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Class Act

by Kim Nowatzke

They have been dubbed the “Class With Class.” And after spending just a few moments at one of their monthly get-togethers, you can see why the Elston High School Class of 1966 lives up to its nickname, and why the ties between these former classmates are so special.

Back in 2017, the tradition of meeting monthly began with about a dozen attendees at Swingbelly’s, 3101 U.S. 12. Graduate Dave Banwart, granted the unofficial class title of “mayor,” got the idea after seeing Facebook posts by Jean-Ann (Jaques) Morton about getting together with girlfriends who’d graduated from Elston in 1965.

The numbers understandingly dwindled during the pandemic; however, monthly informal meetings of the 1966 class average about 30 and at one time reached more than 50.

“After getting so big, we would fill a place up,” Banwart explained. So, the group switched meeting places a few years ago to Mug Shots Lounge at City Lanes, 1901 S. Woodland Ave.

“The best thing to come from our luncheons is the

renewal of old friendships and the beginning of new ones,” 1966 Elston graduate Bernie Scott said. “We had a very large graduating class, and it was impossible to know everyone, but the class reunions and luncheons have really helped in finding some really great people who were classmates.”

The “Elston Class of 1966” private Facebook page, started by Scott about a decade ago, has been a great resource in getting the word out about the monthly meetings and other information. It now has 272 members, which includes about 40 who aren’t actual classmates, such as spouses and children.

“It has a good number of views,” Scott said. “We encourage our members to contribute any time they want.”

Sharon (Hill) Lane is another fan of the monthly gatherings.

“I like the discussions, staying in touch and hearing about their lives,” she said.

The December meeting added a bit more fun with a bring-an-ornament, get-an-ornament exchange. Many Elston and Red Devil-themed ones have exchanged hands over the years. For Mariam (Abraham) Kobos, it became yet another example of her classmates’ thoughtfulness.

With her job schedule, it’s hard to make the get-togethers. She purposely didn’t plan to join the or-

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Members of the Elston High School Class of 1966 are photographed by *The Beacher’s* Kim Nowatzke at their monthly get-together in December at Mug Shots Lounge.

THE
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Class Act

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nament exchange since she was going to be late to the meeting, yet her friend, Jeanne (Konkey) Schoof, gave the ornament she received to Kobos.

“I thought it was very sweet of her to do that,” she said. “It shows how our friends are and why we have closeness...I love my class and the many friends I’ve made.”

Former classmate Nancy (Bobinski) White notes that other Elston graduates from other years have been welcome to the get-togethers.

The camaraderie, and the opportunity to be with others she wouldn’t normally see in her everyday life, is what she savors.

Lane, head of the reunion committee since the late 1980s, said about seven or eight out of its approximately 15 members attend each month.

“We all work together. Everybody’s input is important,” she stressed. “So, many people here play an integral part.”

The class used to have reunions every 10 years, Scott said, but since the 50th reunion, they upped that to every five years.

Former classmate Tommy Harris, who has lived in Indianapolis for the past 44 years, said he has attended every class reunion, and tries to make at least one or two monthly get-togethers each year. He has a smaller group of 10-12 guys from the class, who live as far away as Florida and California, that he keeps in contact with monthly. Describing

himself as a jock who played football and track all through high school, he said he knew a lot of people from his class and still does.

“I definitely think this class is unusual,” he shared. “We had a close class from poor kids to the well-to-do families.”

With such a large class, Kobos didn’t know everyone, but says she knew many in high school...and still does.

“We all seemed to get along, and we pretty much respected each other,” she noted. “I’m on the reunion committee, and this group is very close...I love my class and the many friends I’ve made.”

Bob Lewis, another 1996 graduate, started coming to the monthly get-togethers about two years ago.

“It’s great to be with my classmates again,” he said. “At our age, at any one time, we know we may not see them again. You don’t realize what you’ve lost until it’s gone.”

Not surprisingly, Elston winning the 1966 state basketball championship has played a significant role in the class’ cohesiveness – in the past and present.

“I think the state championship brought us even closer,” noted White, who was one of seven cheerleaders on the squad at the time, and the only one who was on the squad as a junior and senior. “The whole school got along. It brought us all together. The defining glue that cemented the bond...it was basketball – the excitement and the enthusiasm of winning state and all that followed after that.



Dennis Schultz and Sharon (Hill) Lane are photographed together at the December gathering.



A high school photo of
Bernie Scott.



A high school photo of
Dave Banwart

Some of her core memories of the big win on March 19, 1966, included busloads of people – with cheerleaders dispersed among different buses – heading to Indianapolis for the championship game.

“There were tons of people in the street – it was crazy,” she said. “The streets were like high noon (even though it was the middle of the night) – bumper-to-bumper traffic. When we got back, the gym was full floor to ceiling. Each time we won, the crowd just got bigger. It was also the first time we had won regionals. The team came back the next day, but us cheerleaders came back after the game, and we had another pep rally at midnight or 1 a.m. in the morning.”

She later learned what it was like as a spectator because her husband, John White, graduated the year before and was part of the crowd.

Lane, another cheerleader, said the experience brought everyone closer together.

“Everyone would have paid to come to a pep session led by (the late) Warren Jones (Elston High School principal),” she said. “That personal touch, and winning the state championship, has made us very close.”

She recalled when members of the 1966 class were at the lakefront when they ran into members of the opposing team at the championship game.

“It’s really nice sometimes how you meet someone,” she said, “and you find out that you were intertwined because of the basketball win.”

Scott has a hard time describing the impact of March 19 on him and his former classmates.

“Winning the basketball state championship cannot be described in words,” he emphasized. “It became an emotional high that has lasted a lifetime.”

Doug Wickstrom, who was vice president of the class, agreed.

“It was a big class – a wide grouping of people,” he said. “It was like a little city at the time. Our defining glory was winning the state championship. It was like winning a war. We were the center of the whole town.”

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Class Act

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Lewis recalled “one story never told” about the trip to the state championship game.

“We had to take buses – we couldn’t take personal cars – and the bus driver on the bus I was on fell asleep and ran off the road,” he said. “All I remember is going off into the ditch. No one was hurt. I was helping throw kids out the back door.”

Kobos said she was fortunate to be on the first bus of a long fleet on its way to Indianapolis.

“Coming back that night, when we got closer to Michigan City, (U.S.) 421 was lined up on both sides with cars honking and farmers with their tractors lit up,” she said. “When we got to the Devil’s Den, there were so many people there that we weren’t sure all of us students would be able to get in.

“The team came in the next day on a fire truck to Ames Field for a huge celebration,” he continued. “It was fantastic! With the late Warren Jones as our principal and ‘No. 1 cheerleader,’ and the support of the students and the entire city, it was electrifying. Everyone was backing the Red Devils. St. John’s United Church of Christ’s sign outside said, ‘Contrary to our normal policy we, too, are backing the Devils.’ I thought that was cool. It was a great time — never to be forgotten by any of us.”

She considers her best memory as a high school

senior to be the historical four weeks of basketball leading up to the state championship, in addition to basketball player Jim Cadwell winning the Arthur L. Trester Award for Mental Attitude.

Marsha (Brinckman) Pawloski recalled drawings not only to attend championship games, but also for season tickets.



This ticket represents the remarkable experience the Class of 1966 had when Elston won the state basketball championship.

“It wasn’t that the high school won, but that the whole town won,” she said. “Warren Jones would always end his cheer with, ‘Give me a devil roar!’”

Pawloski has been a member of the reunion committee for the past 37 years.

“I didn’t know quite a few people,” she said, “but through the committee, I’ve met some wonderful people.”

And, there are plenty of other memories.

“My biggest memory was the passing period and the number of bodies that had to get one place to another in five minutes,” Pawloski recalled.

For Scott, teachers and staff stand out.

“I had excellent teachers and an excellent principal,” he recalled. “Every classmate remembers Harriet Wright, the school secretary, who had a memory like a steel trap. Rarely did she forget the name of a student.

“Phyllis Durrand was one of my favorite teachers,” he continued. “I found myself in her public speaking class, which terrified me. Her class and patience helped me overcome my fear of speaking to groups. Little did I know I would be speaking to very large groups later in life. Of course, football and basketball games were the highlights, with dances held afterward at the YMCA.”

A core memory of Lewis’ high school days was driving up and down Franklin Street and buying a hamburger for \$1.

“I have memories of parties, basketball and football games, dances and proms and friendships that still now exist and gradua-



A cake donated by classmate Dennis Schultz for the monthly get-together in December at Mug Shots Lounge. Photo by Kim Nowatzke

tion,” Kobos said.

Whatever the memories, you can bet the Elston Class of 1966 will enjoy reliving them for a bit – and making a few new ones of their own.

“Our class felt like one big family...this class has always been close,” White stressed. “If anybody needed anything, someone would help. We are all one here – no matter who you hung around in high school...we all take care of each other.”



An example of the type of ornament exchanged at a Christmas get-together.



Lissa (Anderson) Nygren and Sharon (Hill) Lane cut the cake at the December get-together. Photo by Kim Nowatzke.



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Elayne serves as the team's real estate assistant and brings 20 years of industry experience. She understands the transaction process from start to finish and is skilled at marketing. She supports the entire team and is committed to providing a professional experience for clients.

Life is Good

I am going to reminisce because I still do not trust the data coming out of the MLS, and I am just feeling very good about the world in which I live and work.

First, I want to reminisce about The Beacher. I was around when Sally Montgomery started to publish The Beacher. That was when we were doing the second section of condos with boat slips along Trail Creek. Sally would sit with me to work on the layout of a page promoting these unusual places where you could pull in, go upstairs to your two bedroom-plus loft condo, then walk out to your boat tied up at a 50' slip. All this for less than \$150,000.

Sally had infinite patience with me. Andrew "Drew" has continued to indulge my crazy ideas and added so many wonderful features to The Beacher. I even read the movie reviews now. The Beacher survived changes to the "real newspaper" that had a large building near City Hall.

Kudos to Drew and staff. Sally would be proud. I am proud to send you a check every month. The Beacher is unique.

Next, I get a bit of a kick every time I drive between Commerce Square and the residences on the other side of the main drag. Things look great some 40 years later. Gil Pontius still headquarters Al's Food Stores there. The houses are all in good condition and worth more than the \$130,000 they originally sold for. Businesses still thrive there.

As I said, I like where I live and work.

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Dunes Summer Theatre

Dunes Summer Theatre has finalized audition details for the 2024 season.

The first round is from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3, at The Holdcraft Performing Arts Center, 1200 Spring St. Chicago auditions are at City Lit Theatre, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr. Times are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10, and noon-4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 11. Those auditioning should prepare:

- Two contrasting monologues no longer than three minutes.
- For musical performers only, two contrasting selections no longer than 32 bars each (an accompanist will be provided).

Actors should submit a current headshot and resume to Artistic Director Steve Scott at ArtisticDirectorDAF@gmail.com

Prerecorded auditions for those unable to attend in person will be accepted through Feb. 20. Recordings should be prepared according to the guidelines, and be sent with a headshot and resume to ArtisticDirectorDAF@gmail.com

The summer schedule is:

- "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward (May 31-June 16).
- "Talley's Folly" by Lanford Wilson (June 28-July 14).
- "The Bridges of Madison County," book by Marsha Norman, music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown (July 26-Aug. 11).
- The 4th Annual "Dunes Broadway Cabaret" (Aug. 15-17).
- "Voices From the Heartland: The Second New Plays Festival" (Sept. 19-22).

Visit www.dunesARTS.org for more details.

Pickleball Tournament

Registration is under way for United Way of LaPorte County's first pickleball tournament, which is from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, May 18, at Kesling Park, 2150 A St., LaPorte.

The event is for leveled mixed doubles (3.0, 3.5, 4.0), with a maximum number of 72 players on six courts. Registration is at 8 a.m. The \$25 entry fee serves as a donation to United Way. Food will be sold and team medals awarded. If it rains, the event moves indoors to LaPorte County Family YMCA, 901 Michigan Ave.

Visit tinyurl.com/37te5uvb for reservations.



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Reins of Life Volunteer Training

Reins of Life will host volunteer training from 2-4:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 22, and 5:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, at the Michigan City facility, 9375 W. County Road 300 North.

Reins of Life is a non-profit therapeutic horseback-riding organization. A high number of volunteers is needed to provide services to adults and children with disabilities.

Attending one session qualifies someone to volunteer during riding lessons. Helpers are assigned one rider and horse for a session, which lasts about two months. Volunteers must be able to walk 30-45 minutes at a time and be at least 13.



Reins also has the largest therapeutic carriage-driving program in the United States. To become a volunteer, those interested must attend additional training from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25. There is significantly less walking in this capacity.

RSVP by calling (219) 874-7519. Leave a name, email address and which training session. Visit www.reinsoflife.org for more details.

Harbor Country Hikers

Harbor Country Hikers will explore one of West Michigan's rare acidic sandy flatwoods at 1 p.m. EST Saturday, Jan. 20, at New Buffalo Area Schools' Nature Study Trails, 1112 E. Clay St.

In a press release, HCH President Pat Fisher, who will lead the event, said these environments are endangered because they often fall outside the protection of Michigan's wetland laws.

The NBAS site, combined with the adjacent Turtle Creek preserve, offer more than four miles of trails through native flora and fauna in ancient beachheads, wide ravines, streams, a planted prairie, marshes, floodplains, hardwood forests and seasonally wet flatwoods. Plans for the hike, rated moderately difficult to difficult, are to cover two or three miles of trails.

Membership is preferred; however, the public is welcome. Wear a warm cap and sturdy shoes or boots, and take plenty of water. Depending on the weather, there may be muddy or icy areas.

Visit www.harborcountryhikers.com or the group's Facebook page for more details.

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Catherine Dickerhoff, Michigan City Elks Lodge 432 past exalted ruler and secretary, presented a \$4,500 check to Cheryl Daurer, executive director of Meals on Wheels in Michigan City and LaPorte. The gift will provide more than 900 meals to struggling people.

Unity Foundation Scholarships

March 15 is the deadline to submit applications for Unity Foundation of LaPorte County's 2024 cycle of scholarships.

For the 2023-2024 school year, Unity's scholarship program awarded \$310,000 to 172 local students.

Unity's General Scholarship Application simplifies the process by allowing students to apply for different scholarships through one form. The application, eligibility requirements and additional information are available at www.uflc.net/scholarships. Applicants are encouraged to begin the process early.

Graduating high school seniors, continuing students and non-traditional students seeking to obtain a professional certificate, or associate, undergraduate, graduate or doctoral degree can apply.

FBG Accepting Holiday Decorations

Friendship Botanic Gardens, 2055 E. U.S. 12, is accepting donations of gently-used Christmas and holiday decor for next year's Christmas Joy Lights Festival.

Also being accepted are gently-used Halloween items for the annual Haunted Trails. Email info@friendshipbotanicgardens.org or call (219) 878-9885 for more details.



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Indiana Dunes National Park

- **Science Fridays Series from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 19, at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center.** The presentations by local experts change topics each month. January's speakers are Dr. Charles Beeker and Sam Haskell, who will discuss shipwrecks along the Indiana Dunes National Park coast. See dive footage of the Muskegon (in front of Mount Baldy) and the J.D. Marshall while listening to Beeker speak about his directed research.
- **The Save the Tunes Council performs from 7:30-9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 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, Jan. 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.
- **Porter Beach Restoration from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Jan. 20.** Meet staff and volunteers at Porter Beach Parking Lot at Wabash Avenue and Johnson Beach Road. Wear comfortable clothes; work gloves and equipment will be provided. Temporary passes will be available.
- **Warm Up to Winter from 1-3 p.m. Saturdays-Sundays in January 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.
- **Winter Fun from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturdays**

in January at Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education. If there's enough snow (a minimum of 3 inches is required), visitors can borrow cross-country skis or snowshoes to explore Miller Woods. Limited snowshoes are available. Guests also can help feed the center's resident turtles and fish and explore exhibits.

- **Miller Woods Snowshoe Hike from 1-3 p.m. Sundays in January at Paul H. Douglas Center.** Limited snowshoes are available, with the ranger-led program dependent on a minimum of 3 inches of snow; otherwise, a traditional hike is planned. Call (219) 395-1824 for snow conditions. Friends of Indiana Dunes sponsors the program.
- **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: Jan. 20-21, "Mysteries of the Ancient Architects"; and Jan. 27-28, "Mammoth Cave A Way to Wonder."
- **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.



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:

- **Beach Discovery Walk at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 20.** Meet a naturalist at the east side of the beach pavilion for a 45-minute exploratory walk along the state park beach. If conditions allow, snowshoes will be offered for free on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Beach Mysteries Table from 2-3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20.** Meet at the Nature Center to identify items found on the beach.
- **Squirrel-Tales Hike at 10 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 21.** As part of National Squirrel Appreciation Day, a naturalist leads a one-mile, moderate hike that focuses on squirrel adaptations and identification. If conditions allow, free snowshoes will be offered 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.

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NETFLIX

“Society of the Snow” is Definitive Account of 1972 Andes Crash

by Andrew Tallackson



Survivors of the devastating plane crash wave to their approaching rescuers in “Society of the Snow.”

Like James Cameron’s quest to have his sinking of *Titanic* be the definitive account, J.A. Bayona has taken the 1972 Andes flight tragedy about as far as it can go.

And like Cameron’s 1997 triumph, “*Society of the Snow*” is not the first telling of this story. Frank Marshall took a crack at it 30 years ago with “*Alive*,” although with a mostly white cast. Bayona (the monumental 2012 tsunami film “*The Impossible*”) uses Uruguayan and Argentine actors, most of them newcomers. But beyond that, he invests more time with these people, while the physical production is staggering in scope and authenticity, including footage at the actual crash site.

But how the Netflix movie, based on Pablo Vierci’s 2009 account, affects you taps into the existential tone of Bayona’s work. As one character asks, do you view these events as a tragedy or a miracle? There is no objective way around it because the movie is such a visceral experience, and that colors how you walk away from it.

The 1972 flight carried 45 passengers and crew, specifically 19 players in the Old Christians Club rugby team, their families, friends and supporters. The plane hit a mountain ridge, the entire back half subsequently torn off. The remainder of the fuselage slid down a mountainside before stopping at the base of the valley.

Give Marshall, director of “*Alive*,” credit for staging the crash with unflinching accuracy. I’ve only seen it once, but the crash, itself, has stayed with me. Bayona’s recreation is almost exactly the same, especially the horrifying finish as the plane grinds



“Society of the Snow”

Running time: 144 minutes. Netflix. Rated R for violent/disturbing material and brief graphic nudity.

to a halt, seats and their passengers slamming into each other.

But here, what follows is Bayona’s painstaking attempt to memorialize, and contrast, those who perished with everyone else in primal survival mode. He features moments of levity, where survivors keep each other entertained, along with the mental distress of the hopelessness of their predicament. Each time someone perishes, their names and ages appear on screen. And, more so than the 1993 film, Bayona forces the characters to examine their own moral compass when others choose to eat the remains of the dead for sustenance.

I braced for Bayona’s explicit portrayal here. My fear was that his background in fantasy (“*Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom*,” “*A Monster Calls*”) might come into play. Never once, though, does he exploit the difficult subject. The acts of cannibalism largely are depicted off-screen. In fact, Bayona is more interested in characters reconciling their disgust at descending into the unthinkable.

Visually, Bayona and cinematographer Pedro Luque create an endless, inhospitable sea of white. Sweeping drone shots convey how impossible it was for anyone flying above to discover the crash site. As characters scale the mountains in hopes of reaching help, Bayona’s camera angles nearly induce vertigo.



“Society of the Snow” spends more time getting to know the rugby players before and after the 1972 plane crash.

And by spending more time with these people — “Society of the Snow” is nearly 2 ½ hours — we feel the loss as survivors perish. We get it, why some team members come close to madness. So at the end, when rescue finally arrives for the 16 survivors, we are faced with the film’s existential dilemma.

Do we see what unfolded in 1972 as a tragedy or a miracle?

I felt more loss than relief at the end. The senselessness of it all. Even as team members take their first showers in months, weeping for joy, what strikes us more is their emaciated bodies. The best comparison, I suppose, is that of Nazi concentration camp survivors. Yes, we are moved by the reunions with their families, but Bayona doesn’t treat his finale as easy uplift. His final shot, in fact, is of the surviving 16, huddled together in safety. It is a miracle they survived, but the loss is deeply felt.

From here on out, there is no need to retell this story. This is it. The definitive account.

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The Year in Television: A Look Back at 2023

by Andrew Tallackson

Ralph Macchio, in 2022's *Waxing On: The Karate Kid and Me*, offered the most telling observation on what he called a "new golden age" in television.

Back when the actor's career momentum stalled, shortly after "My Cousin Vinny" (1992), his agent suggested he take the lead in a network drama. Insulted, he thumbed his nose at the advice. TV, to him, was a step down from the silver screen.

Today, he argues, streaming has made television the destination point for actors. Where creative freedom and substantive budgets open doors for actors to do their best work.

He's right.

Save for event pictures ("Oppenheimer," "Barbie," "Avatar: The Way of Water"), Hollywood is losing the battle to streaming. The public is more compelled to stay home and binge a series. In fact, 2023 was such a dynamite year for television, whittling down a list to the Top 10 was impossible. Revisions were many.

What follows is my way of tossing more bouquets as we move on to what awaits in 2024.

1. "Jury Duty" (Prime)

It ain't Emmy bait, although it scored four nominations. It's not highbrow, although how they pulled it off is a carefully orchestrated miracle. That I watched all eight episodes twice, not wanting it to end, is a tribute to the ingenuity involved. Basically an elaborate prank, the show creates a fake trial, with the entire cast populated by actors save for one person. An average Joe (Ronald Gladden) unaware that none of it is real. The show's creators struck gold with this guy. He is a rarity: a nice guy with a huge heart. Watching the actors effortlessly improvise around him to keep the joke going, you forget what you're watching is lightly scripted. The laughs are huge, thanks in large part to "X-Men" veteran James Marsden (Emmy nominated) for playing an exaggerated version of himself. The joy of the show comes from watching outrageous types poke fun at our legal system. You become so enamored by these people, you don't want your time with them to end.

2. "The Diplomat" (Netflix)

A career diplomat (Keri Russell) arrives at her new U.K. post, right as an international crisis erupts and her personal life goes haywire. The show is a comedy-drama-thriller for smart people. It throws you into a whirlwind of events with little to no prep and expects you to keep you up. The result was the



year's most wildly entertaining experience. It's like a sneak peak into the lives of political movers and shakers taken to wild extremes. The dialogue cuts like a knife, and the ensemble is up to the challenge. As the viewer, you appreciate that the show not only respects your intelligence, but also amps up each crisis. The scene-stealer: longtime character actor Rufus Sewell ("Dark City") as Russell's equally savvy husband, their back-and-forth marriage on the cusp of imploding. We've never seen the actor this charismatic.

3. "A Small Light" (Disney/Hulu)

Here is a master class in how to tell a familiar story from an altogether new perspective. How Anne Frank and her family went into hiding during World War II now comes from the side of Miep Gies, Otto Frank's secretary, who was instrumental in keeping the family out of sight. Miep is played by Bel Powley ("The Morning Show") in a galvanizing performance that serves as a window into the world outside the attic. Her performance is, in turn, youthful, wise, emotional and heartbreakingly persistent. The resistance efforts outside of the attic place Frank's

series of quirks. The result is quiet moments that deeply affect you. When Larson's character encourages a woman in her cooking-show audience to pursue her dreams, the woman's response, and follow-up appearance, have a fragile power that celebrate strength, courage and determination.

5. "Daisy Jones & the Six" (Prime)

Talk about a herculean task. Taylor Jenkins Reid's 2019 novel was a mock oral history of a pop-rock band that triumphed and failed in the mid-1970s. So many key incidents in the book were mentioned in a line or two. This 10-episode Prime series, then, had to flesh out the story. To visualize what, in many cases, was just a passing reference in the book. The result? Dare I say it, but a fuller, deeper experience. A more complete study of the characters, all cast to perfection, and a flawless recreation of the '70s rock scene. Was it a thinly veiled retelling of Fleetwood Mac? Reid didn't intend it as such, although she was inspired by their music. Nonetheless, Riley Keough (Elvis Presley's granddaughter, no less), was the perfect embodiment of Daisy Jones. A rock goddess symbolizing '70s excess at its best and worst.

6. "Somebody Somewhere" (HBO)

The second season of the hit comedy about middle-aged misfits never skipped a beat. More than ever, it has the breath of life. Like you're watching real people relate to each other in very real ways. Bridget Everett's Sam feels like that snarky pal we all know, using humor to mask hurt and sadness. Her sister, Tricia (Mary Catherine Garrison), is a piece of work: overwhelming in every sense of the word. Sam's closest friends are members of the LG-BTQ community, and rarely has a show introduced such characters with effortless appeal. The most unforgettable is Fred (Murray Hill), a trans man with a heart so huge, his kindness consumes you in the best way possible. HBO ordered a third season two months after Season 2's debut. Thank you, HBO.

7. "The Bear" (FX)

The second season of the FX smash achieved the unthinkable. It allowed its cast to grow. To not only realize personal flaws, but transcend them. Each episode allowed the characters to embark on personal journeys where they emerge as stronger, better people. Still struggling is Carmy (Jeremy Allen

story within an entirely new context. It feels more complete. So, when that horrible day arrives, when Nazis discover the family's hiding place, the loss hits you with a crushing weight. Critical notices were strong, ratings high, yet not one Emmy nomination. Why? Did Emmy voters assume they already knew this story and skip it? That's a shame.

4. "Lessons in Chemistry" (Apple TV+)

This tender adaptation of the Bonnie Garmus best-seller is like a salve for the soul. Beautifully acted, it stars Oscar-winner Brie Larson ("Room") as a chemist battling sexism, grief, loss and renewal in the late 1950s-early 1960s. Larson creates a woman ruled by a strict adherence to science and structure, with little to no room for matters of the heart. And that is precisely the journey on which her character takes: a willingness to break down the walls shielding her and allow others into her inner circle. That includes her tough, strong-willed neighbor (the dynamite Aja Naomi King), who's fighting her own battles against politics and racism. The lovingly adapted series embraces the eccentricities of its characters without reducing them to a

Continued From Page 19

White), and we understand why through a blood-pressure spiking Christmas flashback in which we experience his hellacious family. Leading the charge? Jamie Lee Curtis, as Carmy's mother, in a career high sure to win an Emmy next year.

8. "Poker Face" (Peacock)

Rian Johnson, the driving force behind the "Knives Out" series, turned his wry talent to '70s "case of the week" shows with this frequently hilarious tribute. Casino worker Charlie Cale (Natasha Lyonne, Emmy nominated) has the uncanny ability to know when someone is lying. When she's forced to flee the casino, her cross-country travels introduce a cavalcade of oddballs and their loopy mysteries. The "guest stars" include Adrien Brody, Benjamin Bratt, Hong Chau, Chloë Sevigny, Judith Light (who nabbed an early Emmy for the performance), Ellen Barkin, Tim Meadows, Simon Hellberg, Tim Blake Nelson, Nick Nolte, Stephanie Hsu and Joseph Gordon-Levitt. The real treat amid all that star power is Lyonne. For years, she's played second fiddle in movies like the "American Pie" series and Netflix's "Orange is the New Black." This is the role she's waited her whole life to play: a pint-sized dynamo/liar-detector test with a smoker's voice and heart of gold.

9. "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" (Prime)

Plenty of shows said farewell in 2023, Netflix's "The Crown" among them, but this Prime comedy brought five seasons to a most satisfying close. It took an unusual approach, frequently leaping forward in time to feature these characters in a somber reality. But its depiction of the final leap for Midge (Rachel Brosnahan) into the big leagues was tremendously

Coming Soon!

My picks for the best films of 2023. I'm still tracking down a few titles, so expect to see my column in early February.

moving. More so, it revealed the true love story of the series was between Midge and her longtime agent, Suzy (Alex Borstein). Not in any physical sense, but as a friendship that withstands peaks and valleys. We weren't ready to say goodbye to these characters, but if we must, this was how to do it.

10. "The Last of Us" (HBO)

Video-game adaptations, I avoid like plague. Bereft of inspiration, plot and character, they're about as thin as toilet paper. "The Last of Us" redefined the video-game adaptation into awards-worthy entertainment, with character always at the forefront. The series envisions an apocalypse that reduces much of the population to terrifying creatures, the survivors left scrambling for cover. Twenty years later, one man (Pedro Pascal) must shepherd a child (Bella Ramsey) across country. It sounds like "The Walking Dead" meets "The Mandalorian," but the show is incredibly grounded. Pascal and Ramsey created a formidable bond, and the people they encountered on their trek, especially Melanie Lynskey's cruel tyrant, are unforgettable. The champagne moment: the third episode, "Long, Long Time." A story of love and loss that may be the finest hour of television from 2023.

Close Calls

FX's " Fargo " and Apple TV+'s "For All Mankind" delivered their final episodes in January, but the latest seasons in these franchises proved they've aged like fine wines. " Fargo " embraced the wacked-out spirit of the original Coen brothers classic with gusto, thanks in large part to killer work by Juno Temple, Jon Hamm and especially Jennifer Jason Leigh. "For All Mankind" again reinvented itself by leaping forward to 2003, this time centering on tensions within the workforce and global diplomatic relations. The writing and the performances, especially by Wrenn Schmidt as Margo and Coral Peña as Aleida, reveal the show at the top of its game.

Worth a Mention

"A Murder at the End of the World" (FX), "Beef" (Netflix), "Hijack" (Apple TV+), "Hunters" (Prime), "Lucky Hank" (AMC+), "Lupin" (Netflix), "The Morning Show" (Apple TV+), "Only Murders in the Building" (Hulu), "Silo" (Apple TV+), "Unprisoned" (Hulu).

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Vehicle Applications Open for Annual Concours d'Elegance at Copshaholm

March 15 is the application deadline for The Studebaker National Museum's sixth annual Concours d'Elegance at Copshaholm, which is from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. EST Saturday, July 13, in South Bend.

Co-presented by The JBS Collection and LaVine Restorations, the gathering celebrates automotive design, engineering and culture.

The featured marques are Chrysler, DeSoto and MG. Closed-body Full Classic automobiles will be featured in the Ultimate Luxury class, while pre-World War II race cars will be highlighted in the Competitions Classics class. The event also will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Ford Mustang, as well as vehicles more than 100 years old in the Centennial Club class. Other highlights include: Disco Decade Rides for cars from the 1970s, Powered by America,

featuring European-built exotics originally equipped with American powerplants, and Flathead Fords, an open class for flathead Ford V8-powered automobiles. Rounding out the field is Love that Lark!, a class for 1959-1966 Studebaker Lark-type cars.

The Pass-In-Review and Awards Ceremony is at 2:30 p.m. EST. Awards will be presented in all classes, as well as Best of Show and other special awards of distinction. The chief judge is automotive scholar-historian Matt Short. Judging is French Traditional. Automotive historian Bill Rothermel will narrate the awards ceremony. Visit tinyurl.com/sysaxjk3 to register. Accepted vehicles will receive notice of the selection committee's decision by April 7.

Visit www.concoursatcopshaholm.org for additional details.

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Mann is in Top Form, But Connecting with “Ferrari” is Tough

by Andrew Tallackson

in
Theatres



Adam Driver does his trademark disappearing act as the subject of Michael Mann's "Ferrari."

Save for the climactic 1957 Mille Miglia, especially the horrifying recreation of Alfonso de Portago's fatal crash, "Ferrari" is oddly underwhelming, and that is one adjective that should be *nowhere near* a movie with this talent.

The director is the great Michael Mann ("Heat"), working from a screenplay by the late Troy Kennedy Martin (1969's "The Italian Job") and lifted from Brock Yates' 1991 biography Enzo Ferrari: The Man, the Cars, the Races, the Machine. The cast includes an Oscar nominee (Adam Driver), an Oscar winner (Penélope Cruz) and an underrated talent (Shaillene Woodley). Ferrari's turbulent private life is not cast aside; instead, it's the prime focus.

So why do we feel detached from it?

The approach is right. "Ferrari" is part of the new breed of snapshot biopic that zeroes in on a particular point in the life of its subject. From that, we cull perspective. Insight into these people.

That, I'm afraid, is where "Ferrari" fails. Mann remains a master storyteller, but Martin's screenplay does not feed the actors the tools they need to invest empathy into these people.

The story unfolds during the summer of 1957, one year after the death of Dino Ferrari, son of Enzo (Driver) and Laura (Cruz) Ferrari. Both are in mourning, their company teetering close to bankruptcy. He has a son with his mistress, Lina (Woodley), fathered during the war. So, he's dividing time

★ ★ 1/2

"Ferrari"

Running time: 130 minutes. In theaters. Rated R for some violent content/graphic images, sexual content and language.

between women.

We meet race car drivers, company men, but the bulk of the film involves these three wounded souls.

Driver has become America's answer to Christian Bale. A chameleon who transforms himself body and soul into a role. Here, he's imposing in height, gaunt, hairline receding from age. As a physical interpretation, the performance is complete. But what are we to think of Enzo as a business owner, driving enthusiast, husband and lover? There is little to no insight, no a-ha moment that explains the guy. He's basically a selfish lout. If anything, Cruz walks away with every scene. Devastated by loss, seething with rage over her husband's infidelities, she is one helluva force, the galvanizing presence this movie deserves.

I also appreciated Woodley's approach, creating someone who loves the man in her life, even as she resents being "the other woman."

But so much of "Ferrari" is its subject going through the motions. It takes Mann's innate talent behind the camera to rev things up. Every se-

The Michael Mann Connection

There is a notorious legend in the Tallackson clan that has survived decades without falter.

My mother attended Chicago's Amundsen High School. At the time, she was Judith Mendelsohn. In the late 1950s, her chemistry lab partner was none other than Michael Mann, who graduated the same year as her. According to family lore, Mann accidentally spilled acid on my mother's poodle skirt. She was rushed to the office since the acid was dissolving her skirt right in front of the whole class.

The story earns a laugh every time my mother tells it. However, it remains near the top of my bucket list to one day meet Mann and get his side of the story...



Penélope Cruz is ferocious as Enzo Ferrari's wife, Laura.

quence involving Ferrari's cars, and the men who drive them, is thrilling thanks to the director's kinetic style that puts you in the driver's seat, shifting gears along with those behind the wheel.

When we finally arrive at the 1957 Mille Miglia which, coincidentally, kicks off at night, the images are everything you'd expect, and want, from Mann's films. And when de Portago's car hits something in the road, the tire exploding, the ensuing carnage is terrifying. Mann's camera does not look away; in-

stead, it follows the trajectory of the vehicle as it plows into spectators, de Portago's own body severed in half.

So potent is the moment, you gasp, your hand over your mouth, unable to speak. Mann, at 80, remains a master storyteller.

But where's the film's ending? The final shot hints at what is to come within Enzo's private life, but it's not the emotional resolve the story needs. It just dangles there, like so much of the film, waiting to be shaped into something greater.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@gmail.com

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The following programs are scheduled:

- **Bad Art Night for Adults from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 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.
- **Film Showing: "A Haunting in Venice" at 2 p.m. Friday, Jan. 19.** The movie, which is Rated PG-13, runs 1 hour, 43 minutes.
- **Genealogy Help with Pat Harris from 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays in January.** Harris can offer tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record
- **Scratch Club (ages 7-17) at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25.** Learn to code with Scratch — a platform to create stories, games and animations — by working through projects and sharing ideas. Call Dave at (219) 873-3045 for details.
- **Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in January.** 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.

- **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.
- **Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17) from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in January.** 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.
- **Bottle Cap Buddies Scavenger Hunt in January.** Visit Youth Services, find all the characters and win a prize.
- **Weekly Crafts for Kids & Teens.** Each week offers a different project. Take-home craft kits are available, or create some in the Makerspace.
- **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.

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

New Buffalo Township Library

- **New Buffalo Township Library Book Club.** The program is at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23.
- **"The Giving Tree."** The library is accepting donations to Michiana Humane Society.
- **Winter Reading begins.** 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.
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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, Jan. 19, at the main library.** Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- **Virtual Author Talk with Rajiv Nagaich from 1-2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23.** Nagaich, an elder law attorney, speaker and retirement planner, is the author of Your Retirement: Dream or Disaster. Visit the website to register.

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.

Public Art Committee

The Michigan City Public Art Committee meets at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 18, in the City Hall Mayor's Conference Room, 100 E. Michigan Blvd.



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HFL Grant Applications

Health Foundation of LaPorte has opened its 2024 Cycle 1 grant portal through March 1 for health-and-wellness projects and programs.

Proposals must address HFL's strategic priorities of Healthy Children, Healthy Living and Healthy Minds.

HFL also is accepting Healthy LaPorte grant requests that meet needs outside the strategic priorities. The goal is to: expand successful, existing programs; test new, promising initiatives; and collaborate to better meet needs here.

For 2024, HFL has introduced a simpler application for grant requests up to \$10,000. Applicants will find fewer questions on the form, which should take less time to complete.

HFL also accepts requests for grants of \$10,001-\$25,000 and for grants more than \$25,000. Each has its own application form. Grants of \$10,001-\$25,000 are accepted for proposals that address Healthy Children, Healthy Living, Healthy Minds and Healthy LaPorte.

Grants for more than \$25,000 require a Letter of Inquiry as a first step. Applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal if the LOI is accepted. Grants must address one of HFL's strategic priorities.

(Healthy LaPorte Grants for more than \$25,000 are not considered.)

All applications and LOIs must be submitted through HFL's grant portal to be considered. Organizations can find a link on HFL's website, www.hflaporte.org. Visit www.hflaporte.org/grantmaking-overview for more details.

Monday Musicale

Monday Musicale will host an open meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 22, at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

Continuing the "Music Unites the World" theme, the program will feature the music of England. Appointments are Ange Benz, Anthony Holt, Krystal Levi, Joe Stewart, Felicia Thomas, Trilogy vocal trio and a mixed ensemble of madrigal singers.

The program, chaired by Sue Cassler, explores various periods and genres of British music, beginning with the 16th century Madrigal tune "Sing We and Chant It" by Thomas Morley. Stewart will perform Ralph Vaughan Williams' baritone solo "The Vagabond." Benz will present "Limehouse Blues," which premiered on London's West End in 1921. Soprano Thomas will sing the British seasonal favorite "Walking in the Air." Other selections include traditional folk songs, and compositions by Handel, Gilbert & Sullivan and Lennon and McCartney.

Steven Mast's hosting committee will provide light refreshments for the social hour after the program. There is no fee. Guests are asked to make a donation to the club's youth scholarship fund.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust



The view from the shoreline of Deep River towards the new acquisition.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust purchased 23 acres from the American Legion, funding for the project bolstered by long-term donor Jim Martin.

The land within a river floodplain will be preserved for marsh bird habitat, and be part of a larger project along Deep River to improve community access, Executive Director Kris Krouse said in a press release.

Martin said in a press release, "I can't wait to launch from the New Chicago kayak dock and paddle to the land from Deep River in 2024."

Completion of the project is one of many components designed to improve access along a stretch of the Deep River corridor. Hunter Potchen, a school-age resident of New Chicago, approached Shirley Heinze to help improve the site of the former Water Front Lounge with a pier so he and other community members can enjoy fishing and other activities. The site, donated by the Town of New Chicago, includes a grassy field, parking area and a boat launch that needs repair.

Restoration, and the creation of public-access amenities, are in the process and made possible, in part, by grant support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chi Cal Rivers Fund and the Legacy Foundation. Shirley Heinze has worked closely with the Calumet Collaborative and Hunter's organization, Jr. Solutions, to help realize Potchen's vision of improved access and community programming.

Public access amenities are planned for 2024.

Ted Perzanowski, M.Div., B.A.



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In the Area

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

Jan. 19 — Film Showing: “A Haunting in Venice,” 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Jan. 22 — Monday Musicale, 7 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St. Free. Donations accepted to club’s youth scholarship fund.

Jan. 23 — Virtual Author Talk with Rajiv Nagaich, 1-2 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: www.laportelibrary.org

Through March 31 — Work by Cheryl Kaper, The Legacy Center Gallery at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. “Meet the Artist” reception: after 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass on Feb. 4. 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

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

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

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

In the Region

Jan. 18-20 — “Circle Mirror Transformation – A

Play by Annie Baker,” The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Times: 7 p.m. EST Jan. 18-19, 2 & 7 p.m. Jan. 20. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee. Reservations/info: www.acornlive.org

Jan. 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

Jan. 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

Jan. 19 — Opening reception, Series 1 Exhibit, 5:30-7 p.m. EST, Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Runs through Feb. 25. Info: www.boxfactoryforthearts.org, facebook.com/boxfactoryarts

Jan. 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

Jan. 20 — Porter Beach Restoration, 9 a.m.-noon, Porter Beach Parking Lot, Wabash Avenue & Johnson Beach Road. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

Jan. 20 — Beach Discovery Walk, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Jan. 20 — The Pioneer Land Spinners, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

Jan. 20 — Harbor Country Hikers, 1 p.m. EST, New Buffalo Area Schools’ Nature Study Trails, 1112 E. Clay St. Info: www.harborcountryhikers.com, the group’s Facebook page.

Jan. 20 — Beach Mysteries Table, 2-3 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Jan. 21 — Squirrel-Tales Hike, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Jan. 21 — The Acorn’s Dance Showcase featuring CC Dance + Miss Natalie’s Rhythm and Dance, 3 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$10 + \$3 convenience fee (general), \$35 + \$3 convenience fee (reserved), children/free. Reservations/info: www.acornlive.org

Jan. 23 — New Buffalo Township Library Book Club, 10 a.m. EST, library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

Through Jan. 18 — Janice Sonnenberg paintings, The Village Gallery at Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso.

Through Jan. 21 — Annual members show, Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: (269) 983-0271, www.krasl.org

Through Feb. 13 — Newly acquired paintings from Philipp Brockington estate, Porter County Museum (PoCo Muse), 20 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso.

Free admission. Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Sun.
Info: www.pocomuse.org

Through Feb. 29 — “Changes” (solo exhibit by Chicago-based artist Bryana Bibbs), Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Gallery tour/talk with Bibbs: 1-2 p.m. Feb. 10. Public weaving workshop: 10 a.m.-noon Feb. 10. Info/registration: www.chestertonart.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.

Saturdays in January — Winter Fun, 1:30-3:30 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/indu

Saturday-Sunday in January — 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 January-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.

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

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

Pioneer Land Spinners

The Pioneer Land Spinners event originally slated for Jan. 13 is rescheduled due to weather to 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20, at LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave.

Free admission for Westville residents also is rescheduled to Jan. 20.

Call (219) 324-6767 for more details.

PoCo Muse Acquires New Paintings

Porter County Museum (PoCo Muse), 20 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso, is displaying newly acquired paintings in its Robert Cain Gallery through Feb. 13.

The works, all by Porter County artists, were part of a bequest from the estate of Philipp Brockington (1940-2023), a Valparaiso University professor and art lover. The exhibit features some of the most notable local artists of the 20th century.

On display are works by Frank Dudley, perhaps the best-known Dunes landscapist, Hazel and Vin Hannell, Harriet Rex Smith, Virginia Phillips and Helen Burkett. Also included are two personal works by the benefactor himself. The gift of 30 artworks includes an endowment for their care.

In conjunction with the exhibit, a documentary about Porter County artists will be screened on a continuous loop starting Feb. 1.

Museum hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, with free admission. Visit www.pocomuse.org or find @pocomuse on social media for more details.



This untitled landscape is among works included with the Philipp Brockington estate.

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Betrayal by Phillip Margolin (hardcover \$29 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 325 pages.)

If you're looking for an old theme with new twists, this is it. Yes, it's still a murder-mystery, but the people, place and plot put a totally different spin on it.

Meet Robin Lockwood, a young woman given the opportunity to up her status as a Mixed Martial Arts fighter by taking on a fight in Las Vegas against one of the Top 10 fighters in the world: Mandy Kerrigan.

Sounds too good to pass up, even though Robin's manager tells her to refuse the fight. Experience and ability win out, and Robin is punched into the canvas, virtually ending her career with a concussion and temporary memory loss. Obviously, that embarrassing loss gives Robin the impetus to try something less painful, at least physically — and become a lawyer.

So, it's back to college to get a law degree and settle down in Portland, Ore., in a small law office where she slowly builds up a reputation as a fair and tough defense lawyer and, later, is named partner in her firm. And, Robin still works out in a gym and runs every day to stay in shape.

Fast forward 10 years to a brutal murder of an entire family in Portland — parents Margaret and Nathan Finch, 14-year-old daughter Annie, and 20-something son Ryan. Margaret was a well-known lawyer in town and Nathan a chemist at a large pharmaceutical company.

Guess who walks into Robin's office the next day? Why, it's Mandy Kerrigan, hat in hand, metaphorically speaking of course, bringing up all kinds of memories Robin would like to forget. However, Robin forgoes what happened 10 years ago as Mandy tells her story of being accused of the Finch murders. Robin knows Mandy is one tough cookie, but a killer? No way. Robin agrees to look into the facts before taking on Mandy's case.

A neighbor provides damning evidence as she sees Mandy making a ruckus outside the Finch house the night of the murders. Shortly after she disappeared, Arthur Proctor, Annie Finch's English teacher, comes to the door, enters the house and finds the family all shot dead. Door locked? Door open? Which is it?

Earlier that same night, Mandy beat up Ryan Finch at a bar for selling her performance-enhancing drugs that weren't supposed to be detected by

Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



testing. After all, she now is 10 years older and afraid she won't be able to stand up against her younger opponent. Police are satisfied that Mandy took out her anger on the entire Finch family later that night. Case closed.

Mandy swears the Finches' front door was locked, but it seems to have been open when Proctor showed up. Hmm.

Robin finds too many holes in the police case and takes on Mandy as a client. Time to find other suspects.

Suspects! They come out of the woodwork! As her investigation gathers speed, Robin learns the Finches were far from the perfect American family. Consider this: Dad was fired from his job and amassed a mountain of debt because of his addiction to gambling. Ryan sold drugs, mom was a lawyer for some questionable people, including a Russian mobster, and Annie flipped her personality between seventh and eighth grades from sweet to sour as she becomes a super cyber bully. There are other suspects — some red herrings — and following Robin's rebuttal to the police investigation is an exercise

in logical thinking, as well as pure gut reaction.

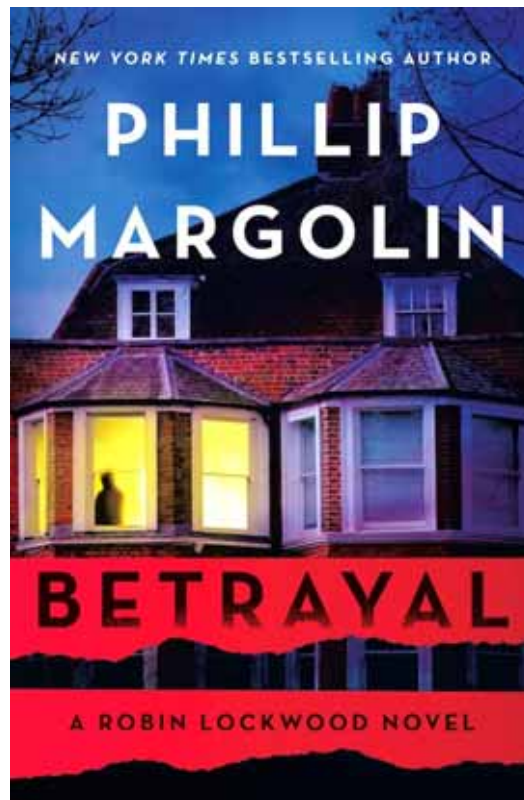
Did I mention there is one person next in line to inherit the Finch fortune if all the family members die? Interesting, right? And, one more to add to the growing list of suspects, all of whom have alibis, or so they swear to.

By the time Mandy is charged with murder, it's time to enter the courtroom phase, which shows Robin's expertise on presenting alternate possibilities. Robin's defense of Mandy is brilliant, but is it enough to get a hung jury or not-guilty verdict?

This is the seventh book in the Robin Lockwood series, and while at first I wondered about her being an MMA fighter before becoming a defense lawyer, I guess maybe it's not such a big leap from physical fighting in a cage to mental fighting in a courtroom.

The final word: Margolin shows us there can be layers to a murder...you just have to peel away until you get to the truth. And the truth may not be what you expect.

Till next time, happy reading!



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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.



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.

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Chesterton Art Center

- **“Changes,” a solo exhibit by Chicago-based artist Bryana Bibbs, is in both galleries through Feb. 29.**

Bibbs embraces textiles, painting and community-based practices. Her show will feature 79 weavings from her 2020 “Journal Series” documenting personal experiences through woven pieces using wool, dried paint, flax-recycled sari silk, degummed cocoons and handmade fibers and yarns.

Bibbs has exhibited throughout Chicago at ARC Gallery, Evanston Art Center, Tiger Strikes Asteroid Gallery and Chicago Artists Coalition, as well as Brooklyn’s Room482 Gallery and most recently Portland, Maine’s, Public Library.

A gallery tour and talk with Bibbs is from 1-2 p.m. Sat, Feb. 10. Both are free. Bibbs also will host a public-weaving workshop from 10 a.m.-noon Sat, Feb. 10, with registration at www.chestertonart.org

Founded in 2020, Bibbs’ “We Were Never Alone Project,” a weaving workshop series for victims and survivors of domestic violence, eliminates stigma and establishes a safe, supportive space to create art and share stories. A free “We Were Never Alone” workshop is from 2-5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 31, at Three Moons Fiberworks, 402 Broadway, Chesterton. Contact the art center to RSVP.

The exhibit and related programming are supported by Porter County Community Foundation.

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.



American Red Cross

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

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 402 E. Coolspring Ave., 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20.
- St. John Lutheran Church, 111 Kingsbury Ave., LaPorte, 8 a.m.-noon Sunday, Jan. 21.
- Northwest Health Heart and Vascular Building, 901 Lincolnway, LaPorte, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 21.
- LaPorte High School, 602 F St., 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23.

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

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Thank you to all my past and current clients! There are many options out there, I greatly thank you for putting your trust in me. Real Estate is such a relationship driven business and I truly appreciate you all.

Thank you to the Staff and support system at @properties Christie's International Real Estate. Your tools, systems, and guidance provide a true competitive advantage. To the Title Companies, Escrow Officers, Photographers, Inspectors, and service providers I work with, I literally couldn't do it without you.

Thank you Mom (Micky Gallas)! The best way to be successful is to learn from successful people. Thank you for teaching me this business, the right way. I learn something new from you each and every day. I am blessed to learn from the best.

Lastly, thank you to my wife, Bridgette, and daughter, Griffin. This is a long hour, impromptu schedule, 24/7/365 career. Your constant support, understanding, and encouragement means more than you'll ever know. I couldn't do this without you!

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MICKY GALLAS GROUP

31

TRANSACTIONS IN 2023 (INDIVIDUAL)*

\$22.6M+

TOTAL SALES IN 2023 (INDIVIDUAL)*

#1

BROKERAGE AND GROUP IN LAPORTE COUNTY (VOLUME)**



*Source: GNIAR MLS, based on closed sales and transaction data, 1/1/23-12/31/23. **Source: GNIAR MLS, Market Share by Sales Volume, Beach Area (521), Michigan City Area (46360 Zipcode), and LaPorte County (521-527), 1/1/23 to 12/31/23.



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