with the stuffy demeanor of a “Masterpiece Theatre” regular. An aristocratic air. Then, he delights in sabotaging that very image, reveling in mischief. A sneaky, rebellious streak in comedies like “Love, Actually” (2003) and “Shaun of the Dead” (2004). Heck, he even snuck in a vampire flick: the 2003 video-game adaptation “Underworld.”

But with “Living,” which scored the 73-year-old his first Oscar nomination, the actor takes you on a most delicate journey, one we think we have figured out, arriving at closing passages that achieve a fragile perfection.

Director Oliver Hermanus certainly has lofty ambitions, remaking Akira Kurosawa’s 1952 film “Ikiru,” about a terminally ill bureaucrat searching for meaning in life. But in tapping Kazuo Ishiguro (“The Remains of the Day,” “Never Let You Go”) to fashion the screenplay (itself an Oscar nominee), this update is about living in ways we never see coming.

Set in 1953 London, we meet the employees of a county department drowning in paperwork. Dwarfed by mountains of it on their desks, misshapen piles that reflect the whole sloppy mess of the building: nothing gets done, routine requests passed from office to office.

Heading this particular department is Rodney Williams (Nighy), and it is no coincidence one of his female employees, Margaret (Aimee Lou Wood, delightful), secretly refers to him as “Mr. Zombie.” He sits at his desk frozen like a statue. There is no



“Living”

Running time: 102 minutes. Rated PG-13
for some suggestive material and smoking.

life to him. He lives without living. And much of his staff has settled into a groove where little gets accomplished.

When Rodney learns he has six months to live, he makes an uncharacteristic move, ditching work and heading to a seaside resort with the intention of offing himself. When he can’t go through with it, an insomniac writer (Tom Burke), learning Rodney’s fate, encourages him to live a little. Problem is, even Rodney admits, he doesn’t know how.

Sounds like we’ve got “Living” figured out. Nighy will go into full “Bill Nighy” mode, cutting loose with *carpe diem* vigor. Another riff on his “Love, Actually” rascal. And that might have been fun, but convenient. Potentially maudlin and manipulative.

For a while in “Living,” we aren’t quite clear of Hermanus’ intentions as director. He seems preoccupied with style for style’s sake, vigorously recreating the time period. The lush colors are, indeed, gorgeous, but the drastic shifts in camera angles and music choices on the soundtrack draw attention to themselves. It’s showoffy.

Nighy, however, maintains a tight ship with his performance and, ultimately, the film itself. Rodney loosens up a bit, learns to sneak in a smile, but he doesn’t descend into some 1950s party animal.

He's still the reserved Englishman, but fully aware of existing on borrowed time. You can feel it, in scenes where he clings to moments away from work with Margaret. He's not pining for her romantically, but more grasping at straws, as if her very vitality will somehow rub off on him.

It comes as a surprise, then, that the movie does not end with Rodney's death, instead allowing it to occur at the three-quarters mark. Then, something profound happens. We see Rodney, in his final weeks and days, through the eyes of those who worked for him. Through them, we come to a state of enlightenment. For Rodney, "living" is not about living it up, but achieving something small, but significant. Something that makes him happy. Proud. We see it in the way Nighy carries himself, with a renewed vigor.

The final scenes are so quiet, almost hymn-like through Emilie Levienaise-Farrouch's achingly beautiful score, that I often held my breath for seconds at a time, fearful of breaking the spell the movie cast over me. It was as if I had witnessed a man



Rodney Williams (Bill Nighy) opens up about his terminal illness to a former coworker, Margaret (Aimee Lou Wood).

who, by all accounts, was unremarkable, but whose own personal victory achieved a state of grace before death.

By the end, Nighy has moved us with a smile. A posture that suggests purpose. A gaze that conveys peace.

What a beautiful achievement.

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- "Avatar: The Way of Water"
- "The Banshees of Inisherin"
- "Elvis"
- "Everything Everywhere All at Once"
- "The Fabelmans"
- "TÁR"
- "Top Gun: Maverick"
- "Triangle of Sadness"
- "Women Talking"

DIRECTOR

- Martin McDonagh, "The Banshees of Inisherin"
- Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, "Everything Everywhere All at Once"
- Steven Spielberg, "The Fabelmans"
- Todd Field, "TÁR"
- Ruben Östlund, "Triangle of Sadness"

ACTOR

- Austin Butler, "Elvis"
- Colin Farrell, "The Banshees of Inisherin"
- Brendan Fraser, "The Whale"
- Paul Mescal, "Aftersun"
- Bill Nighy, "Living"

ACTRESS

- Cate Blanchett, "TÁR"
- Ana de Armas, "Blonde"
- Andrea Riseborough, "To Leslie"
- Michelle Williams, "The Fabelmans"
- Michelle Yeoh, "Everything Everywhere All at Once"

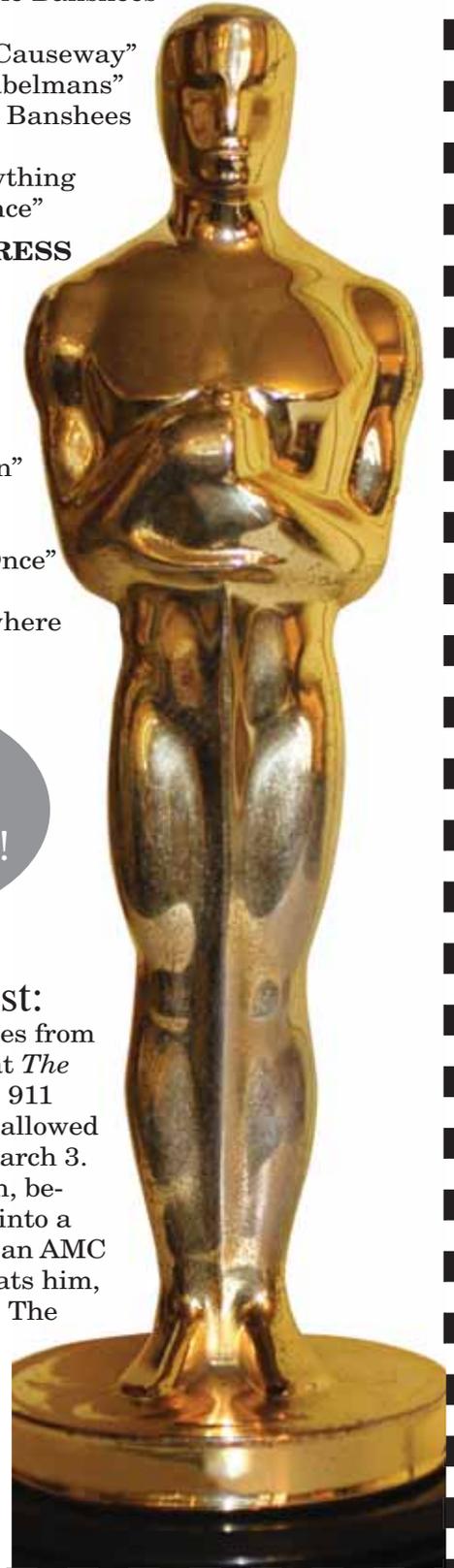
SUPPORTING ACTOR

- Brendan Gleeson, "The Banshees of Inisherin"
- Brian Tyree Henry, "Causeway"
- Judd Hirsch, "The Fabelmans"
- Barry Keoghan, "The Banshees of Inisherin"
- Ke Huy Quan, "Everything Everywhere All at Once"

SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- Angela Bassett, "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever"
- Hong Chau, "The Whale"
- Kerry Condon, "The Banshees of Inisherin"
- Jamie Lee Curtis, "Everything Everywhere All at Once"
- Stephanie Hsu, "Everything Everywhere All at Once"

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

Check one box in each category. Only one entry per person. Entries from *Beacher* employees will not be accepted. Forms can be dropped off at *The Beacher* or submitted by mail to: The Beacher, Attn: Oscar Contest, 911 Franklin St., Michigan City, IN 46360. Only scanned copies will be allowed by email to atallackson@gmail.com. The deadline is noon Friday, March 3. Editor Andrew Tallackson's picks will appear in the March 9 edition, before the March 12 telecast. Those who beat his picks will be placed into a drawing. First place receives a \$25 Swingbelly's gift certificate and an AMC movie pass. Second place receives an AMC movie pass. If no one beats him, readers with the most correct picks will be placed into the drawing. The winner will be revealed in the March 23 edition.

Name:

City/Town:

Phone Number:

Chesterton Art Center

Chesterton Art Center will host its free Family Art Day, where families can create art and tour the new exhibit, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25.

With guidance from the CAC team, families will explore the "Sense of Place" exhibit that celebrates work from the Indiana Dunes National Park Artist-in-Residence program. Visitors then move into the classroom to create dunes-inspired artwork, including collage birds, mixed-media beach scenes and plant study accordion books. All supplies are provided, and families should dress to get messy.



Register at tinyurl.com/mvnhazpk or call (219) 926-4711.



Chesterton Art Center is located at 115 S. Fourth St. Hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. Call the center at (219) 926-4711 or visit www.chestertonart.org for more details.

Applications for AED Grants

Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte is accepting applications for Automated External Defibrillator grants from nonprofit local organizations, schools and government through March 31.

The grants are through the "When Seconds Count: AED Initiative." More information and the grant portal are available at www.hflaporte.org/when-seconds-count-aed

HFL also works with the LaPorte County AED Collective to provide guidance on education and maintenance, and monitor the locations of AEDs here. Visit tinyurl.com/yv2wbx6r for details.

HFL opened the AED grant-application process in February to coincide with American Heart Month. Through "When Seconds Count," it has awarded 137 AEDs, along with cabinets and signage, totaling more than \$276,000 in LaPorte County since 2017.

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Wolfpack Roundup

Area eighth-graders are invited to Michigan City High School’s annual Wolfpack Roundup at 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, in the Michigan City High School auditorium, 8466 W. Pahs Road.

The event is open to families of current eighth-graders: those who attend Michigan City Area Schools, private or charter schools or are home-schoolers. Families with older students considering a transfer to MCHS are welcome.

Prospective students can learn about the school’s individualized learning paths, including Honors College, Early College, Core Academy and career-tech certifications. Parents and students can learn about ways to earn college credits, such as AP and dual credits, as well as the Indiana College Core at MCHS, one of the region’s only schools to offer it.

Eighth-graders can attend “Friday Night Live,” which coincides with the Wolfpack Roundup. The event happens a few times throughout the year and typically is open only to current MCHS students. It is a free open-gym event with basketball, volleyball, a video game truck, pop-up art, movies, music and free food. Eighth-graders may stay until the event is over at 10 p.m., with or without parents.

More details are available at www.EducateMC.net/MCHS, or call Danielle Reed, MCHS school counseling department chair, at (219) 873-2044.

Commission for Women

To celebrate International Women’s Day, Michigan City Commission for Women will host a round-table conversation and luncheon, “Embrace Equity for Access to Healthcare for Women.”

The free event, which includes discussion on the commission’s priority of eliminating maternal and infant mortality, is from noon-2 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at Krueger Memorial Park, 801 Liberty Trail. Lunch is provided.

Participating groups include: Minority Health Partners of LaPorte; Women’s Infants and Children-Northwest Indiana Community Action; Franciscan Health PreNatal Assistance Program; Dunebrook; and doula Susan Enamorado. RSVP with name(s) and/or organizations by email by March 1 to commissionforwomen@emichigancity.com

Cabin Fever HamFest

Cabin Fever HamFest, sponsored by the LaPorte County Amateur Radio Club, is from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St.

The event includes free parking, food and door prizes, with Volunteer Examiner testing at 9 a.m. General admission is \$8. Visit <http://lpcarc.org/hamfest> or call (219) 851-2133 for updates.

4-H Clover Crop



Crafters at the 2022 Clover Crop.

Area scrapbookers and crafters are invited to the “14th Annual 4-H Clover Crop,” sponsored by LaPorte County 4-H Boosters and Alumni, from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, March 11, at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds Small Projects Building, 2501 W. Indiana 2.

The \$30 donation for adults (\$35 after Feb. 27) and \$20 for students includes table space, breakfast, lunch, contests, prizes and goodie bags. Also planned are classes, make ‘n takes, a silent auction and home-based businesses. All proceeds support program activities and scholarships to benefit LaPorte County 4-H Club members.

Call Angela Lile at (574) 910-0404, visit 14th Annual 4-H Clover Crop on Facebook or email angrile@gmail.com for more details. Registration forms also are available at the Purdue Extension LaPorte County office, 2857 W. Indiana 2, Suite A, LaPorte.

Rotary Club Scholarships

The Rotary Club of Michigan City Foundation is offering \$2,000 scholarships to two high-school seniors served by Michigan City Area Schools and exemplifying Rotary’s motto “Service Above Self.”

Application and letters of recommendation must be postmarked no later than March 24. The application can be accessed at <http://www.mcrotaary.org> (see the homepage blue banner “2023 Scholarship Application”).

The foundation, in honor of J.M. Ruby, Robert Schwartz and A.K. Smith, funds the two scholarships. To be eligible, students must:

- Have a minimum of a “C” average in high school (class rank will not be considered).
- Graduate from any accredited high school before June 30, 2023.
- Plan to attend post-secondary education in fall 2023.

The scholarship is paid directly to the winner’s post-secondary education school.

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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:

- **Great Decisions at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27.** The foreign-policy discussion program returns for its 25th season. The discussion is "War Crimes." Reading material is available at the circulation desk. Call 873-3049 for more details.
- **Makerspace: open lab hours from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in February.** 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.

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

□
Volunteer genealogists can answer questions from 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays (Pat Harris) and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. the last Saturday of the month (Colleen Miltenberger).

□
Two displays can be viewed celebrating Black History Month.

"Remember Our History," found at the circulation desk, shows images and scenes from pivotal events involving African Americans in American history.

"Celebrating African American History with U.S. Postage Stamps," located on the east slatwall, focuses on stamps celebrating black history and African-American greats. Booker T. Washington was the first featured in 1940. Most notable is the Black Heritage Series, which began in 1978 with Harriet Tubman.

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

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LaPorte County Public Library

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

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

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



LaPorte County Public Library patrons are no longer charged daily overdue fines when an item is returned late. Customers only will be charged for items they damage, lose or never return.



The following programs are planned:

- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 24, at the main library.** Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- **Teen D&D from 5-7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, in Meeting Room A at the main library.** The program involves a cooperative tabletop role-playing game for teens 12-18. Registration is required.
- **Family Emoji Party from 6-7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, in the main library multipurpose room.** Celebrate the end of the Winter Reading Program with emoji-themed stories and games.
- **Virtual Author Talk with Sadeqa Johnson (Adults 19+) from 3-4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28.** Advanced registration is required at <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/24155>
- **Readers Corner-Book Club from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28, at the Coolspring Branch Meeting Room.** Refreshments will not be served, but participants may take coffee or tea.
- **Crafty Kids (ages 6-11) from 4-5 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, in the main library multipurpose room.** Children learn new craft styles 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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MCAS Kindergarten Roundup

Michigan City Area Schools kindergarten enrollment is open online for the 2023-2024 school year, with children required to be age 5 by Aug. 1.

Parents and guardians can visit www.EducateMC.net/kindergarten to begin the process. Once basic information is received, parents receive instructions on creating a PowerSchool account to finalize enrollment. Parents/guardians will need an official birth certificate, parent/guardian's driver's license or state photo ID, proof of residency, immunization records and proof of lead testing.

The documents may be uploaded during online enrollment or dropped off at the child's school between noon-6 p.m. Wednesday, March 1. Parents needing additional assistance can come to their child's school that day during those hours. Elementary schools will be available to assist families throughout March by appointment.

Kindergarten students should be enrolled at the school serving the area in which they live. If a family is unsure which school applies, contact the MCAS Transportation Department at (219) 873-2127.

School-based Pre-K programs, offered at Pine and Springfield elementary schools in partnership with LaPorte County Family YMCA, are open for fall enrollment. Children enrolling in the YMCA PreK program must be 3 by Oct. 1. There are tuition fees associated; however, need-based scholarships are available and CCDF vouchers accepted.

MCAS plans to open the Little Wolves Early Learning Center, 1001 E. U.S. 20, in August. The center will serve children who are 4 by Aug. 1. There is a fee. More information is available at www.EducateMC.net/preK

MCAS also is accepting applications for its K-6 magnet schools, which include Pine Elementary School (visual and performing Arts) and Lake Hills Elementary School (an Indiana-certified STEM school). Most magnet spots for the 2023-2024 school year will be available at the kindergarten level. Slots in higher grades will be filled as space allows before the start of the school year. Information and applications are available at www.EducateMC.net/magnets. The deadline for these applications is April 28.

Spring Artisan Fair

LaPorte County Historical Society seeks vendors for its annual Spring Artisan Fair, which is from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday, April 16, at LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave.

The event is the same day as LaPorte County Draft Horse Association's Plow Day near the Door Prairie Barn. All types of artisan are invited. Spots are limited, so contact Danielle Adams at director@laportecountyhistory.org for more information.

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2. Lady Strikers	12.5	7.5
2. Pin Pals	12.5	7.5

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES

	SCORE
1. Barb Macudzinski	165
2. Debbie Novak	159
3. Dottie Brinckman	158
4. Ann Bogart	157
5. Susan Kieffer	155
6. Nancy Klausner	154
7. Kathy Staninger	152

SPLITS

Carolyn Wiggins	2-7
Robyn Rice	3-10, 5-10
Ann Bogart	3-10
Nancy Klausner	2-7



American Red Cross

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

- American Legion Hamon Gray Post 83, 228 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23.
- La Lumiere School, 6801 N. Wilhelm Road, LaPorte, 1-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 1.

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.

“Preview PNW”

Prospective students can attend Purdue University Northwest’s “Preview PNW” from 4-7 p.m. Thursday, March 2, at the Westville campus, 1401 S. U.S. 421.

Registration can be completed by visiting www.pnw.edu/westville-preview. Check-in begins at 4 p.m. Students and their families receive information on undergraduate course offerings, the admissions process and paying for college. Tours are planned.

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

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In the Area

Feb. 23 — Closing-night performance, “Triangle,” La Lumiere School, 6801 N. Wilhelm Road. Free.

Feb. 24-25 — Daddy Daughter Dance, Red Mill County Park, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, LaPorte. Times: 6-8 p.m. Feb. 24/2-4 p.m. Feb. 25. Cost: \$25/couple, \$5/each additional daughter. Pre-registration/payment: (219) 325-8315.

Feb. 25 — Cabin Fever HamFest, 7 a.m.-1 p.m., LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. General admission: \$8. Info: <http://lpcarc.org/hamfest>, (219) 851-2133.

Feb. 26 — Maple Sugar Time Demonstration, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12. Free. Info: volunteer@friendshipbotanicgardens.org, Friendship Botanic Gardens on Facebook.

Feb. 26 — Valparaiso Oldtime Dance Society family dance, 2-4 p.m., Barker Hall at Trinity Church, 600 Franklin Square. Admission: \$8, \$4/14 & younger, \$20/family.

Feb. 27 — Family Emoji Party, 6-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Feb. 27 — Great Decisions, 6:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Feb. 27 — Monday Musicale, 7 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Info: Monday Musicale Michigan City Facebook page, susan.cassler@comcast.net

Feb. 28 — Virtual Author Talk with Sadeqa Johnson (Adults 19+), 3-4 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: <https://libraryc.org/laportelibrary/24155>

Feb. 28 — Readers Corner-Book Club, 6-7 p.m., Coolspring Library Branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

March 1 — **FIRST DAY OF WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH.**

March 1 — Retirement open house (LaPorte County Parks rangers Laura Moyer/Niki Schmutte), 1:30-4 p.m., Luhr County Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte.

March 1 — Crafty Kids (ages 6-11), 4-5 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Through March 31 — Artwork by Madeleine

Schooley/the late Barbara Fedder, The Legacy Center Gallery at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Gallery 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.

Tuesdays — Bingo, St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church, 109 Ann St. Doors open: 3:30 p.m. Bingo: 6 p.m. Starting Feb. 7: \$45 entrance fee (includes all cards). Info: (219) 336-3099.

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

In the Region

Feb. 24-26, March 3-5 — “Murder on the Orient Express,” Elkhart Civic Theatre @ Bristol (Ind.) Opera House, 210 E. Vistula St. Times (Eastern): 7:30 p.m. Feb. 24-25/March 3-4, 3 p.m. Feb. 26 & March 5. Tickets: adults/\$25, seniors (62+)/\$23, students (with ID)/\$19. Reservations: (574) 848-4116, www.elkhartcivictheatre.org/murder

Feb. 25 — Family Art Day, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Free. Registration: tinyurl.com/mvnhazpk, (219) 926-4711.

Feb. 25 — All About Brumation, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Feb. 25 — Winter Tracks & Scat, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Feb. 26 — To the Beach & Back Discovery Hike, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Feb. 26 — The Acorn’s Dance Showcase: Citadel Dance & Music Center, 3 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$25-\$35. Reservations: www.acornlive.org

Feb. 28 — NBTL Book Club, 10 a.m. EST, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Book: Alice Hoffman’s *The World That We Knew*.

March 1 — “Insights in History,” 1:30 p.m. EST, The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Admission: \$3. Reservations: www.historymuseumSB.org, (574) 235-9664.

March 1-3 — Shakespeare at Notre Dame, “Romeo and Juliet,” 7:30 p.m. EST, The University of Notre Dame’s Washington Hall. Mainstage tickets: \$15-\$25. Reservations: <https://performingarts.nd.edu>

Through Feb. 26 — “Stories from the Soil” (Jon Hook-Andrea Peterson exhibit), Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: <https://boxfactoryforthearts.org>

Through March 1 — “Sense of Place: Works

from the Artists in Residence of Indiana Dunes National Park,” Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

Through March 2 — Oil painter Judy Davis, The Village Gallery, Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso. Info: (219) 465-1591.

Through March 5 — “Enchanted Lands: The Collage Works of Scott Hatt, Elkhart’s The Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Fri., 1-4 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Admission: \$10/adult, \$6/ages 8-12, \$8/ages 13-18, \$8/college students with ID. Info: (574) 293-6660, www.midwestmuseum.us

Through March 24 — Group exhibit, “Sense and Sensibility: Poetry in Painting,” South Shore Arts, 1040 Ridge Road, Munster.

Through April 16 — Exhibit, artist-poet-artificial intelligence researcher Sasha Stiles, Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: www.krasl.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

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-Sundays in February — National Park Themed Movie, 10-11:30 a.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Saturdays-Sundays in February — Snowshoe Open House at Chellberg Farm (snow permitting), 1-3 p.m., Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/ind

Saturdays-Sundays in February — Chellberg Farm Open House, 1-3 p.m., Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/ind

Maple Sugar Time Demonstration

Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12, will host a free afternoon of winter wilderness discovery during the annual Maple Sugar Time Demonstration from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 26.

Visitors can take a self-guided nature walk through old-growth woodland trails before stopping by the maple-sugaring station to learn how early inhabitants of North America produced maple syrup.

Longtime garden volunteer Jude Rakowski will demonstrate the processes of harvesting and boiling Red Maple sap to make a foodstuff crucial to the survival of the early settlers. Rakowski gathers and chops wood the entire year to fuel the fires used to boil the maple sap.

The event is weather-dependent. Check Friendship Botanic Gardens on Facebook for information about any rescheduling.

Email volunteer@friendshipbotanicgardens.org for more details.

New Buffalo Township Library

- **NBTL Book Club at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28.** The book is Alice Hoffman’s “The World That We Knew.”



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 4 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.

“Romeo and Juliet”

As part of Shakespeare at Notre Dame, Actors From The London Stage will present “Romeo and Juliet” at 7:30 p.m. EST Wednesday-Friday, March 1-3, at The University of Notre Dame’s Washington Hall.

The five-actor touring company will present a new staging of the Shakespeare tale.

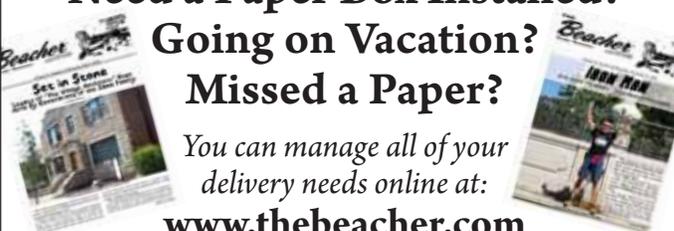
Mainstage tickets range from \$15-\$25. Reservations can be made at <https://performingarts.nd.edu>

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of 3 years of professional painting experience and be able to work effi-
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Code 6 by James Grippando (*hardcover, \$27.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 356 pages.*)

“We make software that could help keep the country safe...prove that there was a technological solution to the challenge of balancing public safety and civil liberties.”

Sounds good, but...

Truth? Fiction? We have a little of both this week in a thrilling, mind-blowing story of how much information is enough? How far can governments go with collecting, analyzing and cubby holing our lives? And what will they do with that information?

All good questions, about to be explored...

Buck Technologies is a data-integration company, its CEO is Christian Gamble. He started the company with his partner, Jeremy Peel, who is now chairman of the board.

Data integration, surveillance technology, call it what you may, it's the business of learning your business — where you go, what you do, heck, what toothpaste you use...and a whole lot more.

Buck's customers include the Pentagon and CIA, and why they placed their offices nearby in Virginia. *“In short, the business of Big Data was hopelessly intertwined with politics.”* And that's why third world countries and terrorist groups would love to get their blood-stained hands on these programs and their codes.

There's a bit of history as Grippando goes back in time to the 1890 U.S. census, when the primitive Hollerith data-sorting card machines are first used. They were the forerunners of the IBM computers. In World War II, the Nazis used these punch card machines to keep track of Jews and the efficient running of the concentration camps.

Grippando doesn't over dwell on this history, but it's interesting to have a little knowledge about Tom Watson and his invention, and how it leads up to this point in time.

Gamble is married to Elizabeth, a hopeless alcoholic, and they have a daughter, Kate.

Kate has a law degree and will start soon as an intern in daddy's company. But her real passion is writing and becoming a playwright.

Those are the basics you need to know before I take you down the rabbit hole...

The morning everything in Kate's life changes, she is trying to persuade Irving Bass, a famous Broadway director, to use her play, setting her off on the future she knows she is meant to follow. The play, by accident or consciously, is about Tom Watson, inventor of the aforementioned Hollerith ma-

Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



chines. Parts of the play hit close to home.

Arriving at the building where the Gambles live in the penthouse apartment, she finds the block closed off, police and EMT on scene. An empty apartment leads Kate to the balcony where a ripped silk scarf shows the spot where her mother threw herself over the railing. She left a note that said, *“I did it for Kate.”* Did what for Kate? What is that mysterious “it”? The death is ruled a suicide even though Kate thinks otherwise.

At the same time Kate starts her internship at Buck, Irving Bass' assistant calls to say he's interested in her play. Time to start rewrites.

Meanwhile, Kate's first day at the office, she runs into Patrick Battle, Gamble's wunderkind and someone she used to babysit. He inadvertently mentions a project he's working on and probably should not have mentioned.

Same day, Patrick disappears from work, and Kate is told he's on his way to Columbia, South America, for a corporate retreat. Hmm. The timing is strange.

Kate sees nothing wrong with this retreat, they happen all the time. Time to get back to her play.

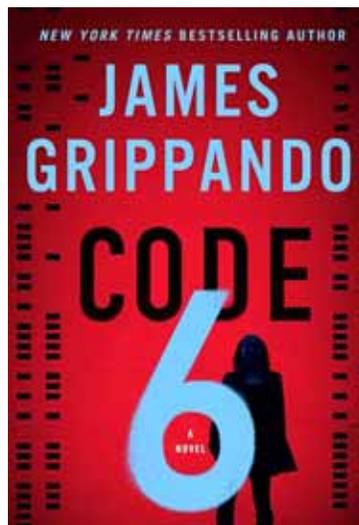
The story now moves between Virginia and South America. While his days in the jungle are becoming something closer to dangerous than a learning experience, alternating chapters show what is going on in Buck Technologies...like a ransom note received for \$2 million for Patrick's safe return, which is followed several days later by a new demand: the ransom now is a copy of “Code 6” in exchange for Patrick's life.

When Kate finds out, she contacts her ex, Noah Dunn, a senior cybercrime prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office. Buck Technologies, namely Jeremy Peel, is not interested in saving Patrick, so Kate takes it on herself to get him back. But how? Noah vows to help. Now, the story picks up speed.

This is a character-driven story with something for every reader — thrilling, political, filled with familial lies and loves. All aspects of this complex story come together in a climax that is knock-your-socks-off exciting.

The final word: The characters jump off the page with resounding reality. Mislplaced ambition, greed, lies and secret codes, they're all here in a thought-provoking and entertaining story.

Till next time, happy reading!



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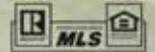
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