



Volume 39, Number 18 Thursday, May 11, 2023

Fighting Fire With Fire

by *Edmund Lawler*



The smoldering aftermath of a controlled fire. Photo by Micah Bell.

Cresting a hill on a road leading to Porter Beach in Indiana Dunes National Park, the scene to the east is apocalyptic.

The rolling dunescape is studded with blackened tree stumps. Prickly pear cacti are grotesquely curled from the intense heat generated by a fire that swept across the sands three days earlier. The remaining trees are singed and seared. Silvery ash carpets the ravaged terrain.

Who would do this?

Meet Micah Bell. He's no arsonist. Far from it. As the national park's fire prevention and mitigation technician, his job is to prevent wildfires from endangering the park's residential neighbors, as well as the 15,000-acre property itself.

He and his National Park Service colleagues fight fire with fire by conducting "prescribed" or controlled burns throughout the spring, and to a lesser extent in the fall. It's all part of the park's Resource Management program, which will see six prescribed burns this spring consuming about 900 acres.

Bell is used to people comparing the aftermath of a prescribed fire to the ruins of a battlefield.

"But what they don't realize," he said, "is that

green shoots will be popping out the ground here in a month."

Fire, he says, is one of the most ancient tools of land nourishment. Bell has heard apocryphal tales of how early white settlers here emulated the Native American practice of cleansing the land with fire to generate nutrients so the soil is more agriculturally productive.

Striking an ecological balance in the park is another key goal of the prescribed fires.

"Many of our burns are part of the long-term restoration projects here in our park," he said.

He points to ash piles across the scorched landscape – the remains of combustible materials like dead, downed tree branches stacked in advance of the controlled fire.

"Those piles will begin pushing nutrients back into the ground once it starts to rain, and everything will grow up fresh and strong," he says. "The fire also makes the ground more receptive to the native plants."

Invasive species like buckthorn and Asiatic bittersweet had taken hold of the landscape over the

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years since homes were first built on the east side of Wabash Avenue in Porter, Bell explains. Leafy vines, which can quickly transmit flames, clung to the trees. Decades-long accumulation of fallen leaves added fuel for a potential fire that could threaten a neighborhood on the other side of the street.

“Under the right conditions, this area could have been the site of a serious wildfire,” Bell says.

Reducing or eliminating fuels for a fire is critical.

“We come out here on a good day before it gets really hot and dry, and we can burn this stuff on our terms,” he said.

The federal government has purchased more than 6,100 tracts of land to incorporate into the park since Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was authorized by Congress in 1966. In 2019, Congress

declared it a national park, Indiana’s first and only.

Homes at the site of the prescribed burn are long gone, but vestiges remain. Before the mid-April fire on 23 acres just south of Porter Beach, Bell says perennial plants and flowers that once graced a home’s garden randomly dotted the landscape.

Work at the burn site began long before the first flame was lit. Some 60 volunteers and park personnel spent a day there last fall cutting down dead and non-native trees and plants and stacking them in pyres. Native oak trees were untouched.

“A year ago, this was thick forest,” Bell says. Looking east toward Indiana Dunes State Park, he says you could not see the fence that runs along the top of a dune ridge dividing the two parks.

“As we continue to restore this, it will be more grassland as it is up on the ridgeline, although there will still be some trees,” Bell explains. “It won’t be a savannah, but what biologists call an open dune.



Micah Bell of Indiana Dunes National Park’s Wildland Fire Management team is photographed against the backdrop of a recent prescribed burn at Porter Beach in IDNP. Photo by Edmund Lawler



Prickly pear cacti curled by the intense heat of the prescribed burn.
Photo by Edmund Lawler.

The land will become one continuous open dune complex. It will look more natural, like what it looked like 100 to 150 years ago.”

The restoration will take several more years.

The controlled blaze roared eastward, over the ridgeline and onto 36 acres in the state park. But that was by design, Bell assures.

“This was a cool fire because it is one of the first fires we did when burning jointly with the state of Indiana,” he explained.

NPS assigned 15 of its fire-management specialists, including some from out of state, to the controlled burn. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources sent a 15-member fire-management team of its own.

A prescribed fire not only needs the right team, but also a smart plan.

“There’s a lot to it,” Bell says. “We have a very specific plan when we do this. It has been approved at the local, state and national levels.”

Local fire departments are given a heads-up about the controlled burn. Residents of Lake and Porter counties can sign up to receive prescribed fire notifications through the Smart911 system.

For a controlled burn, NPS deploys its fleet of all-terrain vehicles, two brush trucks that hold 300 gallons of water and a larger fire engine built on a commercial chassis that hauls 800 gallons of water. At least one engine typically is left behind at the station in case of an emergency elsewhere in the park.

The day of a prescribed burn begins by sending a fire-management specialist to the site to take field

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readings. The information is entered into a National Weather Service website. A short time later, the weather service issues a spot forecast for that site.

“With that forecast for that plot for the day, we can make smart decisions as to whether it’s safe to burn,” Bell says. “Many times, when the spot weather forecast comes back, we say, ‘No, we can’t do it today. It’s too windy, too hot, too dry, just not safe.’”

Wind doesn’t necessarily scotch the plan. Gentle breezes, Bell says, are welcome because they fan the flames across a burn site.

The Wildland Fire Management team at IDNP, led by MaryEllen Whitenack, also oversees fire-management operations of the Great Lakes Fire Management Zone. It includes 12 other National Park Service sites in the Midwest, such as Sleeping Bear Dunes and Pictured Rocks national lakeshores in Michigan.

The team includes a fire ecologist and fire-effects crew, Bell says, adding, “They come out before and after a burn to evaluate the plot. They continue to come back over the years to ensure that we are achieving our goals.”

Not long after the prescribed burn at Porter Beach, the Wildland Fire Management team dispatched a truck from its station on Mineral Springs Road to a wildfire in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 280 miles to the north.

“People, especially from out west, think we don’t have wildfires in the Great Lakes region. But given the right conditions, some of our fires can generate 30-foot-high flames off the dry materials in the woods,” Bell says.

For example, in March 2012, a 391-acre fire spread seven miles across the park, forcing residents in Ogden Dunes to evacuate. Hot cinders from two Indiana Harbor Belt Co. locomotives passing through western portions of the national park sparked a series of wildfires.

Locally, wildfire risk is highest in the spring — despite April showers — and the fall when humidities are relatively low and winds can be fierce. Higher humidity in the summer tamps down the risk.

Bell wears several hats for NPS. In addition to his role as fire-mitigation technician, he conducts fire-prevention education programs for area schools and organizations like the Boy Scouts. He even trots out Smokey Bear (an NPS firefighter in a bear suit) for local events like parades to help remind people that only they can prevent forest fires.

For parts of every summer, Bell heads west to serve as a public-information officer for one of more than two dozen interagency teams combatting the titanic conflagrations that rip through tens of thousands of acres of tinder-dry forests.

Bell is accustomed to being on the firing line. He served two combat deployments in Iraq as a captain in the Michigan National Guard. A native of Cadillac, Mich., he underwent NPS wildfire training after high school in the neighboring Manistee National Forest, where his father was a volunteer firefighter.

Bell initially considered becoming a firefighter, but opted for college, earning a degree in criminal justice from Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Mich. Yet, his interest in fire prevention won out. He’s been with NPS in Northwest Indiana for 22 years.

The investigative techniques he learned in his criminal justice program, however, have been valu-



State and federal fire management teams control a burn. Photo by Micah Bell.



Firefighters use drip torches, filled with gasoline and diesel fuel, to ignite a prescribed fire along a trail in Indiana Dunes National Park. Provided photo.

able because fire-mitigation specialists also need to determine the cause of fires. Some are intentionally set; some arise from utility pole fires; and others originate from sparks or embers from the nearly 400 freight and passenger trains that rumble along the edges of the park every day.

Other fires have been ignited by park visitors carelessly using charcoal grills, fireworks or cigarettes.

“And there are two natural causes of forest fires – lightning and lava,” Bell adds, while acknowledging fiery volcanic flows pose no immediate threat to the Indiana Dunes.

The fire-mitigation challenge for the park is its urban nature, Bell says. Communities such as Beverly Shores, Dune Acres and Ogden Dunes and their hundreds of homes are surrounded by the park.

And, the park is on the eastern edge of the Chicago metropolitan area, the nation’s third largest.

“There’s a long history of wildfires in this area,” he said. “They are nothing like the ones out west, but we want people to be aware of the risks.”



A National Park Service sign on U.S. 12 near Kemil Road warns of wildfire danger. Photo by Edmund Lawler.

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Uneven “Guardians of the Galaxy” Still Manages to be Rousing, Emotional

by Andrew Tallackson

“Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” is a bit messy... but what a beautiful mess it is.

This is the swan song for writer-director James Gunn, his last Marvel project after defecting to DC. What I love about the guy is, he’s incapable of existing on autopilot. He takes insane risks: 2021’s “The Suicide Squad,” especially, deserves far more love. Here, he feverishly gives you your money’s worth, but crams *way* too much into one story. Even at 2 ½ hours, the movie feels uneven, flip-flopping between past and present and dragging out the epic climax.

Clearly, though, Gunn knows this is it for him, and he wears those big emotions on tear-stained sleeves. The last act is a big lump-in-the-throat finish. However choppy the journey is, we don’t care. We’re overwhelmed by it all.

Gunn has his Guardians rally not to save the galaxy, but one of their own. That would be Rocket, the raccoon voiced as always with gruff snark by Bradley Cooper. This is his movie. When he’s injured, his Guardians “family,” including Peter Quill (Chris Pratt), Drax (Dave Bautista), Nebula (Karen Gillan), Mantis (Pam Klementieff), Groot (voiced by Vin Diesel) and, eventually, Gamora (Zoe Saldaña), do everything possible to save him.

Gunn alternates between the rescue and Rocket’s backstory, and it’s pretty grim, interrupting the effortless vibe Gunn achieves in the present. And the presence of Will Poulter as Adam Warlock and Elizabeth Debicki as his mother, Ayesha, doesn’t really



“Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” really belongs to Rocket, voiced again by Bradley Cooper.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3”
Running time: 150 minutes. In theaters. Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence and action, strong language, suggestive/drug references and thematic elements

jive until late in the film.

But Gunn proves, yet again, he lives to create a wacked-out experience. When the Guardians arrive at Orgoscope, a space scientific facility that’s a living, organic creation, the visuals pop. We haven’t seen anything like this before. And the villain, The High Evolutionary (Chukwuji Iwuji), is a devious variation on the twisted Doctor Moreau from “Island of Lost Souls.”

The other characters are more rounded this time, with Groot, Mantis and Nebula getting more to do. And when Gunn arrives at the last act, everything is prepped for a protracted, but rousing finish. Gunn is a master here, alternating between thrilling heroics and tender character interactions that go for the jugular. Really, this is Marvel in peak form. Up there with “Spider-Man: No Way Home.” If the last “Thor” and “Ant-Man” movies coasted, failing to withstand closer scrutiny, then “Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 3” soars. If these characters do not return, that’s OK. Gunn achieved the grand sendoff they deserve.

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Nic Orbovich, MC-CMF co-founder and artistic director, and Zosia Glashauser, violinist with Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, will present selections from their "Fiddler's Two" repertoire. The event also will feature hors d'oeuvres, fine wines and refreshments, followed by the performance and special desserts. Tickets, which cost \$100 per person, are available by calling Judy Jacobi at (219) 873-4560. Reservations are due by May 15.

The 2023 festival, "Many Peoples, Many Musics," is Aug. 12-20 and features three family and chil-



Zosia Glashauser and Nic Orbovich perform at the 2022 "Afternoon of Chamber Music." Beacher file photo by James Conlin.

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General admission is \$5, or free for guests 12 and younger. Visit tinyurl.com/yww2wnps for reservations. Day-of tickets are available at the entrances along Lake Bluff Park at Ship, Broad, Market and Park streets. Free admission wristbands are available at tinyurl.com/mpch6dwh. Proceeds support year-round access to the arts, including free exhibits in galleries, public sculpture placement, scholarships and community programs.

VIP Collectors' Experience Packages are available. They include access to the VIP lounge during event hours, parking, a commemorative pin granting access to the event all weekend and early-access shopping Saturday, July 8. Packages of two start at \$65 for KAC members (\$130 for non-members) and can be purchased at tinyurl.com/yww2wnps



Visitors to the 2022 Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff. Provided photo.

During the fair, local artists and organizations, including Water Street Glassworks, will be on KAC's Oval Lawn, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich., along with a free artmaking activity. Inside, the galleries are free and open to the public from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. EDT July 8 and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. EDT July 9.

Early events include:

- Thursday, June 8, 6-8 p.m. EDT, Community Night at The Livery, 190 Fifth St., Benton Harbor, Mich.
- Friday, July 7, 5-10 p.m. EDT, The Krasl Art Fair Block Party (\$5 admission for non-members).

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Returning to the Wonderful World of Judy Blume

by Andrew Tallackson



Margaret (Abby Ryder Fortson) navigates the uncertainty of life with her mother, Barbara (Rachel McAdams), in "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret."

"I don't think that Judy Blume wrote her books to be timeless. I think she wrote her books to be timely, and they were so timely...that they became timeless."

Could there be a more succinct, lovingly crafted tribute to author Judy Blume? That observation hails from Young Adult author Jason Reynolds in the new Prime documentary "Judy Blume Forever," which arrives right as the big-screen adaptation of "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" lands in theaters, some 53 years after it was published.

Finding my seat in the theater showing "Are You There God?," I feared for it, to be honest. Would it remain relevant? Would the journey of its 11-year-old hero appear quaint compared to today's Young Adult hits involving wizards, death matches and glittery vampires? Blume, by comparison, found drama in mundane, middle-class existence.

But seeing "Margaret" in full Judy Blume glory on screen begs a more pointed question: why did it take 53 years to bring her story to the screen? Why was Blume's 1970 game changer, which dealt with girls on the cusp of puberty, finding a dubious home on banned-book lists, untouchable for so long?

Because in writer-director Kelly Fremon Craig, whose "The Edge of Seventeen" (2016) is an overlooked gem, Blume trusted the right person for this story. By remaining faithful to the book, and approaching its topic with humor and sensitivity, the movie, like the book, depicts young girls as real

★ ★ ★ ★ (both films)

"Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret," "Judy Blume Forever"

Margaret: Running time: 106 minutes. In theaters.

Rated PG-13 for thematic material involving sexual education and some suggestive material

Forever: Running time: 97 minutes. Amazon Prime. Rated 16+.

people. That the topic of menstruation is a natural facet of life, not something to be dismissed with adolescent sniggering.

But to say that's all this story is about is to strip it of larger context. Fremon Craig really gets it, that this is a story about a girl in that curious limbo where she's too young to be old, and too old to be young. Margaret (a winning Abby Ryder Fortson) has to leave New York, and the close proximity to her grandmother (a relatively subdued Kathy Bates), because of her father's new job. Her parents are complicated. Herb (Benny Safdie) is Jewish, Barbara (Rachel McAdams) Christian. Her parents never approved of the marriage, so, Herb and Barbara opted not to practice any religion, agreeing Margaret can choose whatever faith she likes as an adult. Now living in New Jersey, Margaret realizes the only person she can truly speak to, with

whom she can be open and honest, is God. Her conversations either land in journals or through prayer.

Freeman Craig, as the writer-director, shows a deft maturity in exploring a child who is a product of an interfaith marriage. We see Margaret dabble in a little of this and that: going to temple with grandma, church with a school friend, confession with a Catholic classmate.

And through it all, Margaret's own confusion about her body as all her friends seem to be maturing faster, specifically who gets "it" first. Had this movie been directed by a man, Margaret might have been the subject of ridiculous jokes: humiliated and made to feel ashamed. But here, the anticipation for these girls of getting their period is filmed as the symbolic first big step toward womanhood. No slapstick, no crude humor. Just simple, direct truths.

Indeed, that is what the documentary "Judy Blume Forever" achieves scene after scene. For Blume, she cites "Margaret" as the first time, as an author, when she stopped being an observer to her characters and poured herself into her work. And with each book — "Blubber," "Deenie," "Iggie's House," "Forever," the exceedingly popular Fudge series — more young readers connected with her characters.

Heck, Blume was the first author I wrote to as a child. In response came a form letter she sent to most of her readers...but personally signed by her. I still have it. And what the many letters shared in the film reveal is, for millions of children, Blume was like a confidant. The adult with whom they could share their innermost thoughts without fear of repercussion or judgment. That many of these letters are now owned by Yale University is a testament to the written word and its impact on readers.

Blume admits that, having a mother and husband who bottled up emotions, writing became her release. And thankfully, for her, the outpouring through fiction resonated with readers.

"Judy Blume Forever" does not shy away from the controversy her books courted. Not just "Margaret," but also "Deenie" and especially "Forever" for its frank depiction of teen sex. The documentary, however, frames the subject in an illuminating context, that we live in a patriarchal society that fears freedom and empowerment for women. Blume keeps stressing, in interviews and archival clips, "A book



Judy Blume, now 85, comes across as sweet, humble, wise and filled with good humor about her life and extraordinary career as an author.

never hurt anyone," and that argument couldn't be timelier as censorship and book banning again rear their ugly heads.

Anyone fortunate enough to see "Margaret" in theaters — sadly, it's failing, miserably — should catch "Judy Blume Forever" afterward. They complement each other. You appreciate Blume more than ever by hearing her story...in her own words.

And what words they are.



Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com

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A Chance to Shine

Winners in Monday Musicales's 2023 Student Awards Competition presented a free concert April 30 at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Senior Division honorees, plus first-place Junior Division winners, performed their selections.

The overall winners were:

JUNIOR DIVISION

Grade 4 Piano

Avelyn Mills – first.

Katherine Burden – second.

Grade 5 Piano

Finley Romine – first.

Elias Sawaya – second.

Maren Rishaug – third.

Amy Liana Carpenter – honorable mention.

Evangeline Kotulski – honorable mention.

Elisabeth Wireman – honorable mention.

Middle School Piano

Samuel Burden – first.

Elizabeth Giuliani – second.

Jacob P. Wireman – third.

Middle School Instrumental

Mya Moore, flute – first.

Junior Division Voice

Evangeline Kotulski – first.

Natt Kilbourne – second.

Selah Branco – third.

Joy Carson Memorial Award

Samuel Burden, piano.

Organ Lesson Grant for Pianists

Maren Rishaug.

SENIOR DIVISION

Mildred Bowman Memorial Award

Ella Crane, voice.

First Congregational Church Award

MaryRose Cook, piano.

Past Presidents Award

Iyanna Estes, voice.

Monday Musicales Award

Joseph Giuliani, piano.

(All photos by Bob Wellinski.)



The Rest of the Story: The Salerno Beachhead

Author's Note: When I found a hidden treasure on New Year's Eve 2022 — a 1935 Royal Deluxe typewriter — I knew "we" were destined to write a story set in 1935. And we did, calling it Royal Fireworks. I presented the opening last time and thus described a coincidental meeting, in the bar car of a westbound train in June 1935, of a doctor from Akron, Ohio, and a traveling hospital-supplies salesman from Philadelphia. They shared a love of the drink and thought they would never see one another again. But the salesman got a tip from a customer in Chicago that a certain hospital in Akron was not happy with its current supplier, that it would be to his benefit to pay a visit. He threw a perfect sales pitch, but then, the purchasing agent, a diminutive nun named Sister Ignatia, wanted our traveling friend to meet a certain doctor who had recently had a life-changing meeting of his own with a financial type from New York. The salesman reluctantly agreed to meet this

Life With Charley

Charles McKelvy



wonder doctor for 15 minutes and, yes, he was not really surprised to see that the doctor in question, "Doctor Bob," was the self-same doctor he had imbibed with on that westbound train a few weeks prior. He met with Doctor Bob a lot longer than 15 minutes, and what went down between them absolutely changed his life. And now, nearly 10 years later, on Sept. 9, 1943, we see that self-same salesman converted to an Army medic treating the wounded on the infamous Salerno beachhead. Attend please...

The Salerno Beachhead

"Medic!"

Another voice, closer: "Medic!"

"Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy..." came the cry of what sounded like a baby. But not a baby. A grown man, mortally wounded, crying for his mother.

Could I blame him?

No sir, senator!

And, as a U.S. Army medic, there was no way I could help them all. So I did what I was trained to do and called back: "Who has superficial wounds to the arms and/or legs?"

Triage, plain and simple: You patch up the ones who can get back in the battle and leave the rest for later, by which time, of course, they'll be callin' at the Pearly Gates.

Then a Scottish voice replied, "I do, Yank."

My dearly departed mother was 100 percent Scottish, so that sealed the deal. So I called back, "Comin' at you, Laddie."

Then I crab crawled to his foxhole where I found the kilted soldier desperately trying to stanch the arterial bleeding from the shrapnel wound to his left shoulder.

"You right-handed?" I asked.

"Aye, Yank. That I am."

"Good. I'll have you sewed up in a jiffy, and then

you can get back on the firing line."

So you know, we were part of an Allied landing force in Salerno, Italy, on Sept. 9, 1943. We had just rolled through Sicily and were expecting a cakewalk up the Italian peninsula as the Italian Army collapsed around us in the wake of Benito Mussolini's forced resignation just weeks before.

But we weren't facing the rudderless Italian Army at Salerno.

No, we were pinned down by those murderous Huns of the Wehrmacht. They were getting rolled up in Russia by the unstoppable Red Army, but they weren't going to give up Italy to the Yanks and Limeys without one hell of a fight.

And what a fight they were pouring down on us on the Salerno beachhead. And until our superior air and naval support started giving it back as good as we were getting it, we had to get every wounded soldier we could back in action.

Now, I could blame our leader, Gen. Mark W. Clark, for the mess we were in, but I won't.

Why not?

Because one thing I learned since that "15 minutes, please" meeting with Doctor Bob back in 1935 at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio, is this, and simply this: I AM RESPONSIBLE. Not for what's happening around me. And not for the fact that our great and wonderful Gen. Clark didn't have the good intelligence to know that we were facing the battle-tested 16th Panzer Division. They sure knew we were coming; they had dug in all along the beach and emplaced their artillery on the high ground. One thing I learned from reading about my favorite subject, the American Civil War, is that the Army that seizes the high ground first wins. I think it was Gen. Robert E. Lee who said that.

Anyway, Doctor Bob and the "Good Oldtimers"

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drilled into my newly sober head that we're responsible for how we respond to events, not for the events themselves. I can't get into Gen. Clark's head and tell him to get us the hell out of this mess. Not remotely possible. But I can admit to myself that when I signed on for this little overseas adventure as a medic — hey, I was a hospital-supplies salesman before the war — I was responsible for dealing in a mature way with whatever came my way.

And that's pretty much what I told that cut-up Highlander in the foxhole on the Salerno beach-head: "We're responsible for our actions today, not that idiot Gen. Clark."

"Right you are, Yank," he said. "Now before you turn my bloody shoulder into a bloody pin cushion, give me the good stuff."

"Morphine?"

"Aye. And be bloody quick about it."

"Sorry, Laddie. Fresh out. You're not my first customer today."

The good Scot smiled grimly and said, "Then give us a wee dram. Or two, or three. Or the whole bleedin' flask."

"Flask?!?"

"Don't be a cutie-pie, Yank. We know that all you Yank orderlies carry flasks of our good Scottish whisky in your kits."

I could only laugh. "You're right," I said. "Many of us do, but it's not your lucky day, Laddie, because you got the medic who doesn't keep a flask of the good stuff on his person. There WAS a day when I most certainly would have, and we would have had ourselves one hell of a whoopee party out here on this sunny Italian beach. But I hopped on the wagon and gave it all up, one day at a time. But, you'll be happy to know, I have an ample supply of needles and thread and dressings in my kit. Now, brace yourself, my good Highland Laddie, because I'm goin' in. Just think of the Bonnie Lassies back home while I set you right so you can get back in the fight."

He was just like my mother — a true stoic. He didn't even flinch as I sewed up his wound. "But," he did say, "I don't understand how you can get through

this hell on earth without a wee dram or two. You have all the looks of a lively old beastie. One who I would happily share a pint or two of McEwan's at my public house back home in the Highlands of Scotland the Brave. Why give it all up? And for what?"

"We don't have time for two-part questions," I said. "So let me just say that I finally admitted, to Doctor Bob that day in Akron, that, damn it all, I am and always will be a right-old tippler — an alcoholic. Doc gave me a great big bear hug, and then he gently, but firmly forced me to kneel with him and said, 'Turn your will and your life over to the care of God. Right here. Right now.' I was speechless."

Then Doctor Bob said, "Why don't you take a little trip down memory lane and see how alcohol worked out for you? When it was just you and alcohol calling the plays." So I strolled on down that path of perdition and immediately realized that booze — alcohol, spirits, sauce, demon rum, devil's juice, fire-water — had absolutely ruled my life from the moment I took my first drink, at the tender age of 12. "Hey," I continued, "it was the old man's hooch after all, so how was I to know that something Dear Old Dad kept in his liquor cabinet would come back and bite me in the keester?"

My patient nodded so hard in agreement that I thought his head would fall off.

Continued on Page 24



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Continued from Page 23

"You know, don't you?"

He continued nodding, then asked, "So, Yank, did you, you know, surrender to the Good Lord God Almighty that day?"

"I did, indeed, especially after Doctor Bob said, 'only God can restore us to sanity.'"

"And," my Scottish patient added, "God has kept you from the drink, all this time?"

"Aye, Laddie, that he has. Why do you ask, uh—"

"Duncan. Cpl. Duncan Macfarlan. At your service."

"Well, Duncan Macfarlan, I am Daniel Swilley, and I am most pleased to make your acquaintance here in sunny Italy. And I am here to testify that if you ever want to find a way out of your drinking problem, if you think you have a drinking problem, is to first admit you have a problem and then ask God for help not taking that first wee dram, each and every day you draw breath."

The good Scot simply cried. And cried, and cried. Then he said, "You're talking my talk, Daniel Swilley. Pray continue."

So I did, and by the time I had him all stitched up and combat ready again, I said, "We usually wrap up our little gatherings of recovered drunks with 'The Lord's Prayer.' Will you join me?"

"Aye, that I will."

And so we joined hands and prayed. Cpl. Macfarlan then took up arms again and went back into the fray.

I turned to the next available patient — a Yank in a nearby foxhole who had taken a shrapnel shredding to his lower legs. He would never run the mile again, but he could and would get back into the fight if I could but stanch the bleeding in his legs.

But before I could get to him, I heard an all-too-familiar whistling. The musician in me said it was almost beautiful, in an eerie sort of way. It was pitch perfect, and it was growing into a grand crescendo as it dove down upon me, in the form of a fearsome, German 88 round.

Before my instant death, I had time to utter a quick prayer: "Thanks, God, for keeping me sober today. And—"

The end.

But it wasn't the end, because, as I soon realized, there are meetings in Heaven. As the new guy, I was expected to give the lead that night.

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A ceremony unveiling a custom bench installation, plus an Americans With Disabilities Act dunewalk dedication, is at noon EDT Saturday, May 13, at the New Buffalo public beach. The bench project was commissioned and donated by Mary Rose Roberts. The bench was designed and built at no cost by Eric Trowbridge Designs. The effort is dedicated to David Richards, the late New Buffalo city manager. Photo by Bryan Chris.

Studebaker Museum

Neighborhoods built by Citizens Home Co. is the focus of the next Studebaker Museum Speaker Series at 1:30 p.m. EDT Wednesday, May 17, in the museum’s Wiekamp Auditorium.

The speaker is Adam Toering, City of South Bend Historic Preservation administrator.

In the late 19th century, planned communities were growing throughout the U.S. For example, George Pullman wanted to attract and retain workers for his Chicago business. He believed providing a quality standard of living would keep workers happy, productive and less likely to strike.

In South Bend, industry leaders used residential new construction to compete for workers. In 1919, the Citizens Home Co. formed as part of the Studebaker Corporation’s housing company.

Program admission is \$2, or free for museum members and campus members. The museum is located at 201 Chapin St., South Bend. Call (574) 235-9714 for more details.

The museum will host “Cars & Coffee,” highlighting the Crossroad Casket Cruisers, from 8-10 a.m. EDT Saturday, May 13.

The free program, held rain or shine, includes coffee and donuts. For an additional cost, visitors can tour exhibits and Oliver Mansion at The History Museum, which adjoins the Studebaker National Museum.

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Indiana Dunes National Park

- **The ninth annual Indiana Dunes Birding Festival on Thursday-Sunday, May 11-14.** Organized by Indiana Audubon Society, the event includes Indiana Dunes National Park and Indiana Dunes State Park as hosts. Uniting major environmental groups, it highlights the dunes area's biodiversity and bird-watching opportunities. Planned are more than 150 guided field trips and car-pool tours, presentations, workshops and social events. Evening programs include excursions for night birds, and a family friendly "birds and brew" on multiple nights. Registration is at www.indunesbirdingfestival.com
- **Project 1966: Hike Every Trail in the Park** from 8-10 a.m. Saturday, May 13, at the Heron Rookery east lot trailhead, 1336 County Road 600 East, Michigan City. Join a ranger to hike the park's trails this summer, with each week featuring a new trail. It's 19 hikes covering 66 miles to honor the year the park was established.
- **Drop-In Volunteer Program (Trash Trekkers) from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. daily in May at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center and Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education.** Trash Trekkers is a no-hassle volunteer option that helps keep trails and beaches clean. Temporary passes are available. Visit tinyurl.com/2p83798v for details.
- **Gardening at Chellberg Farm from 9 a.m.-noon Sundays in May.** Tour the farmhouse and visit the animals, with rangers and volunteers sharing the area's history. The program is sponsored by Friends of Indiana Dunes. Chellberg Farm is on Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20 and 12 in Porter.
- **Mother's Day Wildflower Hike from 10-11:30 a.m. and 1-2:30 p.m. Sunday, May 14, at Heron Rookery.** Join a ranger for a hike to see what woodland flowers are blooming. Be prepared for muddy conditions. Meet at the east parking lot on County Road 600 East in Michigan City.
- **Miller Woods Hike from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Sundays in May at Paul H. Douglas Center.** The ranger-led stroll explores a rare black oak savanna, and offers views of Lake Michigan and Chicago.
- **Bailly/Chellberg History Hike from 1-2:30 p.m. Sundays in May.** Explore the grounds of both historic homes, and learn about early settlers and farmers who came to the region in the 1800s. Park at the Bailly/Chellberg parking lot off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter. Passes are required.
- **Chellberg Farm Open House from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Sundays in May.** Rangers and volunteers will share the area's history as visitors tour the farmhouse and garden and visit the animals. Passes are required. The parking lot is off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter.
- **Music Heritage Series Concert at the Farm from 5-6 p.m. Sunday, May 14, at the Chellberg Farmhouse.** The Save the Tunes Council performs outside on the lawn. Take a blanket or folding chair.
- **Dog Days at Chellberg from 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, May 17, at the Bailly Homestead/Chellberg Farm.** Take pets and join a ranger to learn how dogs can become a B.A.R.K. Ranger. After getting sworn in, visitors can take pets on a hike. The program is sponsored by Friends of Indiana Dunes. Visit www.dunefriends.org for more details.



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IDNP awarded Commercial Use Authorizations for the West Beach and Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk concession stands for the 2023-2024 seasons.

After a competitive bidding process, Smoke on the Water was chosen to operate at Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk. For West Beach, The Big Weiner, Valparaiso, was chosen to expand dining options to include a wide variety of beach fare. Visit tinyurl.com/2p8b52ev for more details.

The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is at 100 N. Lake St. in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Call (219)

395-1882 or visit www.nps.gov/indu for details.

Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs will be offered:

- **Welcome to the Darkside: Mothing in Indiana at 1 p.m. Thursday, May 11.** The focus is how mothing compares to birding, and the importance of moths to birds and ecosystems.
- **Joys From Birding at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, May 11.** Shari McCollough will lead a photo tour, having spent years photographing the wildness within a small, local, restored habitat in Central Indiana.
- **Is Your Coffee Bird Friendly? at 1 p.m. Friday, May 12.** The focus is the requirements coffee growers need to obtain the bird-friendly certification. Samples of coffee will be provided.
- **Indiana Bird Town: "It's a Sign!" for Michigan City at 2:30 p.m. Friday, May 12.** Mary Nell Murphy discusses the process to document Michigan City's application to join the Bird Town group of Indiana towns and cities.
- **Youth & Family Birding Day from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, May 13.** Beginning bird hikes start every hour on the hour at the Nature Center. The program includes bird games, bluebird house building, photo ID quiz and giveaways.
- **Extreme Birding: One Man's Biking Big Year at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 13.** Beau Schaefer rode his gravel bikes over 6,000 miles and identified 276 species of birds through the six-county greater Chicago area.
- **Visiting All National Parks at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, May 13.** Midwestern naturalists Kandace and Robert Tabern have visited all the national parks in fewer than 10 years.

Indiana Dunes State Park is at 1600 N. County Road 25 East (the north end of Indiana 49), Chesterton. Call (219) 926-1390 to register for programs.

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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:

- **Duneland Stamp Club at 4 p.m. Thursday, May 11.** The club meets the second Thursday of each month. New members are invited.
- **Tinkercad 3-D Modeling at 4 p.m. Wednesday, May 17, in the Makerspace.** Registration is required for the program that involves Tinkercad, a free online collection of software tools. This session, for children 9-17, serves as an introduction to 3-D design, art and printing. No experience is necessary. All registered participants receive a 3-D print of his/her creations. Register at the Youth Services desk or call (219) 873-3045 for more info. Space is limited. MCPL 3-D printing rules apply, and the printing fee is waived for this program.
- **Film Showing: "80 for Brady" at 2 p.m. Friday, May 12.** The movie is Rated PG-13.
- **Bad Art Night for Adults from 5-7 p.m. Tuesday, May 16.** Designed as a way to unwind and create, the library provides the paint, canvas and pompoms. An award goes to the piece voted Worst Art. No registration is required.
- **Creative Tech Activities from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in May.** Children ages 6-17 can create with LEGO WeDo, Micro:bits, paper circuits, Ozobots and 3-D. Children 12 and younger must have a parent or guardian attend.
- **Weekly Crafts for Kids & Teens weekly.** Each week offers a different project. Take-home craft kits are available, or create some in the Makerspace. Supplies are limited.
- **Story Time at 10 a.m. Wednesdays.** Children birth to age 5 and adults will enjoy stories, songs and crafts. Check out previous story time videos through the library's YouTube channel, Facebook page and website. □

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.)

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.).

□

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

□

The following programs are planned:

- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, May 12, 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, May 15, in the main library Meeting Room A.** The program involves a cooperative tabletop role-playing game for teens 13-18. Registration is required.
- **Family Pajama Storytime from 6-6:30 p.m. Monday, May 15, in the main library multi-purpose room.** The program focuses on stories and songs. Guests can wear pajamas and take a favorite stuffed animal.
- **Getting Started in Google Suite (adults 19+) from 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 17, in the main library Study Cafe.** Prior to class, set up a Google Gmail address. If unable to, arrive early for assistance.

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.

Have a story idea?


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Pets & Pours

“Pets & Pours,” a dog-walking fundraiser for Michiana Humane Society pets, returns from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, May 13, at Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12.

The event features a dog-walking course through the Gardens. All dogs must be leashed. The ticket cost includes admission, commemorative pint glass and live music by Toy Dynomite and Help Hounds. Burn ‘Em Brewing, Shady Creek Winery, Social Que BBQ and Zorn Brew Works will sell food and drinks. New this year are pet glamour shots. Also planned is the “Pet of the Year” winner. The owner who collects the most donations from friends, families and fans earns the title.



Proceeds support the care of about 1,000 shelter pets. Tickets are \$55 for adults 21 and older, \$20 for ages 14-20 and free for 13 and younger. Reservations and the Pet of the Year entry are at www.MichianaPets.org or by calling Michiana Humane Society at (219) 872-4499.

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New Buffalo Township Library

- **Vernal pools hikes at 10:30 a.m. Saturdays, May 13 and 27.** Meet in the New Buffalo Elementary School parking lot, 12291 Lubke Road.
- **Teen Trivia Night at 6 p.m. Monday, May 15.**

Weekly programs:

- Craft Time all day Wednesday (no program May 10) while supplies last.
- Read to a Dog Sessions for all ages from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesday and 4-4:45 p.m. Wednesday.
- Story Time at 5:30 p.m. Thursday (except May 11).
- 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.

Duneland Weavers Guild


Duneland Weavers Guild will host Deb Essen during the May meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 13, at Three Moons Fiberworks, 402 Broadway, Chesterton.

Essen is the author of Easy Weaving with Supplemental Warps, a frequent contributor to *Handwoven* magazine and has recorded several DVDs.

Visit www.dunelandweaversguild.org or the guild on Facebook for more details.

The guild also will host “Introduction to Supplemental Warps,” a workshop for intermediate to advanced weavers, Thursday-Friday, May 11-12, at Hageman Library, 100 Francis St., Porter. Contact Sue Degnan at smh154@yahoo.com if interested.

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Prayer to the Blessed Virgin
 (Never known to fail.)

Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the ‘Sea, help me and show me, herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth! I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3x). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in Eternal Glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. After 3 days, the request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor is granted.

JROTC Supports School, Community

Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps continued to support the school and community in April.

Cadets assisted at MCHS track meets, helped clean up at Indiana 421 and U.S. 6, Westville, and provided the Color Guard for the opening ceremony of the Indiana Letter Carriers Convention at Blue Chip Casino.



The Color Guard presents the colors at the Indiana Letter Carriers Convention.

This month, cadets will support community service projects such as cleaning veteran headstones at Greenwood Cemetery, assisting Michiana Humane Society at Friendship Botanic Gardens and marching in the Michigan City Memorial Day parade.

MCJROTC also is planning its week-long leadership camp conducted at St. John's Military Academy in Delafield, Wis. Portage, Romeoville, Ill., and Indianapolis Ben Davis high schools will participate.

Also this summer, Cadet Staff Sgt. Matthew Wilson will attend the National JROTC Military Drill Camp in San Antonio, Texas, and the MCJROTC Senior Leadership Camp near Pittsburgh. Maj. Tom McGrath, the senior Marine instructor, said Wilson is interested in serving in the military, with the potential to earn a \$180,000 ROTC scholarship.

The Marine Corps funds the costs of both camps.

KAC Business After Hours


Krasl Art Center and Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber will host the next Business After Hours, complete with an unveiling of the 2023 Krasl Art Fair merchandise and commemorative design.

The program, which is from 5-7 p.m. EDT Thursday, May 11, at KAC, includes drinks, light snacks, networking and free headshots.

The design unveiling is at 6 p.m. EDT. The KAC-commissioned artwork is used to create merchandise, the Collectors' Experience Pin and the event theme. This year's artist is Alann Boatright, a former Michigander who travels between Indiana and Florida as a full-time artist

This year's fair is estimated to include 172 artists from around the country July 8-9.

KAC is located at 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Visit tinyurl.com/3m58m7ru for details.





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In the Area

May 11 — Duneland Stamp Club, 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

May 11-14 — “Murdered to Death,” Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Thur.-Sat./2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$17/adults, \$12/children 12 & younger. Reservations: www.footlightplayers.org

May 12 — Film Showing: “80 for Brady,” 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

May 12-14 — “Church Basement Ladies,” LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$17/adults, \$16/seniors 55+, \$13/students with ID. Reservations: www.laportelittletheatreclub.com

May 13 — “Pets & Pours” (Michiana Humane Society benefit), 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12. Tickets: \$55/adults 21 & older, \$20/ages 14-20, free/13 & younger. Reservations: www.MichianaPets.org, (219) 872-4499.

May 14 — MOTHER’S DAY.

May 14 — Free admission for mothers/grandmothers, Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12. Free roses handed out: noon-5 p.m.

May 15 — Teen D&D, 5-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

May 15 — Family Pajama Storytime, 6-6:30 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

May 16 — Bad Art Night for Adults, 5-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

May 17 — Tinkercad 3-D Modeling, 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3045.

May 17 — Potawatomi Audubon Society nature walk, 9 a.m., Bluhm County Park, 3855 S. County Road 1100 West, Westville.

Through June 30 — Artwork by the Rev. David Kime, the Rev. Roque Meraz, Dr. John Wilhelm, The Legacy Center Gallery at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Center hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Thur., 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun. Info: (219) 872-9196.

First and Third Mondays — Singing Sands

Toastmasters Club, 6:30-8 p.m., Senior Health/Wellness Center (old hospital ER, Barker/Buffalo).

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

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

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

Tuesdays in May — Creative Tech Activities, 3:30-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Saturdays through Oct. 28 — Michigan City Farmers Market, 8 a.m.-noon, Eighth & Washington streets. Info: www.emichigancity.com

In the Region

May 11 — Welcome to the Darkside: Nothing in Indiana, 1 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

May 11 — Joys From Birding, 2:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

May 11 — Mother’s Day candle making workshop, 6-8 p.m. EDT, Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Non-refundable fee: \$50/ Berrien Artist Guild members, \$65/non-members. Reservations: <https://boxfactoryforthearts.org/classes-workshops>

May 11-14 — Indiana Dunes Birding Festival, Indiana Dunes National Park/State Park. Info: www.indunesbirdingfestival.com

May 11-14, 18-21 — “Much Ado About Nothing,” 7:30 p.m. EDT, The Ghostlight Theatre, 101 Hinkley St., Benton Harbor, Mich. Tickets: \$12-\$28. Reservations/info: www.GhostLightBH.com.

May 12 — Is Your Coffee Bird Friendly?, 1 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

May 12 — Indiana Bird Town: “It’s a Sign!” for Michigan City, 2:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

May 12-14, 19-21 — “Steel Magnolias,” Elkhart Civic Theatre @ Bristol (Ind.) Opera House, 210 E. Indiana 120. Times (Eastern): 7:30 p.m. May 12-13 & 19-20, 3 p.m. May 14 & 21. Tickets: seniors (62+)\$23, adults/\$25, students/\$19. Info: www.elkhartcivictheatre.org/hoppy, (574) 848-4116.

May 13 — Ceremony (custom bench installation), noon EDT, New Buffalo public beach.

May 13 — “Cars & Coffee,” 8-10 a.m. EDT, Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St., South Bend. Free. Info: (574) 235-9714.

May 13 — Project 1966: Hike Every Trail in the Park, 8-10 a.m., Heron Rookery east lot trailhead, 1336 County Road 600 East, Michigan City. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

May 13 — Youth & Family Birding Day, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

May 13 — Duneland Weavers Guild, 10 a.m., Three Moons Fiberworks, 402 Broadway, Chesterton. Info: www.dunelandweaversguild.org

May 13 — Free Family Art Day, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Chesterton Art Center, 115. S. Fourth St. Registration: www.chestertonart.org/classes, (219) 926-4711.

May 13 — Extreme Birding: One Man's Biking Big Year, 1 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

May 13 — Visiting All National Parks, 2:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

May 13 — Abe Partridge with D. Anson Brody, 7 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee, \$55 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

May 14 — Mother's Day Wildflower Hike, 10-11:30 a.m. & 1-2:30 p.m., Heron Rookery, 1336 County Road 600 East, Michigan City. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

May 14 — Music Heritage Series Concert at the Farm, 5-6 p.m., Chellberg Farmhouse, Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20/12, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

May 15 — Teen Trivia Night, 6 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

May 17 — Dog Days at Chellberg, 1-3 p.m., Bailly Homestead/Chellberg Farm, Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20/12, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.dunefriends.org

May 17 — Studebaker Museum Speaker Series (focus: Citizens Home Co.), 1:30 p.m. EDT, Studebaker Museum Wiekamp Auditorium, 201 Chapin St., South Bend. Cost: \$2, free/museum & campus members. Info: (574) 235-9714.

May 17 — Open Mic Night featuring Jack Whittle, 7 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Performer inquiries: openmic@acornlive.org. Audience: \$25 (reserved seating). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

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

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

Through May 19 — 29th Annual Juried Arts Exhibition, Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Info: www.artbarn-school.org, (219) 462-9009.

Through May 29 — "Built to Last: Studebaker Buildings Past & Present," The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St., South Bend. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Sun. Admission: \$11 - adults, \$9.50 - seniors 60+, \$7 - youth ages 6-18. Info: (574) 235-9714, www.studebakermuseum.org

Through May 30 — Exhibits, Matthew Berg's "Lake Mill Club"/Abbie Parmele's "An Invitation—Energy is Everything," Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Reception: noon-2 p.m. May 20. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

Through June 2 — "So Far: Nancy Hejna Artworks in Exhibit," Marshall J. Gardner Center for the Arts, 540 S. Lake St., Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Artist talk/reading/book signing: 2-4 p.m. May 21. Info: (219) 885-9114.

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

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

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

Saturdays in Chesterton — European Market, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., Broadway & Third Street (next to Thomas Centennial Park). Info: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8z2utd>

Sundays in May — Gardening at Chellberg Farm, 9 a.m.-noon, Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20/12, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

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

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

Sundays in May — Chellberg Farm Open House, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 20/12, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Vickers Theatre — *Now Showing*: "Still: A Michael J. Fox Movie." Rated R. Times: 4 p.m. May 12, 7 p.m. May 13, 4 p.m. May 14. *Also*: "Book Club: The Next Chapter." Rated PG-13. Times: 7 p.m. May 12, 4 p.m. May 13, 1 & 7 p.m. May 14. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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Payments must be made with cash only and paid at the facility within 72 hours. All goods are sold as is and must be removed at the time of payment. Sale is subjected to adjournment.

The Girlfriend Sale, your ultimate women's resale clothing event

Last Chance 1/2 price sale is this Saturday, May 13, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Long Beach Community Center, 2501 Oriole Trail, Long Beach. Come find amazing consignment items from more than 125 participants' closets, plus new tags on designer clothing from your favorite specialty boutiques, with most items at 1/2 off!!! We have everything from comfy casual to cutting-edge dressy: all sizes, shoes, handbags, scarves, gift items and so much more. We promise, even if you've shopped the sale earlier, you are sure to find things you have never seen before, and all at those unbelievable prices we love. Join us for one more shopping hurrah!!! Be sure to check out our designer clothing orange dot super sale racks, too. Stop off at the ATM to take advantage of our speedy cash checkout line. We do accept credit cards. Parking is limited at the center. You may pull into the grassy area in front of the building, making sure all 4 tires are off the pavement. Please obey all no parking signs, leave room for others and do not park on residents' property or down any side streets. Check out our FB page thegirlfriendsale for more details.

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The Measure by Nikki Erlick (*hardcover, \$28.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 349 pages.*)

*"And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last."*
Sir Walter Scott

It's been said the only two things you can be sure of in life are death and taxes. Taxes are straightforward, due by a certain date, but what about death? We all know we're going to die some day, just not when. And maybe that's the way it should be. Would knowing you had a short life span be helpful? Or would it make you do foolish or stupid things?

So, is this story just an interesting read for a rainy day, or a tale of what ifs and what thens? Maybe it all boils down to the measure of life itself. Here's the lowdown...

"...when they first appeared, in March, nobody had any idea what to do with them, these strange little boxes...they came for everyone, all at once."

That is, everyone 22 and older. They look like small wooden boxes, finding their way to everyone, whether they live in a house, mansion, tree, desert or mountain top.

The top of the box has the recipient's name and an inscription — *"The measure of your life lies within."*

Inside each box is a string. Some are short, some long, some varying lengths in between. What in the world could they mean? And how are they delivered all over the world in one day? God? Aliens? The devil?

It doesn't take the government long to get scientists working on the strings and arrive at a solution: the string indicates the length of your life — short, long or somewhere in between — and the strings can't be cut. What's next? Comparative medical testing, of course, and that's when the shocking truth comes out — the health of long-stringers vs. short-stringers is, indeed, different.

It takes a good month for the truth to reach the public. By then, the manure hits the fan...

Who really wants to know the month and year of their demise? Some things in this life are left better unknown, and many people choose not to open their box once they learn its true meaning.

Stories come in about suicides by short-stringers, as well as mass shootings. Soon, governments are inundated with calls. Mass meetings call for short-stringers to be kept from political jobs, military positions or other government jobs because they might

Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



go mental knowing about their shortened lives.

One thing is for sure — the strings take over all news channels, overriding everything else. The argument between short- and long-stringers becomes like a social-class war, with long-stringers thinking they are the top of the food chain and therefore the leaders.

Nina, a magazine editor, and her life partner, Maura, a writer, open their boxes together. Maura's string is long, Nina's is short. They plan to marry and have a family. Does this change plans?

Other characters include Ben, an architect with a short-string, friends Jack and Javier, who just graduated from college and look forward to careers in the military, with one a long-stringer and the other a short-stringer. How will that affect their chances at positions they want so badly?

Hank is an ER doctor with a short string. He finds solace in a support group for short-stringers and meets Amie, Nina's sister, who has a long string.

Then there's Anthony, Jack's uncle, who is gearing up for the presidential race. He's been given a long string and makes speeches letting his followers know he thinks short-stringers should be at the back of the political bus.

Following these eight people, we see how prejudice and fear pit people against each other. There will be sacrifices, marriages put on hold, plans to have babies forgotten, not to mention parades, speeches and anger on both sides. Imagine such a scenario — not just for individuals, but for society as a whole. The implications are endless.

I thought I would not enjoy this story, but found myself drawn in by the brilliant writing. It's a page-turner: all the bad and good in our society laid out. But will cooler heads prevail?

Just how important is it to know when you are going to die? Or is it more important to make the most of the life and time you have been given?

The final word: As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, *"It is not the length of life, but the depth of life."* I support that thought wholeheartedly. But really, would you open the box?

Till next time, happy reading!



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