



Volume 39, Number 47 Thursday, November 30, 2023

# Creating a found hims Moon Val and Lor Porture of Filmmakers

Growing up in Long Beach, David McGowan found himself at home, at his most inquisitive, in Moon Valley. The 200 or so acres between U.S. 12 and Long Beach were his playground. An opportunity to explore.

> "I spent all my time in the summer back there," says McGowan, whose family lived at Stop 20. "That was my woods. There was a big swamp there, and it's where I saw spotted turtles. There were so many of them."

> > Today, it should be noted, the International Union for Conserva-

tion of Nature categorizes spotted turtles as an endangered species.

"I was only a kid at the time," McGowan says, "but if I had known then what I know now, I would have alerted someone about them."

McGowan may not have been a catalyst for change at such a young age...but he is now. The Academy Award-nominated filmmaker applies his passion for conservation and the environment to his Chicago company, Ravenswood Media, 4728 N. Beacon St. He and his team craft films that advance the missions of those

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Students conduct an interview with an expert Rwandan birder, Lemmy Mbonigaba, as part of The Rwandan Wildlife Filmmaking Course. David McGowan is visible holding the microphone boom.



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# Creating a Community of Filmmakers Continued from Page 1

contracted by them, whether it be government or non-government agencies, academics or environmental groups.

McGowan's latest endeavor shows him thinking outside the box.

The Rwandan Wildlife Filmmaking Course joins forces with Greg Bakunzi of Red Rocks Initiative to target what he calls "the next generation of Rwandan conservationists." The course provides filmmaking skills to guides, trackers and rangers, those he describes as being closest to wildlife, and with the best knowledge of the challenges ahead.

Bolstered by online crowdfunding, the program debuted in 2022. His second three-week experience iust concluded on Oct. 1.

Has film always been McGowan's passion? Not exactly.

He came from a "steel" family that moved to Long Beach from Pittsburgh in 1961. His father was a



This photo of David with his sister, Kate, was taken in Long Beach at Christmas around 1966.

next-generation steel worker, the family moving to 2016 Melrose Drive.

"Everyone knew each other," he said of Long Beach. "It was a great place to grow up. It was more than just neighbors. These people knew each

> other. There was a nice community feel here."

There was pressure from his family, McGowan admits, to continue the family legacy by working at the mills. He tried it, respected those who toiled at it, but it wasn't for him.

"It's a great place, a great job, a cool place to be," he said. "I just couldn't see myself spending the rest of my life there. I had to flee to Chicago, because there was some pressure on me to make a decision at 19."

That is precisely what he did.

A friend was tak-



David McGowan (third from the left) is photographed with friends at a Long Beach birthday party in 1971.

ing film classes at Columbia College Chicago. Mc-Gowan moved in with him, and any interest in the craft took off from there.

"I saw it was something I could do," he said. "I could learn this. I could have a job where I wasn't going into an office every day."

He clarifies, though, that it wasn't so much filmmaking that drove him, but his love of nature. He describes himself as having the "biophilia gene." It is a hypothesis that humans have an innate drive to connect with nature, that they possess a love of life.

"It's been with me always," he admits. "When I was a kid, I saw the slow erosion of the woods. They were taking huge chunks of trees. Places that were wild were now fallen trees stacked on top of each other. I thought then, we better start thinking about the future of humans and nature, and what our role is on this Earth. I took that with me into my filmmaking career."

In 1992, McGowan received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary, Short Subject, for his film "The Mark of the Maker." The focus was Kathryn and Howard Clark who, in 1971, led the renaissance in hand papermaking in the United States.



Kathryn and Howard Clark were the focus of David McGowan's Oscarnominated documentary short, "The Mark of the Maker."

McGowan shares a humorous anecdote about attending the Academy Awards. He was seated in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. After the show started, he excused himself to find the nearest bathroom. When he returned, someone was in his seat. Not wanting to make a scene, he found an usher to voice his concern.

"The guy laughs," McGowan recalls. "He says, 'Come here.' He takes me around the corner, and there is a line of people wearing tuxedos."

That was McGowan's crash course on awardsshow seat fillers: people hired to bolster the image that the auditorium is filled with people, not empty seats.

McGowan says his career in environmental storytelling took off in earnest at the turn of the 21st century. Specifically, with Ravenswood Media. The movies it produces are not necessarily seen by mass



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#### Creating a Community of Filmmakers Continued from Page 3

audiences. It is, he says, a narrow demographic, but these projects help advance whatever cause is on the table.

"We work with these people on the message, make the film and edit it, and get it out to the proper websites so the right people are seeing it," he says. "And that's been my career for the last 25 years."

Past Ravenswood Media films range from Whitenose syndrome affecting bat populations to wildlife

protection and the frog population. The Great Lakes is of particular interest, with Ravenswood Media videos reflecting a collaboration with Great Lakes Protection Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Council of Great Lakes Governors, American Water Works Association, Wayne State University and Cleveland Botanical Gardens.

The earliest seeds for The Rwandan Wildlife Filmmaking Course were planted around 2008 when Mc-Gowan became aware of Envirovet. where veterinarians treat animals in the wild, in their natural habitats.

"For the first time, they really brought veterinary medicine to wildlife," he said. "No one had really

thought about that. There's certainly no wallet attached (to these animals), but it was becoming clear we needed to do that."

One experience involved mountain gorillas in Uganda. A veterinarian shared with McGowan a remarkable story

"One day, he was watching gorillas, and a silverback keeled over and died before him. That was unremarkable. They die like everyone else," McGowan said. "What was remarkable was, in 15-20 minutes, other female gorillas and juveniles surrounded the silverback. It was unmistakable mourning. Nobody had ever observed that behavior. If I had a camera and observed this, this would have been national news. For science, it would have been a new insight into gorilla behavior."



David McGowan hopes to return to Rwanda each year to continue the progress made by The Rwandan Wildlife Filmmaking Course.

McGowan thought at the time, "We have to get back here and give a course on filmmaking skills. The idea was, I would come back and give them the

> basic skills, to provide another tool to wildlife managers."

> McGowan started in earnest trying to make his wildlife filmmaking course a reality in 2018. He made contacts within the World Bank, whose goal is to reduce poverty, improve economies and standards of living.

> All was going well...then came the COVID-19 pandemic.

> "I must have had six meetings at the World Bank about getting funding for this," he said. "Then COVID hit, and it was devastating. All my contacts at the World Bank...no one went to the office anymore. They were all working by remote. Some contacts retired. Some were reassigned elsewhere in the world. That just wasn't a viable path anymore."

What was a viable option? Greg Bakunzi and Red Rocks Initia-



Roger Irakoze (center) demonstrates camera functions to the class in Kinyarwanda.

tive, which targets the Virunga Mountains in East Africa to promote sustainable economic and social development. The prime focus is tourism programs and community-based environmental conservation.

That is how the first Rwandan Wildlife Filmmaking Course kicked off in 2022. McGowan gathered his gear, bought his own plane ticket and headed to Rwanda. Over a three-week period, he worked with a dozen students, the group making two films, including "One Health Rwanda," which was narrated by a student who was a wildlife veterinarian.

"We actually did it," McGowan said, the pride, the satisfaction, evident in his voice. "It exceeded our wildest expectations. We showed it could work. The students were highly motivated. They caught on fast."

This past spring-summer, McGowan raised \$6,000 through the online crowdfunding platform indiegogo. That not only covered his plane ticket, but he was able to return with cameras, tripods, audio recording equipment, microphones and a computer with an editing app.

McGowan wrapped up the three-week session Oct. 1.



David McGowan is photographed with Greg Bakunzi of Red Rocks Initiative

Twenty five students have now been through the course. The fruits of their labor not only include "One Health Rwanda," but also a documentary on Planet Birdsong, a British non-government agency that, according to its website, "provides bird sound recording devices and teaches Rwandan citizen scientists how to contribute to the global database of bird calls."

His students embodied a range of English skills. He feared that might be a liability, but it turned out to be an asset.

"I would explain some lessons and components for 5-10 minutes," McGowan said, "then I'd stop and say (to those who spoke English), 'Can you tell these guys what I said in Rwandan?' So these guys are reinforcing the plan in their own heads by explaining it to the other guys.

"While the English speakers are talking to the non-English speakers, there is a social bond being built between them," he continued. "Something akin to siblings, and that bond would generate this feeling of community among them. They weren't strangers among each other, and that really helped when we went out to make films."

McGowan's goal is to return to Rwanda year after year, supported by contributions through indiegogo. And each time, he aims to bring more equipment. In the interim, he keeps in contact with his students.

"We stay in touch through Zoom to discuss editing and things like that," he said. "It's starting to create a community of wildlife filmmakers in Rwanda.

"I think a big motivator of why these guys stick with it," he continued, "is having their voices heard. They are talking about things they want to talk about, not someone from the outside interviewing them about what the West wants to hear. They have the tools to do this on their own terms."

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com

#### If You'd Like to Help

Anyone interested in donating cameras, lenses, tripods and other equipment to Rwandan Wildlife Filmmaking Course can email David McGowan at mcgowan@ravenswoodmedia.com

Anyone who would like to contribute to the ongoing indiegogo campaign can visit tinyurl. com/3f9txj9u



#### "Napoleon" Soars on the Battlefield, Not So Much Off of It

by Andrew Tallackson

Midway through "Napoleon," we arrive at the Battle of Austerlitz, a decisive moment in the Napoleonic Wars, and it is as close to art as director Ridley Scott can get.

A sea of tents on a frozen landscape, swirls of snow hammering the soldiers. Cinematographer Dariusz Wolski ("Dark City") mutes the colors so the setting is darkly inhospitable. When it's revealed that forces against Napoleon (Oscar-winner Joaquin Phoenix) are standing on an ice-covered lake, cannons fire, shattering the fragile surface.

The spectacle proves, yet again, that Scott ("Gladiator") can stage a gonzo battle sequence like it's nobody's business.

A shame the rest of the movie can't measure up.

Early on, Scott appears in his element. Reteaming with "All the Money in the World" writer David Scarpa, the two treat their subject as a mash-up of historical fiction, elaborate warfare and bawdy love story.

Scott likes to get things started with a bang, and he stages the Siege of Toulon with enough surging troops, cannon fire and exploding objects — poor, poor Napoleon's horse — for 10 movies.

Then, it settles into the courtship and marriage between Napoleon and Josephine (Vanessa Kirby).





## "Napoleon"

Running time: 158 minutes. In theaters. Rated R for strong violence, some grisly images, sexual content and brief language

We prep for fireworks. So many movies offer the same portrait of Napoleon: the lit-fuse little tyrant. But here, Phoenix plays him as a man so bolstered by ego, he appears bored by others, in some cases dozing off in their presence. And, we're *really* pumped by Kirby as Josephine. The greatest sin of Netflix's "The Crown" is that it ditched her and Claire Foy after Season 2. Kirby's Princess Margaret stole the show: a woman so carefree-naughty, others never knew how to behave around her.

Unfortunately, after Josephine taunts Napoleon sexually about their prospects together, the actress is reduced to a glum, childbearing failure. Worse, after Napoleon divorces Josephine, the movie loses all narrative pull and becomes repetitive. You start to feel the weight of the movie's nearly 2 hour, 40 minute run time.

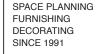
The script relies on that tired trope of historical epics where characters longing for each other write back and forth, their letters read through voice-over narration. But here, the words of Napoleon and Josephine are meaningless. We don't feel anything for these two. They're sour slugs.

Some of the battle tactics in the climactic Battle of Waterloo are breathtaking in size and scope, but pretty quickly, they take on a redundant, chaotic tone where we've seen this already. Worse, Martin Phipps' disaster of a score is so distracting, it undermines the drama of the action.

At 85, Scott shows no signs of slowing down. Over the past 20 years, when blessed with the right script ("American Gangster," "The Martian," "The Last Duel"), everything clicks. When the story lets him down ("Exodus: Gods and Kings," "Prometheus," "Robin Hood"), you can feel him overcompensating, assuming we'll forgive the flaws because his movies look great.

With "Napoleon," he's overcompensating.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallakson@gmail. com



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#### The History Museum

The following events are planned at The History Museum, South Bend:

Christmas at Copshaholm from 4-7 p.m. EST Sundays, Dec. 3 and 10.

More than 15 Christmas trees are displayed throughout the 38-room house, along with festooned fireplace mantels, garlands on the stairways and tabletops with holiday décor.

Tours are self-guided. Docents on each floor can answer questions about the home. Also planned is an "Elf-on-the-Copsha-Shelf" scavenger hunt.

Tickets are \$15, or \$10 for members, \$5 for youth 6-17 and free for 5 and younger. They can be purchased online. There are steps leading to the mansion and stairways inside the house.



One of the dining rooms decorated for the holiday.

"Insights in History," which focuses on yuletide traditions, at 1:30 p.m. EST Wednesday,

The speaker is Skylar Whited. A first-floor tour of the Oliver Mansion decorated for the holiday season will be offered. Admission is \$3, or \$1 for members. Reservations are required by Dec. 4.

• Gallery Talks for Teachers from 4:30-5:30 p.m. EST Thursday, Dec. 7.

The free program sheds light on educational offerings for students. Each visit provides a certificate of completion for 2 PGP points, and teachers receive corresponding curriculum materials.

Complimentary wine will be offered. Register by contacting Director of Education Stephanie Mc-Cune-Bell at smccunebell@historymuseumSB.org or (574) 235-9664, Ext. 241.

The program is co-presented with Studebaker National Museum.

The museum is located at 808 W. Washington St. Visit www.historymuseumSB.org or call (574) 235-9664 to register for programs or for more details.

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#### 2023 Christmas Candlelight Tour

Preserve Historic LaPorte, the nonprofit historic preservation group formerly known as People Engaged in Preservation, will host the 2023 Christmas Candlelight Tour of Historic Homes on Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 2-3.

Times are 3-7 p.m. Dec. 2 and 1-5 p.m. Dec. 3. The tour includes six private homes:

- Doug and Claudia Winter, 1402 Michigan Ave.
- Justin and Cassie Holmquest, 1529 Michigan Ave.
- Chris and Courtney Parthun, 1533 Michigan Ave.
- Tim and Hannah Schroll, 1502 Indiana Ave.
- Patricia Howard, 1102 Second St.
- Drew and Jamie Buchanan, 2108 Woodlawn Drive.

Also included is the Collegiate Gothic-styled La-Porte First United Methodist Church, 1225 Michigan Ave., and LaPorte County Courthouse, built in 1892-1893 and designed by Brentwood Tolan in Richardsonian Romanesque styling.

All eight sites will be open for self-guided touring and decorated for the season. Also included is live musical entertainment at all locations, and refreshments at the church.

Advance tickets, which cost \$25, are available in LaPorte at Coachman Antique Mall, CO-OP Shoppes, LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, Meridian Title, Town & Country Florist and Thode Floral. In Michigan City, advance tickets are available at The Antique Market and Hoity-Toity.

Advance tickets also are available by mail. Payment must be received by Dec. 1, and such tickets will be provided only on a "will call" basis at the church. Send a \$25 check per person payable to: Preserve Historic LaPorte, P.O. Box 853, LaPorte, IN 46352. Provide an e-mail address or phone number so volunteers can confirm receipt of payment.

At-the-door tickets, which cost \$30, will be available at LaPorte First United Methodist Church, 1225 Michigan Ave., during tour hours only.

Contact Pam Ruminski at (219) 363-2094, Tim Stabosz at (219) 363-7485 or email p\_ruminski@yahoo.com for more details.





### Doug and Claudia Winter 1402 Michigan Avenue Built circa 1864



#### Justin and Cassie Holmquest 1529 Michigan Avenue Built in 1920

Renderings of two of the homes included in the 2023 Christmas Candlelight Tour of Historic Homes, presented by Preserve Historic LaPorte.





#### **Partnership Bolsters Presence of AEDs in County**

Every law-enforcement vehicle in LaPorte County now has a life-saving automatic external defibrillator thanks to a partnership between three collaborating organizations.

Representatives from Bolt for the Heart. Franciscan Health Michigan City and the Play for Jake Foundation recently presented 26 KE AEDs to seven lawenforcement agencies to place in squad cars. The AEDs were purchased with

funds generated by the Bolt for the Heart walk/run Oct. 14 in LaPorte, sponsored by Franciscan Health Michigan City.

The presentations of AEDs to police departments from Long Beach, Trail Creek, Purdue University Northwest, Kingsford Heights, Westville, Kings-



LaPorte Police Chief Paul Brettin (from left), LaPorte Mayor Tom Dermody, Bolt for the Heart Founder Pierre Twer, Play for Jake Foundation Founder Julie West and Dean Mazzoni, Franciscan Health Michigan City president and CEO, distribute 26 AEDs to local law-enforcement officials.

bury, Pottawattomie Park and the City of LaPorte complete the Bolt for the Heart walk/run goal of placing a unit in every LaPorte County squad car.

Since the program began, 165 AEDs have been placed in LaPorte County squad cars at a cost of roughly \$330,000, Bolt for the Heart Founder Pierre Twer said in a press release.

The recent presentation makes La-Porte County one of

three Indiana counties with an AED in every lawenforcement vehicle.

Twer encouraged anyone 40 and older with qualifying risk factors to take advantage of Franciscan Health's \$49 heart scans. More information is available online or by calling (833) 238-0688.

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#### **Reins of Life Hosts Rider Fun Show**

Thirty five riders took turns riding nine horses, showing off skills they've achieved during weekly lessons, during a recent Reins of Life rider fun show in Michigan City.

Participants ranged in age from 3 to adult. Horses ranged in size from a Shetland pony to Belgian and Percheron draft horses. Riders came from the Michigan City and South Bend barns.

The show, sponsored by GAF Roofing, Michigan City, introduced students to the concept of horse shows. Up to five rid-

ers, each with one to three volunteers, rode in the large arena at once. The judge was Nicole Adams, a local horse trainer, instructor and equestrian. Each



rider experienced sportsmanship in a low-pressure competition. Everyone left with a trophy.

non-profit The Reins of Life began in 1978 and opened its Michigan City facility, 9375 W. County Road 300 North. in 2007. Since then, it has served adults and children with disabilities through various programs, including therapeutic horseback riding, therapeutic carriage driving, school programs and veterans programs. The Michi-

gan City facility serves more than 100 people per week, with a roster of 200 active volunteers.

Visit www.reinsoflife.org for more details.





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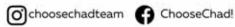
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#### **And Gladly Teach**

I know my alma mater, Illinois State University, has since "updated" the Chaucer quote, but in 1972 it was bold to print on my diploma: "...and gladly would he learn and gladly teach."

That was pretty much the expectation from what then was considered a teachers' school. In fact, my high school counselor was more than a little puzzled when I opted for Illinois State over schools such as Northwestern University that were known for journalism programs. I aspired to be an ink-stained wretch so, of course, I naturally would train for the reporting life at a school like Northwestern.

Well, a school like Northwestern put my application on the "hold" pile, gently suggesting I apply elsewhere. Plus, my parents, who thankfully were willing to help fund my college education, more than gently suggested I find a state school, in Illinois.

Several older friends from Morgan Park High School in Chicago went to Illinois State to become teachers.

Hmmm.

They liked it and invited me for a visit. So I went for a weekend visit and grooved on the campus, down there in Normal. I checked to see if ISU offered any kind of journalism degree. Turns out, it had just created something called "English-Journalism," and that seemed good enough for me.

So, in September 1968, I packed off to ISU.

I had no intention whatsoever of becoming a teacher, but most of my classmates and friends in the dorm did. Why go to a teachers' school if you weren't going to become a teacher?

Right?

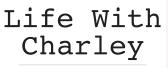
Lo and behold, I did end up teaching as a student at Illinois State. That was during the summer of the moon landing and Woodstock — 1969 to be precise. I found myself in the "Summer of Love" standing in front of a blackboard at the YMCA in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, teaching English to Chinese students.

Did I like it?

Yes, especially the lively discussions and dinners with my students, most of whom planned to do graduate studies in the United States. Yes, they'd taken years and years of English classes, but their teachers had been fellow Chinese; they needed to have a native speaker of English, well, of American English, teach them to talk like a regular guy from da Sout' Side of Chicago.

Like I said, we had a real hoot in that un-air-conditioned classroom up there on the second floor of the Y.

Kaohsiung, by the way, is a port city, so I was often mistaken for an AWOL American sailor. But I did gain admission, on a weekly basis, to the Naval Recreation Center, where I would sit by the pool and treat myself to a big, old cheeseburger with fries and a strawberry milkshake. No beer there for



Charles McKelvy





I gladly taught Alie Bronson clarinet basics. She now is a far better player than I will ever be. Photo by Natalie McKelvy.

me, because that was the only place this 19-year-old got "carded" in Taiwan.

Now, you would think I would want to change my major at ISU and "gladly teach" upon graduation.

Nah. I was all in on becoming an ink-stained wretch, bound and determined to get my money's worth out of each and every journalism class at ISU. But my academic advisor was not so sure I was on the right course. He strongly advised I transfer to a real journalism school like Missouri or Michigan State, or I don't remember. All I know is, he wanted me to go to a state school in another state, where I would not cash in on in-state tuition.

"Not gonna happen," I said. "I'm here to stay." And I was, and I got plenty of on-the-job-training at Illinois State writing for the school paper and year-book, even doing a stint behind the mic at the cam-

pus radio station.

(Anybody ever hear of "dead air"? Well, I mastered it one night when I flipped the wrong switch and blasted out a good 10 minutes of dead air before the station manager called and reamed me a new you-know-what.)

I did work as an ink-stained wretch after graduating from Illinois State University, even in my service as a Journalist Second Class in the U.S. Navy. I wrote and reported for *The City News Bureau of Chicago*, where I honed my skills, on the job, of course. But I only survived and thrived because senior people there took me aside and taught me the tricks of the trade. And, before I left *City News* for the slightly greener pastures of *The Suburban Trib*, I passed on my experience, strength and hope to

newcomers at City News. Illinois State was right when they emblazoned my 1972 diploma with: "...and gladly would he learn and gladly teach."

Gladly learn, then gladly teach.

And so my life has been — sometimes in startling ways — especially with regards to swimming and playing the clarinet.

First swimming.

My father, then others at the YMCA and American Red Cross, taught me to swim. By high school, while completing the requirements for Senior Lifeguard, I was charged with teaching children to swim. They were kids who had never seen anything deeper than a bathtub. Suddenly, they were expected to jump into a 25-yard competition pool and swim. They were terrified. Absolutely terrified. I gently held them, guiding them forward and backward. I learned that method from my father and instructors, and it was then time for me to pass it along.

To teach swimming.

Lo and behold, I am now teaching and coaching young and adult swimmers at the South Shore Health & Racquet Club in St. Joseph, Mich. I did not seek the position as a part-time swim instructor, but I answered the call, from the aquatic director, when it came. And, I am so glad I did, because I get to impart my lifelong love of swimming to budding swimmers from 2 to 70+. When I am unsure how to teach a certain kick or stroke, I ask the experts, my colleagues. I am not too old to learn, and when I learn the right way to do the dolphin kick, I can correctly pass it along.

Secondly, the clarinet.

I took lessons for a number of years with the best clarinet teacher (and player) anywhere, Jason Gresl. Jason got me up and running on a licorice stick that bedeviled me as a child. He even coaxed me into composing my own tune, one I can play from memory called "Bird Song." Jason, perhaps without realizing it, also taught me how to teach clarinet to beginners.

And so it happened one summer afternoon a few years back on the bank of the Kalamazoo River, in Otsego, Mich. We had driven east to spend the day with our dear friend, Mary Lober, and to offer comfort in her grief over the recent loss of her beloved husband, Randy. So, as I had done before Randy died, I brought my clarinet along to play a tune or two for Mary.

Mary wanted us to head over to her nephew's house along the river to visit with her relatives, especially Mary's lively grand-niece, Alie Bronson. Have clarinet, will travel. So, when we gathered around a table out back, I accepted Mary's

invitation to break out my clarinet and play a tune or two. Alie and her friends

were absolutely enchanted, especially when I assembled my "horn" from its five constituent parts. Six if you count the reed, and how could you not count the reed on a reed instrument?

So, without realizing it, I went into teacher mode and explained each part: the bell, the bottom joint, the top joint, the barrel and the mouthpiece with its ligature to hold the reed. I assembled my clarinet from those five parts, then attempted to play it.

Nothing but an unmelodious rush of air. Not musical in the least.

Then I produced a reed from my case and said, "What if I added this little thing?"

Alie and her friends thought that was a grand idea, so I did. Then, I played a tune or two for my young audience.

They were all enchanted, but none more than Alie. I had gladly taught and just won a student, one Alie Bronson of Otsego, Mich.

I have since returned to Otsego to tutor Alie in the fine art of playing the clarinet. Alie and her mother went to Kalamazoo and bought a really fine instrument for her to play in her middle-school band, and off we went with me teaching Alie the lessons Jason Gresl taught me.

It wasn't long before Alie far outpaced me on the clarinet, but I was able to tune her up for a forth-coming middle-school concert. What a pleasure to be in the audience for that concert and watch my erstwhile student perform brilliantly at center stage.

Who knew, right?

Clarinet

101: no

reed, no

music

Well, if I had read my diploma a little more carefully back in 1972, I would have known that all that glad learning would one day lead to some glad teaching.

#### "Rustin" is a Mess, But Colman Domingo is Oscar Worthy

by Andrew Tallackson



Colman Domingo is like watching a human tsunami in "Rustin."

Right when the first season of "Fear the Walking Dead" confirmed suspicions it was an utter waste of time, along came the unexpected.

Colman Domingo.

As the unreliable Victor Strand, he sat in a prison cell, like a king on his throne. Thriving off surrounding chaos. Enjoying the game of manipulation.

It was my first introduction to the actor. My reaction: Who is this guy? Did he just single-handedly save a bore of a series? Greatness had to be in store for him.

"Rustin," the new Netflix film that pays overdue honor to the man who, among many things, spearheaded the 1963 March on Washington, delivers on that promise. Buzz for months has been that Domingo is a shoe-in for a Best Actor nomination.

Believe the hype.

The actor is like watching the civil rights movement jacked up on Red Bull. His energy is a sight to see.

But the movie? All over the map. It is and is not worthy of Domingo and the man he's playing. The tone alternates between TV-style simplicity and, at its most awkward, downright cartoonish.

I was not familiar with Bayard Rustin's story, but it makes sense it was cowritten by Oscar-winner Dustin Lance Black ("Milk"), who mission is to tell



#### "Rustin"

Running time: 106 minutes. Netflix. Rated PG-13 for thematic material, some violence, sexual material, language including racial slurs, brief drug use and smoking.

LGBTQ stories, especially the overlooked ones.

Rustin not only planned the March on Washington that involved the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., but also championed non-violence and inspired the Freedom Riders. Not too shabby a resume, but the sad truth is, he was born in the wrong time. Gay, and unabashedly open about it, he made people within the civil rights movement uncomfortable. So much so, a pressured King initially broke ties with him a few years before the march.

All of that is depicted in the film, and it is a sign of the times that the movie does not shy away from the topic. Had this been made in the 1980s or 1990s, Rustin's sexuality either would have been ignored or downplayed. But here, the openness frees Domingo to achieve a warts-and-all performance. The actor is like watching a human tsunami. Someone who barrels into a room and consumes everyone in his path. Someone who's always moving, thinking

out loud, even if it alienates others.

You'd think the director, theater veteran George C. Wolfe, would be the right man to tell this story. In 2020, he transformed August Wilson's stage play "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" into a vibrant Netflix film that scored Viola Davis a Best Actress Oscar nod, and was a fitting swan song for the late Chadwick Boseman.

But here, Wolfe slips back into this theater roots. He treats half the movie like a photographed stage play. The actors frequently shout their dialogue as if projecting to the back row of a theater. Other

times, they overact the overly written dialogue: big speeches that come across as monologues that win Tony awards.

(Audra McDonald and, surprisingly, a subdued Chris Rock provided the better moments.)

The jazzy score by Branford Marsalis mimics Rustin's carefree spirit, giving the film a kinetic boost. The movie zips by, rarely catching its breath.

But that's also the movie's problem. Wolfe doesn't give certain moments their due. King's support of Rustin on national television should be affecting, but it feels awfully corny. Other scenes play out like that, where the effect is mawkish at best.

And the climactic march? What a disappointment. It deserves an epic feel, a cathartic rush of emotion, but it feels like an afterthought. All those people, together, making a profound statement on the need for change. Again, Wolfe rushes through it,





A scene like this, in which the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. supports Rustin on national television, should be powerful, but comes across as terribly mawkish.

any chance for greatness blown.

The final image is effective, though. A simple, symbolic image depicting a life devoted to service.

Is "Rustin" worth seeing? Yes for Domingo's performance. The rest of it?

Aye-yi-yi...

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com



# The Importance of Authenticity in Art

"The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance."

— Aristotle

Art has been defined as a range of human activity with the expression of emotions and ideas through creative/physical mediums. Over time, magnificently inspired paintings, sculptures, music, dance and writing have lifted the human heart. Michelangelo, Van Gogh, Hopper, Mozart, Beethoven, Bernstein, Shakespeare, Angelou and so many more have moved and excited us, enriching lives while expanding our consciousness.

Life would be duller and more onerous without the arts.

Authenticity in producing an artwork stems from an inward sense of personhood as expressed by the artist. To my mind, it is one of the most important components to consider when looking at or buying art. The internal as transformed into something external should come from a place of genuine inspiration, and in a voice that is individualistic and innovative.

When looking at a piece of art, I initially try to locate the artist's voice: the authentic self. I first ask myself what I see here. I then ask if there is more to be learned. Has this particular artist taken an idea or theme and done something unique with it, reinterpreting it in an interesting and original way?

For some works, I might question if one can transform, update and imbue a fresh approach to that which was expressed decades or even centuries before. The answer, of course, is yes. It is possible to do that. A classic example might include Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" (itself based on an earlier poem) which in the 20th century was transformed into "West Side Story." In the case of contemporary painter Kehinde Wiley (who transforms regular people into a realistic 18th century style of art), he reinterprets the past. For example, his portrait painting titled "Willem Van Heythuysen" at the VMA in Richmond, Va., directly refers back to a 1625 painting of the Dutch merchant by Frans Hals. His style of portraiture is unique, his paintings meant to elevate his subjects, people who wouldn't normally be considered worthy of such attention. It is a direct reference to politics and the underrepresentation of people of color in the art world.

After decades of creating my own art and looking at tens of thousands of other artworks, my eye has evolved. My appreciation for the time spent, the honesty of the work as presented, and the intention of the artist plays a major role in my ability to enjoy

other visual artworks.

Years ago while developing art curriculum at my school, and based on my own studio experiences, I developed a method for analyzing artwork produced by my students. Those key factors have stuck with me even now when I visit galleries, artist studios or museums. I start with the title (if there is one) and consider the possible purpose of the work. Could it simply be to create something beautiful, to stimulate the intellect, to perhaps reveal a truth, express a religious value, protest injustice, express some universal truth or commonality or simply meet the needs of the artist/creator? I look carefully as well at the subject matter, whether it be landscapes, portraits, narrative works, abstractions or any other combination.

Next, I try to imagine what the artist is telling me as a viewer. It's not always easy to do so, but the reward of trying is worth the effort. Most importantly, I need to really feel a true sense of the artist's self, the authentic self, to sense that internal significance and whether or not I am picking up on such intent. Admittedly, this can become difficult when dealing with contemporary art installations and conceptual works which, upon first glance, may not be as easily read or understood.

In such a case, I need to do more research. Seeing only one or two pieces in a show may not provide the full picture. I may question what I am seeing and struggle to find a way to enter the work. I want to understand more, and that necessitates time to research, read and mull it over. It's not uncommon then for me to return to a gallery after a bit of research to reconsider a work or works before writing about it.

This need to understand crosses multiple visual art mediums. For example, in the case of the land art work "Confluence" by Robert Stackhouse and Carol Mickett, when I first encountered it, I was struck by the monumentality of the piece and how it was sited. More than 100 tons of Indiana limestone was used to create a 70' boat-like form. There are words chiseled into the surface that read: *My soul has grown deep like the rivers*.

Considering that limestone, itself, is created over eons and made up of tiny fossils and shells, it is fitting then that this native stone was selected and the work itself sited within a short distance from the White River in Indianapolis. Now, mind you, I didn't know all those details until I read about it after. I initially thought the work might reference a kind of imaginary Midwest Stonehenge. Just walking in and between the uprights didn't provide the clue as to the artists' intent until later. I did respond

The Inquisitive Artist
Linda Weigel

When looking at a piece of art, I initially try to locate the artist's voice: the authentic self. I first ask myself what I see here. I then ask if there is more to be learned.

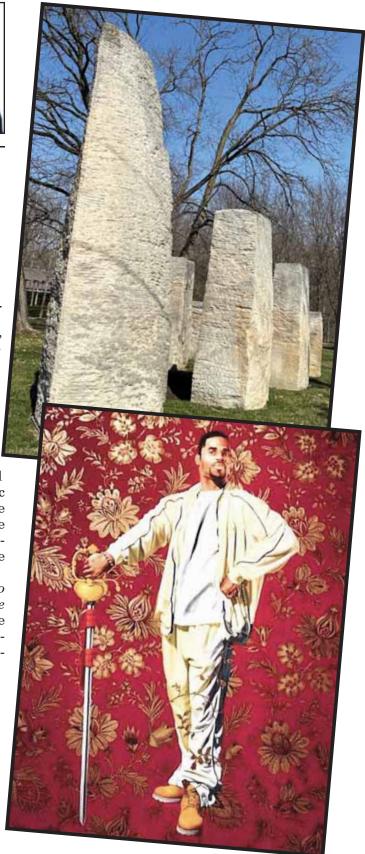
positively to the work immediately upon seeing it but I didn't really understand its purpose and intent, and I always want to know more.

I would recommend, then, that anyone looking to experience art be sure to have an open mind, to be curious, to question what you see and, if struggling to understand or interpret what you see, ask questions. Read the accompanying signage. There's a lot to unpack out there, and there are lessons to be learned, discoveries to be made and universal truths to be revealed. Look, too, for the authentic voice, something unique to the artist and immerse yourself in the experience. Our region provides the gift of originality through the rotating contemporary works of visual art at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, local galleries and university collections.

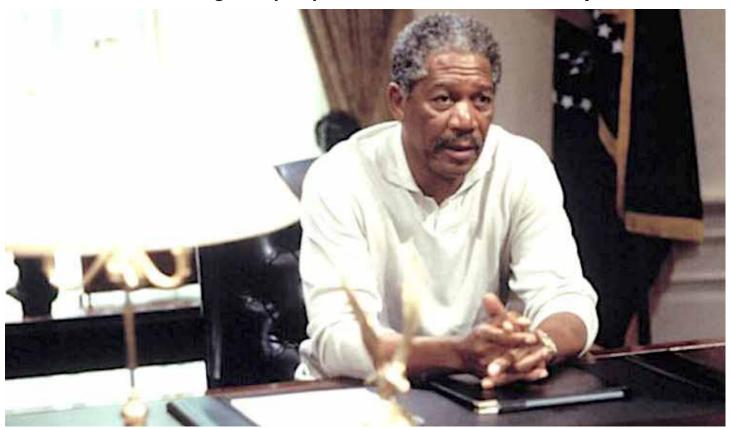
Emile Zola said, "If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, will answer you: I am here to live out loud." Living out loud in the case of the contemporary visual arts is living authentically, unafraid to voice an opinion or concern, making oneself vulnerable to the viewer.

#### **About the Photos**

Top: A side view of "Confluence" by Robert Stackhouse and Carol Mickett, taken at the Indianapolis Art Center. Bottom: "Willem Van Heythuysen," a 2006 oil and enamel on canvas by Kehinde Wiley. Photos by Linda Weigel



#### Revisiting "Deep Impact" Amid Its 25th Anniversary



Morgan Freeman created one of the all-time great movie presidents in "Deep Impact."

I may be the only one who thinks "Deep Impact" is a classic.

Well, let me clarify. A disaster-movie classic. I can see people reading this, seeing "Deep Impact" and "classic" in the same sentence, then flooding my email inbox with queries like "Are you serious?" or "Wait, the corny comet movie?"

Yep. That one.

Even this year, the year of its 25th anniversary, "Deep Impact" makes me cry. It reminds me of early Spielberg, where the spectacle is undeniable, but the human drama supersedes it.

"Deep Impact" arrived in theaters May 8, 1998, about a month before "Armageddon" made a bigger splash at the box office. The films were among a nostalgic rebirth of the disaster genre fueled by "Independence Day," "Twister" and, in 1997, competing volcano flicks "Dante's Peak" and "Volcano."

"Deep Impact" was no box-office slouch. Against an \$80 million budget, it grossed \$140 million in North America and another \$209 million worldwide for a total of nearly \$350 million.

That's no chump change, but the movie to this day feels undervalued, largely because it was directed by a woman: Mimi Leder. Rampant sexism, especially from critics, ravaged the movie.

I would argue the movie exceeded expectations *because* the director was a woman.

Making the disaster movie respectable ain't easy. True, James Cameron achieved Oscar-winning his-



torical fiction with 1997's "Titanic," but more often than not, these movies exist within a universally derided genre. Empty spectacle designed mostly for the wow factor of seeing civilization decimated. Reviews almost always are brutal. The notoriously savage *New Yorker* critic Pauline Kael, for instance, in her review of Roland Emmerich's "Independence Day," tsk-tsked at how the movie remained so cheerful after exterminating the lives of millions.

"Deep Impact" centers on a comet headed toward Earth, NASA missions to destroy the comet or knock it off its course, and the pockets of individuals facing their own mortality.

The screenplay marked a collaboration between two of Hollywood's best: Bruce Joel Rubin, who won an Oscar for 1990's "Ghost," and Michael Tolkin, best known for Robert Altman's scathing Hollywood satire "The Player" (1992).

As a journalist, I appreciate the story's approach to introducing its threat to humanity. Broadcast reporter Jenny Lerner (Tea Leoni) believes she's onto something amid rumors of a disgraced White House official and a mistress named "Ellie." One-on-one confrontations with sources turn up little. Jenny's Internet search — Leder's camera inches across the computer screen, James Horner's score ascending to a fever pitch — leads to the startling discovery that her "smoking gun" is not a person, but the acronym E.L.E., or extinction level event.

That leads to a scene that is a master class in how to avoid talky exposition: Have the fate of the world carefully delivered by Morgan Freeman as President Tom Beck. "Deep Impact" made me want to see Morgan Freeman elected president for life. He is the ideal vision of a world leader. Guarded when necessary, refreshingly transparent in public. He offers hope amid potential catastrophe and an unabashed directness in his faith. Freeman ("The Shawshank Redemption") has one of those voices where he proceeds with measured authority. You want to hear what he has to say. So in "Deep Impact," when he tells the American people, "Now, in the meantime, you will go to work. You will pay your bills," it is with the steady guidance of a father to his children.

Leder cast her film well elsewhere in the picture. Like the crew of the space shuttle "Messiah," whose mission it is to thwart the comet. The crew is populated by a rowdy band of character actors — Blair Underwood, future "Iron Man" director Jon Favreau and the no-nonsense Mary McCormack — whose father figure is the great Robert Duvall, playing a widowed astronaut who knows his crewmates view him as a fossil, but who earns respect by making tough decisions.

The screenplay doesn't overwhelm itself with jargon. More often than not, it sneaks in hilariously off-the-cuff dialogue that grounds the drama in how

people actually speak. Like comet discoverer Leo Biederman (a pre-"Lord of the Rings" Elijah Wood), a high school teen, sharing his story at a school assembly, then hearing from a fellow classmate, "You know, you're going to have sex a lot more than anyone in the class." Or a NASA official accurately sizing up the "Messiah" crew: "They're not afraid of dying. They're just afraid of looking bad on TV." And the movie's best line, delivered by a deadpan McCormack after the crew realizes it must sacrifice itself to destroy the comet: "Well, look on the bright side. We'll all have high schools named after us."

Leder handles that much-needed levity perfectly. We appreciate those moments, because the second half explores how we, as a people, stare death in the face. Do we stand tall...or crumble?

That approach saw "Deep Impact" dismissed by critics. One naysayer, "Armageddon" director Michael Bay, aimed his sexist darts at Leder's film by dismissing it as a Lifetime Channel movie. Two hours of watching people waiting to die.

What Leder, as a woman, brings to her film is a sensitivity to the ways of women. How an older female journalist feels snubbed by a younger version of herself thrust into the spotlight. In the most elegant sequence, Jenny's 61-year-old mother (Vanessa Redgrave) decides to die on her own terms. Choosing an elegant dress, her favorite jewelry, flattering makeup. Then, there's the way Jenny makes a lifechanging decision to save her boss...while standing in a day-care center. As the tsunami barrels across eastern states, Leder unveils her boldest move, cutting away from the wave to reveal a husband and wife, looking into each other's eyes, the husband caressing his wife's cheek for the last time.

Continued on Page 24



The crew of the "Messiah" is filled with great actors, including Robert Duvall and Mary McCormack.



That massive traffic jam at the end of "Deep Impact" is real: thousands of motorists on film.

Continued From Page 23

Do you see what I'm getting at? Leder isn't out to make a feminist statement, but she lavishes an attention to details that men miss. If the approach is "girly," then by all means, bring on "girly" because the depth of human emotion is consuming. Seriously, the scene where parents, realizing their legacy is their children, say farewell to their daughter and infant child, favoring her survival over theirs, wrecks me, especially now, as a parent myself.

Yes, it's true the film ditches logic at the end. Jenny can somehow bypass traffic jams to make it in time to reconcile with her father. Wood's crappy scooter can somehow outrun the tsunami.

But the spectacle here far outweighs anything in "Armageddon." That traffic jam at the end? That's not CGI. That is thousands of extras staging epic

imagery. And the shot of helicopters entering the sky to flee New York: That's great moviemaking.

And, of course, that final speech by Freeman's president, standing before the ravaged remains of the White House, Horner's score achieving majestic crescendos: "Cities fall, but they are rebuilt. And heroes die, but they are remembered. We honor them with every brick we lay, with every field we sow. With every child we comfort, and then teach to rejoice in what we have been re-given. Our planet. Our home. So now, let us begin." Only an actor like Freeman could pull that off.

Corny? Sure. Does it get me every time? You bet. The sign of a classic.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com





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

- The Hogwarts Reading Challenge. The program ends Thursday, Nov. 30.
- "Forests of Southwest Michigan." The program is at 6:30 p.m. EST Tuesday, Dec. 5.
- "Letters to Santa." Children can write to Santa for a reply by sending letters to: Santa, 33 N. Thompson St., New Buffalo, MI 49117.

#### Weekly programs:

- Craft Time on Wednesdays 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.
- Lego Club on Fridays-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.



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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:

- Scratch Club (ages 7-17) at 4 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30. Learn to code with Scratch a platform to create stories, games and animations by working through projects and sharing ideas. Call Dave at (219) 873-3045 for details.
- Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in November-December. 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.
- Cocoa and Canvas! from 5-7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 4. Participants learn how to paint a cabin winter scene. Light refreshments will be served. Registration is required because supplies are limited. Call Sydney at (219) 873-3044 or Jennifer at (219) 873-3042 for details.
- Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17) from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in November-December. 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.
- 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 10-17) from 4-6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6. Supplies and characters are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Email Miss Dana at 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 for more details.

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# American Red Cross

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

- Frank and Edward Skwiat American Legion Post 451, 121 Skwiat Legion Ave., 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2.
- Conservation Club House, 100 Mill Pond Road, Union Mills, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3.
- St. John's United Church of Christ, 101 St. John Road, noon-6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5.
- Sacred Heart Church, 201 Bach St., LaPorte, noon-5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6.

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







#### **Holiday Artisan Fair**



LaPorte County Historical Society will host its third annual Holiday Artisan Fair from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2, at the museum, 2405 Indiana Ave.

Entrance is by donation. Local artisans will present: ornaments, jewelry, original prints and cards, ceramics, organic pet treats, crochet, fiber art and resin art. The museum gift shop will be open.

Call (219) 324-6767 for more details.

#### **Harbor Country Hikers**

Harbor Country Hikers President Pat Fisher will offer tips on how to keep warm and safe on winter hikes at 1 p.m. EST Saturday, Dec. 2.

The venue is the Edward and Elizabeth Leonard Wildlife Preserve, 15800 Lakeside Road, Union Pier, Mich. A Chikaming Open Lands property, it protects 108 acres of mature woodland, wetlands and agricultural land, some of it in production today.

Membership is preferred; however, the hike is open to the public. Visit www.harborcountryhikers. com or the Facebook page for more details.

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#### **Harbor Country Singers**



The Harbor Country Singers community choir will present its annual holiday concert at 4 p.m. EST Saturday, Dec. 2, at Episcopal Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, Mich.

The concert will blend secular and sacred music through Christmas and Hanukkah songs. It will feature area musicians, including a brass quintet and a piano, guitar and bass trio. Songs include "Silent Night," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" and "Light One Candle."

The concert is free, but donations are welcome. A food-item donation, such as nutrient-rich peanut butter or pull-tab cans of soups, stews, tuna, ravioli, spaghetti or anything easy to heat is requested for Neighbor by Neighbor, a nonprofit connecting Harbor Country residents to social services.

Harbor Country Singers, a program through School of American Music, is supported by a Pokagon Fund grant. The church is a partner, providing the venue. Call SAM at (269) 409-1191 or SchoolofAmericanMusic@gmail.com, or visit www. SchoolofAmericanMusic.com for more details.

#### **Pioneerland Christmas Open House**

Pioneerland's annual Christmas Open House is from 3-8 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 2-3, at La-Porte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. Indiana 2.

The free event includes horse-drawn carriage rides, decorations, carvings, hot cider, cocoa and cookies, and photos with Santa.

Visit www.pioneerland.org or call (219) 324-2086 or (219) 380-5678 for more details.

#### **Sullair DCH Christmas Party**

Sullair Disconnected Compressor Honorees will host its Christmas party at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7, at Galveston Steakhouse, 10 Commerce Square.

The event includes appetizers, a cash bar and 50/50 drawing.

The cost is a \$15 cover charge payable at the door. Spouses and guests are welcome.

RSVP by Dec. 1 to sdch.reunion@gmail.com



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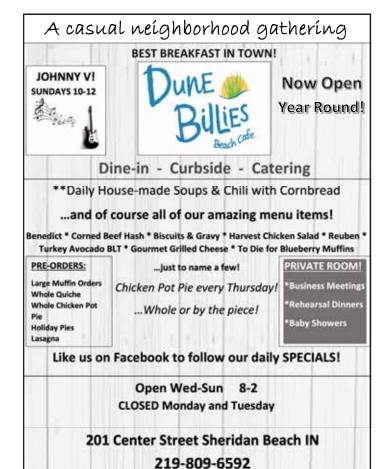
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#### In the Area

**Nov. 30** — Virtual Author Talk with Naomi Alderman, 2-3 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: www.laportelibrary.org

**Nov. 30** — Scratch Club (ages 7-17), 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3045.

**Dec. 2** — LaPorte County Historical Society Holiday Artisan Fair, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

**Dec. 2-3** — 2023 Christmas Candlelight Tour of Historic Homes, LaPorte. Times: 3-7 p.m. Dec. 2/1-5 p.m. Dec. 3. Advance tickets: \$25. Info: (219) 363-2094, (219) 363-7485, p\_ruminski@yahoo.com

**Dec. 2-3** — Pioneerland Christmas Open House, 3-8 p.m., LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. Indiana 2. Info: www.pioneerland.org, (219) 324-2086, (219) 380-5678

**Dec. 4** — Cocoa and Canvas!, 5-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Registration: (219) 873-3044, (219) 873-3042.

**Dec. 5** — Virtual Author Talk with Victoria Aveyard, 6-7 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: www.laportelibrary.org

**Dec. 6** — Dungeons & Dragons (ages 10-17), 4-6 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Registration: dwolf@mclib.org

# The Beacher is Hiring! Part-Time Bookkeeper

We are seeking a part-time bookkeeper to work one to two days a week. We will train you for the position.

Send a resume and contact information to beacher@thebeacher.com, or by mail to The Beacher, 911 Franklin St., Michigan City, IN 46360 **Dec. 6** — Creative Kids (ages 6-11), 4-5 p.m., La-Porte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Through Dec. 31 — Work by Michigan City Art League, The Legacy Center Gallery at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. 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

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

**Thursdays in November-December** — 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

**Dec. 1** — Charlie Parr, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$25 + \$4.50 convenience fee/\$50 + \$4.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

**Dec. 2** — Harbor Country Hikers, 1 p.m. EST, Edward and Elizabeth Leonard Wildlife Preserve, 15800 Lakeside Road, Union Pier, Mich. Info: www. harborcountryhikers.com

**Dec. 2** — Harbor Country Singers holiday concert, 4 p.m. EST, Episcopal Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, Mich. Free, food-item donation requested. Info: (269) 409-1191, www.SchoolofAmericanMusic.com, SchoolofAmericanMusic@gmail.com

**Dec. 2** — The Ides of March Christmas Show featuring Jim Peterik, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$40 + \$6 convenience fee/\$65 + \$6 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

**Dec. 2-Jan. 4, 2024** — Annual Members' Exhibit, Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. *Free artists' reception*: noon-2 p.m. Dec. 9. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

**Dec. 3 & 10** — Christmas at Copshaholm, 4-7 p.m. EST, The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Tickets: \$15, \$10/members, \$5/youth 6-17, free/5 & younger. Reservations/info:

www.historymuseumSB.org, (574) 235-9664.

**Dec. 5** — "Forests of Southwest Michigan," 6:30 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

**Dec. 6** — "Insights in History," 1:30 p.m. EST, The History Museum, 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Tickets: \$3, \$1/members. Reservations/info: www.historymuseumSB.org, (574) 235-9664.

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, (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

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

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

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

Vickers Theatre — Now Showing: "The Holdovers." Rated R. Times: 3:30 p.m. Dec. 1, 3:30 & 7 p.m. Dec. 2, 3 p.m. Dec. 3. Also: "The Last Waltz." Rated PG. Times: 7 p.m. Dec. 1 & 3. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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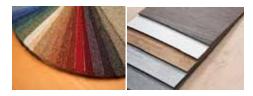
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On November 30, 1887, the first reported game of softball, a game invented by George Hancock, was played at Chicago's Farragut Boat Club.

**On November 30, 1900**, at age 46, Irish author Oscar Wilde died in Paris. His last remark, a comment concerning his distaste for the wallpaper in his room, was, "One of us has to go."

On November 30, 1936, flames destroyed London's Crystal Palace, which was built for the International Exhibition of 1851.

**On November 30, 1954,** Elizabeth Hodges, Sylacauga, Ala., was injured when an 8-1/2 pound meteorite crashed through the roof of her home.

On November 30, 2004, "Jeopardy!" fans got to see Ken Jennings end his 74-game winning streak as he lost to real-estate agent Nancy Zerg.

On December 1, 1880, the first telephone was installed in the White House.

On December 1, 1913, in Pittsburg, the Gulf Refining Co. opened the world's first drive-in gasoline station. Motorists, up until that time, were accustomed to buying gas in garages and livery stables.

On December 1, 1917, the Rev. Edward Flanagan founded "Boys Town" in an area just outside the Nebraska city of Omaha,

On December 1, 1927, Chicago's first contract airmail plane landed at Municipal (now Midway) Airport.

On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Ala., black seamstress Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give a white man her seat on a city bus. As a result of her arrest, the law requiring blacks to sit in the back of buses was eventually struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

On December 2, 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself emperor of France.

On December 2, 1816, the first savings bank to operate in the United States opened under the name Philadelphia Savings Fund Society.

**On December 2, 1834**, the Chicago Lyceum, the forerunner of Chicago's library system, was formed by a group of book intellectuals.

**On December 2, 1939,** New York's La Guardia Airport began operations as an airliner from Chicago landed at one minute past midnight.

On December 2, 1942, below the football stadium at the University of Chicago, a group of scientists, led by Enrico Fermi, for the first time demonstrated a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction.

On December 3, 1818, Illinois became the 21st

state to join the Union.

**On December 3, 1833**, Ohio's Oberlin College opened, becoming the first coeducational college in the United States.

**On December 3, 1925,** in New York's Carnegie Hall, George Gershwin performed as a soloist, playing his "Concerto in F." It was the first public performance of a jazz concerto for piano in musical history.

On December 3, 1947, the Tennessee Williams play "A Streetcar Named Desire" opened on Broadway.

On December 4, 1867, the National Grange of Husbandry, usually known simply as the Grange, was founded in the United States. The organization of farmers contributed significantly to the development of agriculture, and provided a focus for much of the social life of rural America.

On December 4, 1875, New York's William "Boss" Tweed, the former leader of Tammany Hall, escaped from prison while serving a sentence for swindling. He was later captured in Spain.

On December 4, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the dismantling of the Works Progress Administration, which was created to provide jobs during the Depression.

**On December 4, 1965,** Gemini 7 was launched with Air Force Lt. Col. Frank Borman and Navy Cmdr. James Lovell aboard.

**On December 5, 1776**, 50 men at Virginia's College of William and Mary organized Phi Beta Kappa, the first scholastic fraternity in America.

On December 5, 1848, the 1849 Gold Rush was triggered when President James Polk confirmed gold was discovered in California.

On December 5, 1932, German physicist Albert Einstein was granted a visa that allowed him to travel in the United States.

On December 5, 1933, at exactly 3:32 Mountain Time, national Prohibition came to an end as Utah became the 36th state to ratify the Twenty-first Amendment to the Constitution. Eight states had voted to remain "dry," but the "Nobel Experiment," that took effect in 1920 was now a part of history.

On December 6, 1847, Abraham Lincoln took his seat in Congress as an Illinois representative.

On December 6, 1923, Calvin Coolidge's address to a joint session of Congress marked the first time a president's speech was broadcast over the airways.

On December 6, 1933, liquor stores, bars and restaurants in America were jammed as, for the first time in 13 years, one could legally get drunk.

On December 6, 1957, America's first attempt at putting a satellite into orbit blew up on the launch pad at Cape Canaveral, Fla.

**On December 6, 1972**, Apollo 17, America's last mission to the moon blasted off from Cape Canaveral.

On December 6, 1976, House Democrats elected Representative Thomas "Tip" O'Neil as speaker.





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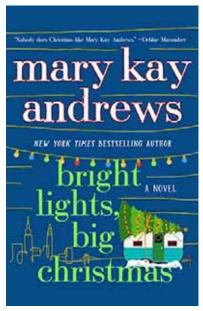
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# Bright Lights, Big Christmas by Mary Kay Andrews (hardcover \$24 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 278 pages.)

Before the angst sets in and the store is sold out of your 5-year-old's most-wanted toy, why not take time for a little Christmas cheer by reading a holiday winner from Mary Kay Andrews. If any author

can cheer you up, it's her. Heartwarming? You could heat up your hot chocolate between the pages of this book. Andrews has the gift of writing a story that in other hands would be soft and mushy, but with her is uplifting and delightful.

Kerry Tolliver comes from the western mountains of North Carolina where her family has a tree farm — they raise Fraser Fir, to be exact, and sell them as



Christmas trees in New York City every year between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

They have a special corner in Greenwich Village they rent out each year, and they sleep in a 1963 Shasta camper trailer they call Spammy because it looks like a can of Spam. When Kerry was a little girl, it was an adventure. But now, she's grown up, has a college degree under her belt and had, emphasis on had, a lucrative job as a graphic artist for a company recently bought out and cleaned out, leaving her unemployed.

Her father has a heart attack and is recuperating at home. The Tolliver family has experienced other recent setbacks, and since Kerry is without employment, she is recruited to go with her brother, Murphy, and his English setter, Queenie — more of a floppy toy than a guard dog — and run the tree stand this year. Not what she wants to do.

I guess this must be a gentrified part of the Village when Kerry and Murphy started talking about prices of their trees. Yikes! Kerry even adds to the coffers by fashioning her own artsy wreaths — also sold for a hefty price. But all is not fun and profit as the pair is shocked to see another tree stand go up across the street in front of a bodega. This could turn into a bitter feud.

As the days go by, Kerry gets to meet the locals Murphy and their dad became friends with over the years. A charming, handsome man, Patrick, and his 6-year-old son, Austin, stop by one day and well, Kerry suddenly isn't so cold any more! Imagine that.

#### Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



There is a closeness to people in the area that shows they care for each other, and Kerry soon wonders if she really wants to go back to North Carolina. But then old man Heinz disappears on a bitterly cold night, and the race is on to find him.

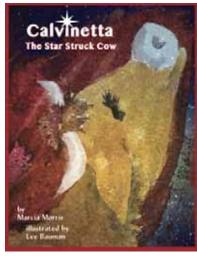
True to form, Andrews comes through with a well-paced, well-plotted story that puts a smile on your face and makes you ready to meet the thundering crowds downtown — as soon as you finish the book!

<u>Calvinetta The Star Struck Cow</u> by Marcia Morris, illustrations by Lee Bauman (paperback from Barnes & Noble or Amazon for \$14.99; also Walmart, Books a Million and Alabris; also available in Kindle)

This charming tale goes back to that stable in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago when a very

special child was about to be born. However, Marcia Morris has given a different perspective on the night's activities through the eyes of the animals, especially a certain cownamed Calvinetta...

Animals are a lot more perceptive than we give them credit for. Why wouldn't the animals, as well as humans, have taken part in the most fa-



mous of all Bible stories? Indeed.

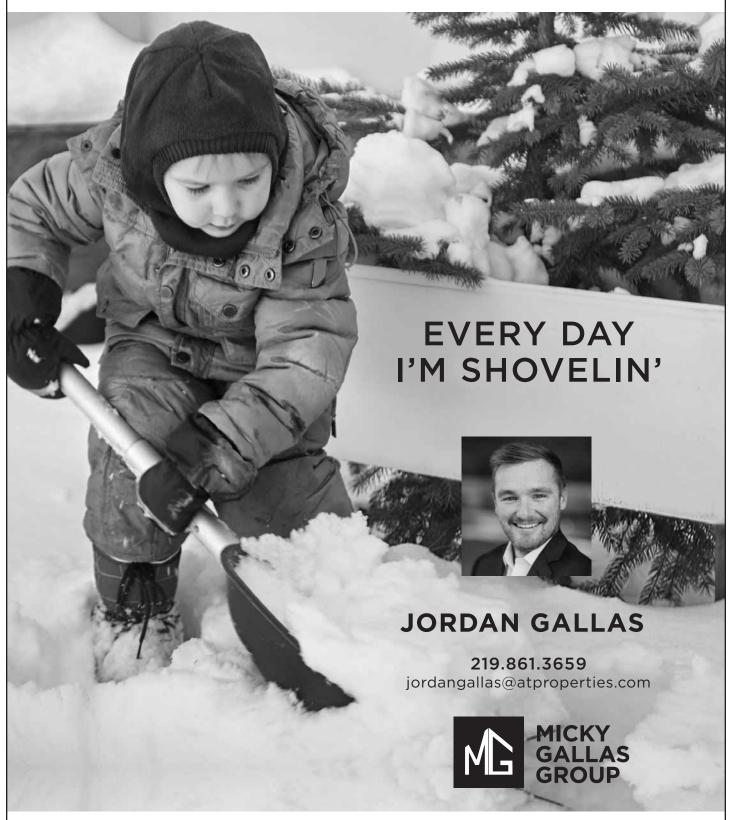
Perhaps the animals in the stables where the human man and pregnant woman are to stay are not happy to share their meager space at first. Maybe they are excited by the coming animal festival on the morrow. Calvinetta, the stable leader, takes note of the strange star hanging overhead, but is interrupted by the sound of approaching humans, the innkeeper, a man and a pregnant woman...How will any of them get a good night's sleep?

What a sweet rendering of an age-old story! A kind of fairy tale, blended with native legend, comes together here. The full-color illustrations by Lee Bauman are beautiful, the soft colors blending perfectly with the tenderly told text. This truly is a book to keep in the family and enjoy Christmases to come.

Lee and Marcia live in the area, and I'm pleased to present this beautiful book to you this holiday season. Perhaps an Easter story is forthcoming?

Till next time, happy reading!

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