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# Epic Journey

by Kim Nowatzke



Sara Noë is photographed by *The Beacher's* Kim Nowatzke in the young-adult fiction section at LaPorte County Public Library Coolspring Branch with her three books in the <u>Chronicles of Avilésor: War of the Realms</u> series.

If asked to come up with one word to describe Sara Noë, the answer would have to be creative.

This 30-year-old author/artist/photographer from LaPorte just released <u>Blood of the Enemy</u>, the third book in her award-winning <u>Chronicles of Avilésor:</u> <u>War of the Realms</u> fantasy series. She has designed her own covers, graphics, maps and merchandise to accompany the books, rounding out her impressive artistic abilities with professional success in natural and wildlife digital photography.

"The books are an ultimate merging of passions for me, and I'm proud to say they are just as much a part of my artistic side as they are my writing side," Noë shared on her website, <u>www.onthecobblestoneroad.</u> com.

Why the intriguing, unusual title for the website? "Life is a journey of unexpected turns and obstacles," she explains there. "We can't always see past the next curve. The road forks sometimes, leaving us standing in the middle wondering which direction to take. I thought I had a route in mind, but I abandoned my map and forged ahead on a different path. So, here we are."

Cobblestones, it should be noted, with their texture and uniqueness, are a recurring theme in her books.

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The author's artistic journey began way back in 2005 when her poems were published in national anthologies. Encouraged by Lorraine Tighe, her Kesling Middle School English teacher who remains her mentor/friend/fan, she completed her first novella, A Flight of Faith, a year later.

With encouragement and support from other teachers along the way, it didn't take long before the ninth-grader completed her first full-length high fantasy novel, Shadow Rider. Unfortunately, during her senior year of high school, the first attempts to trust someone to guide her through the writing world were misplaced. Her manuscript was set aside while Noë focused her time, energy and attention on other pursuits, mainly the Chronicles of Avilésor: War of the Realms series.

It would take five more years to complete this, as she earned her bachelor's degree in landscape architecture, with a minor in creative writing, from Purdue University. This included fulfilling a paid internship requirement.

Why this major?

"I originally planned to go into the family busi-

ness, which was landscaping, but that door closed while I was in high school. I liked writing, but I didn't think that would pay the bills," Noë explained. "Without anything else to fall back on, I decided to focus not on a smaller family-owned business scale, but on larger-scale projects like parks, health care and city planning."

At first, she enjoyed the creative designing component of the curriculum, but the further she progressed into the degree, it became more technical. Halfway through her college education, she decided to forge ahead and finish her goal, including a oneyear internship in Naperville, Ill., before her senior year. That "really hammered home that this was not something I wanted to do. It wasn't something I was as passionate about. I wanted the more artistic part and less of the civil engineering part. Math has never been my strong suit."

Although Noë worked on A Fallen Hero throughout college, she now became hyperfocused on her writing, getting little sleep as she wrote into the wee hours of the morning, using the creative outlet as an escape.

"At the time, I was in denial, but looking back, I can see it as a textbook example of depression," she admits. "I poured so much into the protagonist,



Sara Noë is pictured with her study abroad group at Hampton Court in England. The experience factored into writing her series.

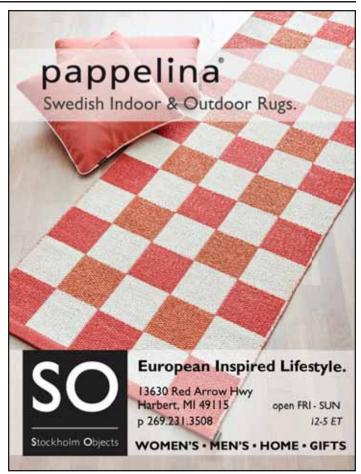
Cato, at this time. He possessed two supernatural powers, cryokinesis (the ability to psychically control cold and ice) and sonokinesis (the power to emit sonic shockwaves). That was kind of my release – putting all this into this character. He manifested what I was going through. It was a therapy for me – pouring everything into those books. This enhanced the books. They represented my emotional struggles — numbness and frustration, that feeling of just wanting to scream."



Sara Noë is photographed at Old Lighthouse Museum dressed as Cato, the main character in her series.

A Fallen Hero was released on Aug. 7, 2018. It follows Cato, the only true half-human, half-ghost hybrid in existence. The U.S. government thinks he's the key to creating a devastating weapon. This would give humankind the upper hand when the inevitable war breaks out between the Human Realm and Ghost Realm, called Avilésor. Cato and his "lab family" survive a transport accident after he is an unwilling test subject in Project Alpha for two years. The plot continues with the group hunted by Shadow Guards, with supernatural abilities, and human agents looking for their prisoners. They eventually end up in Cato's hometown, where the Rip between Realms connects the two worlds.

"I pulled just about every element I love in a good story — character psychology, the thrill of a hunt, captor-hostage relationships, betrayal, found families, fantasy worldbuilding, conflicted villains and less-than-perfect protagonists, experimentation, supernatural battles, etc.," Noë explained in an interview with Harmony Todd of Old Soul Artisan found at <a href="https://www.onthecobblestoneroad.com">www.onthecobblestoneroad.com</a>.





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In addition to work on the series, Noë's poems, fiction and creative nonfiction have been featured in a variety of publications, such as Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans, Northwest Indiana Literary Journal, Voices Literary Journal, Indiana Poetry Archive and Flying Island Literary Journal.

And, it wasn't long before A Fallen Hero was critically acclaimed by the *Prairies Book* view, NAM Editorial and Chronicle Focus Editorial. It also made Lauren Gantt's Top 10 Books of 2019 list.

Phantom's Mask, Book Two in the series, arrived in July 2020. It follows Cato and his lab family as they choose between staying in Phantom Heights as mercenaries, protecting the humans who betrayed them in the past or crossing into the Ghost Realm and confront Azar. Either

choice means dangers and life as fugitives.

Both books earned the Literary Titan Gold Book Award: A Fallen Hero in May 2020, then, only two months later, Phantom's Mask in July 2020. According to www.literarytitan.com, this recognition is "bestowed on books that we found to be perfect in their delivery of original content, utilizing fresh themes to convey innovative ideas, and deftly uses elegant prose to transform words into expertly written literature."

Noë hopes the third book, Blood of the Enemy, receives the same honor.

A total of seven books are planned for the War of the Realms series. She actually wrote these all at once and now is subdividing them into separate books. This way, she already knows how the series will end and can slip in foreshadowing along the way.

"They started as a daydream - I had to write it down. I wrote down scenes that eventually fell into place," she said, explaining the "stitching process," as she calls it.

"But, on the negative side, I was essentially left with hundreds of scenes that needed to be ordered and stitched together like a puzzle," Noë continued in the Old Soul Artisan interview. "Sometimes, scenes didn't fit into the plot flow and had to be deleted or completely reworked. Connecting all of the pieces can be a major challenge when I'm trying to create a smooth transition between scenes that were written at different times."

Blood of the Enemy follows the return of Phantom, who is even more powerful, dangerous and deadly. His powers have grown during captivity, and he hasn't gained mastery over them. His family by blood is determined to reach his human side. But, he has entered into something new and unrecognizable by his loved ones from the past.

While A Fallen Hero and Phantom's Mask are

available in hardback, paperback and e-book, only the first book is in audiobook. Blood of the Enemy is only available as a hardcover. Several local libraries, includ-LaPorte County Public Library, carry the books. Autographed copies can be found at Lubeznik Center for the Arts and Rising Phoenix Art Gallery in Michigan City, and at The Co-Op Shoppes on State Street, Hotspot Café and Bennett's Uptown Shoppes

ing in LaPorte.

In spring 2020, Noë took her venture a step further by launching her merchandise. Through her website, fans can purchase a variety of items she has designed, including kid-size, women's and men's apparel, homeware articles such as beach towels and fleece blankets, and drinkware, face masks and bags. There's even a customized candle scent called Avilésor created by Harmony Todd, the founder and candlesmith behind Old Soul Artisan based out of New Jersey. It's described as a "careful blend of cedar, green leaf and



Sara Noë is photographed at her first book-signing with her sister, Megan, at the Co-Op Shoppes in LaPorte.



apple with a hint of chrysanthemum to add light floral tones" in Noë's website blog, and is part of the

candle company's Dark Lit series.

After receiving one Todd's candles as a birthday gift, she said in the blog, "I immediately fell in love with the aesthetic, and after Book I in the Chronicles of Avilésor: War of the Realms series was published, the candle frequently found its way into the book photography I featured on Instagram," she said. "I inadvertently became known as the 'author with the black feathers" and quickly embraced the title, so the raven wax seal on the lid of my Book of Spells candle fit perfectly."

Not only is there a shapeshifting raven named "Rayven" in the series, but there's also "Wes," the werewolf. The fact that Old Soul Artisan donates a dollar of every website order to wolf conservation efforts was a selling point for Noë.

Over the last 18 months, readers could join Pa-

treon, a monthly subscription platform where creators and artists provide special perks to subscribers. In the top level of her three-tier membership options, members are treated with places or minor characters named after them in one of her books.

"It's engaging with people to find their name in the book," she said, "with the assertion that only their names are used; the characters themselves are not based on real people."

She's added other fun details in her books, too, such as her mother's birth date and a teacher named after her mentor Tighe, who also was a beta reader (who reads the book before publication and offers suggestions) for Book Three.

Continued on Page 6



Sara Noë (right) and her Kesling Middle School seventh-grade English teacher, Lorraine Tighe, who has acted as a mentor/fan/friend.

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# **Epic Journey** Continued from Page 5

Incorporating her love of design and skill set gained from her degree, Noë has created three maps to accompany her book series: Avilésor (the Ghost Realm) in March 2022, Phantom Heights (the Human Realm) in December 2022 and Saros Manor, (Wes Cooper's mansion in the town of Phantom Heights) in January 2023.

She accomplished the line work for the Avilésor map entirely by hand (except for the labeling) and added some digital enhancements to her work for the other two. They are currently only available as posterboard prints at events, but the author looks forward to eventually offering them on her website.

However, for the first time, the maps can be found in the beginning pages of <u>Blood of the Enemy</u>.

"I think people are really going to like the maps and see how everything is laid out," Noë said. "That was the last piece that had to fall into place to publish the book. Book Three is a fun combination of all those little pieces that I didn't foresee back in 2018 when I began the journey of publishing the first book."

She said she studied maps of Michigan City and LaPorte as she attempted to "make something that looks like a real town you could visit."

She also pulled from a three-week trip to England during her sophomore year of college. Noë soaked up the experience as she gained a better understanding about culture and history while studying the landscape, gardens, estates and other points of interest.

"That helped me with the world building," she said. "It helped being exposed to more than corn fields, soy beans and sand dunes that you see around here."

But, that doesn't mean her Midwest roots aren't noticeable in her books.

"The Human Realm is based on the Midwest," Noë assured. "A lot of the scenery came about from my travels back and forth to Purdue. There's plenty of Midwest in this book."

Last year was a turning point as Noë began, for the first time, to pursue her business full time and fulfill other freelance writing jobs (she currently writes for a content marketing company) on the side. In the past, this was flip-flopped, with her writing profession taking more of a backseat position.

Over the years, Noë has delivered rental beach equipment, worked in a casino, created flower arrangements and driven the delivery van for a local florist shop, worked as a server in two different restaurants, and started as a customer service rep for a reading glasses company before transferring to its e-commerce department, where she managed the website, social media and digital assets.

"I like learning new skills, and each job taught me a lot...but over time, I realized that I was tired of spending so much of my time making other people's businesses successful," she explained. "I wanted to be focusing on my own passions. I didn't think I was ready to take my business full time quite yet, but life had other plans, and I decided to take the leap and go for it rather than try to find another day job. I still do some freelance writing on the side, but most of my time is dedicated to my own work."

As an indie (self-published) author, she's keenly aware the job of promoting her books and expanding her reach is exclusively her responsibility.

"You expect that writing and publishing is the hardest part," she said, "but it's really the marketing that is and getting it (your book) into the hands of readers."

So, Noë took a more grassroots approach rather than a digital marketing focus for building her base, with a busy schedule of 35 events in 2022. Her assistant, Kayla, also known as "Silhouette," has been attending more events, too, helping Noë especially with the pre-planning and coordination efforts, and being present to interact and engage with readers in person.

"She's been involved with my writing career since high school when we would share stories with each other," she said. "I published A Fallen Hero in 2018, but early in my career, I was really struggling with the marketing aspect of self-publishing. I expressed my frustration to her, and we realized that having someone reach out to bookstores as my representative was much more professional than having an Continued on Page 8



Sara Noë (third from right) is photographed with her family at the Southern Shore Art Association gallery when her photo, "Spiraling" (above Sara's head), won the "Best Still Life" award.



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# Epic Journey Continued from Page 6

indie author contact them directly. She started acting as my agent and making inquiries on my behalf for book signings. In 2019, she helped me arrange a Barnes & Noble book-signing tour that took place in seven cities across three states (Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin) over the course of two months. She enjoyed taking on the role of event coordinator, and her help freed up more time for me to focus on the next book. In 2021, we really got serious about searching for events and keeping track of schedules. applications, deadlines, new opportunities, etc. We're a lot more invested now than we were when we first started the Barnes & Noble tour in 2019."

Noë said making in-person connections works best right now. Sometimes, she can be found cosplaying as her main character, Cato, at events. The heavy focus on in-person interactions gave her and her assistant an idea of how to more wisely spend their time and money.

"Last year was a big learning curve...I learned so much! It was fun and kind of tiring...it's hard getting a business off the ground, especially in the wake of the pandemic, but I'm definitely happier than I ever was when I was working a full-time day job."

And, Noë's happiness is found in cultivating her other artistic talents.

"I like creating things," she said, "whether it be writing, drawing or being out with my camera."

She attributes her artistic genes to her paternal grandmother and maternal grandfather, and fondly remembers drawing with

them as a child. In fact, Book Three is dedicated to her maternal grandparents, Rosalie and Gordon Glanders

"Although I've dabbled in multiple mediums, I always come back to grayscale pencil sketches," she mentions on her website.

Back in 2010, her "Nevermore" received an honorable mention in the Tri Kappa Art Show. Her works, "The Raven" and "Dapple Gray," could be seen in downtown Michigan City at Pine and Ninth streets and Washington and Ninth streets.

Noë's photograph, "Aftermath," was published on the cover of Voices Literary Journal in 2018, and she won the Best Still Life Award for "Spiraling" in 2019 at a Southern Shore Art Association gallery juried exhibit.

What does the future hold for this talented young LaPortean?

There's the rest of War of the Realms series, of course. While the first six books are in chronological order, the last, a prequel, will contain eight stories.

> Each will be narrated by one of the Alpha subjects from before they became captives. There are many avenues Noë plans to take with other spinoffs in the fictional world of Avilésor, but focus on different time periods and characters.

> She wants to create an illustrated guide of the fantasy worlds" in her books, she said. And, she hasn't forgotten her first book, Shadow Rider, that was set aside. Someday she hopes to publish it, too.

> "It's actually mentioned in the first book (A Fallen Hero) that it is (the character) Vivian's favorite book."

> Wherever  $_{
> m the}$ cobblestone road takes her, you can bet Noë will be growing, learning and creating.

She summed it up well on her website's "The Author" section: "I finally made it, but I still have a long way to go, and a lot more stories to tell!"



Sara Noë is photographed by The Beacher's Kim Nowatzke in the young adult fiction section at La-Porte County Public Library Coolspring Branch with her line drawing, "Raven.

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#### "Oliver!" Returns to Footlight Theatre

Footlight Players will present "Oliver!," the fourth production in its 73rd season, on March 3-5, 10-12 and 17-19 at Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St.

Director Laura Meyer, who helmed the 2014 Footlight production, is joined by assistant director Nikki Anthony and musical director Jennifer Keeley. They have assembled a cast of 35 performers.

The Charles Dickens tale opens in a London workhouse run by Mr. Bumble (Tom LeDonne) and Widow Corney (Kathy Chase). Conditions are bleak as the orphans (Isaac Bitter, Olivia, Selah and Silas Branco, Jude Gowan, Annabelle, Hannah and Jerry Kilbourne, Delaney, Foster and Knowles McMeen, Faith Minich, Addison Moore and Katelyn West), eat their gruel.

The young Oliver Twist (Eli Gowan) has the audacity to ask for more. He then is sold to Mr. and Mrs. Sowerberry (Noel Carlson and Al Dines), the local undertaker and his wife. He is bullied by their daughter, Charlotte (Lexi Passmore), and clerk, Noah (Brandon Branco), subsequently running away and meeting The Artful Dodger (Erika Frye), who takes him to the cantankerous Fagin (Robert Richter) and his gang. There, we meet Bill Sykes (Alexander Bonner), Nancy (Adrianna LeDonne) and Bet (Ella Rucinski). The next morning, Oliver attempts his first theft with Mr. Brownlow (Thom Nelson), but is seized by police (Christopher West and Adam Wogomon). That's how Oliver comes to meet Mrs. Bedwin (Rhonda Brennan).

The cast also includes Rick Henderson, Ericka Kilbourne, Susie Richter and Lara West. Bobby Komendera is the producer, the set design by Wogomon, the lighting by Jim Milcarek, the more than 50 costumes by Sharon Kienitz, and the hair and makeup by Kalie Winebrenner. The scenic artist is Bill Wild.





Adrianna LeDonne (left), Eli Gowan and Alexander Bonner appear in Footlight Players' "Oliver!"

#### **Auditions**

Footlight Players will have auditions for the final show of the season, the spoof "Murdered to Death," at 6 p.m. Sunday-Monday, March 5-6, at Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St.

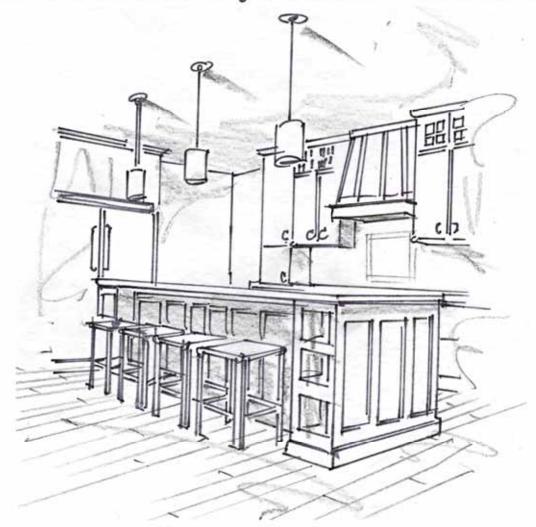
The production is May 5-7 and 11-14. Director Dee Piotrowski seeks five adult males and five adult females.

Show times are 7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$17, or \$12 for 12 or younger. There are no assigned seats. Reservations are held 15 minutes prior to curtain unless secured by full payment. Reservations are recommended by calling the box office at (219) 874-4035 or at www. footlightplayers.org/reservations



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#### Lubeznik Center Exhibit Explores Perspectives of U.S. Residents

"Citizen," which explores the complex perspectives of U.S. residents, runs March 3-June 16 at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, with an opening reception from 5-8 p.m. Friday, March 3.

The exhibit spotlights residents amid struggles for justice, freedom and basic human rights. One emphasis is excluded histories of marginalized communities and their current state as they face the realities of climate change and political setbacks.

The artists are: Sarah Atlas, Nicci Briann, William Estrada, Anne Heisler, Sergio Maciel, Brittany Maldonado, Joseph Josué Mora, Hillesh Patel, CZR PRZ, André Rodríguez, Cristian Roldán, noemi rose, Denise Ruiz, Jessica Sabogal, Diana Solís, Angie Vasquez, Vanessa Viruet and Mer Young.

The exhibit is curated by Chicago artist Sam Kirk, a multidisciplinary artist who explores culture and identity. Images of women,



members of the LGBTQ community and the underrepresented are celebrated. Her work has been featured in EPCOT's International Festival of the Arts, *Rolling Stone*, *O Magazine* and *Forbes*. She has collaborated with Vans and Chicago Cubs.

The reception includes hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Artists will be present.

Planned in conjunction with the exhibit are:

- Director Janet Bloch will give a gallery talk at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, March 11.
- A panel discussion at 5 p.m. Sunday, March 26, with Kirk.
- Family Day from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, June 3. The event includes free snacks and art making.

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Arts is located at 101 W. Second St. Visit www. lubeznikcenter.org for more details.







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While parked, call the library phone number posted on the numbered space sign, tell staff your library card number and he/she will check out the items and take them to a table at the parking space and walk away. Patrons then can step out of their

vehicle to retrieve them. Curbside hours are Monday-Friday (1 to 6 p.m. at Thomas and Hageman) and Saturday (11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Thomas and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Hageman).

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

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#### **Harbor Country Hikers**



Harbor Country Hikers visits Jens Jensen Preserve during a 2022 hike.

Harbor Country Hikers' next hike focuses on Michigan's conifers and broad-leaf evergreens at 1 p.m. EST Saturday, March 4, at Jens Jensen Preserve and the adjacent Pepperidge Dunes Nature Sanctuary in Sawyer, Mich.

HCH President Pat Fisher will discuss evergreens native to Southwest Michigan, others that found their way to the area and others that appear headed in this direction. A 1.5-mile hike, rated easy in terms of physical difficulty, follows Fisher's 15-minute talk. Dress for the weather — warm cap, sturdy boots or shoes — and take plenty of water.

Jens Jensen Preserve, a Chikaming Open Lands property, and Pepperidge Dunes, owned by the Michigan Nature Association, protect 45 acres of beech-maple forest with seasonal wetlands. They are a critical corridor along the lakefront for migratory birds.

HCH membership is preferred; however, the program is open to the public. Visit www.harborcountryhikers.com or the Facebook page Harbor Country Hikers for more details.





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"All That Breathes" follows two brothers and their family as they attempt to save birds impacted by the toxic environment of New Delhi.

"Things are getting from bad to worse here. Birds are plummeting from the sky. Delhi is a gaping wound. And we're a tiny Band-Aid on it."

No doubt the most brutally accurate assessment ever, hailing from a man facing an uphill battle deep in the heart of it.

The New Delhi we experience in "All That Breathes," the Oscar-nominated documentary streaming on HBO Max, is a casualty of overpopulation and pollution. Science-fiction writers ruminate on such possibilities, but New Delhi is the suffocating truth. We see it in the opening scene, at night, the camera moving through a tract of land buried in trash, rats weaving through the rubble. And during the day, two brothers and their family, exhaustively trying to save a dying bird population.

"All That Breathes" is like no other documentary out there. Almost dreamlike at first, following these brothers amid a typical day. The movie is an ecological wakeup call...and a tribute to persistence amid the impossible.

Why would brothers Nadeem Shehzad and Mohammad Saud, who had their own dreams and ambitions, remain in Wazirbad, Delhi, running a bird sanctuary where some 20,000 raptors have been saved over the past 20 years? Director Shaunak Sen finds a lyrical way to convey that early in "All That Breathes." The brothers reveal how, as children, they would lie on their backs, watching "kite" birds soar above them. While most birds appear to make a concerted effort to fly, these "kites" look ef-



#### "All That Breathes"

Running time: 97 minutes. HBO Max. Not Rated, but suitable for youth 12 and older.

fortless. And by placing the camera at a low angle peering up, we get it. There *is* something majestic about these birds in flight.

We learn, too, that Nadeem's and Mohammad's mother, who died of cancer, asked her sons to continue the rescue efforts. However, Sen, as director, does not reduce the brothers to selfless saints. New Delhi is a world that zaps the life out of its people. The streets are filled with decay and ruin. The air is unbreathable. Living conditions are deplorable at best. At one point, Nadeem is so exhausted from his work, he catnaps while his wife takes over dressing the wounds of an injured bird. Many of these animals don't put up a fight. And, I swear, they appear grateful for the help, if that's possible.

A documentary like this could easily shift to convenient uplift, but "All that Breathes" is relentless in its reality checks. Funding arrives to give the bird clinic a legitimate upgrade. The day it's ready, no one can reach it. Monsoon weather flooded the streets with raw sewage.

A local businessman who provides food for the birds calls the work by the brothers "noble." But in a scene where Nadeem tends to an injured bird, all the while hearing religious protests outside of which his wife is attending, you can see he'd rather



The birds seen in the film almost appear thankful for the medical care offered by the brothers.

be by his wife's side.

But then, we have scenes where the birds flourish under the brothers' care. The gentle score by Roger Goula is extremely effective here. We find beauty in the thought that life finds a way to survive.

I kept waiting for the big moment, the climactic revelation that grabs us emotionally, like a fictional work might do. "All That Breathes" does not contain one. Instead, it celebrates the minor victories, the brief triumphs that motivate the brothers. The movie is not so much about the triumph of the human spirit, but the drive that persists within them to not give up.

Will their work make a difference? Sen doesn't sentimentalize their plight. Instead, we realize the journey is nowhere near over. That the brothers will not give up, well, it's remarkable.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@ gmail.com

#### Northwest Indiana Green Drinks

Northwest Indiana Green Drinks will host the program "Where Have All the Natives Gone? Fish Cycles in Lake Michigan!" at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 2, through Facebook Live and Zoom.

The presenter is Ben Dickinson, a Lake Michigan Fisheries biologist of Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The program is supported by Save the Dunes, Michigan City Sustainability Commission and 219 Green Connect.

Visit tinyurl.com/9589bmjp for the Zoom meeting. The Meeting ID is 810 6513 4026 and the passcode 299347.

#### **Housing Report from National Association**

Existing home sales continued to ease in January, marking a yearlong stretch of declines coming off pandemic-fueled highs. But median home prices still are rising.

Total existing home sales — completed transactions that include single-family homes, townhomes, condos and coops — decreased 0.7% in January compared to December 2022, the National Association of REALTORS® reported. Home sales are down nearly 37% compared to a year earlier (at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4 million in January).

"Home sales are bottoming out," says Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. "Prices vary depending on a market's affordability, with lower-priced regions witnessing modest growth and more regions expensive experiencing declines."

Overall, the median existing home sales price nationwide rose 1.3% compared to a year ago, reaching \$359,000, NAR reports. Home prices climbed in three out of the four major regions of the U.S., only falling in the West last month.

The supply of homes for sale continues to be tight in most markets across the country, helping to keep home prices higher. Still, total housing inventory rose 2.1% in January month-over-month and is up by 15.3% compared to a year ago.

"Inventory remains low, but buyers are beginning to have better negotiating power," Yun says. "Homes sitting on the market for more than 60 days can be purchased for around 10% less than the original list price."

Dan's Comments: All of the above could be said about our local Indiana lakefront market, except that inventory is not just low. It is almost non-existent in our marketplace.

# Dan Coffey E: Dan@DanCoffey.com

O: 269.469.5635 Ext. 302 W: www.remaxhc.com



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# Renewable Energy Comes to Downtown Salon

by Edmund Lawler

The first solar-powered business in downtown Michigan City is now silently extracting energy from the skies, while at ground level voiding its monthly electric bill.

Even better, Northern Indiana Public Service Co. will kick back a monthly credit to Elle Salon, 113 W. Eighth St., thanks to its recently installed rooftop solar panels. The renewable energy future has arrived in the shadow of NIPSCO's cooling tower that looms over the Michigan City lakefront.

"I'm excited that we could finally turn on our solar system and begin reaping the benefits of the sun," says Sam Hook, who co-owns the salon with his wife, Elle. The couple, who launched the business in 2006, have been downtown stalwarts, weathering the "Great Recession," the COVID-19 pandemic and now more happily watching momentum build downtown as it awaits next year's completion of the South Shore Double Track.

Elle was raised on a farm in LaCrosse and graduated from Purdue University. Sam grew up in Chicago's south suburbs and graduated from Columbia College Chicago. They met in Michigan City and were married in 2005.

Both are committed environmentalists frustrated by how little they were able to do to combat climate change.

"One of the reasons we wanted to do solar was that we have this sense of helplessness," he says. "You read about all the threats to the environment. But what could we really do besides recycling? We wanted to create a meaningful impact. When you're creating 100 percent of your energy, that's a meaningful impact."

Sam, who's also associate partner with Epic Business Development, a local design and branding firm, says he began researching commercial solar installation companies on the Internet. But, he found it confusing and was wary that some may be fly-by-nights in the rapidly evolving renewable energy space.

He says a friend, Nancy Moldenhauer, the Save the Dunes president and chair of the Michigan City Sustainability Commission, recommended he contact a company in Indianapolis with a solid reputation for commercial and residential solar installations throughout the state.

Jefferson Electric did the installation over two days, completing the work Nov. 11. Because Elle Salon falls within the boundaries of the Franklin Street Historic Preservation District, the solar installation had to meet district guidelines. It did: the



With their salon's new rooftop solar installation, Sam and Elle Hook will ditch their monthly electrical bill. Photos by Edmund Lawler.

array of rooftop solar panels is not visible from the street. The installation also had to pass inspection by the city, which it did as well.

The Hooks eagerly flipped the switch Jan. 9, and the 1,200-square foot salon with a row of large, south-facing windows began drawing its juice from the sun — rain or shine, but mostly shine.

The solar unit and installation cost \$19,500, which the Hooks hope to recoup by eliminating their roughly \$200-a-month NIPSCO electricity bill. And, they believe a solar-equipped building will enhance their property's resale value.

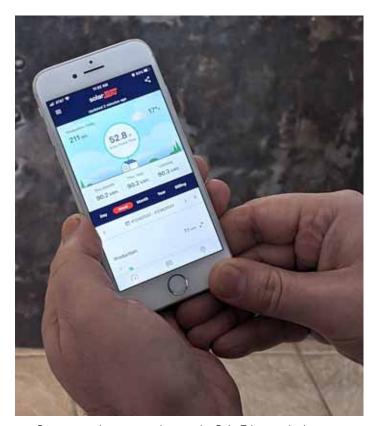
"Jefferson Electric did the calculations and predicted we will generate 108 percent solar energy, giving us an 8 percent sell-back," Sam says. "If everything works out with the weather, the solar panels will generate 100 percent of our electricity

needs. The extra 8 percent will go back on the grid as a send-back to NIPSCO."

Tara McElmurry, NIPSCO's communications manager, explained that Elle Salon is participating in its Excess Distributed Generation Tariff, where customers can earn utility bill credits for the power they generate through renewable energy.

"Through this program, NIPSCO installs one meter capable of measuring energy customers are using, as well as measuring the amount customers are generating through the renewable energy source," McElmurry says.

"If participating customers generate more than what they need," she continued, "they'll receive utility bill credits that can be applied to reduce their bill in the amount valued at 125 percent of market-priced power for all excess distributed generation."



Sam can track energy savings on the SolarEdge monitoring app.

McElmurry says customers can learn more about NIPSCO's various renewable energy programs and how to apply at www.NIPSCO.com/renewableenergy.

Sam likes that on sunny days, when the solar panels create more energy than the salon actually uses, it gets pushed back through the salon's newly installed electric meter. From there, the solar-generated electricity flows onto NIPSCO's grid, helping the utility wean itself from coal and natural gas, which produce excessive amounts of greenhouse gasses.

He is especially fond of an energy-monitoring app on his mobile phone called SolarEdge. The app lets him view real-time data on the salon's solar array's performance.

"I geek out on the app," Sam says. "You feel good on sunny days when you see how much solar power you're generating and how much carbon you saved."

But what Elle likes even better is being able to assure the couple's two teenage daughters that they're striking a blow for the environment.

"They're concerned and have asked if there will be anything there for us in the future?," she said. "I tell them that all we can do is try our best."

Meaningful impacts, indeed, start with small steps.



Justice Smith makes for an instantly likable hero in "Sharper."

It may be early, but I will go out on a limb to say this: You will not have a more wicked good time at the movies this year than "Sharper."

The movie is all about the art of the con. The great playwright David Mamet ("Glengarry Glen Ross," "House of Cards") lives for this stuff. A world where no one is who they seem. No one can be trusted. The twists keep coming at a delicious pace.

The screenplay of "Sharper" is in the great tradition of a Mamet work. Crafted by Brian Gatewood and Alessandro Tanaka, it sat on the 2020 Black List of scripts no studio would touch. Until, that is, Apple TV+, the only streaming service bold enough to take risks, teamed up with the studio A24 ("Everything Everywhere All at Once") to get it made. Starting with instantly likable unknowns — Justice Smith and Brianna Middleton — the cast expanded to include Sebastian Stan, Julianne Moore and John Lithgow.

Writing any review of "Sharper" is impossible. One slip of a spoiler, and the movie's devious spirit gets ruined. So, I'll give it my best shot.

Told in non-linear fashion from the perspectives of each character, we first meet Tom (Smith, "Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom"), who is a bit of an anachronism. He runs an antique bookstore. Into his shop



Running time: 116 minutes. Apple TV+. Rated R for language throughout and some sexual references.

arrives Sandra (Middleton, "The Tender Bar"), and they have what in movies is called a "meet cute." An instant attraction, everything falling into place easily. A bit *too* easily. Tom, despite suffering from anxiety, is a pretty grounded guy. A good head on his shoulders. A kind heart. Ditto Sandra. She's got baggage — a wildly unstable brother — but for the most part, she's just as attracted to Tom as he is to her

Then one day, Tom agrees to help Sandra amid a dire situation involving her brother. We sense something is off because the camera holds itself on Sandra just a bit too long for comfort. Like it's the last time we are going to see her.

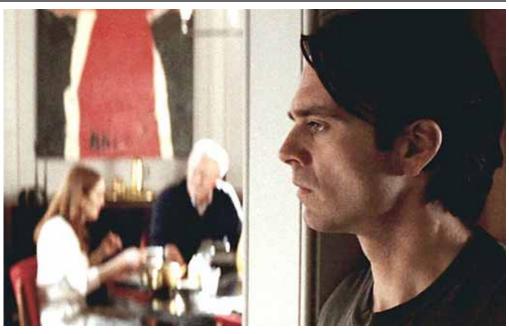
From there, we arrive at the story from Sandra's perspective. We also meet Max (Stan), a puppetmaster in the con world, his mother, Madeline (Moore) and her crazy rich boyfriend, Richard (Lithgow). How are they connected? The screenplay carefully orchestrates each reveal, the twists dripping with

cruel irony.

Modulating this sea of cons is director Benjamin Caron, who before this helmed acclaimed episodes of "The Crown," "Sherlock" and "Andor." Here, he doesn't clutter the story with cheap theatrics. The script is the selling point. It delights in keeping its characters one step ahead of each other, so Caron lets his cast sit in the driver's seat, propelling the action forward. Stan, in particular, has become a far more interesting actor the further away he gets from playing Marvel's The Winter Soldier. He's willing to take risks, whether it's embodying Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee, and his overeager male appendage, in the Hulu

miniseries "Pam & Tommy" or here, playing a man icily detached so emotions never interfere with his gameplan. And Moore? Let's just say the Oscar winner is full of surprises.

Once you get a feel for the kind of movie "Sharper" is, you have an idea where all the twists and turns might land, and the one it saves for last, we



Max (Sebastian Stan) eavesdrops on his mother (Julianne Moore) and her boyfriend (John Lithgow).

see it coming. But the resolution is so satisfying, you can't fault the movie for settling precisely where it should. And the journey to that point is such a wild ride, you finally can catch your breath, in all the right ways, once the screen fades to black.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com





# And the Nominees Are...

#### PICTURE SUPPORTING ACTOR ☐ "All Quiet on the Western Front" ☐ Brendan Gleeson, "The Banshees ☐ "Avatar: The Way of Water" of Inisherin" ☐ "The Banshees of Inisherin" ☐ Brian Tyree Henry, "Causeway" □ "Elvis" □ Judd Hirsch, "The Fabelmans" "Everything Everywhere All at Once" ☐ Barry Keoghan, "The Banshees ☐ "The Fabelmans" of Inisherin" □ "TÁR" ☐ Ke Huy Quan, "Everything ☐ "Top Gun: Maverick" Everywhere All at Once" "Triangle of Sadness" SUPPORTING ACTRESS ☐ "Women Talking" ☐ Angela Bassett, **DIRECTOR** "Black Panther: ☐ Martin McDonagh, "The Banshees of Wakanda Forever Inisherin" ☐ Hong Chau, ☐ Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, "The Whale" "Everything Everywhere All at Once" ☐ Kerry Condon, "The ☐ Steven Spielberg, "The Fabelmans" Banshees of Inisherin' Todd Field, "TÁR" ☐ Jamie Lee Curtis, ☐ Ruben Östlund, "Triangle of Sadness" "Everything Everywhere All at Once" **ACTOR** ☐ Austin Butler, "Elvis" ☐ Stephanie Hsu, "Everything Everywhere □ Colin Farrell, "The Banshees of Inisherin" All at Once" ☐ Brendan Fraser, "The Whale" Paul Mescal, "Aftersun" ■ □ Bill Nighy, "Living" **ACTRESS** Contest □ Cate Blanchett, "TÁR" sponsor ☐ Ana de Armas, "Blonde" Swingbellys! ☐ Andrea Riseborough, "To Leslie" ☐ Michelle Williams, "The Fabelmans" ☐ Michelle Yeoh, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" 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:

Learn more about the staff of The Beacher Weekly Newspaper

# Meet Connie Kuzydym

#### **Area of Residence**:

Michigan City.

Title: Correspondent.

Years with *The Beacher*: 8.5. What I love about my work:

The opportunity to meet and talk with so many interesting individuals in our area. It's fascinating and educational.

Favorite story/assignment and why: It's hard to choose my favorite piece. Being predominately a profile writer, I'm meeting and writing about amazing individuals living in our area. My favorite part is the process of talking with and listening to those being interviewed about their lives or contributions, then deciding how to best tell their story to our reader.

Favorite movies: "Top Gun,"
"You've Got Mail," "Pretty
Woman," "White Christmas."
Favorite books/authors:

I love historical fiction, mysteries that aren't gory and light reads. When checking out books, I choose one bestselling author/book that received some type of award that I have never read before.

**Favorite singers/music**: I lean towards country, but enjoy a wide range of genres.



**Favorite TV shows**: Anything on Hallmark or GAF, "When Calls the Heart," "Blue Bloods," "Last Man Standing," "The Queen's Gambit."

TV shows I'm watching now: "Yellowstone," "Manifest." Favorite food: Barbecue ribs, Blaze pizza, Mediterranean fare.

**Favorite sports team**: Notre Dame football. **Reason I love living in this area**: The lake, and the fact our area is a hidden gem. We are in a sweet spot with our county's northern border being Lake Michigan. We have numerous county parks and Indiana Dunes National Park at our disposal. Being an hour from downtown Chicago, Notre Dame, along with bordering Michigan, there's so much to do. Plus, there are great areas to cycle to/from.

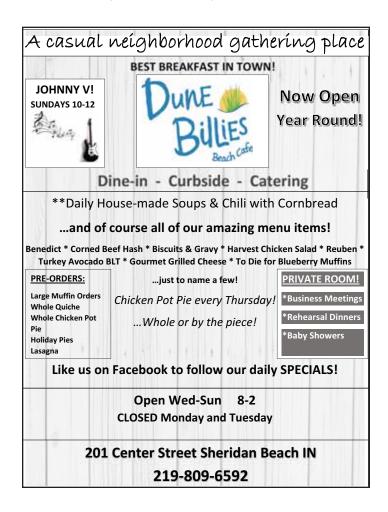
Beacher The People Paper

#### Getting a Real Kick Out of The Ballet Lady





Judith Joseph, as The Ballet Lady, has a blast with Head Start classes at Niemann Elementary School. The program wrapped up March 1.







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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.

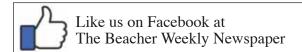
The following programs are scheduled:

- Pokemon Party! from 3-5 p.m. Monday, March 6. No registration is required for the allages program that includes Pokemon crafts and games.
- Virtual Dungeons & Dragons from 4-6 p.m. Wednesday, March 8. Youth ages 12-18 can play through Zoom. Miss Dana can teach people how to play. Advance registration is required. Contact Dana in Youth Services at dwolf@mclib.org or (219) 873-3045 for more details.
- Free Genealogy Workshop from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday, March 14. Presented by the Ulster Historical Foundation of Belfast, staff members Fintan Mullan and Gillian Hunt will highlight Irish and Scots-Irish genealogy for beginners and active family historians. A light lunch will be provided. Registration is required by March 7 by calling (219) 873-3049.
- 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 (through 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).

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





2023 ICS Hosted Events!



#### Save these dates in 2023!

**January**—Sweetheart Contest Begins

3/11—Sweetheart Day Event 10AM—4PM—Valparaiso Moose Lodge

5/12 & 5/13—Mother's Day Flower Sale

6/10 & 6/11—Aunt Kitty's Treasure & Trash Spring Yard Sale

7/15 & 7/16 —ICS Used Book Sale

8/19—1st Annual ICS Bazaar—Elkhart

8/26 & 8/27—Summer Open House

9/30 & 10/1—Aunt Kitty's Treasure & Trash Fall Yard Sale

10/21—ICS/TNR Project's 2nd Annual Chili Cook-Off

12/9 & 12/10—Holiday Open House

Watch Facebook, our Website and Mewsletters for updates to these and more ICS events throughout the year! Thank you for your continued support!



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#### **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



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

- La Lumiere School Fine Arts Building, 6801 N. Wilhelm Road, LaPorte, 1-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 1.
- Purdue University Northwest, Library Student Faculty Building Room 144, 1401 S. U.S. 421, Westville, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, March 8.
- Trinity Lutheran Church, 907 Michigan Ave., La-Porte, 1-6 p.m. Thursday, March 9.
- American Legion, 107 N. Flynn Road, Westville, 1-6 p.m. Thursday, March 9.

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

#### **New Buffalo Township Library**

#### 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.

#### **Home & Lifestyle Expo**

Builders Association of LaPorte County will host its Home & Lifestyle Expo on Saturday-Sunday, March 4-5, at Blue Chip Casino Hotel, 777 Blue Chip Drive.

Times are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. March 4 and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. March 5. Admission is free. Vendors include professionals in home building, remodeling, home maintenance and gardening. Call (219) 326-0624 or www.HomeLifeStyleExpo.com for more details.

#### **Old Lighthouse Museum**

Old Lighthouse Museum, 100 Heisman Harbor, kicks off its 50th year by being open with no admission costs from 5-8 p.m. Friday, March 3.

Guests can tour the museum, climb to the lantern room atop the lighthouse, learn about the harbor's history, try a treasure hunt or complete a crossword puzzle for prizes. Members of LaPorte Symphony Orchestra who provide music. Light hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be available.

#### **Hoosier Star Auditions**

LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra will hold auditions for the 18th Annual Hoosier Star vocal competition Saturday-Sunday, March 18-19, at Bethany Lutheran Church, 102 G St., LaPorte.

Times are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. March 18 and 1-5 p.m. March 19.

The competition is open to amateur singers of all musical styles and ages — individually or as a duet - from Indiana and Berrien County, Mich. Contestants are divided into two age groups: Youth Division (17 and younger) and adult division (18 and older) at the time of auditions. Ten finalists — five in each age group — advance to the final event, and the chance to perform with LCSO, win monetary prizes and the title of 2023 Hoosier Star. The event is Saturday, Sept. 9, at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. Audience members, including a panel of judges, will choose the final two winners in each age division based on the performances. First and second place in the Youth Division receive \$1,000 and \$500, respectively. First and second-place winners in the Adult Division win \$1,000 and \$500, respectively.

Audition forms are at www.hoosierstar.com. Contestants should pre-register for a guaranteed time slot. The registration fee is \$20 per person or duet. If a competitor would like to audition as a soloist and a duet, two separate audition forms, including separate fees, are required. Applications must be received by March 15 to be eligible and receive a guaranteed time slot. Walk-in auditions will be available at the end of each day.

No group performances may enter, and both competitors in a duet must be from the same age division. For auditions, applicants may provide an accompanist, or supply a digital MP3-capable device. No a cappella auditions will be accepted.

Applicants will be notified of the assigned audition date and time within a week beforehand.

Visit tinyurl.com/2p8bchh5, email hoosierstar3@ yahoo.com or call (219) 362-9020 for more details.

### LONG BEACH WOMEN'S BOWLING



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#### In the Area

### March 1 — FIRST DAY OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH.

March 2 — Northwest Indiana Green Drinks, 6:30 p.m., Facebook Live/Zoom. Zoom link: tinyurl. com/9589bmjp. Meeting ID: 810 6513 4026. Passcode: 299347.

March 3 — Open house, 5-8 p.m., Old Lighthouse Museum, 100 Heisman Harbor. Free admission.

March 3 — Opening reception, "Citizen," 5-8 p.m., Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., 101 W. Second St., 101 W. Second St. Info: www.lubeznikcenter.org

March 3-5, 10-12, 17-19 — "Oliver!," Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat./2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$17, \$12/12 or younger. Reservations: www.footlightplayers.org/reservations, (219) 874-4035

March 3-5, 10-12 — "Arsenic and Old Lace," LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: adult/\$17, seniors (55+)/\$16, students/\$13 with student ID. Reservations: www.laportelittletheatreclub.com

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

March 6 — Pokemon Party!, 3-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

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

March 7 — Bingo (host: Long Beach Park Board), 5-6 p.m., Long Beach Community Center, 2501 Oriole Trail.

March 8 — Virtual Dungeons & Dragons, 4-6 p.m., through Michigan City Public Library. Info/registration: dwolf@mclib.org, (219) 873-3045

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.

#### In the Region

March 2 — Sarah Lee Guthrie, 7 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee, \$55 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www. acornlive.org

March 2-3 — 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

March 3 — Miles Nielsen & The Rusted Hearts, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee, \$55 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www. acornlive.org

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. March 3-4, 3 p.m. March 5. Tickets: adults/\$25, seniors (62+)/\$23, students (with ID)/\$19. Reservations: (574) 848-4116, www.elkhartcivictheatre.org/murder

March 4 — Birds-of-a-Feather Stroll, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

March 4 — Harbor Country Hikers, 1 p.m. EST, Jens Jensen Preserve/adjacent Pepperidge Dunes Nature Sanctuary, Sawyer, Mich. Info: www. harborcountryhikers.com

March 4 — Who's Scat is That?, 2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**March 4** — Paws for Humanity Spring "Kickoff" Benefit, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$40 + \$6 convenience fee, \$65 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

March 5 — Cold Blooded Buffet, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

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-arti-

ficial 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 March — Chellberg Farm Open House, 2-4 p.m. Meet at parking lot off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Vickers Theatre — Now Showing: The Oscarnominated Short Films 2023: Live Action. Times: 4 p.m. March 2 & 5. Also: "The Fabelmans." Rated PG-13. Times: 7 p.m. March 2-6. Also: The Oscarnominated Short Films 2023: Animation. Times: 4 p.m. March 3 & 9. Also: The Oscarnominated Short Films 2023: Documentary. Times: 3:30 p.m. March 4 & 10. Opens March 9: "Women Talking." Rated PG-13. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.





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#### **Happily Ever After Tea**

South Bend's The History Museum will present a "Happily Ever After Tea" at 6 p.m. EST Thursday, March 9, in conjunction with the exhibit "Unveiled: Wedding Traditions."

Held in the Leighton Gallery, the tea features tables of eight, each decorated to reflect a wedding reception. The menu includes sweets and teas catered by Oliver Inn Bed and Breakfast. Tours of "Unveiled: Wedding Traditions" will be offered. Through photos, gowns and jewelry, it showcases the museum's clothing collection and items on loan from the community.

The museum is located at 808 W. Washington St. Reservations are required by March 2. Tickets: \$30 for adults, \$25 for members, \$15 for youth 6-17 and \$5 for children 5 and younger at www.historymuseumSB. org. Call (574) 235-9664 for details.









Knight: My Story by Bob Knight with Bob Hammel (hardcover, retail \$25.95, paperback retail \$24.99; 432 pages. Published in 2002)

It's March, and you know what that means — March Madness!

Who's your favorite NCAA team? Maybe you have a favorite coach? This week, I go back to one of the best, and certainly one of the most controversial, coaches in college basketball history. You know who I'm talking about...Bobby Knight, of course. He wrote this book in 2002, not long after starting his last coaching job with Texas Tech.

Knight ended his career with an 899-374 record. Not bad, right? But it was his shenanigans on the court that made him memorable. Even though he

coached other teams, he will forever be associated with that mysterious, powerful force known as Hoosier Hysteria.

No matter what you think of the man, his game was basketball, and he knew how to build winning teams. Passionate about the game? You betcha! Some say he got a little, no, make that *a lot*, carried away with his enthusiasm for the game, giving plenty of fodder for newspapers and TV sports shows. So will the real Bobby Knight please stand up?

This week's recommendation may not give you all the facts, but at least it's written from the man's own perspective, and a wise person once told me, the truth usually lies somewhere in-between. The book is a sometimes overwhelming compendium of sports information. A little too much for the

likes of me. Sure, I enjoy the game (although NFL is my bag — go Packers!), but you really have to be a sports nut to appreciate it.

That's what this book is all about. Fifty pages into it, I'd heard more sports stats than my brain could absorb. I'm always amazed how a man can hold all those facts in his head, then forget to bring home a gallon of milk...

Two pieces of information are pounded into the reader's mind in the first chapter:

No. 1 — Knight should have seen it coming and gotten out sooner. He says he should have left Indiana University as soon as the "zero tolerance" rule was handed to him. "More unbelievable to me was that I was still around to let them do it to me, four months after they couldn't find the reason to fire me but suited me up in the phony 'zero tolerance' straitjacket so, in their minds, I could fire myself."

No. 2 — Ted Williams is his all-time hero. Knight writes obsessively about the Hall of Fame baseball star. He certainly has a deep respect for the man: "not only as a great baseball player but also a genuine hero of two American wars; as a master fisher-

#### Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



man; as one of the rare national figures who absolutely...refused to knuckle under to a hostile press."

Knight talks of his early life in Orrville, Ohio, (born there in 1940); how baseball was his first sport, played in Little League while growing up, how football and basketball crept into his life through high school and finally, basketball days with Ohio State.

Knight doesn't mind taking swipes at himself, like when he was a young teen watching a basket-

ball game with his friend, Norman Douglas. One player, Bill Simonovich, was the center, and after a particular play, Knight shouted, "Boy, is that Simonovich big!" Norman's mother came running out of the kitchen and said, "Bobby Knight, what did you just say?" Knight's comment was, "Even then I had a little problem with people not quite understanding things I said."

After graduating from college, a one-year stint as assistant coach at Cuyahoga Falls (Ohio) High School convinced him coaching was what he wanted to do the rest of his life. That led to a meeting with the Army basketball coach and eventually to a job at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point

as an assistant coach, a recruiter and finally head coach (1962-71).

From there, he applied, and won, the head coaching job at IU, where he stayed for the next 29 years until the infamous firing.

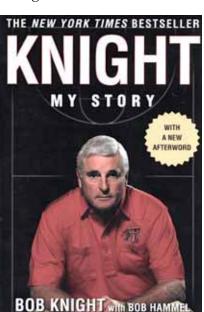
The gospel according to Knight: "I've always felt winning is what you're supposed to do. Winning is a by-product of preparation and work at practice, all the things leading up to a game."

He spouts a lot of sports wisdom, reminisces about players, coaches and friendships made along the way. This book must have been a cathartic experience.

Are Bobby Knight's exploits legendary, or have his legends been exploited? This book, after all, is his story. Reading it did give me a different perspective, but when I saw among the photos one of his wife, Karen, I couldn't help but think, "Now there might be a story!"

The man sums himself up best: "Being right and being quiet never has been a combination I was very good at."

Till next time, happy reading!











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