



Volume 40, Number 11 Thursday, March 21, 2024

# Rescuing a Neglected Relic



This archival photo from 1960 shows the diner, and nearby businesses, in the 900 block of Franklin Street.

"We will probably be judged not by the monuments we build but by those that we have destroyed." New York Times editorial by Kai Oishi (1963)

#### What's going on at the old diner?

At Franklin and 10th streets, just across from *The Beacher Weekly Newspaper*, stands a long-neglected relic of Michigan City's past. A tiny, rusting, dented, tarnished metal box of a building. How it happened to be there, neglected for so long, an eyesore to so many, is an intriguing story.

More than that, as observant folks might have noticed, activity around the old building suggests something new and exciting might be in store for the long-abandoned structure.

Michigan City has been guilty of putting many a historic structure to the wrecking ball, but take heart. This one old building, whether it can be considered a monument or not, will survive to live another day.

Older folks who grew up in the heyday of downtown Michigan City have fond memories of the old diner. One hears stories of teens gathering in town on a Friday evening, pooling their allowances to share burgers, fries and a Coke between them. Jim





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# **Rescuing a Neglected Relic**

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Retseck remembers passing the old M&M diner on the way home from school every day. If he was lucky and saved his money, he would shell out 55 cents to enjoy a hot and tasty meal fit for a king.

Diners seem to be a uniquely American invention. We Americans like to tuck into a quick meal on the go. The very first such "restaurant" was said to be set up in the back of a horse-drawn wagon way back in 1872 by one Walter Scott to service the busy employees of *The Providence Journal*, a newspaper of Providence, R.I. It wasn't long before many such small eateries began to pop up along the bustling streets of city centers on the East Coast.

Northeastern United States became the center of the early diner craze, with New Jersey being its capital, at one time having more than 600 such restaurants.

Often, railroad cars were removed from their wheels and set up on narrow city lots as small res-

taurants for hungry clientele. These long, narrow establishments were ready-made structures, setting the stage for future diner designs.

After the advent of the automobile, espe-Henry Ford's cially "T" that put model automobile purchase within reach of common working families, everyone began taking to the road, travelling for pleasure. With improved highway sys-



Arthur Hoyt Valentine capitalized on Americans and travel through diners like the one in Michigan City.

tems, perhaps especially the famous Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica, Calif., small diners began to spring up all over the Midwestern landscape.

Enter Arthur Hoyt Valentine, a man with an idea.



This undated archival photo shows a crowd lined up in front of the old dinner for a parade.

Valentine was born in Elliot, Ill., on June 4, 1891. He moved with his family to Kansas in 1914. As an industrious young man seeking opportunity in a booming economy, he saw all of these travelling and hungry Americans as just the opening he needed. After all, someone had to feed them on the road.

In the early 1920s, Valentine began setting up lunchrooms and diners near his home in South Central Kansas, while at the same time working as a car salesman. Nothing like grabbing the tiger of America's newfound love of automobile travel by both ends!

In 1921, Billy Ingrahm and Walter Anderson founded the White Castle restaurant chain in Wichita, Kan.

# **Beacher Company Directory**

Don and Tom Montgomery Owners Editor Andrew Tallackson Janet Baines Inside Sales/Customer Service Tom Minogue Sales Randy Kayser Pressman Dora Kayser Bindery Jacquie Quinlan, Hope Costello Production John Baines, Tom Montgomery, Kim and Terry Nowatzke Delivery

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White Castle "sliders" were assembly line burgers, and the family-owned business soon would be hailed as the first restaurant chain in America. To promote the purity of their product, which was questioned by many Americans at the time because of Upton Sinclair's book, <u>The Jungle</u> (1906), the burgers were sold in restaurants with interiors made of gleaming stainless steel.

The Ablah Hotel Supply Co. in Wichita, founded by two brothers from Lebanon in the 1930s, was building prefab metal buildings with stainless steel interiors for many of these new American diners, including White Castle.



The identification tag for a Valentine diner.

At the time, Valentine was operating up to 50 lunchrooms in the Wichita area, mostly in spaces rented in existing buildings. In 1933, he purchased a prefab metal lunch stand building with stainless steel interior from Ablah. The buildings and Ablah must have made a positive impression because Valentine began working as a salesman for the company, while at the same time managing his many diners.

Around 1938, Valentine took over Ablah's business, and the Valentine Diner was born. World War II and supply shortages interrupted his plans, but in 1945, he created Valentine Industries. In 1947, he formed Valentine Manufacturing Inc., bringing together all aspects of diner design — interior and exterior — and creating a business plan to sell the small diners across the country.

Thus was born an industry that built iconic eateries in small towns across the landscape of America. As American car culture grew, it carried with it the iconic diner. Valentine continued building his little metal box diners into the 1970s.

Over the years, Valentine experimented with many designs. At least 12 different configurations of diners were sold over the years, including one without a kitchen or the ever present counter, and fitted with wall shelves to be used as a liquor store. The design was a simple box, yet it did reflect a bit of the "Googie," or futuristic space-age style of the 1930s-1950s. They were built to be pre-assembled and set up with all interior fixtures, ready to get down to business as soon as utilities were connected.





# **Rescuing a Neglected Relic**

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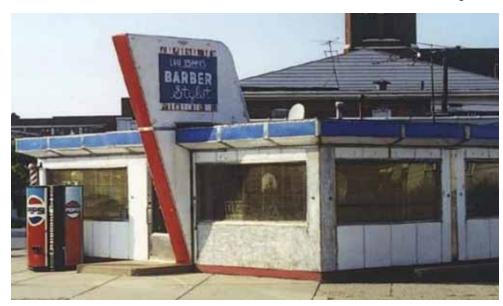
Valentine's business plan was reflected in his philosophy of life. He enjoyed being his own boss, and the sales pitch for his diners was simple. A person could buy one of his prefab buildings by mail order and have it shipped by truck to the desired location. He was convinced an industrious person could make a good living with just one unit. It could be a one- or two-person business.

If you could not afford to buy a diner with cash, payments were arranged. A wall safe was installed within the diner, and each evening, the would-be purchaser could put a portion of his proceeds in the safe. A Valentine employee would make weekly rounds to collect the payments. If, for some reason, you could not pay, your little diner would be loaded back on the truck and returned to its maker.

Our little Valentine on Franklin Street is a design known as "Double Deluxe": Serial No. 1595. It was delivered to its current site at 920 Franklin St. in 1956. Kyle Anthony-Petter, associate planner for the city's Department of Planning and Redevelopment, supplies us with the history. The "Double-Deluxe" Valentine was trucked to its present location in two pieces and set on its current foundation in 1956.

Morris Kozin opened M&M Diner on March 20, 1956, running it until it became J&J in 1965 under the ownership of Gerald Kessinger. By 1967, it became R&J diner, with Ralph A. Dietrich operating it. In 1970, it became Dick's Diner, operated by Richard Power. But two years later, it was vacant until 1973 when it became Rib Crib Bar-B-Q Carryout, with Elmer Young running the business. The next year, it became Schneider Lock and Security, run by Fred Schneider.

The building was vacant from 1977-1979. In 1980,



This archival photo taken in 1980 reveals the diner now as Lou's Barber Shop.

Lou Esper's barber shop opened in the old building. By this point, the original dining area had been stripped out and two barber chairs installed with a waiting area. The original cooking section has survived with the range and special work tables. The barber shop closed in 2001, and the building has remained empty until today.

The old Valentine diner has survived snow, sleet, rain, Michigan City festivals, even a car crash to be with us today. It is truly a miracle it still exists. After many a transition, it now patiently awaits its final transformation.



The old diner as it exists today.

Over time, the old building became a shabby shadow of its former self. In fact, it has arrived at a point in its long history in which if not cared for soon, it will simply melt into a pile of rusted metal to be carried away to a scrap heap and forgotten.

Thankfully, this is not to be.

Michelle Dickman is a woman with big plans and even bigger dreams. She purchased the property along with her two business partners, Joseph Tagler and Levi McDowell. She and her associates have a unique vision to see past the rust and dent-

ed metal to the bones of the old diner. They are convinced what it once was can be restored and, in fact, it can be even better.

Michelle is a "serial" multitasker. She currently is director of child care for LaPorte Community Schools Corp., part owner of Downtown Delights in LaPorte and sells real estate on the side. She says she always is "up for a challenge." The broken-down diner "kept tugging at me," she says. She became convinced it should be restored to its former glory, and she knew she was the person to do it. Besides, it would provide work opportunities for local young people.

Heart, dreams and elbow

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Michelle Dickman is photographed with her brother, Joseph Tagler.

grease is what Michelle is investing in the project with help from the Michigan City Historic Preservation Commission. She and her partners will restore the diner to its original dazzling white exterior, highlighted with turquoise accents and neon lights.

Mike Tracy, of Rose Construction, is project manager at the old diner site.

"We are grateful to have this opportunity to do a project that is so important to Michigan City," he savs.

He agrees with Michelle when saying, "We have had a very positive experience with City Hall. Many people are pulling for Michigan City."

Rebuilding the old diner has been a challenge.

Much of the construction of the walls, floor and roof is composed of steel bent over plywood.

"The project has had us putting our thinking caps on," Tracy says as he and his crew study the history of this construction. "We are breaking down the theory behind the design. We are rebuilding from the inside out."

Tracy has been in the construction business for many years. He says he and his company are "bringing the best craftsmen of the area together to complete this project."

The new "Brew Box," as the new diner is called, will incorporate on-site parking and outdoor patio seating. The interior will be fitted with a typical center counter, as well as a counter with seats facing the large outside windows with a view of Franklin Street. When construction is complete, "the building will look like it did when new except that it will be up to current building codes," Tracy adds.

Dickman likes to support area businesses. Her new diner will feature coffee made from beans roasted by a local firm in Munster and Amish donuts from "Rise-N-Roll" in Valparaiso.

The partners hope to open their newly restored "Brew Box" diner this spring. As old downtown Michigan City sits on the cusp of a renaissance, Dickman and her partners are sure their delightful new-old coffee shop/diner will stand as a welcome gateway to the Uptown Arts District.



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# **Dunes Arts Summer Theatre Announces 2024 Season**

Dunes Arts Summer Theatre's 73rd season will offer five productions, including the musical adaptation of "Bridges of Madison County."

Steve Scott, who joined Dunes Summer Theatre in 2021 after producing more than 200 productions

at Chicago's Goodman Theatre, returns as artistic director.

"It's the most challenging season that we've done in several years," Scott said in a press release, "and I'm looking forward to bringing our Dunes audiences these now-classic plays."

Performed at the Michiana Shores theater, 288 Shady Oak Drive, options exist for individual tickets (\$35), senior-student tickets (\$30), group sales (\$25 for four or more) and season subscriptions (\$150). Reservations can be made at www. dunesARTS.org or by calling (219) 879-7509.

Season subscribers also are invited to free special

events, including opening night champagne receptions with cast and crew, and the Spring Soiree Cocktail Party on May 18 at a private home.

Summer performances are at 7 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. The schedule is:

• "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward, directed by Michael Lasswell, on May 31-June 16. In the classic farce, a pompous young British novelist is haunted by the ghost of his seductive former wife.

## Call for Artists! The Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery hosts its annual 5x5 fundraiser May 3rd!

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• "Talley's Folly" by Lanford Wilson, directed by Morgan McCabe, on June 28-July 14. An abandoned Missouri boathouse in 1944 becomes the site of an unexpected romantic meeting between a middle-aged accountant and a reserved



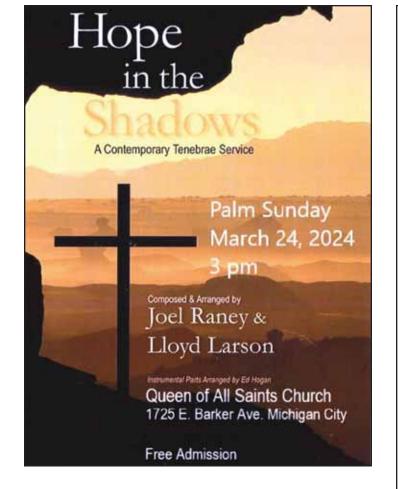
young nurse.

- "The Bridges of Madison County," book by Marsha Norman, music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown, on July 26-Aug. 11 Directed by Steve, with music direction by Andrew Flasch, the musical is based on the novel and film detailing the romance between a photographer and an unhappy Iowa farm wife.
- **"The Fourth Annual Dunes Broadway Cabaret: Romantic Journeys"** on Aug. 15-17. The show is directed by Scott, with music direction by Flasch. It also will be presented at 1 p.m. EDT Sunday, Aug. 18, at The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich.
- "Voices From the Heartland: The Second Annual New Plays Festival" on Sept. 19-22. The event offers a preview of works penned by writers from Northwest Indiana and Southwest Michigan.



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# **HIRING EVENT!**

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For more info email: contact@dunesarts.org dunesARTS.org/education

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Theatre Location Dunes Arts Summer Theatre 288 Shady Oak Dr. Michigan City, Indiana www.dunesARTS.org

SCAN

**OR CODE** 



# A Few Suggestions to Make the Oscars, Well, Less Dull

by Andrew Tallackson

I've been trying to put my finger on why the Oscars are so boring.

It has nothing to do with who won this year. For the most part, everyone who deserved a trophy got one. And the seven-Oscar triumph for "Oppenheimer"? I'm down with that.

Nor does any disinterest stem from my predictions in *The Beacher*'s "Beat the Editor" contest. I was 99.9 percent sure four of my six guesses would ring true...and they did.

No, I'm referring to the *ceremony* itself. Why, despite a few moving acceptance speeches, is the event so joyless year after year? So tiresome in length? It shouldn't take a presenter getting slapped in the face to spike watercooler chatter the following morning. We should enjoy the experience of seeing deserving talent appreciated.

Really, though, for the past 10 years or so, the Oscars have been a total bore. To illustrate my discontent, a few observations about this year's ceremony:

- I like Jimmy Kimmel. His dry delivery of a joke's punch line. He's been First-place w a solid host over the years, particularly that one year he tricked unsuspecting moviegoers into parading past the front row of the auditorium. There was nothing necessarily wrong with his March 10 "performance"; however, there was nothing memorable about it either. Time for a new host.
- Introducing the five acting nominees in each category by bringing back five past winners to gush about them *realllllllllly* stretched things out. I prefer acting clips. We get to savor one more time why the person was nominated in the first place.
- The epic fail that was the "In Memoriam" segment. We do not need an interpretive dance number attached to it. We do not need interpretive dance numbers *period* at the Oscars. They have a way of undermining the festivities. This year, not only did it distract from the deceased entertainers, but the awkward camera angles feverishly trying to squeeze everything in made it tough to see the names flashing across the screen. Scrap the dancing, please.
- Give more thought to the presenters. Bring back more cherished acting pairs from past movies.

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito may not have set the stage ablaze with their chit-chat, but it was good to see them together.

- Close the night on a higher note. Bring back the previous year's winner to crown the newbie, like the symbolic passing of the baton.
- Get better writers. The "witty banter" between the presenters, more than ever, felt awkward. Lifeless. Either let them riff on their own, or give

them something clever to say. Not the stiff, cookie-cutter patter dished out this year.

Just some food for thought.

By contrast, I couldn't be more thrilled by reader response to our "Beat the Editor" contest. Typically, we get 30-35 ballots. This year, we nearly hit 60. Some of that has to do with greater interest in the movies themselves. A lot of it has to do with our generous contest sponsor, Swingbelly's, donating a \$50 gift card to the first-place winner. Thank you, Swingbelly's.

I correctly guessed four of the six

livery of a joke's punch line. He's been First-place winner Aaron McKrell. categories, missing out on Best Actor a solid host over the years, particularly that one and Actress, both of which yielded tight, anythingyear he tricked unsuspecting moviegoers into pa-goes races.

amo

However, six readers accurately predicted all six categories: Larry Arness, Porter; Patrick Cannon, Long Beach; Jamie Edwards, Michigan City; Mike Daniel, Chesterton; Aaron McKrell, Michigan City; and Sydney Small, Michigan City. We put all six into our drawing, with *Beacher* Print Salesman Tom Minogue drawing the winners. They are:

- **<u>First place: Aaron McKrell</u>**. He receives the \$50 Swingbelly's gift card and a \$25 AMC gift card.
- <u>Second place: Larry Arness</u>. He receives a \$25 AMC gift card.

It is important to note that seven people beat me with five correct guesses. They are: Elise Carey, Long Beach; Sharon Coughlin, Michiana Shores; Trish Firanek, Michigan City; Val Heinz, Michigan City; Mary Killingbeck, Michigan City; Bob Sieko, Walkerton; and Kevin Smith, Chesterton.

Congratulations to all of you!

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@ gmail.com

Beacher

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# Kevin McGuire Named Alinsky Award Winner

Kevin McGuire, the Michigan City Area Schools director of technology, is this year's recipient of the Paul J. Alinsky Excellence Award presented by The Rotary Club of Michigan City.

The annual award honors Paul Alinsky, a past Rotarian who died in 1997. Recipients are cited for their innovation and leadership.

"To win this award is a testament to all the great people I have had the privilege to work with, and continue to work with, to build a better community," McGuire said in a press release.

Betsy Kohn, MCAS director of communications, nominated him on behalf of the school system. She wrote, "In his role as Director of Technology for Michigan City Area Schools, Kevin has been quietly impacting Michigan City students and the community as a whole for decades...(He) goes above and beyond to create better lives for children in our community through technology. His current major focus is connectivity. He worked diligently, despite supply chain issues, to secure hotspots for students without Internet access during the COVID pandemic, and has been a driving force for broadband access in our city and county."

McGuire spearheaded the installation of antennas on MCAS buildings, providing wireless broadband connectivity to school-issued devices at students' homes in surrounding neighborhoods. He implemented a comprehensive fiber network that connects all MCAS and support buildings (only the second such network in the state at the time). He secured funding from local, state and Federal programs to ensure MCAS was fully 1:1 (providing Chromebooks and tablets to all students PreK-12) with a \$10 million technology plan that also includes classroom equipment, as well as technology training for educators. He is actively involved with the La Porte County Broadband Taskforce, a Rotary Club member and

a volunteer with Michigan City Mainstreet Association and youth baseball leagues.

"Our club is proud to present this award to Kevin to honor the impact he has had on our community, the dedication he has shown to his profession and his service above self," Rotary President Matt Kubik said in a press release.

Past recipients include Les Radke, Bud Ruby, Duane Mertl, Ron Bensz, 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-Deuitch, 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 club will present the award to McGuire during a club meeting at noon Thursday, March 21, at The Salvation Army of Michigan City, 1201 Franklin St. The meeting is open to the public, and lunch costs \$15 per person. McGuire will receive a replica of the Paul J. Alinsky memorial. In addition, Rotary will make a donation to a charity of his choice.

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# LP Community Concert Association

Continuing its 100th anniversary celebration, The LaPorte Community Concert Association will present "Kiss Me Once: Stories from the Homefront" at

7 p.m. Tuesday, March 26, at the LaPorte High School Performing Arts Center, 602 F St.

Kathy Kaefer's program honors "The Greatest Generation" through songs that inspired it. She draws a personal narrative from her own interviews with veterans about wartime experiences, and her grandmothers about their lives as young women of the homefront.



Program highlights

include: "When I Grow Too Old to Dream," "Moonlight Serenade," "I'll Be Seeing You," "I Don't Want to Walk Without You," "White Cliffs of Dover," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "We'll Meet Again," "No Nuttin" and "Sentimental Journey."

The program is included in the 2023-2024 La-Porte Community Concert season. Tickets also are available at the door: \$20 for adults and \$5 for students ages 6-18. Call (219) 362-5292 or (219) 362-8262 for details.

# **Master Gardener Grants**

The LaPorte County Master Gardener Association again will offer a Community Grant Program, with submissions required no later than April 30.

The grants go to LaPorte County individuals or groups for gardening/horticultural volunteer projects that support the community and further the association's mission to "Help Others Grow," educating about gardening.

Each grant is up to \$500, and the number of grants is at the LPCMGA's discretion and based on available funds. All requests must be in writing using the 2024 application on the LPCMGA website (www.lpmastergardener.org) or at the Purdue Extension LaPorte County Office, 2857 W. Indiana 2, Suite A, LaPorte. The website contains additional information and guidelines.

# "Hope in the Shadows"

"Hope in the Shadows," a contemporary tenebrae service, is at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 24, at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1725 E. Barker Ave. Admission is free.



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# **Book & Movie Festival**

New Troy's Book & Movie Festival will show the Oscar-nominated "Killers of the Flower Moon" at 6 p.m. EDT Wednesday, March 20, at New Troy (Mich.) Community Center, 13372 California Road.

Based on David Grann's acclaimed non-fiction book, the film explores the true story of greed, corruption and the murders of Osage members in the 1920s. The movie earned a Best Actress nomination for Lily Gladstone, a first for a Native American actor. Copies of the book are available to borrow in New Troy Community Center's activities room, which is open from 4-6 p.m. EDT Monday-Thursday and 10 a.m.-noon EDT Friday-Saturday.

Doors open for the screening at 5:30 p.m. EDT. Visitors can take a beverage and/or dinner. Free popcorn will be served, with soft drinks available.

The free event is sponsored and paid for by Friends of New Troy. Donations will be accepted. Visit www.friendsofnewtroy.org for details.

# **Monday Musicale**

Monday Musicale will present a Latin Americanthemed program at 7 p.m. Monday, March 25, at First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

Chaired by Jennifer Keeley, the program is the sixth installment in the series "Music Unites the World." Joining her are Beverly Griffith, Betsy Kohn, Steven Mast and guest artists Joe Ruiz and Family. Students Mariah Arce, Moiraey Bair, Finley Romine and Luke Romine from Keeley Music Studio will perform solo and duet piano selections.

Other highlights include: a piano, flute, bass and guitar ensemble featuring Keeley, Kohn, Mast and Taylor; a piano duet, "Spanish Dance," performed by Griffith and Keeley; and original and popular Latin American songs sung by Joe and Camryn Ruiz.

A social hour follows the program, with Anthony Holt's hosting committee serving refreshments in the church's gathering room. There is no charge to attend; however, donations to the club's scholarship fund are welcome.

# **Public Art Committee**

Michigan City Public Art Committee meets at 10 a.m. Thursday, March 21, in the City Hall Mayor's Conference Room, 100 E. Michigan Blvd.



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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:

- Angels Among Us at 2 p.m. Thursday, March 21. Ange Benz, who leads the discussion, can be contacted at (219) 874-3754.
- Scratch Club (ages 7-17) at 4 p.m. Thursday, March 21. 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.
- Bad Art Night for Adults from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, March 21. Designed as a way to unwind and create, the library provides the paint, canvas and pompoms. An award goes to the piece voted Worst Art. No registration is required.
- Kiddo Bingo (all ages) at 4 p.m. Friday, March 22. Play for small prizes.
- Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, March 23. Miltenberger can offer tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record.
- DIY Terrariums (ages 10-17) at 4 p.m. Monday, March 25. Create a terrarium using soil, rocks and little figures. All supplies are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Dress to get messy.
- Great Decisions at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 25. The foreign-policy discussion program continues its 26th season. The focus is "U.S.-China trade Rivalry." Reading material is available at the circulation desk. Call 873-3049 for more details.
- After School Movie: "Peter Rabbit" at 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 26. The movie is Rated PG, the screening sponsored by the library and Michigan City Parks and Recreation Department.
- Dungeons & Dragons for Adults from 5-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 27. All experience levels are welcome. Register on the website, with supplies provided on first-come, first-served basis. Email questions to mguncheon@mclib.org.
- Genealogy Help with Pat Harris from 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays in March. Harris can offer tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record



- Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in March. Membership is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, crossstitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome. Also, the group has organized a local chapter of the Warm Up America Foundation. Volunteers are knitting and crocheting handmade squares (7x9 inch) that will be joined together to make full-size afghans.
- Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17) from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in March. 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.
- **"Kung Fu Panda" Scavenger Hunt in March.** Find the characters hidden in Youth Services for a prize. Locations change each week.
- Weekly Crafts for Kids & Teens. Each week offers a different project. Take-home craft kits are available, or create some in the Makerspace.
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance aid needed. Volunteers help at least one day a week during tax season. 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. The bus leaves Marquette Mall at 7 a.m. in front of the former Marquette Theatre. The next stop is Kabelin Ace Hardware, 512 Andrew Ave., LaPorte, at 7:30 a.m. It leaves the library for the return back at 4 p.m. The \$35 cost is due by March 25. Send reservation forms to LaPorte County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 365, LaPorte, IN 46352. *Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit www.mclib.org or call (219) 873-*

E. Fourth St. Visit www.mclib.org or call (21) 3049 for more details.

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# Sunday, March 24

Join us for a **free** event at Lubeznik Center for the Arts with exhibiting artist Shannon Downey. Get acquainted with craftivism, learn to embroider, stitch something brilliant and make friends—all in just two hours! This family-friendly workshop is intended for the LGBTQIA+ community and all allies!

Morning Session: 11 AM-1 PM CST Afternoon Session: 2-4 PM CST

Please RSVP and specify which session you would like to attend by emailing ArtInfo@LubeznikCenter.org



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This workshop is supported by the Arts Midwest GIG Fund, a program of Arts Midwest that is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional contributions from Indiana Arts Commission.



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Millie Bobby Brown stars as Elodie, trapped in a cave with a fire-breathing dragon, in "Damsel."

I don't get the hate.

Now, let me clarify. I do not read other people's reviews before crafting my own. Taints the outcome. Headlines, though, yes, and the consensus apparently is that "Damsel" is a dud.

I loved it.

Millie Bobby Brown, the star, is becoming the Gloria Steinem of popcorn flicks. Reinventing male tales with feminist slants.

"Damsel" is so cleanly told, so lushly directed by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, so persuasively performed, I was entertained from start to finish, with an ending so satisfying, there could be no better way to wrap this one up.

Kudos to Brown for smartly balancing her "Stranger Things" success with calculated risks in other genres. Granted, her two "Godzilla" movies do her no favors in the acting department, save for the big-screen exposure, but the "Enola Holmes" pictures for Netflix prove she can carry films on her own, even when surrounded by considerable star power like Henry Cavill.

"Damsel" makes its feminist intentions known from the word go. Brown, as Elodie, solemnly intones that this is *not* one of those fairy tales where the distressed damsel awaits her male savior.

We then witness, through the movie's prologue, a failed attack on a brutal dragon in the kingdom of Aurea. Centuries later, Aurea's Queen Isabelle



(Robin Wright) extends the invitation to Elodie to marry her son, Prince Henry ("Love, Simon" star Nick Robinson). Seems that Elodie's kingdom, run by her father (Ray Winstone) and stepmother (Angela Bassett), is financially devastated. A union between the two kingdoms, secured by Elodie's nuptials to Henry, would restore their country's economic prosperity.

Suffice it to say, all does not go as planned. Elodie ends up in the same cave with Aurea's dreaded dragon. Why and how that happens, I won't say. Just know that Elodie, thankfully, ain't easy prey.

A bulk of "Damsel" unfolds in that cave, and that decision by screenwriter Dan Mazeau ("Fast X") is the movie's aching flaw. A cave, however cavernous it may be, is not the most visually striking place to stage action. However, Fresnadillo, whose "28 Weeks Later" (2007) was the best sequel "28 Days Later" could ask for, tries to liven things up, particularly through glow worms that contain an unexpected power.

And, thankfully, with an actress of considerable star power like Brown, you can't lose. Elodie is

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strong and independent, but cautiously optimistic about her arranged marriage. Once trapped in the cave, Elodie's transformation into a quick-thinking warrior is genuine. She does not become Sigourney Weaver in the blink of an eye. It takes a bit for Elodie to pull it together. Brown ultimately gives a quick, athletic performance, the message being women who balance brains with brawn are unstoppable. The theme is carried out not with soapbox talk, but by letting Elodie invigorate you by finding strength as she rolls with the punches.

What does it say, too, that even the dragon gets a feminist spin? As voiced by Oscar-nominee Shohreh

Aghdashloo ("House of Sand and Fog"), the actress, ironically, has a breathy smoker's voice fitting for a fire-breathing dragon. She is cunning, manipulative, always one step ahead of Elodie. That the dragon's past fits neatly into the movie's theme of male brutality adds another layer to the story.

As Elodie decides it's time she call the shots, emphatically declaring, "I'm tired of people telling me what to do," "Damsel" arrives at a conclusion we've



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The production values of "Damsel" are exceedingly impressive.

already predicted, but feverishly hoped might happen. We want to see bad people get their just desserts. Even if it takes longer than necessary to get there, the final scene hits such a perfect note, I left "Damsel" with a huge smile on my face. It's not art, but it sure is entertaining as heck.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@ gmail.com





March 21, 2024

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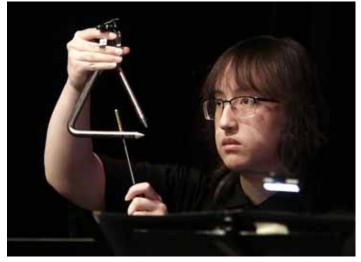






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# Season 2 of "The Tourist" is Even Better, More Satisfying

by Andrew Tallackson



Helen (Danielle Macdonald) finds herself thrust into another mystery with The Man (Jamie Dornan) in "The Tourist."

In true bonkers Australian fashion, Season One of "The Tourist" was pretty darn entertaining. All over the place, true, slipping into a drug-induced haze at one point, but anchored by wonderful performances from Jamie Dornan and Danielle Macdonald.

It came as somewhat of a surprise that I enjoyed Season 2 more. It plays like a sequel, but a superior one. The change of scenery, twisted wit and focused storyline are balanced again by two extremely likable stars. If this is it, if there are no more seasons, then "The Tourist" went out on a high.

Season One, which debuted on HBO Max, introduced Jamie Dornan's Irishman, known simply as The Man, who awakens in an Australian hospital with amnesia after a car accident, his sordid past erased from memory. And in typical Down Under fashion, everyone he meets has that detached way of reacting to a crisis with humor. As if even dire circumstances are amusing. And through Macdonald's eager deputy, Helen Chambers, the show found its sweet spot. A woman trapped in a dead-end relationship and believing The Man is her ticket out of town.

Had "The Tourist" stayed put in Australia, it likely would have been more of the same. Dornan and Macdonald barreling across the outback, plenty of crooked sorts in hot pursuit.

The series, however, switched to Netflix after

HBO Max sent it packing. It also ditched Australia, heading to Ireland and dropping its stars into a Celtic Hatfields and McCoys dispute. The result: a mob tale effortlessly blending laughs with an intriguing mystery that deepens The Man's past.

And it is his family that introduces this season's brilliant creation: his mother, Niamh Cassidy (veteran stage actress Olwen Fouéré). You gotta see this woman. With a shock of white hair cascading down her shoulders, and the gruff demeanor of a triggerhappy contract killer, she never backs down from a fight. In one scene, she stabs a man in the eye after he mouths off to her. In broad daylight, with Helen and others watching.

That unstable element, matched by her local nemesis, Frank McDonnell (the imposing Francis Magee, "Black Mirror," "Into the Badlands"), and you have a lit-fuse community. Season Two has the danger of a Tarantino film and the cheeky humor of a Guy Ritchie flick.

How The Man fits into the conflict carefully reveals itself, with Dornan, more so than last time, sporting a sly deadpan, reacting to every new crisis with what-the-!@\$# exhaustion. He's ideally complemented by Macdonald's sweet, level-headed Helen, whose investigative skills haven't dulled one bit.

"The Tourist" surrounds these two with a lively ensemble. Greg Larsen, who was rather grating last





Olwen Fouéré is this season's brilliant creation as The Man's mother, Niamh Cassidy.

time as Ethan, Helen's betrothed, is screamingly funny. Having tried to get in touch with his sensitive side, he follows Helen to Ireland, still blissfully unaware of the severity of the situation, offering running commentary on the crude individuals who come their way. There's also Conor MacNeill's Detective Ruairi, who seems sweet, but isn't what he appears to be...until he finds himself in a bromance with, of all people, Ethan.

There are only six episodes, but it's just enough to afford the mystery surrounding The Man's past breathing room, and for all elements to lock into place. By the final episode, when war threatens to erupt between Niamh and Frank, the tension is killer because by that point, the story is smart enough to make us care about the outcome. We understand exactly why these two groups are at odds.

How will they fare by the end? It's not how we expect. And for the most part, the series wraps itself up nicely where, save for one more nod to The Man's past, we don't really need more from these characters. Season 2 has done such an expert job selling itself, anything that follows may have trouble living up to expectation.

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Contact Andrew Tallackson at atallackson@ gmail.com



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# **IDNP Receives \$22M for Restoration**

Indiana Dunes National Park received approximately \$22 million from the Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund to stabilize and restore three significant and historic buildings.

This spring, restoration efforts begin on Bailly Homestead, Good Fellow Camp Lodge and the Century of Progress District's House of Tomorrow.

Bailly Homestead, a national historic landmark, dates back to the early 19th century. Once home to Joseph Bailly de Messein, the site played a pivotal role in the development of the Calumet Region.

The restoration project will ensure the building's structural integrity, and provide enhanced accessibility, energy efficiency and sustainability upgrades.

Good Fellow Camp Lodge, originally built by U.S. Steel Co. for its employees' children, will undergo comprehensive restoration to preserve its architectural features and historical significance.

The House of Tomorrow, constructed for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, will undergo restoration efforts to revitalize the structure and ensure its preservation.

In 2022, the park had 2.8 million visitors who spent an estimated \$141 million in local gateway regions, which supported 1,690 jobs and \$209 million in economic output in local communities.



# **New IDNP Superintendent**

The National Park Service named Jason Taylor as the new Indiana Dunes National Park superintendent.

Taylor is an experienced resource and land-

management leader who currently serves as director of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute for the U.S. Forest Service in Missoula, Mont. He assumes his new role this spring.

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Taylor began his career working for the Bureau of Land Management in the White River Field Office. He previously worked with the NPS in 2013 as the chief of natural-resource management and science at Cape Cod



Taylor

National Seashore before joining the NPS's Alaska regional chief of natural resources. He later became superintendent at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway, Alaska, before joining the U.S. Forest Service. As director for ALWRI, he leads an interagency effort to develop and disseminate science crucial to the stewardship of nearly 112 million acres of land in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

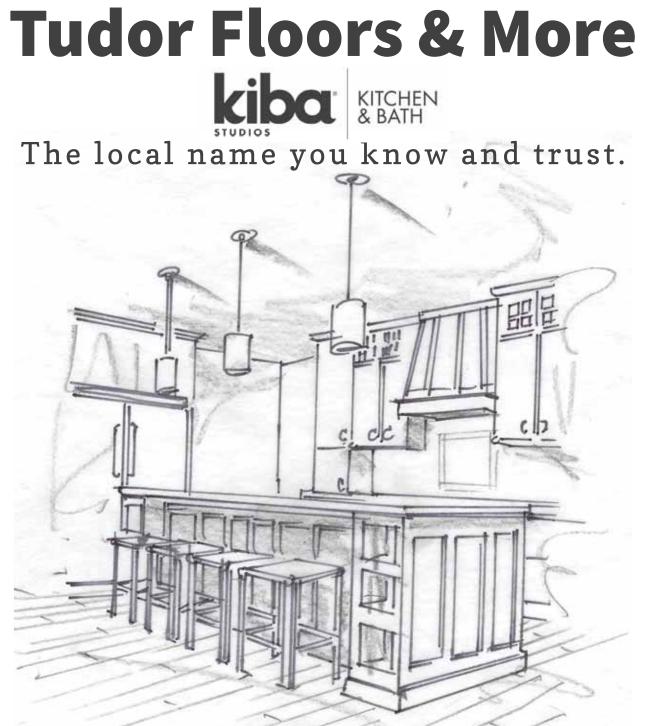
Taylor earned a doctorate and master of science in natural resources and environment from the University of Michigan and a bachelor of science in biology from the University of Michigan – Flint. He and his wife, Jennifer, along with their two young children, will relocate to the Dunes area in early May.

# **Memorial Hospital Reunion**

Memorial Hospital of Michigan City will hold its second employee/staff reunion from 5-9 p.m. Saturday, May 18, at Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 75, 416 U.S. 20.

The cost is \$25 per person, and a guest may attend for an additional \$25. A buffet and cash bar are planned. Visit the Memorial Hospital of Michigan City Reunion Facebook page to make reservations or for more details.





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# LaPorte County Parks



All registrations/questions go through the Red Mill County Park Administrative Office, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, LaPorte. Call (219) 325-8315 or visit www.laportecountyparks.org for more details.

# A Brush with Madness

The all-ages program is from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, March 21, at Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte.

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

## **Eclipse Series**

The joint program with LaPorte County Public Library is from 11 a.m.-noon Tuesday, March 26, at Luhr County Park.

Participants will read a story, make a solar system mobile and hike the solar system.

## **Field Trips**

Educators, Scout leaders and groups can schedule a free organized program for students or groups at any county park.

The programs on various topics meet state standards and patch requirements.

Call (219) 324-5855, visit www.laportecountyparks.org or email natureniki@csinet.net for details.

# New Buffalo Township Library

- Tech for Seniors 101-Smartphone Basics. The program is at 10 a.m. Friday, March 22.
- Kalamazoo Astronomical Society: The Great North American Eclipse. The program is at 4 p.m. Friday, March 22.
- Vernal Pools Hike with Pat Fischer: New Buffalo Nature Trails Vernal Pool Monitoring. The program is at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 23.
- Easter Story Time. The program is at 10 a.m. Monday, March 25.
- NBTL Book Club, Amor Towles' <u>The Lincoln</u> <u>Highway</u>. The program is at 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 26.

## 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 from 9 a.m.-4:45 p.m. Wednesdays while supplies last.
- Chess Club from 6-8 p.m. Thursdays.
- Lego Club from 9-4:30 p.m. Fridays and 9-1:30 p.m. Saturdays.
- Yoga from 9-10 a.m. Saturdays. All times are Eastern. New Buffalo Township Li-

brary is located at 33 N. Thompson St. Call (269) 469-2933 for more details.

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# An Update on "The Lincoln Special"



The momentum continues for Chris Allen's "The Lincoln Special," his planned film project set during the 16th president's funeral train.

Allen, the project's executive director, announced it will partner with the U.S. National Park Service at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial near Santa Claus, Ind. He will make a presentation there about the film June 8.

That presentation coincides with Allen's ongoing road shows throughout Indiana to discuss the film. He appeared in Michigan City in January, and in Hammond on March 16.

- His spring schedule includes:
- Saturday, April 20 Muncie.
- Saturday, May 4 South Bend.
- Saturday, May 11 Fort Wayne.
- Saturday, May 18 Bloomington.
- Tuesday, May 21 Louisville.

tails.

• Saturday, June 1 — Greensburg. Visit www.tearsandiron.com/film for more de-



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

- Purdue University Northwest, Library Student Faculty Building Room 144, 1401 S. U.S. 421, Westville, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday, March 25.
- Converge Community Church, 601 W. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich., noon-5 p.m. EDT Tuesday, March 26.
- Trinity Lutheran Church, 907 Michigan Ave., La-Porte, 1-6 p.m. Wednesday, March 27.

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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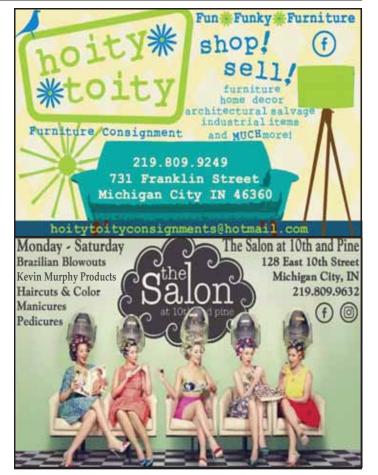
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# **Indiana Dunes National Park**

- Chellberg Farm Open House from 1-3 p.m. Saturdays-Sundays in March. Rangers and volunteers share the area's history as visitors tour the farmhouse/garden and visit the animals. Passes are required. The parking lot is off Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12 and 20 in Porter.
- Miller Woods Hike from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Sunday, March 24, at Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education. The ranger-led stroll explores a rare black oak savanna, and offers views of Lake Michigan and Chicago.
- Turtle Time from 1-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 27 at the Paul H. Douglas Center. Learn about the lives and habits of different turtles that live throughout the park.
- Drop-In Volunteer Program (Trash Trekkers) from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily at Indiana Dunes Visitor Center. Trash Trekkers is a nohassle 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:

- Outdoor Naturalist Stations from 9 a.m.noon Saturday, March 23. Meet the naturalist and volunteers outside the Nature Center to explore the diversity of Indiana Dunes habitats.
- Snakes Alive! at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 23. Meet at the Nature Center to view snakes and learn more about them.
- The J.D. Marshall Shipwreck Today and Long Ago at 10 a.m. Sunday, March 24. Meet at the Nature Center to learn about the sinking of the J.D. Marshall just offshore of IDSP.

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.





# LONG BEACH WOMEN'S BOWLING

WOMEN'S BOWLING					
March 12, 2024					
TEAM STANDING	WON	LOST			
1. Gutter Busters	24	4			
2. Pin Pals	20	8			
3. Gutter Gals	17	11			
HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES	8	SCORE			
1. Mary Lou McFadden		165			
2. Diana Holt		163			
3. June Salmon		161			
4. Tammy Vouri		158			
5. Deb Frederick		154			
5. Ann Bogart		154			
6. Nancy Kubath (series)		405			
SPLITS					
Tina Sonderby		3-10			
Ann Bogart		5-7			
THREE STRIKES IN A ROW					
Deb Konicek, Ann Bogart					
<b>March 5, 2024</b>					
HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAMES	\$	SCORE			
1. Ann Bogart		176			

III OII III DUAL GAMES	SCOLE			
1. Ann Bogart	176			
2. Mary Lou McFadden	170			
3. Tammy Vouri	167			
4. Shelly Dunleavy	165			
5. Carolyn Wiggins	156			
6. Kathy Staninger	154			
7. June Salmon (series)	403			
SPLITS				
Ginny Hogan	5-7			
Jill Jankowski	5 - 10			
Kathy Osborne	4-5			
Tammy Vouri	2-7			
Mary Lou McFadden	3-6-7			
THREE STRIKES IN A ROW				
Kathy Staninger				

# **Community Student Art Exhibition**

The Community Student Art Exhibition, which celebrates works by elementary, middle- and highschoolers, is back at The Box Factory for the Arts through May 5.

Open to youth in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties, the exhibit is presented by Krasl Art Center, Berrien Regional Education Services Agency and the Box Factory. Students have the chance to win juried awards.

First up is the elementary exhibit that runs through April 7. The middle/high school exhibit runs April 19-May 5, with the reception from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, April 18.

Hours for the Box Factory, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich., are noon-4 p.m. EDT Thursday-Sunday. Visit https://boxfactoryforthearts.org for more details

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# MCAS Wall of Fame

Friday, March 29, is the deadline to submit nominations for Michigan City Area Schools' 2024 MCAS Wall of Fame.

First presented in 1976, the annual award honors former school employees who made outstanding contributions to children. Employees from every area are eligible: administrators, custodians, foodservice personnel, instructional assistants, maintenance personnel, paraprofessionals, teachers, transportation staff and secretarial staff.

To qualify, the candidate must have been employed by MCAS for a minimum of 15 years. Special circumstances may be considered for those not meeting the 15-year requirement due to hardship or death. Candidates must have been retired or separated from the school system for at least five years. Because retirees occasionally are called back to service, the date of separation is considered the official retirement date, not including subsequent employment by MCAS. Employees from schools independent before school reorganization, as well as those from schools no longer in existence, are eligible. Death does not make a person ineligible.

All applications remain on file for three years. At the end of that time, candidates must be renominated. Forms and a complete list of past recipients are available at http://EducateMC.net/WOF





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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:

- Spring into Spring: Family Crafternoon from 5-6 p.m. Thursday, March 21, at the Coolspring branch. Ms. Anna will read a spring story, Jessica Kulekhian's First Notes of Spring, then children create a paper flower garden.
- Virtual Author Talk with Madeline Miller from 6-7 p.m. Thursday, March 21. The New York Times bestselling author will discuss her process of retelling Greek classics as modern epics. Register through the website.
- Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, March 22, at the main library. Children ages 3-5 with their caregivers experience stories, songs, crafts and activities.
- Celtic Music with Emily Ann Thompson from 6-7 p.m. Friday, March 22, at the main library Meeting Room B. Thompson performs on fiddle while clogging, and sings in English and Gaelic. She performs with her husband, Kelly, who plays guitar and percussion, and provides vocals.
- Readers Corner-Book Club from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, March 26, at the Coolspring Branch Meeting Room. The focus is <u>Run, Rose, Run</u> by Dolly Parton and James Patterson.

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.

# **National History Day Contest**

Two Renaissance Academy Charter School students will advance to the National History Day in Indiana state contest.

Avarie Marler and Avery Puckett were among about 300 students who participated in the March 9 contest at John J. Young Middle School, with finalists advancing to the 2024 NHDI State Contest on April 20 at Marian University, Indianapolis.

The contest included students from Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Marshall and St. Joseph counties. The project by the Renaissance students, "Writing History," appeared in the Junior Group Exhibit category.

NHDI is a year-long program designed to enhance history education in Indiana's schools. Students in grades 4-12 explore a historical subject that fits under the annual theme. This year is "Turning Points in History." Students use their research to create a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance or website. To reach the state contest, students must qualify at one of six regional contests.

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## In the Area

March 21 — Angels Among Us, 2 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 874-3754.

**March 21** — Scratch Club (ages 7-17), 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3045.

March 21 — Spring into Spring: Family Crafternoon, 5-6 p.m., Coolspring Library, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

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

**March 21** — Virtual Author Talk with Madeline Miller, 6-7 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: www.laportelibrary.org

March 21 — A Brush with Madness, 6-8 p.m., Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Cost: \$8. Info: www.laportecountyparks. org, (219) 325-8315.

**March 22** — Kiddo Bingo (all ages), 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 22 — Celtic Music with Emily Ann Thompson, 6-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

**March 22** — Massasauga (sibling rock band), benefit concert for "Marquette Singers" trip, 7-9:30 p.m., Marquette Catholic High School Rudy Hart Theatre, 306 W. 10th St. Tickets at door: \$7/students, \$10/adults.

March 23 — Genealogy Help with Colleen Miltenberger, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**March 24** — "Hope in the Shadows" (contemporary tenebrae service), 3 p.m., Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1725 E. Barker Ave. Free.

**March 25** — DIY Terrariums (ages 10-17), 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 25 — Great Decisions, 6:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 25 — Monday Musicale, 7 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 121 E. Seventh St.

March 26 — Eclipse Series, 11 a.m.-noon, Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Info: www.laportecountyparks.org, (219) 325-8315.

**March 26** — After School Movie: "Peter Rabbit," 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

March 26 — Readers Corner-Book Club, 6-7 p.m., Coolspring Library, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

**March 26** — LaPorte Community Concert Association, "Kiss Me Once: Stories from the Homefront," 7 p.m., LaPorte High School Performing Arts Center, 602 F St. Tickets @ door: \$20/adults, \$5/ students ages 6-18. Info: (219) 362-5292, (219) 362-8262.

March 27 — Dungeons & Dragons for Adults, 5-7:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: mguncheon@mclib.org

**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

**Through April 2** — Indiana Historical Society traveling exhibit, "Endangered Heritage," LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

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

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

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

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

In the Region

March 22 — Kalamazoo Astronomical Society: The Great North American Eclipse, 4 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

**March 22** — Church of Cash, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$30 + \$5 convenience fee, \$55 + \$5 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive. org

March 22-May 31 — "Birds, Butterflies & the Beauty That Surrounds Them" (Pamela Kirkham's original acrylic paintings), Fernwood Botanical Garden Clark Gallery, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Mich. *Reception: 1-3 p.m. EDT Sunday, March 24*. Info: www.pamkirkham.com

March 23 — Outdoor Naturalist Stations, 9 a.m.noon, Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**March 23** — Vernal Pools Hike with Pat Fischer: New Buffalo Nature Trails Vernal Pool Monitoring, 1 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

March 23 — Snakes Alive!, 2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

March 23 — Valparaiso FOP Lodge 76 Comedy Night (18+), 6:30 p.m., MAAC First Responder Training Campus, Heroes' Hangout, 4203 Montdale Park Drive, Valparaiso. Tickets: level I (\$40), level II (\$70, includes entry, \$10 in food/drink tickets, gift). Reservations: https://bit.ly/valpofopcomedy24.

**March 23** — Lissie, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$35 + \$5.50 convenience fee, \$60 + \$5.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

March 24 — Miller Woods Hike, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education, 100 N. Lake St., Gary. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/ind

March 24 — The J.D. Marshall Shipwreck Today and Long Ago, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**March 25** — Easter Story Time, 10 a.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

**March 26** — NBTL Book Club, Amor Towles' <u>The</u> <u>Lincoln Highway</u>, 10 a.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Info: (269) 469-2933.

March 27 — Turtle Time, 1-2:30 p.m., Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education, 100 N. Lake St., Gary. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps. gov/ind

**Through March 30** — Women's History Month & Kingsford Heights exhibits, LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

**Through March 31** — "Being There" (oils by Julie Christian Bender), Episcopal Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert,

Mich. Hours: 9 a.m.-noon EDT weekdays. Info: www.mediatorharbert.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Through May 12** — "Facing the Giant: 3 Decades of Dissent," Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Also on display: 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.

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

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

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

Vickers Theatre — Now Showing: "A Star Is Born" (1954). Rated G. Time: 6 p.m. March 21. Also: "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire." Rated PG-13. Times: 7 p.m. March 22, 4 & 7 p.m. March 23-24. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.



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Must have USA ID

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Beach house just steps from the sand located in Long Beach: Monthly! Fully furnished, 4BR/2BA, fully equipped large stainless steel kitchen with 2 refrigerators, outdoor deck, BBQ, patio furniture, large family room with 65" big screen TV. Fully fenced backyard with lots of games and beach toys, horseshoes, croquet, inner tubes and life vests for the beach. Call for details. Pets OK with vet docs & approval. **30-day minimum at \$239 a night. Annual lease @ \$3,500/mo. (219) 777-6722** 

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# 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 is located at 100 Francis St., Porter. Thomas Library is located at 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton. Westchester Township History Museum is located at 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton. The Women by Kristin Hannah (hardcover, \$30 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 464 pages.)

The forgotten. The unsung heroes. That describes the women who served in the Vietnam War.

Kristin Hannah is an extraordinary author, which is why I looked forward to reading this book. She also happens to be writing about my generation. The generation, like their fathers before them in World War II, that took their responsibility seriously, marching off to Vietnam, strongly and hopefully, but returning wounded in mind and body, met by booing crowds calling them baby killers. What happened? They only did what their government asked them to do...

That was the problem. We learned our government lied to us about the war. From LBJ to Richard Nixon, we were spoon-fed information that just wasn't true.

Hannah spent hours of research and conducted face-to-face interviews with female Vietnam veterans, giving us a novel that really is a compilation of all these women's stories.

As she describes Frankie McGrath — "She'd gone to war a patriot and come home a pariah."

In 1966, Frankie decides to become a nurse and follow her brother, Finley, to

Vietnam, to support him and do something besides being a housewife or teacher, as social conventions of the day permitted.

Finishing her nursing degree, she goes to the Navy to enlist, but is told she must have two years experience before being accepted. The Air Force says the same thing. The Army, however, sees it differently, and she signs up. To say her parents are unhappy is an understatement. Her father refuses to talk to her. To make matters worse, as Frankie gets ready to head oversees, word arrives that Finley is killed in action. Too late to back out, and she really does not want that.

She earns the title of 2nd Lieutenant and is sent to 36th Evac Hospital in-country, a place within sight of the South China Sea. The job is to get the wounded stable and ready for the field hospital.

To Frankie, upper-middle class daughter of Coronado Island, Calif., the sights and sounds of the jungle are overwhelming. The smells, the dust when it doesn't rain, the monsoons when it never seems to stop, the foul-smelling hooch she and two other nurses share with a fast moving rat, and finally, seeing the various other buildings where they will help patch up soldiers, debride burn wounds and collect the dog tags from the ones that didn't make it to send home to their families.

When she is finally assigned to surgical nurse, Frankie comes into her own. She finds her calling and soon becomes the most reliable surgical nurse

# Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



in the camp. She feels needed and appreciated, knowing she is giving valuable service to men who are hurting, scared and in terrible pain.

After six months at the 37th, the Army moves her to the 71st Evac Hospital at Pleiku, a MASH unit near the Cambodian border where there is deep jungle and heavy fighting, which means heavy casualties.

> There will be men after her, but true to her 1950s upbringing, she remains a virgin...well, for awhile anyway. She even falls in love, and can't believe a man would lie to her about not being married.

> After two years of service, falling in love and experiencing loss, Frankie returns to her Coronado Island in March 1969 to many surprises. People are lined up in the airport, hurling insults at the soldiers and sailors returning from 'Nam, calling them names, throwing things at them. Frankie is astonished. This can't be happening...

Now, the sad part of Frankie's story begins in earnest as she begins to have nightmares, finding herself on the floor afterwards. Loud noises make her think she's under attack...

Her father won't accept her service to her country, telling country club friends she spent the past two years studying abroad in Florence.

When she says she just returned from Vietnam, she is told there were no women there. No help exists when she tries to get help for her nightmares, her drinking and depression over how her parents treat her. This is before the acceptance of PTSD. Even nurses are told to get on with their lives, forget what they saw and did in 'Nam. Really?

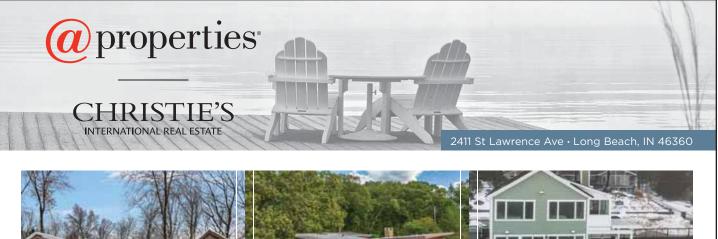
The next few years of Frankie's life slowly deteriorate until she realizes something must be done. Help arrives in the most mysterious ways sometimes, and it's years later as the most eloquent ending takes place Nov. 13, 1982, with the unveiling of the new Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The final word: This is one of the most human novels I've ever read. It's factual, it's emotional, it's a true depiction of what these women vets faced when coming home to a divided country: vilified, but seldom honored. I offer you two other books, both non-fiction, that corroborate much of what you read here: <u>Home Before Morning: The Story of a Army Nurse in Vietnam</u> by Lynda Van Devanter and <u>M\*A\*S\*H Vietnam: What it's Like to be a War</u> <u>Nurse</u> by Lorna Griess.

Till next time, happy reading!







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