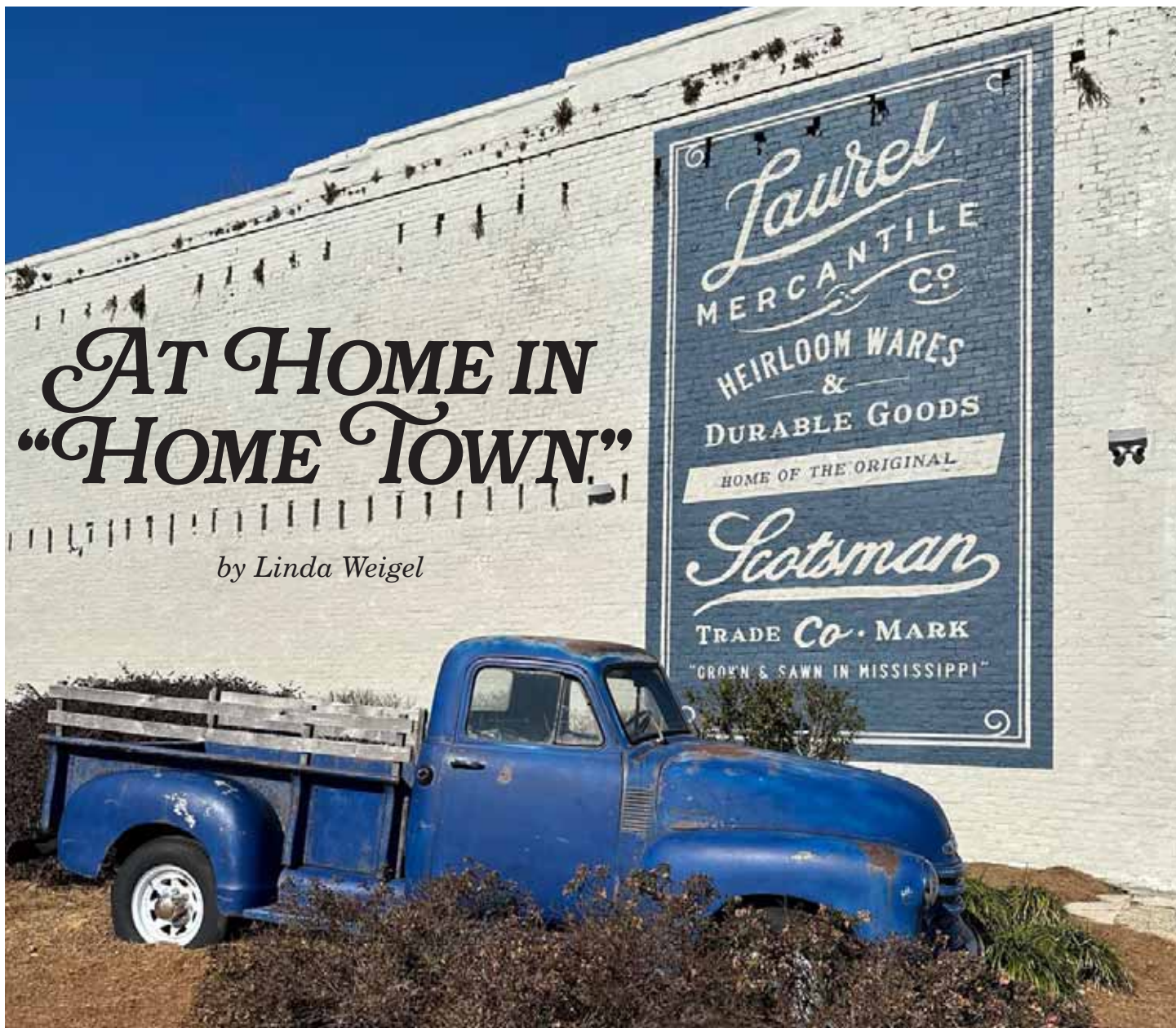




Volume 40, Number 6 Thursday, February 15, 2024



# AT HOME IN "HOME TOWN"

by Linda Weigel

The Laurel Mercantile Co. building, 414 Front St., complete with the iconic blue truck on the side. All photos by Linda Weigel.

It's a curious thing, watching reality TV and wondering if what you see reflects what is in fact reality.

My answer arrived, unexpectedly so, in January.

While planning a trip south to visit family and friends, we would pass by Laurel, Miss., on the return trip, deciding we needed to stay overnight

there to explore the town a bit. What would Laurel be like? Would I find folks who remind me of back home in northern Indiana? Is the town as interesting to visit as it is to watch on TV? Are there commonalities we share with our southern citizens?

The answers are yes, yes and yes.

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*AT HOME IN  
“HOME TOWN”*

Continued from Page 1

I begin by owning up to the fact that for a couple of years now, I’ve been a huge fan of HGTV’s “Home Town,” the reality show that has run for eight seasons since 2016 and centers on the town of Laurel. What is the appeal? What tops the list are the personalities and talents of hosts Ben and Erin Napier, as well as family and friends who often join them in their mission to renovate homes, primarily in the town’s historic district. Another appeal: the beautiful, transformed homes, the oak tree-lined streets and all the other businesses sprinkled throughout each episode.

Erin is an artist skilled in graphic design, a recent author (Make Something Good Today and The Lantern House) and someone who embraces her passion for historic preservation imaginatively. As an artist myself, I appreciate her eye for color balance, pattern, texture and the interplay of those factors in everything she touches.

Ben is skilled in construction and woodworking.



The window display at the Laurel Mercantile Co. building



Employees Josie Phillips (left) and Anna James proved a wonderful introduction to the business and the town of Laurel.

He challenges himself design-wise, creating something special for each client in every episode. For example, if the need dictates, he might incorporate metal along with wood. Or, he might design a one-of-a-kind piece with tricky or curved corners. Everything he builds has meaning, purpose and is unique to the homeowner. I especially admire his use of local and reclaimed woods, sometimes sourced from the client’s own family barn or shed, thereby reinforcing a connection to a personal familial history.

Despite the cold temps during our trip, it was a great decision to stop and explore. Once we exited the interstate, we headed first for Laurel Mercantile Co., 414 Front St., co-owned by the Napiers. Built of brick and mortar, with large front display windows and a recessed storefront entrance, the building is what you would expect for an old town, reminding me of the many stores that line Lincolnway in downtown LaPorte, like Thaddeus C Gallery. Inside, I found brick and plaster walls, a tin ceiling, decorative molding, old-fashioned schoolhouse-style

lighting with lots of wood shelving and antique table displays atop concrete floors accented by beautiful Oriental rugs. Filled with many tempting heirloom goods (all made in the U.S.), the space generated a feeling of coming home to an updated, attractively styled, revitalized, sophisticated country store. It is tough *not* to explore every nook and cranny. High quality prints by artist Adam Trest are tempting. In fact, his paintings often are seen in the show's renovated homes. His style is singularly refreshing.

This was a building sensitively restored, and the people working there were some of the warmest, most sincere individuals I'd met on our trip.



The many displays inside the Laurel Mercantile Co. building.

Josie Phillips and Anna James are wonderful representatives of the brand and town. Meeting them, I felt immediately comfortable. Their low-key, no-pressure positivity was appreciated. We spoke for a bit, just chatting about this and that in a natural, non-pretentious way. In fact, at each shop we entered, we encountered the same sincere hospitality. I do encounter the same thing back home, but frankly, not as often anymore. Small, local, regional businesses, similar to the ones I visited in Laurel, may still exude welcoming attitudes, something that links us together with respect and kindness. Sadly, however, not all do, and my visit to Laurel heightened my awareness, and appreciation of, more personable, one-on-one interactions, a sincere hospitality vs. online, asocial, impersonal connections.

Anna's assistance and a local map helped guide us to other company store locations, a great place to eat lunch (Lee's Coffee & Tea) and the streets with

Continued on Page 4

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# AT HOME IN "HOME TOWN"

Continued from Page 3

most of the renovated houses as seen on "Home Town" (Fourth through Seventh streets).

Laurel Mercantile Co. Scent Library, 314 W. Oak St., is another popular stop. Featured in a 2022 episode, the building was a wreck, to put it lightly. Dirt floors and the like, yet today, you'd never realize the astonishing effort it must have taken to transform the building. Like the Laurel Mercantile blocks away, this store also has large front windows and a recessed doorway. On the exterior, the deep blue panels and window trim reflect the sky, standing out as a psychologically calm, inviting color perfect for a store filled with scents meant to elicit serenity and memory. What waits inside is an interior inspired by the traditional library of wooden bookcases and comfortable seating, the kind I remember from my childhood and travels. Interior design decisions for the Scent Library were influenced by the reception room at the nearby Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, 565 N. Fifth Ave., with its cork flooring, quarter-sawn oak bookcases and wall maps. I was struck by the circulation desk, as it harkens back to older, traditional libraries and, while new, looked old, reminding me of the librarian desk at my old college library. The candles and other scented items are arranged by location or events important to Erin Napier throughout her life. Scattered alongside and in between are books, cards and other interesting objects. It is a breathtakingly beautiful space.

Scotsman General Store & Woodshop, 1 Spec Wil-



The quarter-sawn oak bookcases with library ladder inside the Scent Library.

son Blvd., originally was an old feedstore. This is the third building converted/renovated as part of the Laurel Mercantile Co. family. Ben Napier named it for his Scottish heritage. Once again, I was greeted warmly this time by Mike (formerly from Peoria, Ill.). We chatted a bit and found a mutual connection – it's a small world. The store, itself, is another example of superb interior design with a cast of unlimited temptations, such as wood-rolling pins (regular and French style), cutting boards in various woods, coasters, shirts and other sundries.

The manufacturing of wood kitchen items is especially interesting, and reflective of Laurel's early years. Founded in 1882 in the Mississippi area known as the Pine Belt, Laurel was a lumber town and one of the largest producers of yellow pine shipped throughout the U.S. Bringing back that bit of connection with Scotsman-manufactured wood items is a modern link recon-



Outside the Laurel Mercantile Co. Scent Library.

Continued on Page 6



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# AT HOME IN "HOME TOWN"

Continued from Page 4

necting past with future, as well as a growing business and town employer.

Interestingly, the old house we used to own in LaPorte had wood floors throughout. We were told years later much of the wood used to build it and other homes in LaPorte came from "down south." I wonder now if that wood came from Laurel.

In addition to all the store goods, a large window looks into the woodshop. If lucky, a visitor might just spy Ben filming. Unfortunately, the workshop was empty the day, but I could imagine what it might be like when in use, and how much fun that would be to witness a live shoot.

After leaving the downtown, we visited Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, 565 N. Fifth Ave. Mississippi's oldest art museum was intended as a home and later served as the town's first public library and art museum. With an especially fine collection of Native American baskets, American art (Winslow Homer, Thomas Moran, John Singer Sargent, Mary Cassatt), European oil paintings, Georgian silver, Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints, the museum is free and open six days a week. It also hosts rotating contemporary art, the centerpiece of which is a stunning glass work by Seattle artist Dale Chihuly.

I was greeted in the reception room by docents who, once again, were engaging and informative. The reception room, in fact, looks like a library with oak-paneled walls, bookcases filled with books and lovely iron work. It's easy to see how this building and this space influenced the interior design for the Scent Library. I was so impressed by this gem of a museum, repeatedly saying, "What a fantastic asset for this community and the surrounding areas!"

(By the way, my favorite piece in the museum was an exquisite, small oil on wood panel Winslow Homer painting titled "Fisherman's Wife.")

Afterwards, we took Anna's advice and drove up and down the elegant oak tree-lined streets looking for a familiar revitalized house or two from the "Home Town" episodes. Many of the houses looked beautifully updated and freshly painted and/or landscaped, making it difficult to recognize which had that Napier touch. There was, however, something just a bit familiar in the graceful old homes that reminded me of many of the fine houses south of downtown LaPorte on Indiana and Michigan avenues.

Regretfully, we only had the one day to explore before heading home, but I sensed a comfortable familiarity with the town. Both Laurel and LaPorte began as manufacturing towns. Laurel began with logging and timber; LaPorte started with lumber, but later was best known for manufacturing tractors. LaPorte is the county seat for LaPorte County. Laurel shares the county seat with Ellisville. Both towns are working hard on revitalizing their communities. In fact, I came to understand that Laurel began its revitalization well before the advent of "Home Town" and all the attention it brought. Laurel is an easy two-hour drive north of New Orleans. LaPorte is just east of Chicago and a reasonable commute.

It was delightful to explore the Laurel community, even if only for a day. I've only touched on a few of its assets, primarily related to the TV show. yet there is so much more. The town and its people made a great impression. No, it wasn't all picture perfect, and had I stayed longer, I might have found something to complain about. But like my life here in northern Indiana, there is much to appreciate, to savor, to encourage and to support.

I still can't get over the friendliness and hospitality of everyone in Laurel. It reminded me of what it first felt like moving to LaPorte more than 40 years ago. There is something about small towns, especially when folks pull together to support each other, to care about the quality of life for everyone.

And, yes, Laurel, Miss., really is as nice as what we see in "Home Town."



Outside Scotsman General Store &amp; Woodshop.



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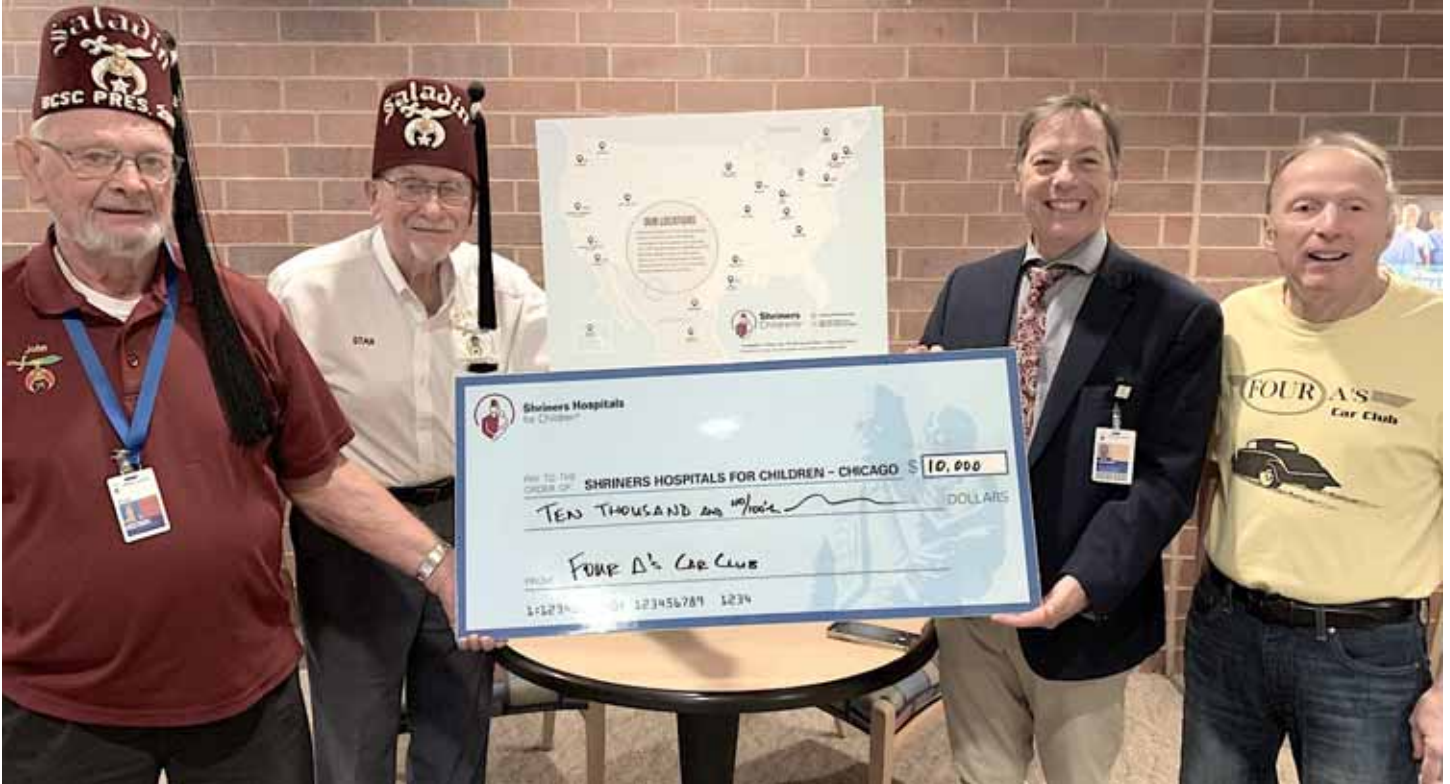
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### Supporting Shriners Children's Chicago



The Four A's Car Club donated \$10,000 to Shriners Children's Chicago. The money was raised through donations and participating at car shows in Michigan City, Door Village and in Three Oaks, Mich. Pictured are Shriners John Keyser and Stan Hively, Dan Winters, Shriners Children's Chicago director of development, and Dave Rybicki, Four A's Car Club president.



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### Women on the Rise Honorees

Twelve women from, or having ties to, LaPorte County are among the 2024 Northwest Indiana Women on the Rise honorees through The Leadership Institute and Society of Innovators at Purdue Northwest.

The annual list includes leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs shaping business and encouraging economic growth.

The local honorees are:

- Felicia Blakely (Michigan City) – executive pastor, president and founder, Diamonds & Pearls Mentorship for Girls and High Praise Outreach Ministries.
- Whitney Bradshaw (Michigan City) – Lubeznik Center for the Arts curator.
- Liliana Franco López (Michigan City) – operations director, Economic Development Corp. Michigan City
- Kylee Frazee Norman (LaPorte) – partner, CLH, CPAs & Consultants.
- Amy Fry (Hammond/Westville) – dean, College of Nursing, Purdue University Northwest.
- Nicky Ali Jackson (Hammond/Westville) – professor of criminal justice and executive director of the Center for Justice and Post-Exoneration Assistance, Purdue University Northwest.
- Gretchen Kalk-Castro (Michigan City) – partner, CLH, CPAs & Consultants.
- Beverly Mack-Martin, MPA (Michigan City) – founder and director of development, The Midwest Minority Consortium for Alternative Energy Solutions.
- Jacqueline Thomas (LaPorte) – president, South Shore Public Relations.
- Darien Thompson (Hammond/Westville) – director of student success & urban engagement, Purdue University Northwest.
- Becca Tuholski (LaPorte) – local food access coordinator, NWI Food Council.
- Shannon Walker (LaPorte) – vice president, Unity Foundation of LaPorte County.

The 2024 Northwest Indiana Women on the Rise Reception is from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 21, at the James B. Dworkin Student Services and Activities Complex in Westville. Individual tickets are \$30. Visit [www.pnw.edu/soi](http://www.pnw.edu/soi) for more information and to register.

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## Dunes Youth Theatre

Dunes Summer Theatre has unveiled its 2024 Youth Theatre schedule.

“Music Theatre” runs from 1-3 p.m. Tuesdays-Thursdays, July 9-25, at the Michiana Shores theater, 288 Shady Oak Drive. The program amounts to 18 hours of instruction. Aimed at youth ages 8-18, students are separated into age-appropriate peer groups. Instructor Michael Fallon will be assisted by a member of the summer cast. The cost is \$225, or \$200 for two or more students (scholarships are available).

“Youth Theatre Mentoring Program” runs June 1-Aug. 20, with one-hour sessions for individualized and small groups. The cost is \$50 per hour, and scholarships are available.

The high school program targets students ages 13-18 who have previous experience and want to refine their skills with professional actors. They will be matched with an actor and work on monologues, songs and other materials useful for auditions and college admissions. Instructor Steve Scott will be assisted by a member of the summer cast.

A final presentation for parents, family and friends is at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 27, at the theater.

Register at [www.dunesARTS.org/education](http://www.dunesARTS.org/education) or call (219) 879-7509.

## KOC Lenten Fish Fry

For six consecutive Fridays starting Feb. 16, Knights of Columbus Council 12951 will host its annual Lenten Fish Fry from 4-7 p.m. at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 606 S. Woodland Ave.

The meal includes three pieces of fish or 21 shrimp, cole slaw, bread and butter, baked or French fried potatoes, and free coffee. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors. “Season Passes” are available for all six dinners at \$85 for adults and \$67 for seniors. Cash, checks and credit/debit cards are accepted. Dinners benefit the parish and school, as well as the community.

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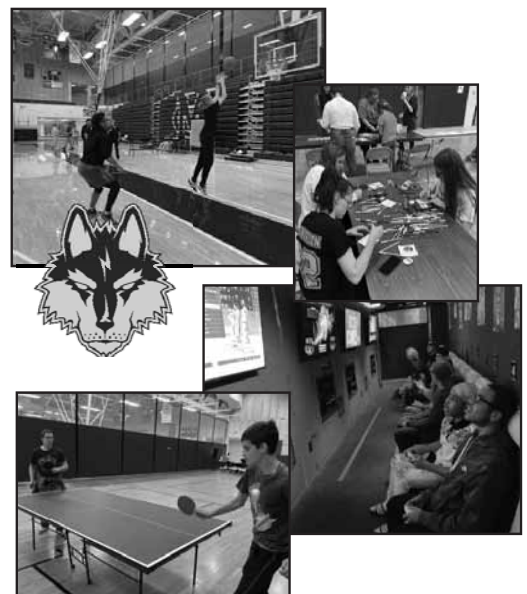
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**La Lumiere "Rising Stars"**



Four La Lumiere juniors have been recognized through Indiana Association of School Principals' Rising Stars of Indiana. The non-competitive recognition program honors high school juniors for academic achievement. Each Indiana high school can recognize up to four individual students. La Lumiere's four students are (from left) Jack Kuehn, Kate Vanderveen, Ilaria von Eschenbach and Luka Asanaka.

**Art Barn School of Art**

"Student & Instructor Exhibition," which highlights 19 participants and 46 pieces, runs through Feb. 29 at Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso.

Instructors and students from 2023 classes were invited to showcase their art, affording the chance to share their work with the community.

Instructors include: Julia Holmaas, Mindy Milan, Mary Ann Pals, Suzie Rosso and Kim Vander Vinne. Exhibiting students include: Sandy Appleby, Judy Davis, Deborah Dee, Betsy Fleek, Jennie Girton, Rebecca Grochowski, Nick Karris, Fran Kras, Lauren Orchard, Olga Petryszyn, Kajal Puranik, Beth Purdy, Linda Stanley, Mariann Straw and Agnes Turman.

Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. Call (219) 462-9009 or visit [www.artbarnschool.org](http://www.artbarnschool.org) for more details.

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## Indiana Dunes National Park

- **Science Fridays Series from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** The presentations by local experts change topics each month.
- **The Save the Tunes Council performs from 7:30-9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16, 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, Feb. 17, 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.
- **Warm Up to Winter from 1-3 p.m. Saturdays-Sundays in February at Chellberg Farm.** Try snowshoeing and wander through Chellberg Farm. Then, stop by the farmhouse to learn about the area's history. A limited number of snowshoes can be checked out at the Eastern National Bookstore located off the main parking lot. Snowshoeing is dependent on the amount of snow on the ground, with a minimum of 3 inches of snow required. Regardless of snow, the farmhouse will be open for hikers. The parking lot is on Mineral

Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter  
Call (219) 395-1882 for snow conditions

- **National Park Themed Movie from 2-3:30 p.m. Saturdays-Sundays through February at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** Movies will change each weekend and last between an hour to 90 minutes. The schedule is: Feb. 17-18, "Ribbon of Sand: Cape Lookout National Seashore" and "Hopewell Furnace: A Place of Opportunity"; Feb. 24-25, "San Juan National Historic Site."
- **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](http://tinyurl.com/2p83798v) for more details.

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

## Indiana Dunes State Park

*The following programs will be offered:*

- **Beaver-Tales Trek from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Feb. 17.** During the three-mile easy hike along Trail 2, hear the story of the park's largest rodent. If conditions allow, free snowshoes are available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Turtle Time at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17.** Meet at the nature center to learn more about turtles.
- **Feed the Birds Snowshoe at 10 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 18.** February is National Bird Feeding Month, so meet at the Nature Center as bird feeders are filled. Also, learn how to attract birds to a backyard. If conditions allow, free snowshoes are available on a first-come, first-served basis

*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.*

## New Buffalo Township Library

- **"The Giving Tree."** The library is accepting donations to Michiana Humane Society.
- **Winter Readings.** The program runs through Feb. 29.

### Weekly programs:

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

*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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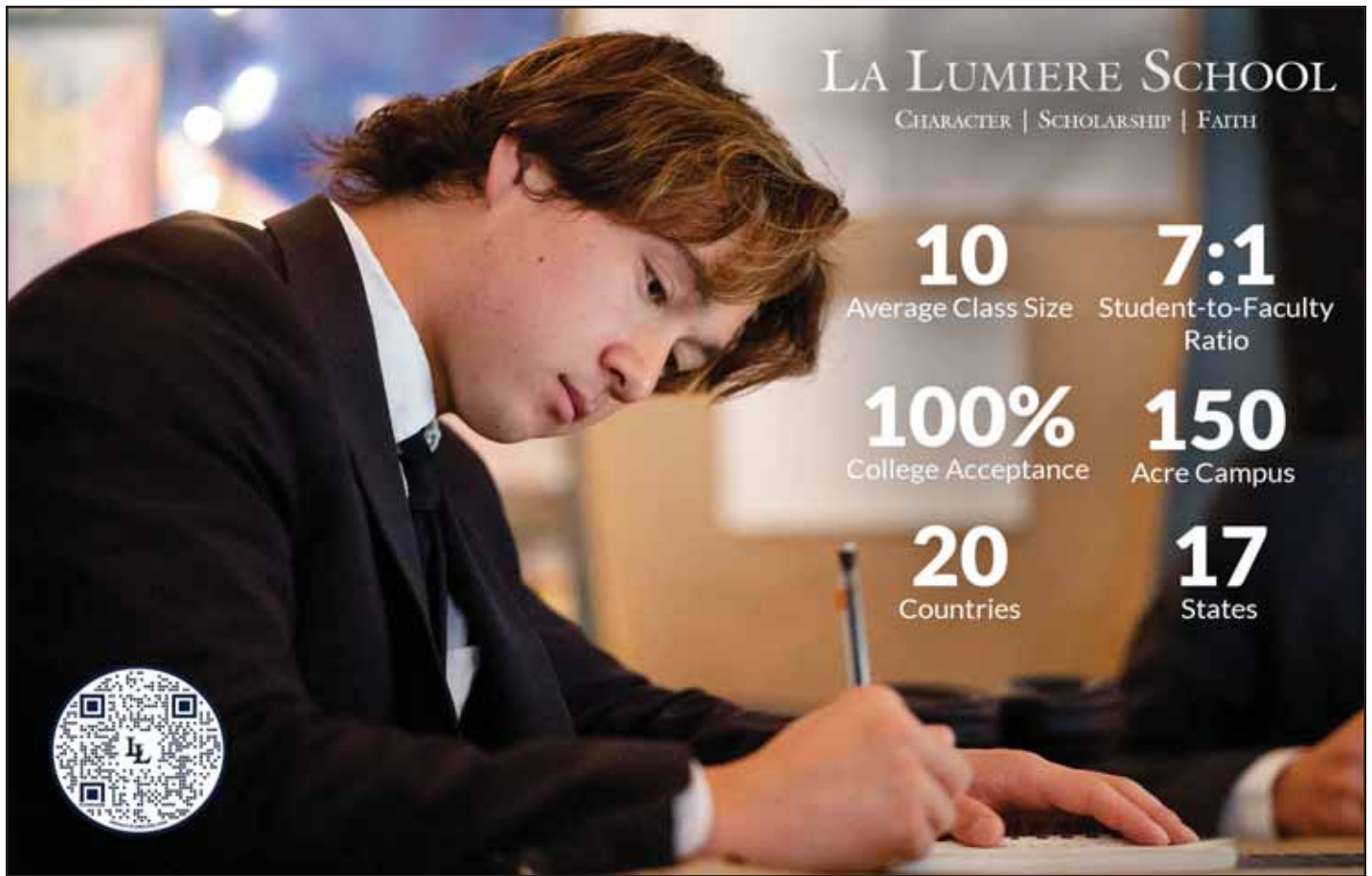
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## “The Greatest Night in Pop” Takes a Moving Look at “We Are the World”

by Andrew Tallackson



“The Greatest Night in Pop” reveals how all those stars made it under one roof to record “We Are the World.”

*“If a bomb drops on this place, John Denver’s back on top.”*

That starstruck observation hailed from Paul Simon, as told by Kenny Loggins, amid the recording of “We Are the World” back in January 1985.

Indeed, watching the archival footage in Netflix’s wonderfully nostalgic documentary “The Greatest Night in Pop,” you are floored all over again by the amount of talent in that A&M studio, all united for the singular cause of eliminating famine in Africa.

Even more extraordinary, as director Bao Nguyen reveals, is the story *behind* the story. How *did* they pull it off, not just in recording the Grammy-winning song, but also shooting the music video, all in one long, wildly unpredictable night?

The result is proof that reality is just as intoxicating as fiction. The stories revealed here are invaluable to pop music lore, the message at the end surprisingly timely even as the song, itself, nears its 40th anniversary.

The initial spark for the recording session flickered across the pond, when the U.K., through Bob Geldof, rounded up the best in the music industry to record “Do They Know It’s Christmas?” as part of 1984’s “Feed the World” effort.

American entertainer-activist Harry Belafonte, questioning why black entertainers here weren’t doing the same for Africa, initially rounded up Quincy Jones, Lionel Riche, Michael Jackson and, initially, Stevie Wonder, to pen a similar rallying anthem.

Riche is the audience guide, helping shape the



### “The Greatest Night in Pop”

Running time: 96 minutes. Netflix. Rated PG-13 for language.

flow of the film. Through him, and Nguyen’s intensely focused retelling, we learn the intimidating pressure behind the project. By expanding the reach of the song to include other American pop stars, the project had one window to get everyone in the same room: the American Music Awards. Which, by the way, Riche was hosting. That meant he, and everyone else tapped to record the song, had to bolt from Los Angeles’ Shrine Auditorium and head to the A&M studio after the ceremony.

Riche and Jackson had a handful of weeks to write “We Are the World,” and the former Commodores frontman offers a fascinating peek into the creative process: how they arrived at the basic template for the song, the chorus, the message. Piece by piece, the song cobbled together to what landed in the studio that night.

Jones, as producer, tapes a sign above the studio entry stating “*Check your ego at the door.*” We hear from many artists who were there that night, from Bruce Springsteen and Cyndi Lauper to Loggins and Huey Lewis, as well as the studio crew. There were moments where ego cut loose. In one head-scratcher, Wonder, insisting on singing part of the chorus in African tribal verse, ends up sending Waylon Jennings out of the building. Then, there



is that rather enigmatic fellow known as Bob Dylan, who requires Wonder to bang out the chorus on piano so he could master the lyrics (he didn't quite get there, as we all know). We also get a slightly insulted Sheila E, realizing Jones and crew really wanted Prince, her then-boyfriend, not her.

Then comes the icebreaker, one of the most moving scenes in "The Greatest Night in Pop," when everyone in that room pays tribute to Belafonte by singing his most famous hit, "Day-O." Then, the walls these stars erect around themselves crumble. Suddenly, they're awestruck. Getting autographs from each other. Supporting each other even as the recording session stretches through the rising sun, signifying a new day.

When Diana Ross is seen sobbing, staying put because she doesn't want the experience to end, we get it. How often would all that talent be in the same room, amid the same circumstances, ever again?

That everyone there was under the gun, yet somehow achieved a pop classic together, and for a good cause, is quite the marvel.

The final scene of "The Greatest Night in Pop" shows how one song did briefly unite the planet. You are moved, but saddened. Nearly 40 years later, we are a more fractured society than ever. Sides of every equation pitted against each other.

While the movie doesn't come right out and say it, the message is clear: If it only took one song to help set aside our differences, why can't we see the big



Lionel Richie serves as the audience tour guide through the momentous recording session.

picture today?

A worthy question...from a jewel of a movie.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com



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# CREATIVE TECH



Step into Michigan City Public Library any Tuesday afternoon, and you'll find plenty of children busy amid "Creative Tech Activities." Aimed at youth ages 6-17, offerings include LEGO WeDo, Micro:bits, paper circuits, Ozobots and 3-D pens. All photos by Andrew Tallackson



## Revisiting the Laughs, and Heart, of “Defending Your Life”



Julia (Meryl Streep) proves more carefree than Daniel (Albert Brooks) is accustomed to in “Defending Your Life.”

Creating new worlds in movies is not easy. It takes a daring feat of imagination to envision a place we haven’t seen before. By and large, we take the same leap of faith as the storyteller, that this brave new world might actually exist.

As I increase my son’s film vocabulary before he heads out into the world on his own, practically every movie I own, or can access through streaming, gets shown to him.

I wondered, as we began watching Albert Brooks’ “Defending Your Life” (1991) if, one, it would hold up and, two, if my son was buying the concept. Midway through it, he turned to me and, with a goofy grin on his face, said, “You know, I’d actually like to visit Judgment City.”

That was the proof I needed. “Defending Your Life” had worked its magic on him. The amount of invention, the comic inspiration Brooks (“Lost in America”) lavished on what might have been a one-joke concept, had roped my son in entirely.

He was along for the ride.

Interesting, though, how the movie affected me now, in my mid-50s, compared to the first time I saw it: barely 21 and still in college. Somehow, amid all the sight gags and visual eye candy, Brooks created an existential comedy about one man examining his

past  
present

Andrew Tallackson



life from birth to death, and the one cosmic force with the power to overcome any adversity.

Love.

Today, “Defending Your Life” would be marketed as a “high concept” comedy. That’s Hollywood speak for brainy. Full of ideas. Brooks envisioned an afterlife stripped entirely of religion. Instead, it is a cosmic way station where the recently deceased go on trial, complete with judges and lawyers, the focus being, did the person under scrutiny live life to the fullest?

Judgment City, indeed, is the movie’s greatest creation. A sunny utopia where the deceased wear white tunics and, during trial breaks, engage in all types of playful, leisurely activities. The afterlife essentially is one extended vacation. Meals served freshly prepared within seconds. Relaxing rounds

of miniature golf. There is the hysterically funny “Past Lives Pavilion,” whose digital tour guide is one of the film’s best sight gags. And the movie’s comedy club boasts Brooks’ knack for snappy zingers:

*Comedian to audience member:* How’d ya die?

*Arthur:* I was in a coma.

*Comedian:* I’m sorry. How long were you in the coma?

*Arthur:* I really don’t know.

*Comedian:* Let’s play a game, Art. Elvis: living or dead?

*Arthur:* Living.

*Comedian:* Long coma, Art. Long coma.

Amid the laughs, the movie has a dark side. Back when it was released, Brooks joked during interviews that, being a neurotic Jew, he’d created his worst nightmare, that even in death, life mocks him. Those on trial in Judgment City are subjected to watching “clips” from their lives that serve as breeding grounds for contemptuous debate among lawyers.

And it is here the existential qualities of “Defending Your Life” take root. Brooks, who in addition to writing and directing stars as former advertising executive Daniel Miller, plays a man who lived a half life. Literally, in that his life was cut short, but more that he spent his days consumed by fear. As Daniel’s public defender (Rip Torn) speaks of Daniel’s restraint, the prosecutor (a steely Lee Grant) gets to the heart of Daniel’s failures. He coasted sideways through life.

A comedy like this could get bogged down by its lofty ambitions. However, Brooks introduces his most unexpected creation: Julia, a fellow visitor to Judgment City played by none other than Meryl Streep. By that point in her career, she’d won two Oscars (“Kramer vs. Kramer,” “Sophie’s Choice”), mastered a laundry list of foreign accents and tackled a fair share of heavy material. This, however, was the first time we’d seen her play, well, herself. So laid-back and carefree. No acting tricks, just a cheerful, optimistic woman who takes a liking to Daniel, despite him being her cynical opposite. The movie earns a laugh by suggesting that Judgment City has its own hierarchy, with Daniel dropped into accommodations akin to a Motel 6. Julia, on the other hand, may as well be staying at a Hilton.

But Streep is so winning, so bubbly, Julia achieves what no one else in life could do. She brings out the best in Daniel. A reason to care.

When first seeing “Defending Your Life,” at such



Judgment City is like a sunny tourist trap, a cosmic way station into the unknown.

a young age, I found the movie’s conclusion phony. A tacked-on happy ending from an otherwise caustic storyteller. Seeing it now, firmly planted in middle age, it moved me. Think about it. Even when life carries with it a crushing weight, love is the one conquering force. It moves us to fight for what, or more specifically *who*, we want most. To take that leap of faith, to bravely share your heart with another person, is life’s greatest adventure.

Seeing Daniel in that final scene, faced with two possible journeys — one back to Earth to start over, the other into the unknown with Julia — the outcome is joyous, life-affirming and wildly romantic.

“Defending Your Life” was not a hit upon release. It scored good reviews, but that was it, grossing only \$16 million back on its reported \$20 million budget. Generating about \$60 million in receipts would have labeled it a success.

Then, as was the case back in the day, the movie found an audience through the home-viewing market, specifically cable and VHS.

Today, it is revered as a classic. Brooks’ best and most atypically optimistic film. It doesn’t feel dated, hasn’t lost its luster. It shines brighter than ever.



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



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### Celebrating a Special Occasion



The employees of Lakefront Salon & Spa, 912 Franklin St., wanted to do something special for one of their most devoted clients, Margaret Zeek, on her 90th birthday. So, they not only cut her hair for free on Feb. 1, the actual date of her birthday, but also two of her daughters were there to celebrate. In the top photo are (from left) stylists Heidi Ponder and Kim Haggart, owner Dianna Smith-Scott, Zeek and stylist Jill Humbers. In the left photo, Zeek is photographed with two of her daughters, Kim and Sharon. Zeek's third daughter, Barbara, who lives in Cincinnati, was unable to attend. Both photos by Andrew Tallackson

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# And the Nominees Are...

## PICTURE

- "American Fiction"
- "Anatomy of a Fall"
- "Barbie"
- "The Holdovers"
- "Killers of the Flower Moon"
- "Maestro"
- "Oppenheimer"
- "Past Lives"
- "Poor Things"
- "The Zone of Interest"

## ACTRESS

- Annette Bening, "Nyad"
- Lily Gladstone,  
"Killers of the Flower Moon"
- Sandra Hüller,  
"Anatomy of a Fall"
- Carey Mulligan, "Maestro"
- Emma Stone, "Poor Things"

## SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- Emily Blunt, "Oppenheimer"
- Danielle Brooks,  
"The Color Purple"
- America Ferrera, "Barbie"
- Jodie Foster, "Nyad"
- Da'Vine Joy Randolph,  
"The Holdovers"

## DIRECTOR

- Jonathan Glazer,  
"The Zone of Interest"
- Yorgos Lanthimos,  
"Poor Things"
- Christopher Nolan,  
"Oppenheimer"
- Martin Scorsese,  
"Killers of the Flower Moon"
- Justine Triet, "Anatomy of a Fall"

## ACTOR

- Bradley Cooper, "Maestro"
- Colman Domingo, "Rustin"
- Paul Giamatti, "The Holdovers"
- Cillian Murphy,  
"Oppenheimer"
- Jeffrey Wright,  
"American Fiction"

## SUPPORTING ACTOR

- Sterling K. Brown,  
"American Fiction"
- Robert De Niro,  
"Killers of the Flower Moon"
- Robert Downey Jr.,  
"Oppenheimer"
- Ryan Gosling, "Barbie"
- Mark Ruffalo, "Poor Things"

Contest sponsor: Swingbellys!

## Rules for The Beacher's Beat the Editor Contest:

Check one box in each category. Only one entry per person. Entries from *Beacher* employees will not be accepted. Forms can be dropped off at *The Beacher* or submitted by mail to: The Beacher, Attn: Oscar Contest, 911 Franklin St., Michigan City, IN 46360. Only scanned copies will be allowed by email to atallackson@gmail.com. The deadline is noon Friday, March 1. Editor Andrew Tallackson's picks will appear in the March 7 edition, before the March 10 telecast. Those who beat his picks will be placed into a drawing. **First place receives a \$50 Swingbelly's gift certificate and an AMC movie pass. Second place receives an AMC movie pass.** If no one beats him, readers with the most correct picks will be placed into the drawing. The winner will be revealed in the March 21 edition.

Name:

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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, Feb. 15.** 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.
- **Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in February.** 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.
- **Pokemon Party (children of all ages) at 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16.** Youth play games, do crafts and take home a goodie bag.
- **Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17.** Miltenberger can offer tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record.
- **Video Game Day (ages 8-17) from 3-5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19.** Play either Nintendo Switch or Xbox One. Board games will be available while waiting to use the consoles.
- **Genealogy Help with Pat Harris from 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays in February.** Harris can offer tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record.
- **Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17) from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in February.** 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.
- **Movie Trivia Night at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20.** Teams of 2-4 are invited to play for free, with prizes given for first, second and third place. Light refreshments will be served. Registration is required online because limited spots are available. Call Sydney at (219) 873-3044 or Molly at (219) 873-3042 for details.
- **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.
- **Winter Reading Bingo for Adults through Feb. 29.** Stop by the reference desk to pick up a Winter Reading Bingo sheet. Complete five reading-related activities in a row, then turn in the sheet to the reference desk to receive a sticker and free entry into a drawing for a \$25 Amazon gift card. The winner will be notified March 1.
- **Weekly Crafts for Kids & Teens.** Each week offers a different project. Take-home craft kits are available, or create some in the Makerspace.
- **Wild Pokemon Scavenger Hunt in February.** Visit Youth Services, find all the characters and win a prize.
- **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance aid needed.** Volunteers help at least one day a week during tax season (February-April). The IRS provides some training, and passing the VITA test through the intermediate level is required. Testing and training are online. Call (219) 873-3049 for more details.
- **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.
- **The 2024 Genealogy Bus Trip to Allen County is Wednesday, April 17.** The trip is sponsored by the library and LaPorte County Genealogical Society. The center has an extensive collection of North American genealogy resources. More details will be available in March.

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

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## LaPorte County Public Library

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

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

- Coolspring Branch: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
  - Main Library: Tuesday/Thursday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).
- Patrons are no longer charged daily overdue fines. Customers only will be charged for items they damage, lose or never return.

*The following programs are planned:*

- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at the main library.** Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- **Lego Star Wars Day from 2-4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at the main branch Study Cafe.** The library will show a "Lego Star Wars" movie, have children build Lego creations and hold a head-to-head Nintendo Switch battle.
- **All library branches closed Monday, Feb. 19, for Presidents Day.**
- **Virtual Author Talk with Jason Mott from 3-4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20.** The *New York Times* bestselling author will discuss his recent novel, *Hell of a Book*. Register online.
- **Family Bad Art Night from 5-6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at the Coolspring Branch meeting room.** Families can create judgment-free art while listening to Karen Kilpatrick's *When Pencil Met the Markers*.

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](http://www.laportelibrary.org) for more details, including programming through the Exchange building.

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## Alinsky Award Nominations

The Rotary Club of Michigan City seeks nomina-  
tions for the 2023 Paul J. Alinsky Award.

Alinsky was a past Rotary Club president, past  
Michigan City Chamber of Commerce board chair-  
man and the Sentinel Alarm Co. founder. He passed  
away in 1997. The award goes to someone from the  
community who, according to a press release, exhib-  
its dedication to community service, excellence, pas-  
sion and innovation in their vocation or career.

A nomination form, available at [www.mcrotrary.org](http://www.mcrotrary.org),  
must be returned to Alinsky Award Committee  
Chair Marty Corley at [mcorley@emichigancity.com](mailto:mcorley@emichigancity.com)  
or sent by mail to Michigan City Police Department,  
ATTN: Marty Corley, 1201 E. Michigan Blvd., Mich-  
igan City, IN 46360.

Past recipients include Les Radke, Bud Ruby,  
Duane Mertl, Ron Benzsz, Jerry Karstens, Emerson  
Spartz, Glen Lubeznik, James Welborne, Kathleen  
Lang, Bernie Scott, Jan Radford, Tom Ringo, Jim  
Dworkin, Dr. Lisa Hendricks, Marty Corley, Don  
Babcock, Al Whitlow, Dion Campbell, Cyndi Davis,  
Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins, Angie Nelson Deutch,  
Clarence Hulse and Rotary Service volunteers. In  
2016, in honor of the club's 100th anniversary, the  
award recognized every Rotary Club member over  
the past century. A memorial inscribed with the  
names of past recipients is on display at City Hall,  
100 E. Michigan Blvd.

The deadline is 4 p.m. Friday, March 1. This year's  
recipient will be announced March 8 and the award  
presented when the club meets at noon Thursday,  
March 21, at The Salvation Army, 1201 Franklin St.  
This meeting is open to the public, and lunch costs  
\$15. The recipient receives a replica of the Alinsky  
memorial. In addition, the club makes a donation to  
a charity of the recipient's choice.

More information is available by visiting [www.mcrotrary.org](http://www.mcrotrary.org)  
or by following the club on Facebook.

## Karstens' Club Chili Cookoff

The 20th annual Karstens' Club Challenge Chili  
Cook Off is from noon-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17, at  
Moose Family Center 980, 2107 Welnetz Road.

The event is a fundraiser for the Karstens Ath-  
letic Scholarship. Tickets, available at the door, are  
a \$5 donation.

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### Film Highlights Art Collection

Porter County Museum (PoCo Muse), 20 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso, has produced a documentary about its local art collection.

“At the Intersection of Art and History: Highlights from the PoCo Muse Art Collection” is showing on continuous loop in the Robert Cain Gallery, in conjunction with an exhibit of works recently received from the estate of Philipp Brockington, the late Valparaiso University professor and art lover. The video can be viewed during regular hours through Feb. 13, then on the museum’s website (www.pocomuse.org) and Facebook page.



“Courthouse” (1935) by Vin Hannell.

Jacob Just, museum director of exhibits and publications, conceived and produced the 25-minute presentation.

“This short video slideshow attempts to explain how the arts connect us to our pasts and give direction to our future,” Just said in a press release. “It classifies the works into three major categories: 1) The Drama of the Dunes, 2) The Pull Towards Home, and 3) Commemorating Daily Life.”

The museum is open from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, with free admission.

### Westchester Public Library

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

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

While parked, call the library phone number posted on the numbered space sign, tell staff your library card number and he/she will check out the items and take them to a table at the parking space and walk away. Patrons then can step out of their vehicle to retrieve them. Curbside hours are Monday-Friday (1 to 6 p.m. at Thomas and Hageman) and Saturday (11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Thomas and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Hageman).

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

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**The Spy Coast** by Tess Gerritsen (hardcover \$28.99 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 347 pages.)

Who is surrounded by people, yet all alone? A spy, of course. A spy has so many names on passports, made-up histories, past jobs that never existed. I don't know how they keep all their identities straight.

On the other hand, I couldn't help but wonder what a lonely, solitary life that must be. And what happens when they reach retirement age? Where do retired spies go? Perhaps some small community, as this story suggests. But can they ever really retire? Could their past come back to haunt them?

This book not only has an excellent story, but also explores the person behind the mask of a spy — like Maggie Bird, for example...if that's her real name.

Sixteen years ago, Maggie left the CIA and, thanks to a friend also retired from the game, now lives in Purity, Maine. It's a sweet little community, complete with all the charms of rural living. She has a nice house with a piece of land and chickens to boot. Her home is called "Blackberry Farm." Sounds cozy, right?

Maggie is happy and content with her life now. No one in Purity knows her real story, nor the stories of her friends from "the agency," who also call Purity home. They call themselves the Martini Club: Ingrid and Lloyd Slocum, Declan Rose, Ben Diamond and Maggie.

Maggie's nearest neighbor is Luther Yount and his granddaughter, 14-year-old Callie, who, along with the rest of the town, know nothing of Maggie's past.

Coming home one day, Maggie's security system shows an intruder in the house. She finds a young woman, calling herself Bianca, making herself at home. She says, "*We could use your help.*" Who? The CIA, of course. Diana Ward has disappeared — she's another retired agent. Bianca says the agency is worried about everyone who was involved with Operation Cyrano, Maggie's last assignment before retiring. That means case files have been hacked, and there's a real need to check on everyone who was involved. Maggie has no use for Diana for certain reasons. No surprise that Bianca leaves as Maggie shuts the door in her face.

Later that night, Maggie comes home from the Martini Club's book club gathering at the Slocum house to find Bianca's body in the driveway. Yes, she's quite dead, and looking like she was tortured before the final blessed bullet ended her suffering.

## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



Then, there's shots fired at her from across the field. Amateur hunters? I think not. More like a warning shot.

Just when she is settling into her perfect retirement, Maggie has to persuade the police that dead Bianca has nothing to do with her. She doesn't count on the female chief of police, Jo Thibodeau, being efficient and nobody's fool. She still carries on her own investigation as the state police bully in and take over.

Maggie has a double problem: finding out who sent Bianca, and who now knows where she lives. Maybe one more problem — why do they want her dead?

Of course, this leads to some backtracking to 16 years ago when everything in Maggie's world went to hell. Operation Cyrano was to be a rather simple extraction of a Russian sleeper agent...until it wasn't. While tracking him down in Bangkok, Maggie had a chance encounter with Dr. Dan Gallagher at an outside diner. But was it really by chance? Gerritsen doesn't give away answers without a struggle. And that's the fun part of this book — it's not the ending that counts as much as the road there. Piecing together Maggie's life all those years ago, you understand why she can't trust anyone, even Danny after

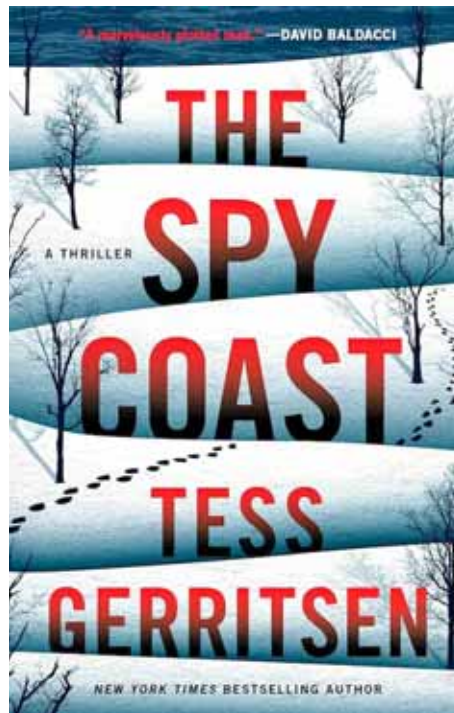
they got married.

Brains vs. brawn. Gerritsen shows us age is just a number. Watching these retirees throw all their expertise at the unknown enemy is satisfying and believable. These are characters who hold your interest, with a story that is as much entertaining as it is thrilling. All the elements for a continuing series are here.

*The final word:* If old soldiers never die, they just fade away, then what about old spies? Once a spy, always a spy? Maybe they just move far back in the woods and raise chickens, and hope they can keep their secrets. Don't look for James Bond here, just five former spies who have all that's necessary at their age — brain power — and they know how to use it!

Gerritsen is the author of the popular Rizzoli and Isles series that was made into an equally popular TV series, as well as a number of other books.

Till next time, happy reading!





# American Red Cross

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

- Blue Chip Casino, 777 Blue Chip Drive, noon-5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15.
- Hamon Gray, American Legion Post 83, 228 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15.
- A.K. Smith Career Center, 817 Lafayette St., 7:45 a.m.-1:45 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16.

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

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### In the Area

**Feb. 15** — Bad Art Night for Adults, 5-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Feb. 16** — Lego Star Wars Day, 2-4:30 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Feb. 16** — Pokemon Party (children of all ages), 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Feb. 17** — Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Feb. 17** — Karstens' Club Challenge Chili Cook Off, noon-3 p.m., Moose Family Center 980, 2107 Welnetz Road. Cost: \$5 donation.

**Feb. 19** — Video Game Day (ages 8-17), 3-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Feb. 20** — Virtual Author Talk with Jason Mott, 3-4 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Registration: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Feb. 20** — Family Bad Art Night, 5-6 p.m., Cool-spring Library Branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Feb. 20** — Movie Trivia Night, 5:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3044, (219) 873-3042.

**Through Feb. 29** — Black History Month exhibit, LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

**Through March 31** — Work by Cheryl Kaper, 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: [lucia@qas.org](mailto: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.

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

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

**Thursdays in February** — 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 Through March 22** — Knights of Columbus Council 12951 annual Lenten Fish Fry, 4-7 p.m., Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 606 S. Woodland Ave. Cost: \$15/adults, \$12/seniors. "Season Passes": \$85/adults, \$67/seniors. Online orders: <http://qas.org/kofc>

### In the Region

**Feb. 16** — 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](http://www.nps.gov/indu)

**Feb. 16** — 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](http://www.nps.gov/indu)

**Feb. 16** — Davy Knowles with Jack Whittle Trio, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee, \$55 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: [www.acornlive.org](http://www.acornlive.org)

**Feb. 17** — 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](http://www.nps.gov/indu)

**Feb. 17** — Beaver-Tales Trek, 10 a.m.-noon, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Feb. 17** — Turtle Time, 2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Feb. 18** — Feed the Birds Snowshoe, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Feb. 18** — The Acorn's Dance Showcase featuring Dance Arts + Diamond Dance Academy, 3 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$10 + \$3 convenience fee, \$25-35 + \$3 convenience fee for \$35 tickets (reserved). Children/free. Reservations: [www.acornlive.org](http://www.acornlive.org)

**Through Feb. 25** — Series 1 Exhibit, Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: [www.boxfactoryforthearts.org](http://www.boxfactoryforthearts.org), [facebook.com/boxfactoryarts](https://facebook.com/boxfactoryarts)

**Through Feb. 29** — "Student & Instructor Exhibition," Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Fri./10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat. Info: (219) 462-9009,

www.artbarnschool.org

**Through Feb. 29** — “Changes” (solo exhibit by Bryana Bibbs), Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: www.chestertonart.org

**Through March 3** — “Abstract Topographies: One if by Land, The Paintings of Richard Keen,” “Intimate Worlds: The Collage Works of Bonnie Rock,” Elkhart’s Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St. Admission: \$10/adults, \$6/8-12, \$8/ages 13-18 & college students with ID. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Fri., 1-4 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Info: (574) 293-6660.

**Through March 14** — Chesterton-based plein air oil artist Christine Newton, The Village Gallery at Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso.

**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** — “Facing the Giant: 3 Decades of Dissent,” Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Also on display: Joe Matty’s “A World Apart” (through March 24), Aaron Martin’s “Nébwakat Mshiké: Wise Turtle,” through 2024. Info: www.krasl.org, (269) 983-0271.

**Saturday-Sunday in February** — Warm Up to Winter, 1-3 p.m., Chellberg Farm, Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Snow conditions: (219) 395-1882.

**Saturdays-Sundays in February** — National Park Themed Movie, 2-3:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.

**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

**Vickers Theatre** — *Now Showing:* “Driving Madeleine.” Not Rated. Times: 5 p.m. Feb. 17, 1 & 3:30 p.m. Feb. 18. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

**On February 15, 1842**, the first U.S. postage stamps with adhesive on the back were introduced by a private mail service in New York.

**On February 15, 1879**, President Rutherford Hayes signed a bill that allowed women attorneys to argue cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

**On February 15, 1898**, 260 crew members were killed when the Maine, a U.S. battleship, blew up in Havana Harbor. This incident escalated tensions between the United States and Spain, and was one of the factors that led to the Spanish-American war.

**On February 15, 1958**, Michigan City was “clobbered” by the biggest recorded snowfall in history. A slow breeze, picking up moisture over the length of Lake Michigan, dumped its entire load on just a few square miles of land. Three to five feet of snow (depending on who did the measuring) paralyzed the area for several days.

**On February 16, 1868**, members of The Jolly Corks, a social and benevolent society, organized themselves into The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. The purpose of this new organization — as it is today — was to practice charity, justice, brotherly love and faithfulness.

**On February 16, 1923**, in Egypt’s “Valley of the Kings,” the treasure-laden tomb of Tutankhamen (“King Tut”) was opened by archaeologists.

**On February 16, 1948**, the first daily television news was broadcast on NBC.

**On February 16, 1968**, the nation’s first 911 emergency phone system was inaugurated in Haleyville, Ala.

**On February 17, 1801**, the House of Representatives broke an electoral tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, electing Jefferson as president and Burr as vice president.

**On February 17, 1817**, Baltimore became the first American city with gas street lights.

**On February 17, 1876**, Maine’s newspapers reported the first sardine was canned at Eastport. While not specifically mentioned, it is safe to assume the second and third were canned on the same day.

**On February 17, 1897**, the PTA was founded in the United States as the “National Congress of Mothers.” It later expanded to include fathers, teachers and other citizens. Today, the official name of the organization is “The National Congress of Parents and Teachers.”

**On February 17, 1904**, Italian Giacomo Puccini’s opera, “Madama Butterfly,” received a poor re-

ception at its premiere at Milan's La Scala Theater.

**On February 18, 1735**, the first opera to be presented in the United States, "Flora, or Hob in the Well," was performed in Charleston, S.C.

**On February 18, 1885**, Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was published.

**On February 18, 1939**, San Francisco's Golden Gate International Exposition officially opened.

**On February 18, 1953**, "Bwana Devil," the movie that heralded the 3-D fad of the 1950s, opened in New York.

**On February 18, 1953**, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz received an \$8 million contract to continue "I Love Lucy" through the 1955 season. This was the highest single TV contract to that date.

**On February 19, 1807**, former Vice President Aaron Burr was arrested in Alabama and charged with treason. He was later acquitted.

**On February 19, 1878**, Thomas A. Edison received a patent for his invention of the phonograph. His assistant, John Kreusi, who constructed the first working model from Edison's drawings, received \$18 for his efforts.

**On February 19, 1910**, the famous "Diamond Jim" Brady appetite was in rare form. At a New York dinner party it was reported he ate seven dozen oysters, five servings of roast beef, two gallons of stewed fruit and three gallons of orange juice.

**On February 20, 1792**, President George Washington signed an act creating the U.S. Post Office.

**On February 20, 1933**, the House of Representatives completed action on an amendment to repeal prohibition.

**On February 20, 1962**, John Glenn, in his Mercury space capsule, became the first American to orbit the Earth, circling the globe three times before landing in the Atlantic.

**On February 20, 1965**, the unmanned "Ranger 8" spacecraft, after sending back thousands of pictures, crashed on the surface of the moon.

**On February 20, 1981**, the space shuttle Columbia cleared the final major hurdle to its maiden launch as the spacecraft fired its three engines in a 20-second test.

**On February 21, 1804**, the first self-propelled steam railway locomotive was demonstrated in Mid-Glamorgan, Wales. Built by Richard Trevithick, it pulled a 10-ton load around a 10-mile track.

**On February 21, 1838**, Samuel Morse gave the first public demonstration of the telegraph.

**On February 21, 1846**, Sarah Bagley became the first female telegrapher, taking charge at the newly opened telegraph office in Lowell, Mass.

**On February 21, 1866**, Lucy Hobbs, upon graduating from the Ohio College of Dental Surgery, became America's first women dentist.

**On February 21, 1878**, Connecticut's New Haven Telephone Co. issued the world's first telephone directory.

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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.



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**Duties Responsibilities & Qualifications**

Must be 16 years of age  
Must have USA ID

Get Michigan child care fingerprint/background check. Must have current Ability to lead and oversee an assigned group of campers.

Ability to work with children of all ages, understand their interests, and apply that to how you relate to each camper

Maintains camp discipline. Refers incidents of misbehavior, as necessary, to the camp director.

Assists with camp activities and events as assigned by the On-Site Program Director.

Promotes high camper morale.  
Ensures camper safety

Compassion, good judgment, sense of responsibility, patience, fairness, humor, charisma, spontaneity and a positive outlook. Will supervise Counselors-in-Training assigned to the same group.

If interested fill out application below  
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or email [anneblasko@gmail.com](mailto:anneblasko@gmail.com) for application link

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In celebration of Presidents' Day, The History Museum and Studebaker National Museum will offer free admission from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. EST Monday, Feb. 19.

The museum campus is located at 808 W. Washington St., South Bend. Call (574) 235-9664 or (574) 235-9714, or visit [www.historymuseumSB.org](http://www.historymuseumSB.org) or [www.studebakermuseum.org](http://www.studebakermuseum.org) for more details.

**Singing Sands Toastmasters Club**

Singing Sands Toastmasters Club will host its 5-year charter party at 6:15 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19, at 301 W. Homer St.

The guest speaker is vocal mentor-performance coach Patti Shaffner.

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