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Open Arms

by Kim Nowatzke

The distance between their homes may exceed 6,000 miles, but Michigan City High School students and their Japanese exchange partners have discovered it really is a small world after all.

Last month, six Japanese students and their two teachers from Zama Sogo High School in Zama City (near Yokohama, a city of more than 3 million people, and not far from Tokyo) spent 10 days with

MCHS students and their families. The unforgettable experience gave both sides a chance to discover that friendship has no geographical boundaries.

The exchange program, known as the “Sister School Visitation Program” in Japan, was met with open arms by both sides after a five-year hiatus due to COVID.

“When it comes to world language teaching, our focus should be on connecting our students to actual living, vibrant, real-time, in-person, human, dynamic, emotional interactions and situations and culture and people,” said Michael Tsugawa (known as Tsugawa Sensei to his students), who teaches Japanese at MCHS.

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Japanese exchange student Yuzan Arai is photographed with Michigan City High School host sophomore Jimmy Biela. Yuzan is wearing a favorite souvenir he bought while here: his Chicago hat. Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

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Open Arms

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Michigan City Area Schools' administration was just as excited to see the popular program return.

"This partnership is one example of the outstanding foreign language department we have at Michigan City High School," Betsy Kohn, MCAS director of communications, said. "We are excited that this partnership has resumed because it gives our students and the students from Japan a 24/7 opportunity to practice their language skills, learn about both cultures from a teen perspective and form lifelong friendships."

The Japanese student exchange was born out of a trip Tsugawa took with MCHS students to Hibarigaoka High School (which is now defunct) near Yokohama in 2005.

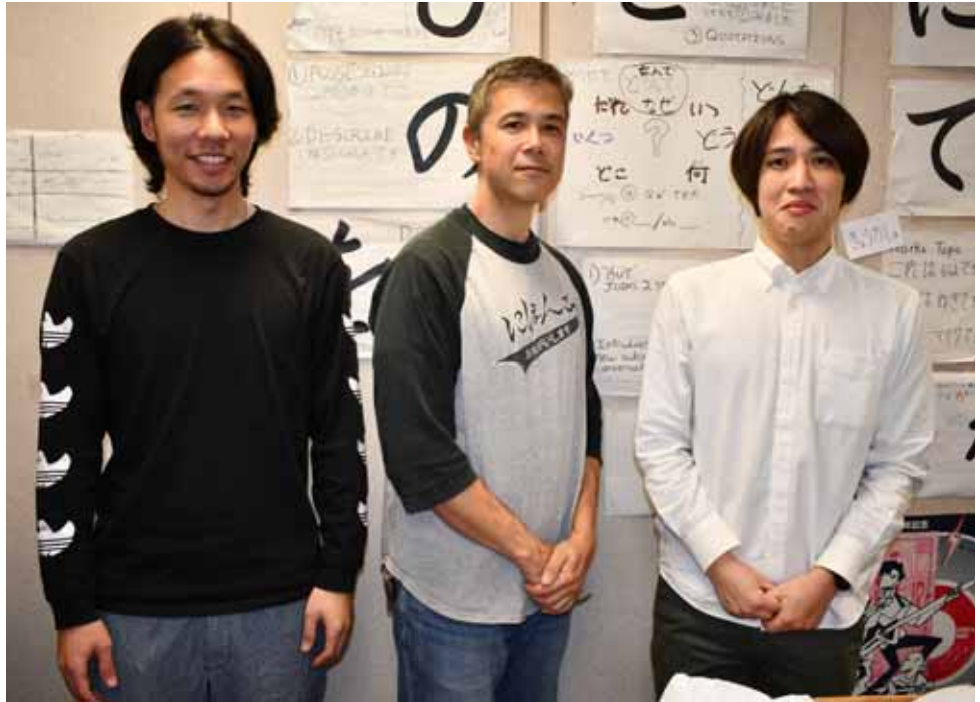
"The friendship that grew with that teacher went in such a direction that he asked me, quite out of the blue, "Can I bring my students to MCHS in the spring?," he said. "That first visit from them to us was 2007 or 2008. Since then, it has been interrupted a couple of times, such as the birth of both of my children (March births!) and COVID, of course."

As with so much else, the pandemic was a considerable obstacle.

"COVID was particularly painful," Tsugawa continued. "I had just received the student profiles in February 2020, and had the host family meeting with the families and students I had recruited right around Valentine's Day 2020, when the first globally prominent rumblings of COVID began."

One of these, ironically, was with the Diamond Princess cruise ship quarantined in the Yokohama port, quite close to Zama Sogo High School.

"I had just finished matching the students and families, when a day or two later I had to gather them all and tell them that I was so sorry to have to call it off 'because of this virus we don't really know called COVID-19,'" he said. "There were tears and



Ryota Fujita (left), a science teacher in Japan, and Yohei Sonoo, an English teacher in Japan (right), are photographed with Michigan City High School World Japanese Teacher Michael Tsugawa.

Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

frustration and that kind of thing then, but weeks later we all got sent home for good. The way the world was in 2021 spring, it was clearly impossible, and for various reasons it was in 2022 and 2023, though we tried really hard in 2023."

This year, the Japanese students and teachers arrived March 9 to an excited, welcoming group of MCHS students and their host families. The Japanese students are entering their second or third year of high school.

In Japan, Tsugawa said, middle school and high school each are three years, so a Japanese first-year student is approximately a sophomore in the United States. Since the Japanese school year starts in April and runs through the following March, the students visited on their break.

In addition, science teacher Ryota Fujita and English teacher Yohei Sonoo joined the six students. While Fujita stayed with Tsugawa, Sonoo went to the home of MCHS Senior Enzo Panozzo.

While Tsugawa has been at MCHS for more than two decades, he explained why it is rare for the same teacher from Japan to participate in the exchange.

"Japanese public school teachers fall in the cat-



Japanese exchange student Yurika Matsuguchi attends the Maple Syrup Festival at Indiana Dunes National Park's Chellberg Farm, where she was able to tap a hole into a piece of wood for a spile (a wooden peg that broaches maple syrup from a tree). Provided photo

egory of 'civil servants,' and the way the civil service work culture is in Japan, they can expect to be transferred to a different school every three to five years," he said. "While that can be a bit confusing at times, I lived and worked in Japan for a number of years, and understand how it is.

"On the upside," he continued, "I have had the opportunity to meet a variety of teachers from their school, which is excellent since I no longer take student groups to Japan (for various reasons, but mostly unreasonable expense) and have never actually been to their school myself. In other words, my connection to the teachers escorting them here began the other day when they arrived, and is something I hope we will build on for the next few years."

The decision to host a Japanese student again was an easy one for Aaverie Wingard and her family. Her older sister, Kendyl Adney, hosted three times before. It was such a positive experience, the family was eager to sign up again.

Parent Jim Biela explained how his family became involved in the exchange program, and how he was impressed by "how respectful, engaged and grateful" the Japanese student, Yuzan Arai, they hosted was.

"Jimmy (Jim's son) came to me with this opportunity, thinking it would be a wonderful learning experience," he said. "I thought it would be a golden

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opportunity for our family to have someone from halfway around the world to hang out with us and we learn from each other. He is a wonderful participant in the family.”

Michael and Angela Gresham, who hosted Japanese exchange student Koa Tsuchiya, knew the program would be a win-win for their family, especially their daughter, Lexi, a MCHS sophomore.

“Lexi loves the Japanese language and also learning about Japanese culture,” Angela said. “When her teacher asked, she was so excited to host, so her and her student could learn from each other.”

Aaverie’s mother, Roxanne Wingard, said the family kept busy during the 10 days with their student, Yurika Matsuguchi. This included a trip to Michigan City’s beautiful beachfront, where looking across Lake Michigan, they saw Chicago. And, during a trip to Chicago, they saw the Chicago River famously dyed green for St. Patrick’s Day, and visited Museum of Science and Industry, Navy Pier and the world’s largest Starbucks.

“We were also able to take her to the Maple Syrup Festival at Indiana Dunes National Park Chellberg Farm, where she was able to tap a hole into a piece of wood for a spile (a wooden peg that broaches maple syrup from a tree),” Roxanne said.

With Aaverie being a City Singers member at MCHS, Matsuguchi attended the “Classics Night” performance at the school.

“Aaverie is part of the MCHS tennis team and, while here, Yurika was able to participate with the team,” Roxanne said. “Yurika had played tennis in Japan while in middle school. Yurika told Aav-



Japanese exchange student Yurika Matsuguchi shows MCHS Senior Alejandro Aguirree how to make an origami swan during a Japanese Club meeting. Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

erie that she may be a little rusty since she has not played in awhile, but come to find out she’s an *amazing* player! She was even able to play in a challenge match with Tsugawa Sensei! I do believe she won!”

Matsuguchi said her favorite activity here was a Taco Tie-Dye Party at the home of Aaverie’s grandparents, Dan and Cheryl Adney. There, the American and Japanese students enjoyed making tie-dye T-shirts, tacos and s’mores, as well as other games and activities.

Angela Gresham said other activities included playing foosball, riding electric scooters and just relaxing together.

Tsugawa said the goal was to achieve a balance



Michigan City High School students Jacob Long, JoJo Caddo, Makayla Sardon and Landen Hall try out *kendanas*, traditional Japanese skill toys, with exchange student Kanro Wakai (center) at a Japanese Club meeting. Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

between “We want to give them a chance to do really unique and cool things” and “they are here to experience as much typical American high school life as possible.”

The Greshams enjoyed shopping, and visiting Sky Zone and Dave & Busters Schaumburg, in addition to days full of basketball games, choir concerts, band concerts and play practices.

With MCHS’ new block class schedule, Tsugawa said, it was a challenge since he only saw each student three times in class. Even so, there was a Japanese Club meeting where the students could practice origami and make *onigiri* (Japanese rice balls) together. During the 10-day experience, a few students even chatted on the air with WIMS Radio’s Ric Federighi.

It wasn’t just MCHS students who benefitted from the exchange students’ presence.

“Our students gave their presentations about



MCHS Junior Aaverie Wingard and Sophomore Jimmy Biela, who both hosted Japanese exchange students, make Japanese rice balls called *onigiri* during a Japanese Club meeting. Photo by Kim Nowatzke.

Japanese culture to the students who take Japanese classes,” Sonoo said. “They did it in English and in Japanese so that our Japanese students can practice English and students at Michigan City High School can practice listening to and understanding Japanese.”

That had an impact on MCHS Junior Hannah Parker.

“Their presentations in class were very formal,” she said. “I got to learn about different cultural dances like the *Yosakoi* dance, different geographical phenomena in Japan, different flowers and different foods.

“However, my personal interactions with the students taught me so much more. In class, we normally learn a lot of formal phrases in Japanese.

But with the students our age, I was able to learn different slang and different popular references.”

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Biela and Arai took time to go bowling and shopping, where Arai found one of his favorite souvenirs – a Chicago baseball hat. Some restaurants they tried were Schoop's Hamburgers, El Bracero, Chipotle and Red Robin. Biela's grandparents, Dave and Claudia Biela, hosted a family dinner with corn beef and cabbage as the main dishes. Hamburgers, s'mores and *carne asada papas* (essentially steak on fries) were favorites Arai mentioned.

"I was amazed how open and willing he was to eat whatever was provided to him," Jimmy's father said. "He really enjoyed trying new foods."

For the Japanese students, food in general played a vital part in the experiences and memories of the program.

For Matsuguchi, Chicago-style hot dogs, school lunch pizzas and tacos were most memorable. Tsuchiya also liked hot dogs and hamburgers, but specifically mentioned pasta and sandwiches.



MCHS Sophomore Lexi Gresham and Japanese student Koa Tsuchiya enjoy a meal at Olive Garden. Provided photo

Tsugawa recalled how during a past exchange, "one of the students visiting us got so addicted to our breakfast cereals (not a part of the Japanese diet) that they got on their departing bus clutching several family size boxes of Honey Nut Cheerios."

Not surprisingly, the differences between schooling here and in Japan were especially poignant.

Matsuguchi pointed out how MCHS has a homeroom, and there are no uniforms. In Japan, she said, the students stay in one room while the teachers rotate to them, rather than the students traveling from classroom to classroom.

"American high schools are a lot more free and easygoing – they aren't as strict or have as many rules," Arai said. "Teachers are more formal (in Japan). There's a more formal relationship."

Parker was amused by some of the Japanese students' reaction in anatomy class.

"There was one thing that made me laugh so

much and certainly surprised me," she said. "So, I take anatomy and in my class there was an exchange student. My teacher had asked the student if they wanted to see a sheep's heart or brain, and after a bit of work to translate, the student, Yurika, profusely shook her head and was completely disgusted! I know that this same thing had also happened with another exchange student, Koa, and I was definitely surprised by how repulsed they were at the idea of even seeing the sheep's organs because in my class, everybody is so excited for dissections."

Most importantly, though, plenty of similarities existed between MCHS and Japanese students.



Japanese exchange student Yurika Matsuguchi and MCHS Junior Aeverie Wingard enjoyed seeing the Chicago River famously dyed green for St. Patrick's Day. Provided photo

"It has been fun to see how teens are teens," Angela Gresham said. "They love the same things: junk food, time with friends, video games and lots of laughing! The difference in language has not hurt this a bit!"

Jimmy Biela echoed that sentiment.

"I learned a whole bunch about that culture even though I wasn't there (in Japan)," he said. "What he (Arai) noticed was very interesting. It was very cool, and I gained new friends."

What other lessons were learned?

"I think that anyone who has been to MCHS can agree that we are a very diverse school. However, even with all the diversity, it is so easy for our students to get stuck in their own bubbles of social media and their own friend groups," Parker said. "Having students my age from across the globe allowed me to get my mind out of the Michigan City High School mindset and become less centralized and, rather, globalize my thoughts and ideas. Even though I didn't personally host an exchange student, it was great to see the way they interacted with each other, and the way they interacted with us. I didn't speak with them much, but even those little interactions taught me a lot about myself and even the American culture that they saw in us."

Indeed, the rewards were endless.

"Most of all, I personally have enjoyed watching

Aaverie and Yurika grow as young ladies and students in just a short amount of time,” Roxanne Wingard said. “Both girls are very shy, but by the end of this experience, both girls were communicating with confidence!”

Tsugawa said the exchange program has had 80 to 100 students visit from Japan over the years. This year, two others MCHS students participated in the 2024 exchange: freshman Makayla Sardon hosted Kanro Wakai, and Thomas Chatfield, also a freshman, hosted Masaki Ito.

“Connection is everything. In the years that we have done this, the long-lasting effects have ranged from, ‘Hey, that was neat,’ to ‘That changed my life path, and everything was different after that,’” he said. “I don’t dare to dream too big; the students have every right to let it be whatever it is to them. If they have a good time for 10 days and make a Facebook/Instagram friend from another country, that is pretty neat. Cool. On the other end of the extreme, some of the ‘alums’ of this exchange have gone on to be language teachers, or move long term to the other country, had it influence their post high school college and/or career choice...”

He told a story of one exchange student who “was an absolutely terrible English student on top of being debilitating shy.” But because she had such a great time visiting MCHS, she came back to visit four or five times and became a Japanese teacher to foreigners in Japan. She currently lives in Brazil and also is fluent in Portuguese and English.

He told another story about former MCHS student Lauren Werner, who hosted multiple times.

“She went to college in the COVID era and had her plans to study abroad in Japan foiled again and again,” he said. “She now lives in Japan, teaching English, and has reunited with the students she hosted.”

How much does this program mean to Tsugawa? “...THIS is what I have wanted my students to do and feel and see,” he said. “And, frankly, providing (if only for a short time) a platform where Japanese teenagers can meet their American peers and try out their English skills is very much what I wanted to do when I taught English in Japan, dreaming of the day when I might teach Japanese to American high-schoolers. This is the most meaningful thing I do as a professional. No exception.”

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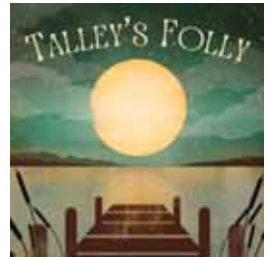
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in
Theatres**“Civil War” is Lean,
Breathless, Fearless**

by Andrew Tallackson

Kirsten Dunst stars
in “Civil War.”

It’s darn near impossible to treat “Civil War” as anything but a cautionary tale about America as its own worst enemy. The particulars about its Second American Civil War are hazy, but writer-director Alex Garland (“28 Days Later,” “Annihilation”) creates so many parallels to the past 10 years, the dizzying effect makes you itch with discomfort.

Thing is, Garland pulls it off. This is lean, angry, breathless, in-your-face filmmaking. What strikes me most, though, is that it’s a love letter to journalists. A celebration of free press. A reminder that old-school journalists are the last hope for capturing unfiltered truth.

Set in the near future, California and Texas have seceded from the United States. The president (Nick Offerman) rules by dictatorship...in his third term, no less.

In New York, photojournalist Lee Smith (Oscar-nominee Kirsten Dunst) and a fellow reporter, Joel (Wagner Moura), team up with Sammy (Stephen McKinley Henderson, wonderful), a veteran journalist, and Jessie (Cailee Spaeny), an aspiring photojournalist. They embark on a dangerous trek to Washington, D.C., to interview the president. Well, actually, be the *only* ones to interview the president, if possible.

I suppose if you’re going to critique the state of American affairs, you can’t entirely reinvent the wheel with the storytelling. “Civil War” becomes a dystopian road movie, complete with highways littered with abandoned vehicles and militant wackos.

But it is the stops along the way where Garland is at his most knowing. Smaller communities largely untouched by conflict suggest how pockets

**“Civil War”**

Running time: 109 minutes. Rated R for strong violent content, bloody/disturbing images and language throughout.

within America turn a deaf ear to domestic strife elsewhere. The most chilling scene: a rogue soldier (Oscar-nominee Jesse Plemons, Dunst’s real-life husband) spews xenophobic hate, symbolizing the resurgent fear of society’s “other.”

Through Dunst’s terrific performance, we see a new side to the actress: her face is a weary roadmap of experience and harsh truths. There is a toughness, a raw edge to her, and she’s beautifully contrasted by Spaeny, who felt muted in Sofia Coppola’s muddled “Priscilla,” but here does career-making work. She expertly captures the naive enthusiasm of wet-behind-the-ears journalists, that cheerful exterior hardening scene by scene.

The battle sequences are swift and bruising. Garland does not linger on the carnage, but plows through them with guerrilla-style efficiency. The movie, in fact, is at its best when capturing the fearless determination of journalists. Their job stops being about them, but being in the moment to obtain the truth.

And what truth does “Civil War” reveal? The photo that slowly develops at the end says a lot about, well, everything. Fortunately, we leave the film admiring the person who took it.

A brave journalist.

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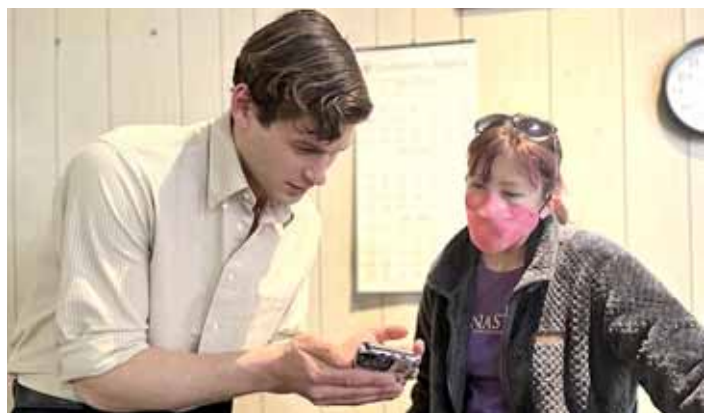
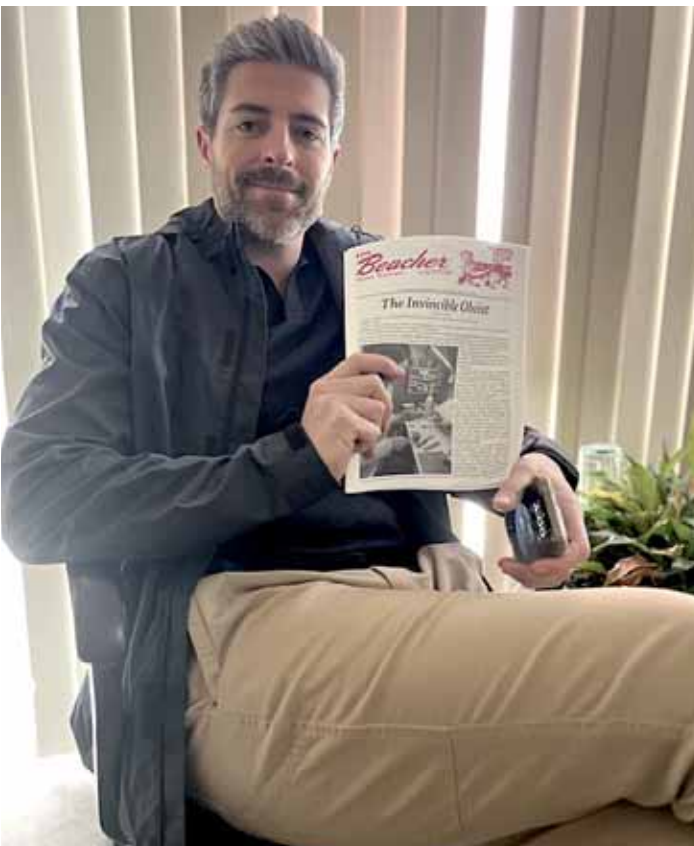
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Dan Meyer and the film crew for "Bulls" shot a quick scene at The Beacher on April 10. It features the lead characters being interviewed by the newspaper. All photos by Andrew Tallackson.





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LCSO Reveals its 2024-2025 Season

LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra's 2024-2025 season marks its 52nd season and the fourth directed by Dr. Carolyn Watson.

The season begins Sept. 14 with the 19th annual Hoosier Star fundraiser. The event features five youth and five adult finalists who each perform with the orchestra to vie for the title of Hoosier Star 2024.

Audience members vote for their favorite performance, and along with a panel of celebrity judges choose the winner.

In October, LCSO again presents its beloved Drayton Family Children's Education Concerts, now in its 39th year. More than 5,000 children from tri-county area schools attend the program.

The first subscription concert, "Dia De los Muertos," is Nov. 2 at LaPorte Civic Auditorium. The guest soloist, classical guitarist Guido Sanchez-Portuguez, will play Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez." The program also will feature works by Mexican composers Gabriela Ortiz, Carlos Chávez, José Pablo Moncayo and Arturo Márquez.

The traditional Holiday at the Pops is Dec. 14 at LaPorte Civic Auditorium.

On Feb. 8, 2025, LCSO will present the second subscription concert at LaPorte High School. The program, "Animal Kingdom," explores how sounds

of the natural world inspire classical music, including "Carnival of the Animals" by Camille Saint-Saëns, Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" and Australian composer Matthew Hindson's "Dangerous Creatures."

The third subscription concert, "The Sounds of Spring," is March 9 at The Holdcraft Performing Arts Center in Michigan City. It opens with Mendelssohn's "Overture to the Hebrides," followed by Lili Boulanger's "Of A Spring Morning." The program also includes the world premiere of Swedish composer Kjell Roikjer's "Concerto No. 2" for xylophone and string orchestra featuring soloist Jared Collier, the LCSO's education manager and member of the percussion section. Closing the concert is Schumann's first symphony.

The season concludes April 12 with "Some Enchanted Evening."

A tribute to Broadway's Golden Age, the program will celebrate Rodgers and Hammerstein with works from "The Sound of Music," "South Pacific," "The King and I," "Showboat" and "Oklahoma!" LCSO Executive Director Emily Yiannias joins the program as a soloist.

Subscriptions, which start at \$70 for four season concerts, are available by calling (219) 362-9020 or at www.LCSO.net. Single tickets become available Sept. 1.



Dr. Carolyn Watson

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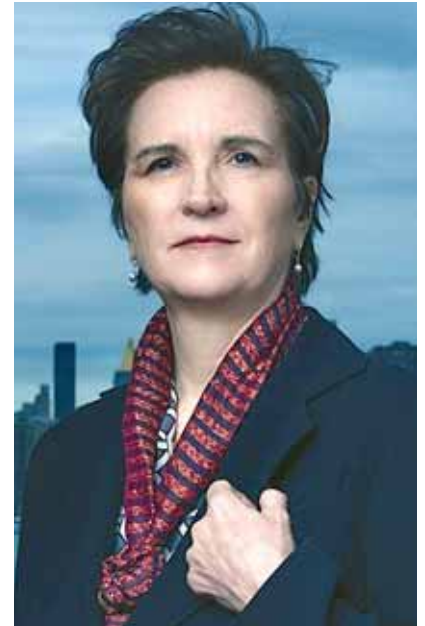
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Barber

Fresh off her European tour, Barber will perform with her band: Neal Alger on guitar, Emma Dayhuff on bass and Greg Artry on drums. The concert will feature original music and classic jazz.

Throughout her career, she has played jazz clubs and concert halls, produced records in Chicago and New York, collaborated with opera legend Renee Fleming and acclaimed composer Shulamit Ran and taught jazz singing as a Townsend Resident Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley. She was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2019.

Tickets, which are \$100, can be purchased at www.AcornLive.org.

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A Brush with Madness

The all-ages program is from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, April 18, at Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte.

Participants follow easy painting directions, with all supplies provided. No experience is necessary. The cost is \$8 per person.

Earth Day at Creek Ridge

Celebrate the holiday by picking up trash, and doing a reuse craft, from 4-6 p.m. Monday, April 22, at Creek Ridge County Park, 7943 W. County Road 400 North, Michigan City.

Celestial Night Hike

Observe a meteor shower during the free program from 7:30-9 p.m. Monday, April 22, at Creek Ridge County Park. Snacks are served.

Drum Fit for Boomers

The all-ages exercise program with music is from 9-10 a.m. Tuesday, April 23, at Red Mill County Park.

Drum on yoga balls to the beat of the music. Instruction, drum sticks and yoga balls provided.

Nature's Tiny Tots

Designed for parents and grandparents, explore nature with toddlers and preschoolers. Enjoy music, dancing, storytelling and, weather permitting, hiking.

The free program is from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 24.

Naturalist Guided Program

Learn to identify wild flowers that bloom only in spring from 5-6 p.m. Wednesday, April 24, at Bluhm County Park, 3855 S. County Road 1100 West, Westville.

Earth Day Beach Cleanup

Long Beach Parks & Recreation's annual beach cleanup, presented with Long Beach Civic Association, is from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, April 20.

Trash bags will be tied up at all stops for participants to use. The bags will be placed out Friday night so volunteers can start cleaning early, if so desired, on Saturday morning. The filled bags must be carried back to the stops. Ask for help lifting any large objects, and wear gloves to ensure safety.



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“Girls State” Wages a Bold Attack on Gender Imbalances

by Andrew Tallackson



The galvanizing presence of “Girls State”: Emily Worthmore, who investigates inadequacies between the boys and girls programs.

Back in its infancy, Apple TV+ released the terrific documentary “Boys State” (2020). It followed a select group of boys among the thousands attending the summer leadership-citizenship experience in Texas. What the movie revealed is that many of these boys had no political identities yet. They were simply regurgitating their parents’ ideologies. The relative few with vision and purpose found themselves in a tenuous uphill battle.

“Girls State,” the new Apple TV+ companion piece also directed by Jesse Moss and Amanda McBaine, begins with the same intentions, but shifts gears to become an early candidate for one of the year’s most compelling documentaries.

We suspect, just from the opening scene, that the week-long experience, this time in Missouri, is about empowering young women. And the first half, yes, that’s what we get.

We meet girls from various walks of life, from conservative to liberal. Young women of color brace for pushback from the largely white assembly, but interestingly enough, that proves *not* to be the case.

A few of the teens yield unexpected laughs. One, a conservative, says she can tell which girls are liberal because they’re “the loudest.” Another girl, interviewing to serve on the Girls State supreme court equivalent, stresses her keen interest in the Johnny



“Girls State”

Running time: 95 minutes. Apple TV+. Rated TV-14.

Depp-Amber Heard trial, clueless that the tabloid sensation is nowhere near a state supreme court.

As the girls vie for key positions, from governor to attorney general, something interesting happens. The girls, proving they do mature faster than boys, become keenly aware of the program’s curious climate. Some of that has to do with the fact that, for the first time, the Boy and Girls State programs are being held at the same time, on the same campus.

What these women discover is, the boys appear to be moving at a faster pace. They’re already diving headfirst into arguing, and setting, policies. The girls group, however, opens assemblies by singing the Girls State anthem. At one point, a mass meeting includes a dance routine. The girls question, is Girls State embracing the very gender clichés it is prepping young women to avoid at all costs? Is there, indeed, an uncomfortable disconnect?

Unlike the young men, who behaved like overly caffeinated frat boys in “Boys State,” these women have a keen sense of identity. They know who they are as women, what they believe.

That's when "Girls State" undergoes a radical shift, due in large part to the film's most fascinating subject: Emily Worthmore. She's a conservative Christian with aspirations to be elected governor by the week's end. She is a sharp, open-minded woman willing to embrace differences of opinion. When the gubernatorial election yields a not unexpected result, we expect her to be crushed. And briefly, she is.

Then, having shown an interest in journalism, she sets aside the election results and puts her reporting background to use, hoping to uncover what she and fellow Girls State attendees believe are gross inadequacies in the program.

I won't reveal what she discovers; suffice it to say, this is the first film in quite some time...where I gasped out loud. Shocked and disappointed. Her findings reveal buried truths about major gender imbalances.

Obviously, Moss and McBaine had permission from Girls State to shoot during the event or they wouldn't be there in the first place. That their film embraces *and* condemns its subject is incredibly brave, not just from the filmmakers, but from Girls



Young women of color attending Girls State don't quite encounter the pushback they expected.

State itself.

We leave "Girls State" profoundly challenged, more aware than ever that the war, the struggle for equality, remains at the forefront. And admiring these women for rocking the boat, refusing to behave how society expects them to be.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com

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Stitched, Woven and Hooked

by Linda Weigel

"In my inner soul art and life are inseparable."

Eva Hesse

For the 11 selected artists in "Stitched, Woven and Hooked," the latest exhibit at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St., Hesse's quote rings true. Each participant's fiber artwork reflects the individual's identity and highly personal interpretation of what most concerns them within the current cultural-sociological moment.

The show opened March 1 and closes June 15, spanning all three major galleries: Hyndman, Brinka-Cross and Susan Block.

Participating artists include: Melissa Blount, Dorothy Burge, Jessica Campbell, Shannon Downey, Laurel Izard, kg, Krystle Lemonias, Hattie Lee Mendoza, Jose Santiago Perez, Shaqui Reed and Galina Shevchenko.

Textile art has been around nearly as long as ceramic art, dating to prehistoric times as far back as 100,000 to 500,000 years ago. Initially created for practical purposes such as clothing, baskets and blankets, the need for textiles evolved over the eons into worldwide, culturally rich textile designs identifying specific groups/societies. Examples could include tartan plaids, Ikat, Batik, Kente cloth and Navaho woven blankets. The great woven tapestries of the Middle Ages often depicted scenes from myths, fables or everyday life, offering color and design while simultaneously providing protecting warmth from the drafty, stone walls of ancient buildings. The link between practicality and beauty continues in many quarters, even today.

However, things began to shift in the 20th century. Working with cloth, yarn and thread techniques, women began expressing themselves politically and socially, using traditional methods in weaving, stitching, hooking and embroidery to challenge what was, and in some respects continues to be, a male-dominated art establishment. Artists such as Eva Hesse, Annie Albers, Sheila Hicks, Lenore Tawney, Claire Zeisler, Kay Sekimachi and Magdalena Abakanowicz provided a foundation for current fiber artists. They have reclaimed the textile arts as their preferred method of expression, often incorporating new materials with multifaceted intent and practice, thereby commenting on everything from ecological issues and the traditional role of women to societal justice.

□

"Art does not solve problems but makes us aware of their existence. It opens our eyes to see and our brain to imagine." Magdalena Abakanowicz



Shaqui Reed's "Intersection of Identity" appears in the foreground. All photos by Linda Weigel

The narrative nature found in much of the work in LCA's current exhibit may be challenging for some or disturbing for others. This is not surprising, as today's artists reflect the world they inhabit: the economic, cultural and political world that personally impacts their experiences. The exhibit information poster states: *"In their work, the personal is political."* That sentiment rings true for each artist in this high quality show. As always, I encourage anyone visiting to read the posted information next to or nearby each work.

As you enter the Hyndman Gallery, you encounter a central sculptural form by the artist Shaqui Reed, a tent form titled "Intersection of Identity." Featuring crystals, beads, plastic barrettes, lace and other items, the work feels intimate. Also, be sure to read the text included on the handmade rug placed within the tent. Reed has two other works in the exhibit. I found the totem sculpture titled "In Heritage and Healing: Monument: For the ones who came before" very interesting and, after reading the accompanying description, more so.

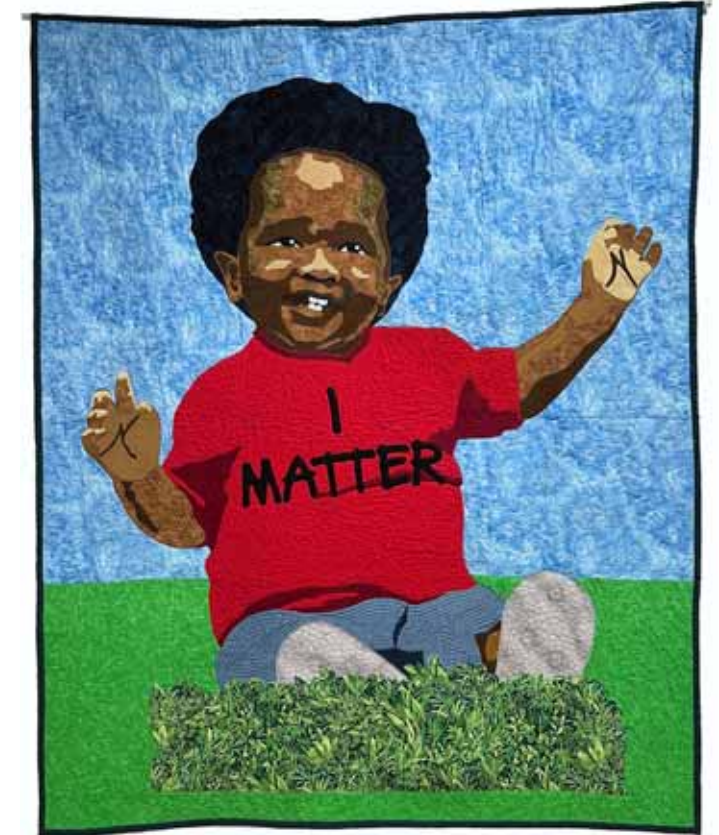
Dorothy Burge's quilts represent more than simple patterned quilt. Burge's "I Matter" is a piece that *"was created in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012."* Equally, her other four works bring a sobering recognition and cry for social justice. The individual pieces are beautifully executed, making their point in a straightforward, non-apol-

ogetic manner. Clearly for Burge, the personal is political.

Jessica Campbell has three free-form carpet tufted works included. The artist statement says, *"Campbell has primarily been using carpet to create art works that visually mimic latch hook rugs but deviate from this medium's precedents in their subject matter, depiction style, and scale."* The sculpted nature of the tufting, itself, presents a dimensional quality that, although tempting to want to touch, should be simply studied instead.

Hattie Lee Mendoza offers five works, including her intriguing "Grandmother's Tribute Series, 2021." *"As a product of Cherokee, Scottish, Swiss-German, and other diaspora, Hattie is, in the very makeup of her DNA, a collage of cultures, values, histories, and personal aesthetics."* For the viewer, the collage of ancestral influences results in a nuanced layer of emotions and response.

Melissa Blount returns to LCA in the exhibit. Much like her 2020 "Black Girl Magic" in the LCA's "Well Behaved Women: Celebrating 100 Years of Women's Suffrage (see July 16, 2020, *Beacher* article), she again presents embroidered works with significant underlying messages. The three fiber works represent *"a time in our history, past and present-day facts and struggles."* The stark white of the fabric contrasts against the embroidery in her works. "Statue of Limitations" stands strong along-



"I Matter" by Dorothy Burge.

side Blount's posted satirical poem, unfiltered and direct. All three fiber pieces speak to what Blount describes as the false narrative of black women as compliant, docile and in service to others.

Krystle Lemonias has three powerful fiber works showcased. Through her use of collaged and stitched fabrics, she has produced works that easily could have been painted, yet the textural quality of the works, themselves, enhance and entice one to look closer, to study the faces recognizing the complexity and fluidity of the stitching and other outlines.

Shannon Downey presents one work, "Liberation," that includes a hand-embroidered first communion dress mounted over a cross made of barn wood. The piece is stark, possibly unsettling, highly personal, as well as political. The accompanying artist statement says *"her path from childhood to adulthood has been an endless journey away from religion and towards truth, benevolence, and joy."* This piece surely represents that path from early childhood ritual and sacrament — a looking back to childhood.

Fiber artist Laurel Izard completes the works

Continued on Page 24

Continued From Page 23

displayed in the Hyndman Gallery. Her quilts “Guns for Girls” and “Tanks and Bears” are part of her broader series titled “American Childhood.” Izard utilizes collected vintage baby blankets and quilts with sweet scenes. She then embroiders atop the quilts with images that contrast against the former, resulting in a contradiction between the sweet and warm and the realities of dangers in our current modern life. That contrasting imagery is stark and to the point, leaving no room for speculation of intent.

Upstairs in the Brinka-Cross Gallery, you will find coiled basket works by artist José Santiago Pérez and small woven pieces by kg (Karolina Gnatowski).

Pérez presents three basketry forms made from coiled mylar emergency blankets. This unusual material sparkles as containers that are not at all practical, but sculptural, shimmery/reflective beautiful organic forms. He also has a small floor piece you won't want to miss.

kg offers five small woven works that incorporate highly personal objects in a narrative relatable to many viewers. In “Sweetliste Drogi,” kg presents a woven piece with sticks “tucked in linen dyed in cochineal stamped with braided nylon mason cord holding golden letters from my father's funeral wreath against a brick wall.” It took me a moment to consider the importance, including those golden letters, and the personal impact that would represent.



Melissa Blount's "Statue of Limitations."

The Susan Block Gallery offers an animated video with accompanying digital embroidery installation by Galina Shevchenko, originally from Moscow and now a Chicago-based multimedia artist. Titled “Unkissed and Non-Conforming,” this multifaceted work is especially fascinating in light of what it represents. In her handout, Shevchenko clarifies the following: “*Unkissed and Non-Conforming*’ is a project dealing with the notions of heroism in the context of war in the former USSR/current Russia. Through this exploration I am attempting to channel the two paradigms of heroism: super-humanity & sacrifice of the Soviet women of the WWII verses the foundation of the new heroism of today’s women in Russia: willingness to sustain their humanity and resist fighting.”

Throughout time, the textile arts have been a means to tell stories, and express history and societal values. Fiber artists today have revolutionized the form by retrieving works produced in yarn, embroidery floss and contemporary materials as politically and socially challenging art, works that speak to the internal self and external forces. The perceived suppleness and softness of the works are illusionary as to the intent and very real concerns of the artists’ making. The works are not handicraft nor functional.

Each is a visual statement, making the personal political, bringing an awareness and dialogue to our complex society.

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Twenty Years Later, “Napoleon Dynamite” is Still a Laugh Riot

by Andrew Tallackson



The peculiar Dynamite clan: Napoleon (Jon Heder, center), older brother Kip (Aaron Ruell, right) and creepy Uncle Rico (Jon Gries).

The first time, I hated it.

The second time, I got the joke.

The third through too-many-times-to-count time, I adored it.

Hard to believe “Napoleon Dynamite” celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Twenty years later, we’re still quoting it, still noticing things we missed, still slipping into Napoleon’s mouth-breathing bark when uttering phrases like “gosh” or “idiot.”

What is the staying power of this cultural phenomenon? I believe it’s that the characters, wackadoodle as they may be, cling to a universal desire for acceptance. To feel a sense of belonging, that they matter to someone else. The bonds, the emphasis on friendship, are the heart of the picture. Why it speaks to so many people.

When reviewing the film back in 2004 for another publication, I dismissed it as a “random freak show,” bestowing it with a lowly 1 ½ star rating.

Later that year, when my wife asked that we rent it — word of mouth catapulted the \$400,000 indie project into a nearly \$50 million hit — I relented, finally appreciating what director Jared Hess and

past
present

Andrew Tallackson



his wife/co-writer Jerusha Hess created. There is *nothing* random about it. Every image, every joke, every character embellishment has a purpose to be savored through multiple viewings.

The film’s tone is deadpan absurdism. The characters, and the Idaho town they populate, seem trapped in a time loop. Where 1982 arrived and never left. Many characters speak in clipped bursts, as if they’re programmed robots. Everyone, it seems, is coasting through life.

The late, great critic Roger Ebert, in his review of “Napoleon Dynamite,” perfectly described the title character, played by Jon Heder, as “*the kind of nerd other nerds avoid.*” In a serious film, or a bland

Hallmark movie, he'd probably be defined as existing on the autism spectrum. But in this world, we just accept him as "different." With Moon Boots as his footwear of choice, a tortured perm, zero filters and an inability to look directly at people, he's the target of school bullies. A joke to be repeatedly joked about at school.

Thing is, Napoleon does not care what others think. When he performs in class with the "Happy Hands" sign language club, the theme from "The Rose" playing on cassette tape, you're inclined to react as school jock Don (Trevor Snarr) does: with chuckling disbelief. When he tries to impress new friend Pedro (Efren Ramirez) with an epic fail bike-ramp jump, he's clueless.

But here's the thing about Napoleon. He is fiercely devoted to his friends. No one, for instance, makes an attempt to meet Pedro (the principal is unchecked casual racism)...except for Napoleon. He sees this as an opportunity to click with another outcast.

Ditto Deb (Tina Majorino), who clearly likes Napoleon, but he's too oblivious to notice. He doesn't know how to initiate legitimate back-and-forth chatter, instead opting for conversation starters about school milk: *"I see you're drinking 1%. Is that 'cause you think you're fat? 'Cause you're not."*

His family, by the way, is another story. Older brother Kip (Aaron Ruell) is in his early 30s, sitting at home all day "chatting online with babes." Napoleon may be outwardly strange, but Kip is worse. Retreating into himself, with little contact with the outside world. Kip is an example of the movie's deadpan style. When Deb stops by the house trying to sell charms and bracelets to Napoleon, she says it's to raise money for college. In the background, we hear Kip shout, *"Your mom goes to college."* It is a juvenile, not especially funny jab, but the fact that Kip *believes* he's funny, smugly satisfied, makes the gag hilarious.

When Kip and Napoleon's grandmother/caretaker injures herself on an ATV, Uncle Rico (Jon Gries) arrives to babysit them. He's the prototype of the small-town creep. The guy who didn't even peak in high school, but believes he did, and wishes life could retreat to those days.

The first half of "Napoleon Dynamite" devotes itself to capturing how its title oddball navigates the treacherous waters of high school. He clearly tries to elevate himself with outrageous falsehoods — he was out hunting wolverines, he's efficient with nun-

chuks — but what's interesting is how, as friendship becomes the core of his existence, all that nonsense evaporates. For as much as we view the character with the perplexed curiosity of a science experiment, we admire his devotion to friends, especially as Pedro runs for student class president against the hilariously vain Summer Wheatley (Haylie Duff).

What's refreshing about the world the Hesses create is, when they infuse actors of color into the story, they don't descend into racial stereotypes. Pedro is just as insecure about fitting in as everyone else. That his cousins back his run for class president is hilariously touching.

Kip's online love interest, LaFawnduh (Shondrella Avery), is a tall, voluptuous black woman, but she exists not as a throwaway racial joke. Ruell, the actor who plays Kip, has joked in interviews about the ludicrous nature of these two. Why, he laughs, would this gorgeous black woman be interested in a pale, skinny dork like Kip? But in the off-kilter world of Napoleon and company, she's



Kip (Aaron Ruell) is transformed by his new girlfriend, LaFawnduh (Shondrella Avery).

the ice breaker designed to thaw Kip out of his frozen existence.

At the end, when Napoleon risks embarrassing himself at a school assembly, his dance routine designed to bolster Pedro's 11th hour campaign pitch, we realize something about the character. Yes, he's bizarre. But at the core, he's the best friend any outcast could desire. Moments before a nervous Pedro steps on stage to read his campaign speech, Napoleon tells him, *"Just listen to your heart. That's what I do."*

That moment is likely what endeared him to all of us. In this crazy, unbalanced world, we may look different. We may speak differently. We may not adhere to the "norm." But it is our connection with others, the bonds we nurture with family and friends, that make life livable.

The happy ending of "Napoleon Dynamite" reminds us we can't exist in protective bubbles. Only through other people can we thrive. And when, after the credits, we witness Kip and LaFawnduh's laugh-out-loud wedding (shot after the movie's initial success as a thank you to fans), the film has achieved wacko perfection. Somehow, the Hesses transformed this world where we first laughed at the characters into one where we laugh *with* them.

A classic, 20 years later.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com



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Chesterton Art Center



Teen Arts Group artists work on the mural.

Chesterton Art Center has successfully completed its mural public-art project, a collaborative effort showcasing its Teen Arts Group.

Every year, TAG executes a special public art project. Under the guidance of Education Director Jillian Bridgeman and Robert Hogan, an Australian-born, Chicago-based designer-artist, TAG members experienced every step of the process. That ranged from initial planning and budgeting to learning how to create and refine large-scale work.

Home Depot of Valparaiso supported the TAG mural project.

TAG is a free monthly program for artists ages 13-18 interested in professional experiences and strengthening visual art practices. They learn from each other and professional artists, explore area and Chicago museums and galleries, and work on individual portfolio development.

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

Art Barn Juried Art Exhibition

An awards reception for the 30th Art Barn School of Art Juried Art Exhibition is from 5-8 p.m. Friday, April 19, at Art Barn, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso.

More than \$4,300 will be awarded during the reception that features light bites, refreshments and a cash bar. Brian Byrn, Midwest Museum of American Art director and curator, was the juror. More than 170 applicants from Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Tennessee, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Maryland and California submitted work. One hundred pieces by 97 artists will be exhibited through May 23.

Visit www.artbarnschool.org or call (219) 462-9009 for more details.



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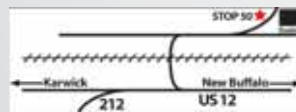
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Indiana Dunes National Park

- **Science Fridays Series from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Friday, April 19, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** The presentations by local experts change topics each month. On April 19, President Kim Ehn and Board Member Dan Barriball, both of Dunes-Calumet Audubon Society, will discuss the science of observing birds at a favorite outdoor spot.
- **The Save the Tunes Council performs from 7:30-9 p.m. Friday, April 19, 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.
- **Chellberg Farm Care from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, April 20, 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.
- **Chellberg Farm Open House from 1-3 p.m. Saturdays-Sundays in April.** Rangers and volunteers share the area's history as visitors tour the farmhouse/garden and visit the animals. Passes are required. The parking lot is off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter.
- **Nature Play Date from 1-3 p.m. Saturdays in April at the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education.** Participate in a nature-themed craft, visit the live animal room or build a fort in the Nature Play Zone. The program is sponsored by Friends of Indiana Dunes.
- **Miller Woods Hike from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Sundays in April at Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education.** The ranger-led stroll explores a rare black oak savanna, and offers views of Lake Michigan and Chicago.
- **Community Park-wide Cleanup for Earth Day from 9 a.m.-noon Monday, April 22, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** Sponsored by Friends of Indiana Dunes, Mermaid Straw and the park's volunteer office, guests work with staff

to pick up trash. Dress for the weather. Equipment and protective gear are provided. Temporary passes are available.

- **Drop-In Volunteer Program (Trash Trekkers) from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily 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 for more details.



April 30 is the deadline for teens to apply for five positions with Youth Conservation Corps), a work-learn-earn program for 15- to 18-year-olds.

Participants are paid \$7.25 an hour for the 40-hour week June 2-Aug. 10, and applicants should be prepared to work the entire program length. Teens are part of a crew that does manual labor tasks, normally outdoors, including mowing grass, picking up trash, cleaning restrooms, grounds keeping and light trail maintenance.

No experience is necessary. Participants are selected by random draw from the applicant pool. To be eligible, teens must be U.S. citizens and 15 before June 2, but not turn 19 before Aug. 10. The application is available through high school guidance offices, the IDNP Office at (219) 395-177 or online at www.nps.gov/indu/parkmgmt/jobs.htm



The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is at 100 N. Lake St. in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Call (219) 395-1882 or visit www.nps.gov/indu for details.

Indiana Dunes State Park

The following programs will be offered:

- **Garlic Mustard Pulling Party from 9-11 a.m. Saturday, April 20.** Part of National Volunteer Week, join other volunteers to remove invasive garlic mustard. Long pants and garden gloves are recommended. The Friends of Indiana Dunes provides snacks and water.
- **Beginner Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Workshops on Saturday, April 20.** Sessions are from 10:30 a.m.-noon and 1-2:30 p.m. Learn the art of wire wrapping to make beach-glass jewelry. The cost is \$7, and pre-registration is required.
- **Wildflower Wander at 10 a.m. Sunday, April 21.** Meet at the Nature Center for the easy discovery walk to see which woodland spring wildflowers are blooming.
- **Beach Mysteries Table from 2-3 p.m. Sunday, April 21.** Meet at the Nature Center to identify items found on the beach.



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

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Michigan City Public Library

Michigan City Public Library's circulation/front lobby area is open to the public. Public seating is available, and the computer lab is open. Hours are: 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday and closed Sundays.

The following programs are scheduled:

- **Bad Art Night for Adults from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, April 18.** 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.
- **Afternoon Movie: "Barbie" at 2 p.m. Friday, April 19.** The comedy is Rated PG-13.
- **Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, April 20.** Miltenberger can offer tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record.
- **Kennedy's Kitchen at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 20.** The band's modern sound is rooted in traditional Irish music.
- **Great Decisions at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 22.** The foreign-policy discussion program continues its 26th season. The focus is "Understanding Indonesia." Reading material is available at the circulation desk. Call 873-3049 for more details.
- **World Book Day (youth through age 17) all day Tuesday, April 23.** Children who come to the library dressed as a character from their favorite book can pick out a free book. See Youth Department librarians for details.
- **Internet Basics Class at noon Tuesday, April 23.** Learn how to use Internet browsers, search engines and websites.
- **Tinkercad 3-D Modeling from 4-5 p.m. Wednesday, April 24, in the Makerspace.** Registration is required for the program that involves Tinkercad, a free online collection of software tools. This session, for children 9-17, serves as an introduction to 3-D design, art and printing. No experience is necessary. All registered participants receive a 3-D print of his/her creations. Register at the Youth Services desk or call (219) 873-3045 for more info. Space is limited. MCPL 3-D printing rules apply, and the printing fee is waived for this program.
- **Genealogy Help with Pat Harris from 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays in April.** Harris can offer tips

and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record

- **Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in April.** 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.
- **Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17) from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in April.** 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.
- **Frogs Scavenger Hunt in April.** Find the characters hidden in Youth Services for a prize. Locations change each week.
- **Weekly Crafts for Kids & Teens.** Each week offers a different project. Take-home craft kits are available, or create some in the Makerspace.
- **Learning Center volunteers needed for children and adults.** Areas include reading, math, high school equivalency and English as a Second Language. All supplies and training are provided. Volunteers are needed two hours a week. Contact Jessica Hoffmaster at (219) 873-3043 or stop by the Learning Center for more details.
- **Collector's Breakfast Fundraiser for the Friends of the Library at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, April 20, at St. John United Church of Christ Fellowship Hall, 101 St. John Road.** Tickets, which cost \$25, are available at the library circulation desk. Each person can take one item for appraisal by Martin Papke of Kathy's Antiques, Chesterton.



Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit www.mclib.org or call (219) 873-3049 for more details.



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Eateries Aid Local Shelter



Two local restaurants partnered to support the nightly meal provided through Michigan City's Nest Community Shelter. The Polish Peasant (top photo) reached out to Nest Executive Director Harrison Holtkamp about doing something special for Easter dinner at the shelter, 1001 W. Eighth St. Owners-chefs Mark and Amanda Kolasa donated a complete Easter dinner. Earlier in March, guests were treated to dinner courtesy of LaPatrona Food Truck of Cabo's Ice Cream (bottom photo).



NB Library Community Forum

Lake Michigan College art lecturer Susan Wilczak will explore what makes a painting or a sculpture "art" during the next New Buffalo Library Community Forum.

The program, which focuses especially on modern and contemporary work, is at 6 p.m. EDT Tuesday, April 23, at New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St.

The free program is sponsored by the Friends of the New Buffalo Library.



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In the Area

April 18 — Bad Art Night for Adults, 5-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

April 18 — A Brush with Madness, 6-8 p.m., Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Cost: \$8. Info: (219) 325-8315, www.laportecountyparks.org

April 19 — Afternoon Movie: “Barbie,” 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

April 20 — Long Beach Parks/Long Beach Civic Association annual beach cleanup, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

April 20 — Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

April 20 — Star Wars Celebration, 9-11 a.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

April 20 — Kennedy’s Kitchen, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

April 21 — Michigan City Chamber Music Festival, Lakeside Artist Guild program, “The Grand Sextet!,” 3 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 121 W. Ninth St. Free. Info: www.mccmf.org

April 22 — Earth Day program, 4-6 p.m., Creek

Ridge County Park, 7943 W. County Road 400 North, Michigan City. Info: (219) 325-8315, www.laportecountyparks.org

April 22 — Great Decisions, 6:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

April 22 — Celestial Night Hike, 7:30-9 p.m., Creek Ridge County Park, 7943 W. County Road 400 North, Michigan City. Info: (219) 325-8315, www.laportecountyparks.org

April 23 — Drum Fit for Boomers, 9-10 a.m., Red Mill County Park, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, LaPorte. Info: (219) 325-8315, www.laportecountyparks.org

April 23 — Hoosier Author Talk with Bruce Johnson, 7-8 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

April 24 — Michigan City Senior Center (Washington Park) grand re-opening open house, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

April 24 — Tinkercad 3-D Modeling, 4-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3045.

April 24 — Naturalist Guided Program, 5-6 p.m., Bluhm County Park, 3855 S. County Road 1100 West, Westville. Info: (219) 325-8315, www.laportecountyparks.org

April 24 — Storytime for Adults, 6-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

In April — “Whimsical Warhol: Pop Portraits by Exceptional Learners of Chesterton High School”/“How the Depot was Saved and How it Survives Today,” The Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery, 525 S. Broadway. “Whimsical Warhol” runs through April 21/“How the Depot was Saved” through April 28. Info: www.bsdepot.org

Through April 30 — Towns of LaPorte County Pop-Up” display (Rolling Prairie), LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave., LaPorte. Info: (219) 324-6767.

Through May 6 — Works by Jane Cowley, Ellen Firme Gallery, 92 W. U.S. 12, Beverly Shores.

Through June — Work by Julie Kasniunas, 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. *Reception:* after 10:30 a.m. Mass on May 5. Info: lucia@qas.org

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.

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

Tuesdays in April — Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17), 3:30-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Wednesdays — Al-Anon meeting for Friends/Family of Alcoholics, 6 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 600 Franklin Square. Enter at Sixth Street Barker Hall side. Info: Candy at (708) 927-5287.

Thursdays in April — 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.

Fridays — Overeaters Anonymous, 9:30 a.m. Info: Jan at (219) 241-8757, Paula at (219) 588-3127, www.oa.org

Saturdays in LaPorte — Guided tours, 2-3 p.m., LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

Second Tuesday of the Month — Stroke Support Group for Survivors and Caregivers, 2 p.m., Mother Maria Theresia Room, Franciscan Health Michigan City, 3500 Franciscan Way. Info: Kelly Wise at Kelly.wise@franciscanalliance.org

In the Region

April 19 — Science Fridays Series, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

April 19 — Awards reception, 30th Art Barn School of Art Juried Art Exhibition, 5-8 p.m., Art Barn, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Exhibit runs through May 23. Info: (219) 462-9009, www.artbarnschool.org

April 19 — The Save the Tunes Council, 7:30-9 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

April 19 — Grahame Lesh & The North, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$25 + \$4.50 convenience fee, \$50 + \$4.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 20 — Chellberg Farm Care, 9 a.m.-noon, Bailly Homestead/Chellberg Farm, 618 N. Mineral Springs Road, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

April 20 — Garlic Mustard Pulling Party, 9-11 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 20 — Beginner Beach Glass Wire-Wrapping Workshops, 10:30 a.m.-noon & 1-2:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Cost: \$7. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 20 — Aaron Lee Tasjan with Molly Martin, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive,

Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$25 + \$4.50 convenience fee, \$50 + \$4.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 21 — Wildflower Wander, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Cost: \$7. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 21 — Beach Mysteries Table, 2-3 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Cost: \$7. Info: (219) 926-1390.

April 21 — Alejandro Escovedo with James Mastro, 7 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$50 + \$7 convenience fee, \$75 + \$7 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

April 22 — Community Park-wide Cleanup for Earth Day, 9 a.m.-noon, Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

April 23 — What Is Art? (With a Focus on Modern and Contemporary Work), 6 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

Through April 27 — “Duneland Weavers’ Guild’s Fiber Art ’24,” “Expressive Minds: the CAC Youth Art Exhibition,” Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chesterton-art.org

Through April 28 — Kevin Firme, “Sculpture and Drawings,” Midwest Museum of Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart.

Through May 2 — Peter Wise exhibit (paintings/mixed media/montages), Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso.

Through May 5 — Community Student Art Exhibition, The Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Hours: noon-4 p.m. EDT Thur.-Sun. Info: <https://boxfactoryforthearts.org>

Through May 5 — “Radiator Mascots: Art, Style & Story,” The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Sun. Admission: \$11/adults, \$9.50/seniors 60+, \$7/youth ages 6-18. Info: (574) 235-9714, (888) 391-5600, www.studebakermuseum.org

Through May 12 — “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 May 12 — Photo exhibit of 1926 Valparaiso fire, Porter County Museum (PoCo Muse), 20 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso. Free admission. Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Sun. Info: www.pocomuse.org, @pocomuse on social media.

Through May 12 — “Facing the Giant: 3 Decades of Dissent,” Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. *Also on display:* Aaron Martin’s

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

Continued From Page 35

“Nébwakat Mshiké: Wise Turtle,” through 2024. Info: www.krasl.org, (269) 983-0271.

Through May 31 — “Birds, Butterflies & the Beauty That Surrounds Them” (Pamela Kirkham’s original acrylic paintings), Fernwood Botanical Garden Clark Gallery, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. Info: www.pamkirkham.com

Through July 28 — “Family Haulers: The American Station Wagon,” The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Sun. Admission: \$11/adults, \$9.50/seniors 60+, \$7/youth ages 6-18. Info: (574) 235-9714, (888) 391-5600, www.studebakermuseum.org

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

Saturdays in April — Nature Play Date, 1-3 p.m., Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education, 100 N. Lake St., Gary’s Miller Beach neighborhood. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/

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

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

Vickers Theatre — *Now Showing*: “A Streetcar Named Desire.” Rated PG. Time: 7 p.m. April 18. *Also*: “Wicked Little Letters.” Rated R. Times: 4 & 7 p.m. April 19, 4 p.m. April 20-21. *Also*: “Hundreds of Beavers.” Rated PG-13. Time: 7 p.m. April 20. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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| 3. Spare Me, Pin Ups | 15 | 19 |

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES

| | SCORE |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1. Jill Jankowski | 178 |
| 2. Dottie Brinckman | 174 |
| 3. Tammy Vouri | 166 |
| 4. Mary Lou McFadden | 161 |
| 5. Mary McDonald | 160 |
| 6. Deb Frederick | 158 |
| 7. Nancy Kubath | 156 |
| 8. Genny Kohler | 153 |
| 9. Kim Stokes | 150 |

SPLITS

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Nancy Klausner | 5-7 |
| Susan Kieffer | 3-10 |
| Deb Konicek | 6-7 |
| Lisa Albers | 3-9-10 |
| Tammy Vouri | 5-10 |
| Diana Holt | 2-7, 3-10 |

THREE STRIKES

Jill Jankowski

Public Art Committee

Michigan City Public Art Committee meets at 10 a.m. Thursday, April 18, at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St.

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LaPorte County Public Library

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

The following programs are planned:

- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, April 19, at the main library.** Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- **Star Wars Celebration from 9-11 a.m. Saturday, April 20, in the main library Reading Wi-Fi Garden.** The program includes a "Star Wars" craft and movie marathon.
- **Hoosier Author Talk with Bruce Johnson from 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, in the main library Meeting Room B.** County Historian Bruce Johnson will discuss the likes of Kurt Vonnegut, Gene Stratton-Porter and James Whitcomb Riley.
- **Storytime for Adults from 6-7 p.m. Wednesday, April 24, at the main library Meeting Room B.** The program involves reading from short stories, excerpts from novels and/or poetry. Coffee will be provided.

LaPorte County Public Library is located at 904 Indiana Ave. The Coolspring Branch is located at 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Visit www.laportelibrary.org for more details, including programming through the Exchange building.

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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On April 18, 1775, Paul Revere began his famous ride between the Massachusetts towns of Charlestown and Lexington, warning American colonists of the approach of British troops.

On April 18, 1818, President James Monroe signed a bill creating the state of Illinois.

On April 18, 1858, rain began falling on the Chicago area, and continued to fall for 60 consecutive days.

On April 18, 1921, Junior Achievement, created to encourage business skills in young people, incorporated.

On April 18, 1923, the first game was played in Yankee Stadium.

On April 18, 1924, the first crossword puzzle book was published by Simon & Schuster.

On April 19, 1775, the Revolutionary War began in Massachusetts as British and American forces began fighting at both Lexington and Concord.

On April 19, 1865, the funeral for President Abraham Lincoln was held in the White House.

On April 19, 1892, in Springfield, Mass., Charles E. Duryea took his horseless carriage — the first American-made automobile — out of his shop for a successful drive.

On April 19, 1897, the first Boston Marathon was run from Ashland to Boston. Winner John McDermott ran the course in 2 hours, 55 minutes, 10 seconds.

On April 19, 1910, after weeks of being viewed through telescopes, Halley's Comet was reported visible to the naked eye in Curacao.

On April 20, 1857, Chicago Mayor John "Long John" Wentworth led a raid on the "Sands," a notorious North Michigan Avenue vice district.

On April 20, 1902, scientists Marie and Pierre Curie succeeded in isolating the radioactive element radium.

On April 20, 1949, Mayo Clinic scientists revealed they synthesized a hormone to treat rheumatoid arthritis named "cortisone."

On April 20, 1955, Richard Daley began his first term as Chicago mayor. He was re-elected five times.

On April 20, 1972, the manned lunar module from Apollo 16 landed on the moon.

On April 21, 1649, the Maryland Toleration Act, providing for freedom of worship for all Christians, was passed by the Maryland Assembly.

On April 21, 1836, at San Jacinto, with the battle cry "Remember the Alamo!" an army of Texans,

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led by Gen. Sam Houston, defeated a Mexican Army led by Gen. Santa Anna. Few battles in history have had such a devastating effect on a nation as did this one on Mexico. In the treaty that followed, they ceded to the new Republic of Texas all of present-day Texas, about half of New Mexico, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming. Ten years later, in the Mexican War with the United States — fueled by a dispute over the southern boundary of Texas — Mexico lost Arizona, California and the rest of New Mexico.

On April 21, 1843, Chicago passed an ordinance prohibiting pigs from running free on the streets of the city.

On April 21, 1925, the Chicago neighborhood of Streeterville got its name when Elmo Streeter was arrested for “squatting” on the land.

On April 22, 1348, at a royal ball in England, the Countess of Salisbury was dancing with King Edward III when one of her garters slipped off. The king retrieved it and put it on his leg. This was the beginning of the Order of the Garter, the highest order of English knighthood.

On April 22, 1864, Congress first authorized the director of the U.S. Mint to use the motto “In God We Trust” on all coins.

On April 22, 1904, J. Robert Oppenheimer, the nuclear physicist who headed the first U.S. atomic bomb development project, was born in New York.

On April 23, 1564, William Shakespeare, considered the greatest dramatist the world has known, was born in Stratford-on-Avon, an English market town about 80 miles northwest of London.

On April 23, 1838, the first transatlantic steamship service began as two ships arrived in New York from England.

On April 23, 1848, the Illinois & Michigan Canal, linking Chicago with the Mississippi River, officially opened.

On April 23, 1954, Hank Aaron, in a game against the St. Louis Cardinals, hit the first of his record 755 major league home runs.

On April 23, 1969, Sirhan Sirhan was sentenced to death for assassinating Sen. Robert Kennedy of New York. (The sentence later was reduced to life imprisonment.)

On April 24, 1704, *The Boston News Letter* commenced publication. It was the first American newspaper printed on a regular basis over an extended period of time.

On April 24, 1800, with a start-up fund of \$5,000 “for the purchase of such books as may be necessary,” and with the books from Thomas Jefferson’s entire library, the Library of Congress was officially established.

On April 24, 1897, William Price, upon reporting for work at *The Washington Star*, became the first journalist with the title “White House Reporter.”

On April 24, 1953, Queen Elizabeth II knighted British statesman Winston Churchill.

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5anxiousal@gmail.com

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**Prayer to the Blessed Virgin**

(Never known to fail.)

Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the 'Sea, help me and show me, herein you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth! I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in

this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3x). Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in Eternal Glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. After 3 days, the request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor is granted.

Galway Confidential by Ken Bruen (hardcover \$26.95 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audio CD. 256 pages.)

“How do you come out of a coma?”

“I was bewildered, befuddled, but mostly I was very —

“Thirsty.”

Jack Taylor spent 18 months in a coma. A lot can happen in that time. Like a pandemic.

This is Book 17 in the series set in Ireland about Jack Taylor, a private investigator. Never read Ken Bruen before, and it's unfortunate I didn't get around to him sooner. He has a way of saying a lot with few words. So if you're looking for a one- or two-night read, this may be it.

The first person Taylor sees upon waking from his coma is a man who calls himself Raftery and says he saved him from a severe beating and stabbing. Raftery tells the nurse he is Taylor's brother, which isn't true, of course, so what's his agenda?

Taylor doesn't even recognize Raftery, but he comes with a hidden bottle of Jameson whiskey on his person, so what's not to like?

He says he's Irish-American and host of a podcast called “Galway Confidential.” He says he has 20,000 listeners. Taylor takes him at his word; after all, he's still a little woozy from his attack. Raftery tells Taylor he threw the assailant over the bridge, where the police picked him up — still alive.

Taylor also is visited by Sheila Winston, a former nun who wants him to investigate who's targeting and killing nuns in the city. She thinks the police are not interested in finding the killer. Raftery says he knows about the attacks and is using his podcast to flush out the killer. He could use Taylor's help.

Then, Taylor learns about two sadistic young men targeting homeless people. Their idea of a good time is dousing them with lighter fluid, then tossing a match. They are on Taylor's radar, as their latest victim is someone he knew. Taylor decides the best way to catch the pair is to pose as their next victim.

His hunch pays off, as he smashes the leg of one assailant while the other runs away. The injured boy's parents try to sue Taylor, but he gets off with the help of a lawyer who says he will work pro bono. Of course, Taylor now owes him a favor, and it doesn't take long for that favor to come front and center. The lawyer says a certain woman is threat-

Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



ening a married man with knowledge of a recent affair she had with him. How about Taylor has a friendly talk with her? Although, I don't think talk is the word the lawyer meant.

Before that talk can happen, the Mother Superior of the local convent calls Taylor in and persuades him to find the killer of three nuns — oh wait, the count is now four as the latest victim is none other than the former Sister Sheila Winston. His conscience now makes him intent on finding the killer and meting out his own brand of justice — forget the police.

Being a private investigator means ferreting out a lot of information, some from the most unlikely of places. A bartender he knows tells him a few things that just about knock him over with shock. Who would have thought that...? Sorry, that's confidential information. And, it's good to remember: *“In Galway, when you are taken into someone's confidence, the implication is that up until now you weren't to be trusted.”*

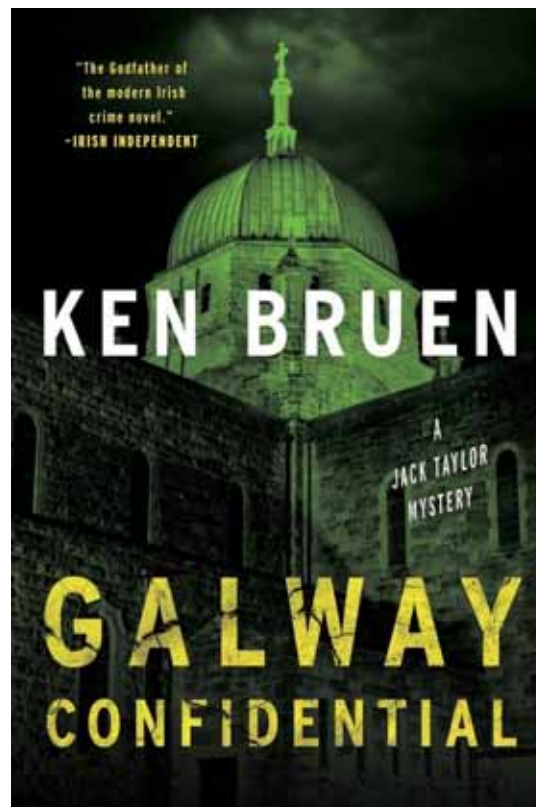
It's an armchair trip around Galway in the time of COVID. Bruen makes many references to the pandemic as felt by the Irish, such as the upset in the economy, the fight in the Ukraine, Boris Johnson quitting and everything

else that came along — especially, for Taylor, the closing down of bars. Taylor's take on the pandemic after he comes out of the coma: *“The whole fabric of how we lived was changed but not improved.”*

That Jack Taylor is an interesting character is the understatement of the year. There's a lot of Jameson to be drunk in this book, to the point I felt slightly tipsy after reading a few chapters. Like a true Irishman, Jack can hold his liquor better than most, with a dry humor that is hard to miss and fun to read. He's a wellspring of Irish sayings like, *“You don't want to tell an undertaker you're not feeling well.”* So glad I met Jack Taylor. I look forward to his next adventure.

The final word: If you are offended by coarse language, there is so little here as to be easily overlooked.

Till next time, happy reading!



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