



Volume 39, Number 45 Thursday, November 16, 2023

# The Lincoln Special

by Andrew Tallackson

**F**or Chris Allen, his admiration for Abraham Lincoln, the pivotal moments that cemented his respect for the 16th U.S. president, emerged in elementary school.

Fifth grade, to be precise. A school trip, of which his father, Bruce, participated, to Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City, Ind., which is in the southwestern part of the state near Evansville. The trip was living history personified. By fourth grade, Allen, a native of Madison, Ind., knew a good deal about the president from books. But this lifted history off the page and into the real world. It had a viable immediacy: Lincoln's early days, the loss of his mother, Nancy, to consumption when he was only 9.

"I knew going into it that this is a piece of his life," Allen said. "I knew the rest of it, but not like this. I learned about his mother, that he lost her

at an early age. Then, his sister. What struck me is that this guy lost almost half of his family, and me (at that time), I have all my family and siblings. That's what stuck with me."

Allen was fascinated, his interest bolstered by the fact that his hometown gave rise to The Madison and Indianapolis Railroad, the state's first railroad incorporated in 1836, then operational by 1841 — *before* Lincoln's rise to the presidency. James F.D. Lanier, one of the railroad's original financiers, Allen says, was a major benefactor for Lincoln, helping keep Indiana solvent during the Civil War.

So, it makes sense that two threads in Allen's formative years — trains and Abraham Lincoln — shape the ambitious project that has him touring the state to rally support. The 52-year-old from Westfield, Ind., who works in trades and annuities, is executive director of the Westfield-based The Lin-

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This concept art for "Of Tears and Iron" shows the Lincoln Funeral Train headed west toward Indianapolis in April 1865.

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## The Lincoln Special

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coln Special. His goal: raise \$6.5 million to shoot a film called “Of Tears and Iron” that weaves fictional characters into the story of the president’s 1865 funeral train. It is based on his original screenplay begun in 2015.

Allen is making trips throughout Indiana to where the train stopped to create awareness and raise funds for a feasibility study.

Michigan City included, of course.

The slain president’s funeral train stopped in our fair city on May 1, 1865, the community united in presenting an honorary funeral.

Allen is ironing out the details to make a presentation here, weather-dependent, on Jan. 6, 2024. In a perfect world, if all goes as planned, “Of Tears and Iron” begins filming in spring 2025.

Why now? Why tell this story? Allen does not mince words, especially in the context of today’s tumultuous world climate.

“What a better story to tell than Lincoln’s final story,” he says. “His story continues on. I learned that after the death of my father. My dad’s story didn’t end when he died in 2008. I learned in my own grief therapy, a person’s life continues on. And here we are, talking about Lincoln years after his death. There is a reason why the Lincoln Memorial is as big as it is.

“What a great way to hopefully lower the temperature in society by reminding folks that we’ve been through this before, we can get through this. Here is a guy whose words and wisdom, wow, what a better person to look to right now.”

Lincoln was assassinated at the hands of John Wilkes Booth at Ford’s Theatre on April 15, 1865. The ensuing three weeks contained events designed for the nation to mourn, and memorialize, their president. Among them was a funeral train, dubbed “The Lincoln Special,” whose route spanned 1,654 miles and seven states on its way to the burial site in Springfield, Ill. It is estimated that millions caught a glimpse of the train as it made its solemn journey.

It should be noted the train’s route was strategically designed to retrace the president’s journey to Washington when he was first inaugurated four years prior.

Mary Todd Lincoln, devastated by her husband’s death, was not present on the train; however, her eldest son, Robert Todd, made the journey, joined, sadly, by the remains of his younger brother, William Wallace Lincoln, who died from typhoid fever in 1862.

For Allen, his passion for all things Lincoln never diminished. It just took periodic back seat, as life has a way of getting in the way of youthful dreams and aspirations. He worked for a time in public television, learning the elements of direction and production from that experience.



Chris Allen is traveling the state to generate support for the film

“You know, in your 20s, you’re out chasing the world and having fun,” Allen said. “I knew I wanted to make movies, even in my early 20s. And I set out doing that, made a bunch of stuff no one has ever heard of. But, I learned a lot. Experience is a wonderful teacher, and I was teaching

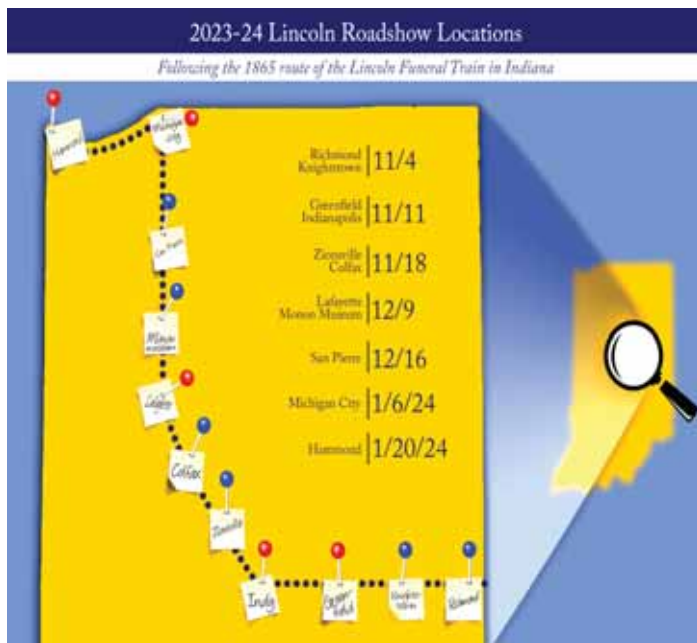
myself film.”

Allen also became a husband to his loving wife, Sandy. They have one son, Sam, who is now 15.

“When you have kids, your priorities change,” he said. “My philosophy was, the best job is being a father, and that’s what I did.

“Now, Sam’s 15,” he continued. “He’s finding his own way, and I’m thinking, what am I turning the keys over to when I go? I don’t like what I see here. I want to make the world better. I know I’m not going to change the world, but if I can move the needle in the right direction, that’s the way to go.”

Sam’s own interest in trains as a child reignited his father’s interest in Lincoln’s funeral train. A trip with Sam when he was 4 to Madison sparked his



A map that details Allen's journey across the state as part of a feasibility study for "Of Tears and Iron."

interest in its rich railroad history. And when 2015 marked the 150th anniversary of the funeral train, Allen was fired up to begin work on an original script. It was a 2 to 2 1/2 year process, working with an editor to make changes, to shape the narrative into a cohesive story.

In 2018, he met politician and civil rights activist John Lewis, who represented Georgia's 5th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives right until his death two years later in 2020. Lewis, at the time, was set to mark the 50th anniversary of Robert Kennedy's speech the night Martin Luther King was assassinated.

The year 2020, as we know, was unprecedented for other reasons. COVID-19 introduced itself, the pandemic putting life on hold as we knew it. It was also the year George Floyd Jr. was killed by a police officer during a Minneapolis arrest, elevating the issues of race and police brutality to the forefront of American discourse.

The combination of social unrest, and a global pandemic forcing everyone to self-isolate, only convinced Allen now was the time, more than ever, to proceed with his screenplay. It tells the story of Ben, a fugitive slave intent on seeing Lincoln's funeral train. That journey, which includes Ben's longtime friend Samuel, contains its shares of triumph and heartbreak as Ben finds himself conflicted. Heading to Canada seems like the best alternative, but what happens to African Americans here after his death?

Allen created a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, The Lincoln Special, to get the ball rolling on his film. He assembled a board that includes:

- Shannon Brown, a historian and researcher who was part of the team that aimed to recreate a full-scale replica of Lincoln's funeral train.

Continued on Page 4

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# The Lincoln Special

Continued from Page 3

- C. Ellen Connally, who served as a law clerk for the 8th District Court of Appeals and magistrate for the Cuyahoga County Probate Court in Ohio before being elected to the Cleveland Municipal Court in 1980, serving until 2004. She was the first black woman in Ohio elected judge without first being appointed.
- Honorary board member Tina Cosby, who was a WISH TV-8 anchor for many years, and now hosts a daily radio show on Indianapolis' 92.7 FM called "Community Connection with Tina Cosby."
- Ed Ernestes, who for many years was a WSBT-TV reporter in South Bend, and who has been involved in film projects with local Oscar-nominated director John Hancock ("The Looking Glass," "The Girls of Summer.")

Allen wants the best production values for "Of Tears and Iron." Shot on 35mm film on location, and with a professional crew from the region and the U.S.

"I don't want to get out there with an iPhone and shoots on weekends," Allen said with a laugh. "I think it deserves the right stuff, so to speak, because it's our nation's story. This is something not a lot of people know about."

Allen is pounding the pavement, holding meetings across the state to spread the word on the film. So far, that has included Richmond, Knightstown, Greenfield, Indianapolis, Zionsville and Colfax. Upcoming stops include not only Michigan City, but also Lafayette, San Pierre and Hammond.

Allen prefers meeting with people in person than through Zoom or other online means.

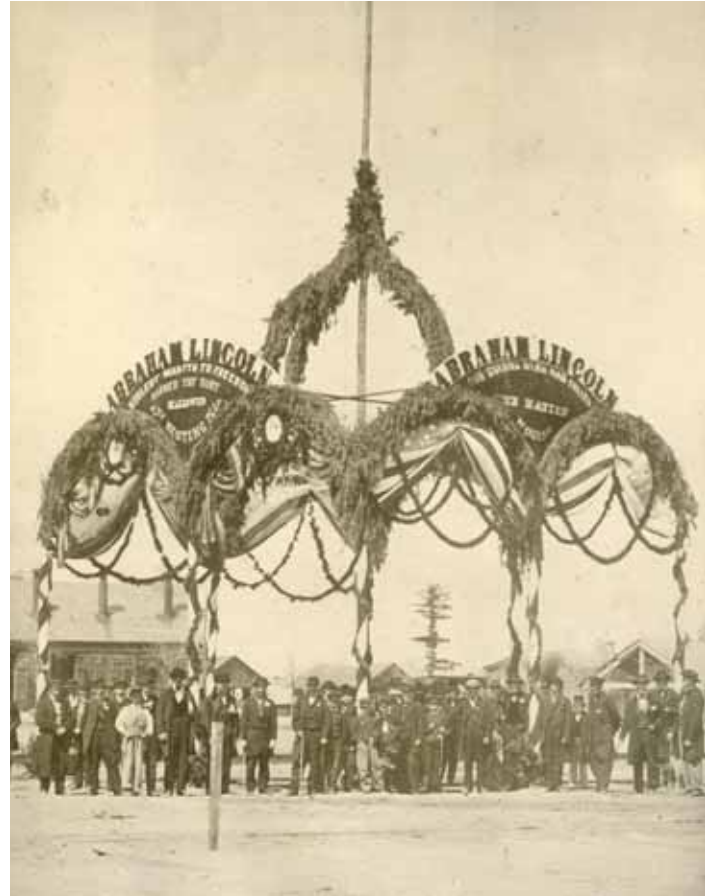
"We're cutting through the digital noise and Facebook and other social media," he said. "The meetings are crucial because people pay attention to face-to-face interactions."

By doing so, he can bolster the vision of his non-profit group. On one level, the discussions renew a dialogue on Lincoln's legacy on the issue of racism. On another, "Of Tears and Iron" can revisit America's troubled past, but lead to healing.

"This was a man who led so many, who knew

the weight of his responsibility," Allen said. "He carried it with him every step of the way. And what I appreciate now, more than ever, is the lessons his life continue to leave us, but only if we pay attention to it. It's all there: the roadmap to sustaining our democracy is right there."

*(The Beacher will update readers on the specifics of Allen's Michigan City meeting. More information on The Lincoln Special and "Of Tears and Iron" is available at [www.tearsandiron.com](http://www.tearsandiron.com))*



This archival photo, provided by Josh McIntyre, shows the Lincoln Funeral Train's stop in Michigan City on May 1, 1865.



Allen had concept art designed of the main characters for "Of Tears and Iron." All three are inspired by real actors. They are: Ben, inspired by Denzel Washington, Samuel, inspired by Anson Mount, and Elizabeth, inspired by Helen Slater

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## “The Marvels” is Thin, But Good-Natured Fun

by Andrew Tallackson



Brie Larson (from left), Teyonah Parris and Iman Vellani star in “The Marvels.”

“The Marvels” is by no shakes a great movie. The story is thin, the villain forgettable. The special effects slide from clever to sloppy.

But this sequel to 2019’s wonderful “Captain Marvel” is the first movie, in some time, in the Marvel Cinematic Universe — MCU to us geeks — that is good-natured fun. The three stars (Brie Larson, Teyonah Parris, Iman Vellani) click instantly. Their chemistry suggests a viable future exists for them.

It helps, too, that director/co-writer Nia DaCosta (2021’s “The Candyman”) isn’t interested in the same gravity as “Avengers: Endgame” or the last “Guardians of the Galaxy.” All she wants people to do is exit the theater with silly grins on their faces.

The movie, in a way, expects too much from viewers, that they’ve devoured all the Disney+ content beforehand, especially “Ms. Marvel” and “WandaVision.” Those who prefer their Marvel action on the big screen may be saying to themselves, huh?

In any event, there is a civil war involving space aliens called the Kree. Their new leader, Dar-Benn (Zawe Ashton), has a major beef with Carol Danvers/Captain Marvel (Larson), and she’s prepared to take out anyone, and any world, to reach her.

Ashton may go down as the most blah Marvel villain in recent history. There’s nothing to her. No legitimate threat. She’s like watching a sour sorority girl intent on crashing the party.

Much of the dialogue in “The Marvels” is comic-book gobbledygook. A lot of sciency words that don’t add up to much. And the special effects? Solid... until the last act, when the visuals have a rushed,



### “The Marvels”

Running time: 105 minutes. In theaters.

Rated PG-13 for action/violence and brief language.

slapdash quality

But Larson, Parris, as Monica Rambeau, and Vellani, as Kamala, are a dynamite team. The film’s trailers suggest bickering between these three, but that is kept to a minimum. Instead, the actresses create women who apologize for their mistakes, celebrate each other’s strengths and brainstorm best possible outcomes. And Vellani is a delight, playing Kamala like the outcast in the school cafeteria, thrilled just to be sitting at the same table as the cool kids.

DaCosta knows how to stage a rousing fight sequence, complete with playfully choreographed combat and CGI-assisted acrobatics. She also doesn’t take her film seriously, not in the same grating manner as “Thor: Love and Thunder,” but with a more affectionate tone. Kamala still has a very likable family, and DaCosta makes a brilliant song choice for her most inspired moment that takes the phrase “herding cats” into wildly funny territory.

More than likely, “The Marvels” will fade from memory for me. It’s slight, but I suspect that is what DaCosta wanted. An agreeable way to pass the time. Nothing more, nothing less.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [atallackson@gmail.com](mailto:atallackson@gmail.com)



# NEW LISTING



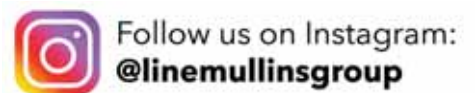
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## Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte Grants



Phase 1 of the Citizens Concerned for the Homeless project involved exterior improvements.

Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte has awarded 33 grants totaling more than \$1.4 million in Cycle 2 for this year.

Those benefitting include: HealthLinc's new Michigan City clinic; Knapp Elementary School; Citizens Concerned for the Homeless Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families; and Friends of the LaPorte County Public Library.

Each year, HFL makes grants during two cycles to advance the strategic priorities of Healthy Children, Healthy Living and Healthy Minds. Additionally, HFL makes Healthy LaPorte grants to address other community needs.

Cycle 2 grants include:

### HEALTHY CHILDREN

- **Friends of the LaPorte County Public Library's Books in the Home of Every Child – Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The total is \$45,000 over three years (\$15,000 per year).**

The Friends applied for a grant to expand its community literacy efforts through the Dolly Parton program, which mails a free book each month to children enrolled in the program from birth through age 5, no matter the family income. Each book includes parent reading tips to increase interaction and strengthen family bonds during book time.

- **Dental Equipment for HealthLinc's new Michigan City Clinic — \$75,000.**

The money provides 12 dental chairs for the new clinic now under construction at 200 Alfred Ave. It is scheduled to be completed in early 2024.

### HEALTHY LIVING

- **Knapp Elementary All "IN"clusive Playground — \$192,794.**

Knapp serves 383 students and is home to a developmental preschool and two autism programs. Many students have physical, sensory or cognitive

challenges; however, neither of Knapp's two existing playgrounds — one for younger children and one for older children — are Americans With Disabilities Act compliant nor inclusive.

The project includes replacing the school's existing playground for older students and building it closer to the school to increase safety and security. The project also will add inclusive pieces to the playground for younger children to increase accessibility. Pour-in-place rubber surfacing will be installed for both playgrounds, making the playgrounds accessible and safe for all children.

The goal is to break ground in summer 2024, with all projects completed before school resumes for the 2024-2025 school year.

### HEALTHY MINDS

- **Citizens Concerned for the Homeless Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families Project, Phase 2: \$50,000 Challenge Grant.**

Phase 2 involves renovation of the 110-year-old Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families building, a residential facility that serves homeless families and single women in LaPorte County.

Phase 1 focused on exterior improvements, with a new roof, complete tuckpointing and a new concrete driveway and patio. The work was completed this past summer.

Phase 2, set to begin in early spring 2024, will focus on the interiors, upgrading plumbing and electrical, remodeling four bathrooms and the kitchen, and restoring all original floors and woodwork within the building.

This \$50,000 award is a Challenge Grant, meaning Citizens Concerned for the Homeless needs to raise \$50,000 from the community to receive the grant funds. CCH will launch a campaign to reach a dollar-for-dollar match for the project.





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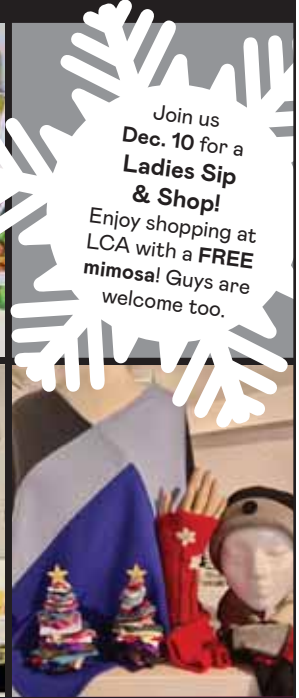
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*Our 2023 season ends on Sunday, Nov. 26. Hope to see you over our last weekend, but if not please have a safe, healthy and happy winter.*

*We look forward to seeing everyone again when we reopen in March 2024.*

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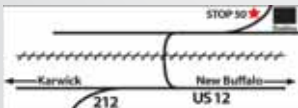
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## Upcycled Holiday Family Workshop

“Upcycled Holiday Family Workshop,” which is open to children 6 and older with a parent, is from 1-4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, at Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso.

Instructor Linda Eyer mann will use materials such as discarded holiday cards, ribbon, scrap paper, small boxes and containers to create holiday ornaments, centerpieces or other decorations. Cookies and cocoa will be served, and staff from Recycling & Waste Reduction District of Porter County will discuss ways to reduce, reuse and recycle.

The cost is \$10 per person. All materials and supplies are provided, but items can be donated. Register at [tinyurl.com/mvjvr84v](http://tinyurl.com/mvjvr84v). Call (219) 462-9009 or email [info@artbarnschool.org](mailto:info@artbarnschool.org) for more details

## KAC Annual Meeting/Showcase

Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich., will host its annual meeting, “The Fall Finale,” from 6-8 p.m. EST Friday, Nov. 17.

The meeting will showcase upgrades to studios supported by a Michigan Arts and Culture Council Capital Improvement grant. Guests also will hear from staff and board members on other updates.

After the brief presentation, visitors can view studio classrooms and gallery displays, including student-made artwork from the fall semester.

The event is free, but registration is requested at [www.krasl.org/events/kac-annual-meeting](http://www.krasl.org/events/kac-annual-meeting). Call (269) 983-0271 for more details.

## Ellen Firme Gallery

“Nine Painters: Art and Soul in the Dunes” runs through Jan. 12, 2024, at Ellen Firme Gallery, 92 W. U.S. 12, Beverly Shores.

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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 following programs are scheduled:*

- **Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in November.** Membership is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome. Also, the group has organized a local chapter of the Warm Up America Foundation. Volunteers are knitting and crocheting handmade squares (7x9 inch) that will be joined together to make full-size afghans.
- **Local Author Barry J. Veden: Honoring Vietnam Vets at 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16.** Veden, a military veteran and interviewer, has published We Were There, a collection of stories told by veterans of the Southeast Asian conflict.
- **Film Showing: "Haunted Mansion" at 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17.** The movie is inspired by the theme park attraction.
- **Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18.** Milten-

berger, a genealogy volunteer, can offer tips on how to research a family tree, find genealogical records, and understand and interpret ancestry/genealogical DNA results.

- **International Classical Music at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18.** Classical accordionist Stephen Kowalczyk will present the concert.
  - **Family Game Night (ages 8-17) from 3-4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20.** Play any provided board games, including Sorry, Trouble, Uno and Candyland.
  - **Genealogy Help with Pat Harris from 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays in November.** Harris can offer tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record
  - **Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17) from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in November.** Create with LEGO WeDo, Micro:bits, paper circuits, Ozobots and 3-D pens. Children 12 and younger must have a parent or guardian attend with them.
  - **Bad Art Night for Adults from 5-7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21.** 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.
  - **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.
  - **Dungeons & Dragons (ages 13-17) at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22.** Supplies and characters are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Email Miss Dana at [dwolf@mclib.org](mailto:dwolf@mclib.org) for details.
  - **Mythical Creature Scavenger Hunt in November.** Visit Youth Services, find all the mythical creatures and win a prize.
  - **Weekly Crafts for Kids & Teens.** Each week offers a different project. Take-home craft kits are available, or create some in the Makerspace.
- Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit [www.mclib.org](http://www.mclib.org) for more details.*

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## New Buffalo Township Library

- **The public can create and donate a wreath for a silent auction to support library needs.** The library encourages wreaths for all themes, seasons and occasions. They should be appropriate and suitable to display and auction. Those that are noticeably old, worn or damaged cannot be accepted. Wreaths may be submitted during library business hours. The wreaths will be displayed Nov. 17-18 in the Pokagon Room. Open bidding is planned at this time, ending at 3 p.m. Nov. 18.
- **Harbor Country Film Group with Eve Moran at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20.** The film is "Searching for Sugar Man."
- **"Michigan Through the Eons."** The program is at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21.

### Weekly programs:

- Craft Time from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Wednesdays while supplies last.
- Chess Club from 6-8 p.m. Thursdays.
- Read to a Dog Sessions for all ages from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesday and 4-4:45 p.m. Wednesday.
- Lego Club from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Fridays and 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Saturdays.
- Story time at 10 a.m. Mondays.

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

## Westchester Public Library

Westchester Public Library has curbside pickup at its Thomas and Hageman branches.

Use a library card or go online to place holds on up to 10 items, including DVDs and CDs. Once notified the items are available, park in specially-numbered spaces at each branch during pickup hours.

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.

## Public Art Committee

Michigan City Public Art Committee meets at 10 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 16, in the City Hall Mayor's Conference Room, 100 E. Michigan Blvd.

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## LaPorte County Public Library

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

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

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

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

*The following programs are planned:*

- **Virtual Author Talk with Joy Harjo from 3-4 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16.** Harjo will discuss her career and new book, *Catching the Light*. Register through the website.
- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 17, at the main library.** Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- **Civil War Era Cross Stitch with Danielle Adams from 2-4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20, at the main library, Meeting Room B.** Adams, LaPorte County Historical Society Museum director, will reveal how to read a pattern and make a historic cross-stitch project. Supplies are limited.
- **Teen D&D from 5-7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20, at the main library Meeting Room A.** The program involves a cooperative tabletop role-playing game for teens 13-18. Registration is required.
- **Readers Corner with local author Matt Werner from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21, in the Coolspring Branch meeting room.** Werner will discuss his latest books.

*LaPorte County Public Library is located at 904 Indiana Ave. The Coolspring Branch is located at 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Visit [www.lapor-telibrary.org](http://www.lapor-telibrary.org) for more details, including programming through the Exchange building.*

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## “Nyad” May Be Oscar Bait, But Bening and Foster Give It Their All

by Andrew Tallackson



Annette Bening (left) and Jodie Foster star in “Nyad.”

If you know anything about Annette Bening, or followed her career, then you can feel her gunning for an Oscar in “Nyad.”

Four past Academy Award nominations. Twice snubbed by Hilary Swank, in 2011 bested by an actress 23 years younger (Natalie Portman won for “Black Swan” over Bening’s “The Kids Are All Right”). Heaven knows, for Bening, it’s time. “Nyad,” the new Netflix sports biopic about controversial swimmer Diana Nyad, delivers everything she needs on a silver platter for Oscar nom No. 5.

In other words, it’s Oscar bait.

Having said that, you can’t help but admire the intensity of Bening, along with how good Jodie Foster is.

The movie, lifted from Nyad’s autobiography [Find a Way](#), marks the feature film debut of Oscar-winning documentarians, and husband-and-wife team, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin. You can see why the swimmer piqued their interests. With the Oscar-winning “Free Solo” (2019) and the emotional “The Rescue” (2021), these two are fascinated by extreme individuals in extreme circumstances. And with their documentary background, there is a no-nonsense approach to “Nyad.” A propulsive ability to avoid sentimentality and stick to the meat and potatoes of the story.

Diana Nyad rose to fame as a long-distance swim-

★ ★ ★ 1/2

“Nyad”

*Running time: 121 minutes. Netflix. Rated PG-13 for thematic material involving sexual abuse, some strong language and brief partial nudity.*

mer in the 1970s, in one instance beating the record of swimming around Manhattan. Her first stab from Cuba to Florida failed. As the movie begins, that defeat still stings 30 years later. Set between 2010 and 2013, the story charts how it would take four more tries to pull it off.

The real-life controversy surrounding Nyad is that her feat is not on the record books. That, among other things, she lacked an independent crew to monitor the final swim for official verification. That her admitted exaggerations over the years cast doubt on her 2013 achievement. I wish the movie took a harder look at that. It explores her divisive personality, but Julia Cox’s screenplay gives Bening too much wordy dialogue, where Bening’s big moments don’t sound like how people speak. The screenplay, in fact, feels crafted to deliver the Oscar reel Bening needs for a nomination.

Bening’s scenes with Foster, though, crackle with authenticity. Unaware of the specifics of Nyad’s life, I went into the film assuming Bening and Foster,



who plays Bonnie, Diana's coach, are a couple. They are not. These superb actresses create a rarity: two openly gay women whose love for each other is strictly platonic. They once dated, realized they didn't work as a couple, but remained best friends. Foster, an actress you never catch acting, plays a woman of endless good cheer, bolstering her friend at every turn, even when her friend's ego gets the better of her.

We also are struck by the boldness in appearance of Foster and Bening. Here are two actresses, both in the 60s and wearing zero makeup. No effort to conceal their ages.

They embrace every line and crease in their faces, which may be a no-no amid Hollywood's nip/tuck mentality, but the choice in "Nyad" feels liberating for these women.

With the stunning visuals achieved in "Free Solo" (Chin's background is with *National Geographic*, no less), you expect to be wowed by the swimming sequences in "Nyad." They do not disappoint, mixing archival footage with flawless recreations. Their camera makes you a part of the journey every time Diana hits the water. And it is in her final journey that we appreciate the exhaustive drive Bening brings to the role. Pushing herself to physical and emotional limits, with not only Foster balancing her out, but also the wonderful Rhys Ifans ("Notting Hill") in another scene-stealing turn as navigator John Bartlett.

The final scene, in which Diana makes it to Flori-



The swimming scenes involve archival footage and flawless recreations.

da, is a triumph of storytelling, not just from Bening and Foster, but also in the subtle way the movie reveals the bigger picture, the rainbow flags reiterating her significance within the LGBTQ community.

"Nyad" may be awards bait, but the bait is worthy. Oscar will come calling.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [atallackson@gmail.com](mailto:atallackson@gmail.com)

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## “Anatomy of a Fall” Treats the Crime Thriller as Character Study

by Andrew Tallackson

in  
Theatres



Sandra Voyter (Sandra Hüller) consults her attorney about the specifics of her case in “Anatomy of a Fall.”

The setup is tantalizing.

As “Anatomy of a Fall” begins, novelist Sandra Voyter (Sandra Hüller) sits in her French chalet, across from an attractive young woman interviewing her. There is a slippery sexual charge between the two, more from Sandra, but it’s interrupted by loud music from the third floor. The music has an angry, invasive quality. Almost intentionally so.

As the reporter leaves, Sandra’s partially blind son, Daniel (Milo Machado-Graner), takes the family dog out for a walk. He returns to find his father on the snow-covered ground. Dead. Blood everywhere, having suffered a fall from the third-floor balcony.

It is a classic opening. The ideal overture to a murder-mystery courtroom thriller. Thing is, director Justine Triet does not treat it as one. She’s more interested in crafting an intensely focused character study. The result is extremely well-acted — Hüller is a shoe-in for a Best Actress Oscar nomination — but at 2 ½ hours, too deliberately paced. The film is so quiet, it dilutes the tension.

What cannot be faulted is the intelligence of Triet’s work, which was well-rewarded at the 76th Cannes Film Festival, where it took home the *Palme d’Or* — she’s only the third woman to capture the prize — and Palm Dog Award.

Her story has the ingredients of a potboiler: the subsequent police investigation, the heated court-

★ ★ ★ 1/2

### “Anatomy of a Fall”

*Running time: 151 minutes. In theaters, reviewed at Vickers Theatre. Rated R for some language, sexual references and violent images.*

room trial, the open-ended conclusion. But as a storyteller, Triet is more concerned with the family dynamic between Sandra, her now deceased husband, fellow writer Samuel Maleski (Samuel Theis), and their young son. This is an exploration of what goes on behind closed doors. The simmering anger, grief and jealousy that chip away at husband and wife. How those emotions achieve toxic resentment.

Triet doles out intimate details sparingly, expecting a certain degree of intelligence from the viewer that we can piece these elements together,

And in Hüller, Triet has found a magnificent actress who carries the weight of the picture. I first encountered her in 2016’s German dramedy “Toni Erdmann.” As the dispirited daughter of a man wanting happiness for her, Hüller gave the single greatest performance of 2016 that no one saw. A deft mix of ironic humor and loneliness. “Anatomy of a Fall” has the potential to reach a greater audience because the story is more accessible. Sandra is a study in composure under pressure, but the more we

learn about her and Samuel, Hüller lets loose. All the festering bile, the primal maternal instincts, spill out, and the impact of her outbursts has a way of reducing everyone around her to silence. Moments of controlled fury. If Hüller does not score an Oscar nomination for this, then something has gone seriously wrong.

Triet, as a director, likes to focus on mundane, everyday details within the family. But here's the problem: she lets shots, and scenes, stretch out too long. She needed to let editor Laurent Sénéchal tighten scenes so they have the desired punch. Propel the story forward. I frequently found myself antsy, wishing Triet made scenes feel like they were headed somewhere.

Again, I admire the way Triet dodges melodrama. Even the jury verdict is delivered almost as an afterthought, and the reaction from Machado-Graner is the most emotionally honest moment in the film.

Triet does not package her ending in a neat, tidy bow. It lends itself to interpretation, but if you've paid close attention, notice the body language between mother and son, you have a pretty good idea



Milo Machado-Graner has the most emotionally honest moment in the film.

of the truth.

"Anatomy of a Fall" is a good film. A smart film. Had it been tighter, it might have been perfection. It comes awfully close.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [atallackson@gmail.com](mailto:atallackson@gmail.com)

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# The New Season Begins



LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra kicked off its 51st season Nov. 4 at LaPorte Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge St. The program, which highlighted Hungarian music, featured two guest soloists: violinist Dr. Salley Koo and cimbalom artist Chester Englander. Also part of the evening was an instrument petting zoo. All photos by Bob Wellinski.



## “Quiz Lady” Finds Big Laughs Through Its Stars

by Andrew Tallackson

We have a Monday-Friday tradition in our house. After the dishes from dinner are put away and the dog walked, we plunk down in front of the TV and watch “Jeopardy.” My wife and I, for the most part, watch in silence, the answers evading our middle-age brains. Our 17-year-old son, though, is a machine. “Jeopardy” is like a religious experience for him. Cranking out answer after answer. Recalling previous contestants who triumphed or bit the dust.

In the new comedy “Quiz Lady,” Awkwafina plays a woman much like my son. She has a specific ritual for watching her favorite game show. She can rattle off answers with the efficiency of a computer program. So when her visiting sister, played by a riotously funny Sandra Oh, secretly records her in game-show mode, then posts it online, she becomes an instant viral celebrity.

Hence the title, “Quiz Lady.” The new Hulu comedy may play out like a sitcom disguised as a feature film, but there are big laughs thanks to perfectly matched stars.

In fact, the stroke of genius, thanks to director Jessica Yu, is that she cast her stars against type. In movies like “Crazy Rich Asians,” “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings” and “Renfield,” Awkwafina is the motormouthed smart-aleck. Here, as Anne, she is painfully introverted. The office drone who doesn’t make friends easily or chat with co-workers. She does what’s required of her, then heads home, the only reprieve from the doldrums being her favorite TV quiz show, all while seated on the couch with her old-as-dirt dog.

Her sister, Jenny (Oh), is the family’s proud-as-punch black sheep. Oh (“Sideways,” TV’s “Killing Eve”) flips her typically reserved image on its backside. She’s the brash, tacky extrovert fixated on get-rich-quick schemes. Out of work, she crashes at her sister’s place, right as the two learn their mother has fled the country, owing Chinese mobsters \$80,000. Jenny, posting her sister in quiz show mode online,

realizes they can make that amount, and possibly more, if Anne auditions for the show.

So, there’s a little bit of road movie in “Quiz Lady,” plenty of sibling rivalry and squabbling, cultural humor and, in the end, sisterly bonding.

Again, none of this is very original. In fact, everything resolves itself as neatly as any TV sitcom. However, the script by Jen D’Angelo is less about the outcome and more about forcing these sisters into getting along. To understand and appreciate each other.



Awkwafina (left) and Sandra Oh star in “Quiz Lady.”



### “Quiz Lady”

Running time: 99 minutes. Hulu.

Rated R for some drug use and language.

That’s the core of the movie, especially when Anne ends up as a contestant on the game show. Will Ferrell is surprisingly effective as the host, Terry McTear, who’s clearly modeled after the paternal cheerleader that was the late Alex Trebek. Jason Schwarzbaum is equally funny as the reigning champ, one of those smarmy twerps who uses faux charm to cloud the fact that he’s a selfish lout.

Not all the gags work. A stay at a Ben Franklin-themed hotel is not as funny as the movie thinks it is; ditto the scene where Anne auditions for the show high as a kite thanks to Jenny’s iffy mood stabilizers. The true laughs come when Awkwafina and Oh hold nothing back, when they feed off each other’s loopy energy. Their back-and-forths are comic gold in a film where, somehow amid all the silliness, it manages to be agreeably heartfelt by the end.

It’s comedy comfort food.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at [atallackson@gmail.com](mailto:atallackson@gmail.com)



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## Indiana Dunes National Park

- **The Save the Tunes Council performs from 7:30-9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** The group preserves folk songs in the traditional way, using guitar, autoharp, dulcimer, banjo, harmonica, bagpipe, penny whistle, hurdy gurdy and other obscure instruments.
- **Drop-In Volunteer Program (Trash Trekkers) from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily in November at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** Trash Trekkers is a no-hassle volunteer option that helps keep trails and beaches clean. Temporary passes are available. Visit [tinyurl.com/2p83798v](http://tinyurl.com/2p83798v) for more details.
- **Chellberg Farm Care from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Nov. 18, at Bailly Homestead/Chellberg Farm, 618 N. Mineral Springs Road, Porter.** Meet a ranger and fellow volunteers to care for the farm. Equipment and protective gear will be provided.
- **Great Marsh Trail Hike from 1:30-3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18.** Join a ranger for a hike through the remnant of a wetland that once spanned Lake Michigan's southern coast. Park at lots north of U.S. 12 on Broadway in Beverly Shores.
- **Stromatolites and Bacterial Mats: From the First Fossils on Earth to the Water Around You" from 1:30-3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** Geologist Randy Patrick will discuss stromatolite and bacterial mat fossils found in rocks 3.5 billion years old. Today, this cyanobacterium is found in water everywhere, including IDNP. Patrick also will display fossils.
- **Stargazing from 7-9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, at the Kemil Beach parking area, 27 N. East State Park Road, Chesterton.** Members from Michiana Astronomical Society will attend with telescopes.
- **Cowles Bog Hike from 12:30-3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, at the bog main lot, 1450 N. Mineral Springs Road, Dune Acres.** Join a ranger for a hike through ecosystems that demonstrate the park's biodiversity. Arrive early, and be prepared to park in auxiliary parking south of the trail or at the park's headquarters if the lot is full.
- **Chellberg Farm Open House from 1-3 p.m. Sundays in November.** 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.

□

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**Holidays at Barker Mansion**

After extensive renovations, Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St., is open for the holidays through Jan. 7, 2024.

The mansion will feature holiday décor in every room, with self-guided tours available of the first and second floors and the permanent exhibit, “The Haskell & Barker Car Company and The Legacy of Freight.”

Special events include:

- Conservation Conversations from 1-2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19. Restoration experts will describe and discuss the undertaking and importance of conservation throughout the mansion. Guests must purchase a tour ticket.
- First Fridays from 4-6 p.m. Dec. 1. Anyone from the 46360 zip code and showing ID is admitted free.
- Holiday Storytime from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Fridays in December. Families can sit in the Drawing Room next to the fireplace and listen to a holiday story. Guests must purchase a tour ticket.
- Local Author Storytime from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 8. Janet Beutner will read her children’s book, *Zip and Zap: A Zebra Christmas Story*. Guests must purchase a tour ticket.
- Visit Santa at the Mansion from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays, Dec. 9 and 16, and Sundays, Dec. 10 and 17. Santa will visit with children, read a story and sing songs. Advance tickets are recommended.
- Educator’s Night from 4-6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 8. The event, which includes self-guided tours, is free for educators showing school ID.

The mansion is open from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays-Sundays, and open until 6 p.m. Fridays. It is closed Mondays, as well as Nov. 23-24, Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 31. Admission is: adults, \$16.50; children and seniors, \$10; and free for children 2 and younger and active military and veterans. Visit [www.barkermansion.org](http://www.barkermansion.org) for tickets or more details.

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### JROTC Hosts Drill Meet



The Drill Team is photographed with its trophies.

Michigan City High School's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps hosted a military drill competition Nov. 4 in which it earned third place for Color Guard and Exhibition, and second place for Regulation in the Armed Division.

Cadets also earned second place for Color Guard in the Unarmed Division.

The University of Notre Dame Navy/Marine Corps ROTC provided the judges.

The Wolves' next meet is Dec. 2 at Portage. The sectional championship is Jan. 27, 2024, at Indianapolis Ben Davis. If MCHS wins that meet, it goes in the spring to the national championship in Washington, D.C. That trip, like all MCJROTC activities, is at no cost to the student nor MCHS. The Marine Corps funds all activities.

Cadets honored veterans Nov. 9 with a ceremony at the MCHS gym that also featured the MCHS band and choir. On Nov. 10, cadets honored the U.S. Marine Corps with its Birthday Ball, marking its 248th birthday. On Nov. 18, the Wolves travel to Indianapolis to compete in Ben Davis' Raider event.

After Thanksgiving break, MCHS will compete in Portage's drill meet, then that evening march in the Michigan City Christmas Parade. On Dec. 7, cadets will support Michigan City Area Schools' "One City One Sound." They will support The Salvation Army holiday food and gift donations drive, and provide the Color Guards for all home basketball games.

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## AED Celebration

Barker Mansion, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church and Queen of All Saint Catholic Church were among the Round 2 Michigan City recipients of the 2023 When Seconds Count: AED Initiative.

Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte held its second AED celebration of 2023 earlier this month. Each year, HFL provides grants for automated external defibrillators through When Seconds Count, which helps ensure LaPorte County has access to life-saving devices.

At the event, HFL awarded 27 AEDs, 21 cabinets and signage to 15 grantees. The amount totaled \$57,491.10. Combined with the AED grants awarded in June, HFL awarded 78 AEDs, cabinets and signage to 38 organizations this year.

Round 2 recipients also included: Cass Clinton Volunteer Fire Department; Dunebrook; Holy Family Parish; LaPorte Assembly of God; LaPorte County Family YMCA; LaPorte County Soil and Water Conservation District; LaPorte Futbol Club; New Prairie United School Corp.; Pleasant Township Fire Department; St. John's Lutheran Church and School; and Tracy Church.

HFL accepts grant requests for When Seconds Count once a year starting Feb. 14. Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, school or government entity. Requests are only accepted through HFL's grant portal, which is accessible at [www.hflaporte.org/grant-opportunities](http://www.hflaporte.org/grant-opportunities).



# American Red Cross

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

- Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte, 140 E. Shore Parkway, LaPorte, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22.

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](http://www.redcrossblood.org) for more details.

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### Seniors Named Commended Students



La Lumiere seniors Emmy Jaracz and Rylan Schwark.

La Lumiere seniors Emmy Jaracz and Rylan Schwark have been named Commended Students in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program.

Each received a Letter of Commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which conducts the program.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized. Although they will not continue in the 2024 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2024 competition by taking the 2022 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

### Harbor Country Hikers Program

“Michigan Through the Eons,” which explores movements across the globe as the continents shifted through geologic time, is at 6:30 p.m. EST Tuesday, Nov. 21, at New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

Katy Swanson, a Love Creek County Park naturalist, will deliver the free program, also discussing changing environments with a collection of fossils.

The program is sponsored by Harbor Country Hikers and the Friends of the New Buffalo Library.


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	SCORE
1. Diana Holt	159
2. Shelly Dunleavy	147
2. Genny Kohler	147
3. Nancy Kubath	144
4. Ellyn Lunch	142

### SPLITS

Sarah Blank	2-7
Tina Sonderby	3-10
Kim Stokes	9-10

### Historical Society Meeting

Barry Veden will discuss two of his books, My Heroes: The Men of the Northern Indiana Chapter XXX Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and We Were There, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21, at LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave.

Members and the public are invited to the free program. Call (219) 324-6767 for more details.

#### My Heroes

the Men of Northern Indiana Chapter XXX  
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge

#### Barry J. Veden



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### Harbor Country Film Group



Sixto Rodriguez's career went nowhere in the U.S., but exploded in apartheid South Africa.

Harbor Country Film Group leader Eve Moran will show "Searching for Sugar Man," a 2012 documentary on Detroit musician-composer Sixto Rodriguez, at 6:30 p.m. EST Monday, Nov. 20, at New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

The program includes an introduction by Moran, a screening of the Oscar-winning documentary by Swedish director Malik Bendjelloul, and discussion afterwards.

Rodriguez was a gifted singer and songwriter who never hit it big in the Motor City. He recorded a few albums in the early 1970s and got good reviews, but his career never took off in the U.S. In apartheid South Africa, however, his lyrics and music made him a rock star.

The free program is sponsored by the Friends of the New Buffalo Library. Free popcorn will be served.

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### In the Area

**Nov. 16** — Virtual Author Talk with Joy Harjo, 3-4 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Nov. 16** — Local Author Barry J. Veden: Honoring Vietnam Vets, 6 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Nov. 17** — Film Showing: “Haunted Mansion,” 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Nov. 18** — Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Nov. 18** — International Classical Music, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Nov. 19** — Conservation Conversations, 1-2 p.m., Barker Mansion, 631 Washington St. Tickets: [www.barkermansion.org](http://www.barkermansion.org)

**Nov. 20** — Civil War Era Cross Stitch with Danielle Adams, 2-4 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Nov. 20** — Family Game Night (ages 8-17), 3-4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Nov. 20** — Teen D&D, 5-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

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[telibrary.org](http://telibrary.org)

**Nov. 21** — Bad Art Night for Adults, 5-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Nov. 21** — Readers Corner with local author Matt Werner, 6-7 p.m., Coolspring Branch meeting room, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Nov. 21** — LaPorte County Historical Society meeting, author Barry Veden, 7 p.m., LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Free. Info: (219) 324-6767.

**Nov. 22** — Dungeons & Dragons (ages 13-17), 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Through Nov. 22** — “Pets of LaPorte County” exhibit, LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., Suite 1. Info: (219) 324-6767.

**Through Nov. 26** — “Dancing on the Shoulders of Giants: Fresco Painting by Diane Grams,” Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St.

**Through Dec. 31** — Work by Michigan City Art League, The Legacy Center Gallery at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Reception: after 10:30 a.m. Nov. 5 Mass. Legacy 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: [kd3627@hotmail.com](mailto:kd3627@hotmail.com)

**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 lessons, 2-3 p.m. Improver 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 November** — Genealogy Help with Pat Harris, 1-4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

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

**Tuesdays though mid-November** — Dave Littell improv classes, 5-6:30 p.m., Long Beach Community Center gym, 2501 Oriole Trail. Recommendation donation to center. Info: (203) 219-5700.

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

### In the Region

**Nov. 16-19** — “The Curious Savage,” 4th Street Theater, 125 N. Fourth St., Chesterton. Times: 8

p.m. Thur.-Sat./3 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$20. Reservations: <https://4thstreetncca.com>

**Nov. 17** — Annual meeting, “The Fall Finale,” 6-8 p.m. EST, Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Reservations: [www.krasl.org/events/kac-annual-meeting](http://www.krasl.org/events/kac-annual-meeting)

**Nov. 17** — The Save the Tunes Council, 7:30-9 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: [www.nps.gov/ind](http://www.nps.gov/ind), (219) 395-1882.

**Nov. 17** — Mike Struwin + Mark Ficks: A Midwest Made Show, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$20 + \$4 convenience fee, \$45 + \$4 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: [www.acornlive.org](http://www.acornlive.org)

**Nov. 18** — Chellberg Farm Care, 9 a.m.-noon, Bailly Homestead/Chellberg Farm, 618 N. Mineral Springs Road, Porter. Info: [www.nps.gov/ind](http://www.nps.gov/ind), (219) 395-1882.

**Nov. 18** — “Upcycled Holiday Family Workshop,” 1-4 p.m., Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Cost: \$10. Reservations: [tinyurl.com/mvjvr84v](http://tinyurl.com/mvjvr84v). Info: (219) 462-9009.

**Nov. 18** — Great Marsh Trail Hike, 1:30-3 p.m., lots north of U.S. 12 on Broadway, Beverly Shores. Info: [www.nps.gov/ind](http://www.nps.gov/ind), (219) 395-1882.

**Nov. 18** — “Stromatolites and Bacterial Mats: From the First Fossils on Earth to the Water Around You,” 1:30-3 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: [www.nps.gov/ind](http://www.nps.gov/ind), (219) 395-1882.

**Nov. 18** — Stargazing, 7-9 p.m., Kemil Beach parking area, 27 N. East State Park Road, Chesterton. Info: [www.nps.gov/ind](http://www.nps.gov/ind), (219) 395-1882.

**Nov. 18** — Echoes of Pompeii, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$20 + \$4 convenience fee, \$45 + \$4 convenience fee (reserved). Info: [www.acornlive.org](http://www.acornlive.org)

**Nov. 19** — Cowles Bog Hike, 12:30-3 p.m., bog main lot, 1450 N. Mineral Springs Road, Dune Acres. Info: [www.nps.gov/ind](http://www.nps.gov/ind), (219) 395-1882.

**Nov. 20** — Harbor Country Film Group with Eve Moran, “Searching for Sugar Man,” 6:30 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

**Nov. 21** — “Michigan Through the Eons,” 6:30 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

**Nov. 22 & 24** — Club Acorn Presents Dancing Queen: An ABBA Salute, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Times: 7 p.m. EST Nov. 22/8 p.m. EST Nov. 24. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee, \$55 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: [www.acornlive.org](http://www.acornlive.org)

**Through Nov. 28** — Duneland Photography Club Group exhibit, “Visions of Reality,” Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: (219) 926-4711, [www.chestertonart.org](http://www.chestertonart.org)

**Through Nov. 30** — Artist David Gray, The Village Gallery at Pines Village Retirement

Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso.

**Through May 12, 2024** — “Indiana Lore,” South Bend’s The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Sun. Admission: \$11/adults, \$9.50/seniors, \$7/youth 6-17, free/members. Info: [www.historymuseumSB.org](http://www.historymuseumSB.org), (574) 235-9664.

**Through Jan. 14, 2024** — Berrien Artist Guild annual member show, Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: [www.boxfactoryforthearts.org](http://www.boxfactoryforthearts.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](mailto:friendsofnewtroy@yahoo.com)

**Sundays in November** — Chellberg Farm Open House, 1-3 p.m., parking lot off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, [www.nps.gov/indu](http://www.nps.gov/indu)

**Daily in November** — Drop-In Volunteer Program (Trash Trekkers), 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: [tinyurl.com/2p83798v](http://tinyurl.com/2p83798v)

**Vickers Theatre** — *Now Showing*: “Lost in Translation.” Rated R. Time: 7 p.m. Nov. 16. *Also*: “Priscilla.” Rated R. Times: 7 p.m. Nov. 17, 4 & 7 p.m. Nov. 18-19. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: [www.vickerstheatre.com](http://www.vickerstheatre.com), (269) 756-3522.



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## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**On November 16, 1901**, in a race on Brooklyn's Ocean Parkway, a car driven by A.C. Bostwick became the first automobile to exceed the speed of a mile a minute.

**On November 16, 1908**, conductor Arturo Toscanini made his U.S. debut at New York's Metropolitan Opera House.

**On November 16, 1959**, "The Sound of Music" opened on Broadway.

**On November 16, 1973**, President Richard Nixon signed the Alaska Pipeline Bill, saying that by 1980, it would free the United States of its dependence on foreign oil.

**On November 16, 1973**, Skylab 3, carrying a crew of three, was launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla., on an 84-day mission.

**On November 17, 1800**, Congress convened for its first session in Washington, meeting in the partially completed Capitol building.

**On November 17, 1869**, with great pomp and circumstances, the Suez Canal, linking the Mediterranean and Red seas, formerly opened. Aboard the first ship to traverse the channel was the Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary, the Empress Eugenie of France and the Khedive of Egypt.

**On November 17, 1926**, the Chicago Blackhawks played their first hockey game, beating Toronto 4-0.

**On November 17, 1968**, NBC outraged football fans by cutting away from the end of a New York Jets-Oakland Raiders game to begin a TV special "Heidi," on schedule. The Raiders beat the Jets, 43-32.

**On November 17, 1970**, unmanned Soviet robot Lunokhod I landed on the moon.

**On November 18, 1805**, in Wiscasset, Maine, 30 women gathered at the home of Mrs. Silas Lee to organize the Female Charitable Society, supposed to have been the first women's club in America.

**On November 18, 1865**, in New York, author Samuel Clemens, using the pen name "Mark Twain," published his famous story, The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, in New York's *Saturday Press*.

**On November 18, 1883**, to eliminate a plethora of local time regions across the continent, the United States and Canada adopted a system of Standard Time Zones.

**On November 18, 1928**, Walt Disney's Steamboat Willie, the first animated-cartoon talking picture, appeared on the screen of New York City's

Colony Theatre. This was the show that marked the debut of Mickey Mouse.

**On November 19, 1874**, William Marcy Tweed, the political “boss” of New York’s Tammany Hall, was sentenced to 12 years in prison for defrauding the city of \$6 million.

**On November 19, 1893**, *The New York World* became the first newspaper to issue a color supplement, four pages printed in five colors.

**On November 19, 1954**, the New Jersey Toll Road Authority installed the first automatic toll collector.

**On November 19, 1959**, Ford Motor Co. announced a halt to the production of the “Edsel,” a medium-priced car that proved a marketing disaster.

**On November 19, 1969**, Apollo 12 astronauts Charles Conrad and Alan Bean made man’s second landing on the moon.

**On November 20, 1620**, Peregrine White became the first child born to English parents in the New World. He was born aboard the Mayflower, the day after it arrived off Cape Cod.

**On November 20, 1873**, the rival cities of Buda and Pest were united to form Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

**On November 20, 1942**, the Alaska Highway, linking Fairbanks with British Columbia’s Dawson Creek, officially opened.

**On November 20, 1947**, England’s Princess Elizabeth and Lt. Philip Mountbatten were married in London’s Westminster Abbey.

**On November 21, 1766**, the first permanent theater building in the United States, Philadelphia’s Southwark, opened with a production of “The Gamester.”

**On November 21, 1871**, New York’s Moses Gale was granted the first patent for a cigar lighter.

**On November 21, 1877**, Thomas Edison announced the invention of the phonograph, which he described as a “talking machine.”

**On November 21, 1980**, on the CBS soap opera, “Dallas,” 83 million TV viewers found out it was Kristin Shephard who had shot J.R. Ewing.

**On November 22, 1718**, English pirate Edward Teach, usually referred to as “Blackbeard,” was killed during a battle off the coast of Virginia.

**On November 22, 1928**, in Paris, Maurice Ravel’s “Bolero” was first performed.

**On November 22, 1930**, Harvard defeated Yale 13-0 as mystified listeners of the British Broadcasting Corporation heard, for the first time, radio coverage of an American college football game.

**On November 22, 1935**, the “China Clipper,” a huge flying boat, left San Francisco on the first official trans-Pacific air-mail service.

**On November 22, 1963**, President John Kennedy was assassinated as he rode in a Dallas motorcade. Texas Governor John Connolly, riding in the same car as the president, was seriously wounded.

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**Concert Group Receives Grant**

LaPorte Community Concert Association has received a Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte grant to provide residents in local assisted living facilities a means to experience live entertainment.

The association will provide season passes for groups of residents, and assist with transportation for the three remaining events in 2024. That includes a magic show with live music, inspirational songs and stories, and a string quartet playing a variety of musical styles. All events are at LaPorte High School's Performing Arts Center.

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**The Secret** by Lee Child and Andrew Child (hardcover, \$28.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 292 pages.)

Prequels have become the thing in books and movies. Series like “Star Wars” (is there any character they *haven’t* taken back to their childhood?), The Hunger Games (President Snow at 18) and others revisit a favorite character or characters at the start of their adventures. Usually, they are stand-alone books or movies, like this 28th book about the enigmatic Jack Reacher, which takes the reader back to 1992 when he was still an Army MP.

The story opens, however, with two women confronting Keith Bridgeman, a heart-attack patient recovering in the hospital. They ask about a list of seven names attached to something that happened in 1969 in India. But they say there is one more name they want that is missing from the list. Bridgeman, whose name is one of those on the list, denies there is an eighth name, only seven, so the sisters throw him out the 12th-story window. I guess they don’t like his answer. Stay tuned, there will be more imaginative deaths, or will they be called suicides?

Before he “fell,” the women tell him they are the daughters of Morgan Sanson, which makes it clear to Bridgeman why they are there. Two other names on the list have died, one by cancer thankfully, the other by the Sanson daughters. He was electrocuted in the bathtub — better a natural death than one chosen for you, right?

A team, ordered by an unknown government cabinet member, is ordered to investigate Bridgeman’s “fall.” Three men and a woman: Capt. Jack Reacher of the Army, Kent Nielsen of the CIA, Amber Smith of the FBI, Gary Walsh of the Treasury Department; and the leader, Christopher Baglin.

Reacher and the others are told of Project 192, a group of government scientists back in 1969 who “worked on neutralizing a particular Soviet nerve agent.” They worked inside the Mason Chemical Industries in India. But is that all? Or is Reacher and the others only given the sanitized version of what happened? And why did all the personnel working there have civilian credentials? Maybe because

## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



the research “...had to be done in absolute secrecy.” Something happened — accident or not? And 1,007 people died there. The government’s story had only seven people dying. That’s more than a mistake. That’s a cover-up.

Now that those scientists are dying off, or being killed off — your choice — it’s come down to finding out who’s meting out their own brand of justice. And maybe someone higher up doesn’t want the name of the eighth team member revealed; probably because that name was the head of the team and now has too much to lose.

Reacher realizes he and his team are throwaway personnel — he recently was demoted from major. The others had problems within their own departments, and if they succeed or not, or get killed along the way, no one will miss them.

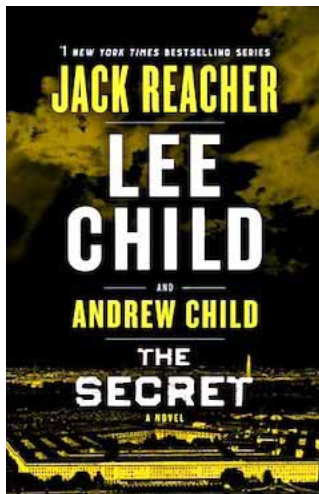
The body count adds up as Reacher and company start digging for clues. It’s fascinating reading, going back and forth between the women and Reacher’s team as each tries to outfox the other. Six of the Project 192 team soon are dead. That leaves one person the women might get an answer out of — unless Reacher gets to him first. It doesn’t take Reacher long to realize someone wants this problem to go away, swept under the rug of a plausible fairy tale.

The story is fast-paced, and at 292 pages not a lengthy read. The character of Reacher is to make any woman swoon — 6’5” tall, solid physique — and besides that, he’s a thinking man, not prone to rash decisions, although when he acts, you’ll be reading a lot faster. All in all, his staying power comes from the way Child has been true to his character. Reacher has a firm sense of right and wrong that never wavers. Action, when needed, is swift and harsh.

Each book holds a new and different story that takes Reacher to all parts of the country. If you want a read that will bring together interesting people and places, look no further.

*The final word:* In 2020, when Lee Child announced he was working with his brother, Andrew Grant (writing as Andrew Child), to turn over the Jack Reacher series to him, I admit, I was terrified this would be the end of one of my favorite characters. This is the fourth book written by the pair, all true to Lee Child’s original concept, so I can conclude that Jack Reacher is still in good hands. And if you’re worried this is a four-letter word fest, that’s just not Jack Reacher.

Till next time, happy reading!



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