

**THE**  
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# Heart of Gold

*by Andrew Tallackson*

Marissa Stapleton knew her 6-year-old daughter, Sienna, was anxious about the wellness check-up required for kindergarten. Doctors make her nervous. So, the solution was simple. Have her older brother, Boomer, tag along. He could ease some of that anxiety, help her get through the experience.

Boomer's love of hockey stems from his father, Tim, the National Hockey League's first Filipino player.  
Photo by Andrew Tallackson

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# Heart of Bold

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If you'd told Marissa something was wrong Boomer, she wouldn't have believed it. He was a normal 8-year-old who loved school and hockey. There were no warning signs of any heart condition.

At Sienna's office visit, the pediatrician, for one reason or another, decided to take Boomer's blood pressure. It was 155/100. Children frequently become anxious in a doctor's office, but Boomer's numbers were elevated beyond what is acceptable for a child his age. The blood-pressure test was repeated, the results the same. Marissa was confused. Her son is not a nervous child. The doctor advised the family to go to Dairy Queen, relax, enjoy some ice cream, then come back. They did as told. Later, back at the doctor's office, Boomer's numbers were still elevated. The pediatrician's advice: Go home, monitor his numbers for a week, then return for a follow-up visit.

That was in September 2023. The ensuing months were a blur of medical tests and meetings with specialists. Nothing indicating anything of concern.

Then came Black Friday in November. Marissa, a Long Beach resident and Realtor with The Line Mullins Group, was at Line Mullins Group Interior, a high-end boutique she owns in Michigan City's Uptown Arts District. A notification arrived on her phone through MyChart, the free app where patients access their health information. The latest test involving Boomer's heart was available. The findings used words like "abnormal" and "severe."



Boomer's parents, Marissa and Tim Stapleton, were a constant source of strength for him. Photo provided

"As a mom, I shut down," Marissa admits, pausing as she recalls that day, her voice rippling with emotion. "I almost didn't want to read it anymore. I'm in the store, it's Black Friday, and I just said to everyone, 'I have to go'."

Marissa immediately went home and showed the results to her husband, Tim. The days, weeks and months that followed would put her and her family to the test. An exhaustive ordeal of exploring every possible option for her son.

Trying times, though, have a way of bringing out the best in people. Reservoirs of strength and courage emerge. Strangers open their hearts through acts of kindness. For Marissa and her family, Boomer's journey, terrifying as it might be, would reaffirm their faith in each other and in those whose paths crossed with theirs.

To look at Boomer today, you'd never guess this is a child who, just a few months earlier, underwent life-changing surgery. His ear-to-ear smile melts your heart. His energy level is immeasurable. He isn't shy about removing his shirt to reveal the 6- to 7-inch surgery scar across his chest. Now a fourth-grader at New Buffalo Elementary School, he's more interested in talking about favorite subjects at school — math and reading — and his love of hockey born out of the career forged by his father — the National Hockey League's first Filipino player.

Was the past year frightening for Boomer? He shrugs his shoulders when asked.

"I wouldn't say yes and I wouldn't say no," he replies. "Maybe I was so-scared."

The official diagnosis for Boomer was a coarctation of the aorta with severe dilation and narrowing. A mouthful, to be sure. In layman's terms, it is a narrowing of the aorta. It typically is present at birth, but symptoms don't arrive until later, usually adulthood. High blood pressure is the warning sign. In infants, severe cases can lead to heart failure. Treatments can range from surgery to a catheter-based process to repair the narrowing.



Boomer repeatedly surprised everyone by how quickly he bounced back from the surgery. Photo provided.

Boomer says up until that day last year when the pediatrician took his blood pressure, he felt fine, save for one reoccurring problem.

"I would randomly wake up in the morning, and my foot fell asleep," he said. "I wondered if maybe I stay up too late or I wake up too early. When I would wake up, I had to shake my foot. It was like when you sit down and two hours later, your foot is tingling, but this was like cold tingling."

For Marissa, after the initial MyChart bombshell, the immediate course of action was to see how her husband might help, how his connections might come into play. Retired from the NHL for six years, he'd amassed an impressive career. Between 2008 and 2012, he played with the Toronto Maple Leafs, Atlanta Thrashers and Winnipeg Jets. Later, his ventured abroad.

Today, he is the co-host of the "Raw Knuckles Podcast" with former NHL player Chris "Knuckles" Nilan. As fortune would have it, the producer's own connections led them to Neil Cambroner, a thoracic surgeon at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. *U.S. News & World Report's* 2021-2022 Best Children's Hospitals rankings named it the best place in the country for heart surgery and pediatric cardiology and heart surgery for the fifth year in a row.

Cambroner, who is Filipino, looked Stapleton up before calling the family, learning how he became the NHL's first Filipino player.

Cambroner would become the family's guiding

Continued on Page 4

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# Heart of Bold

Continued from Page 3

force through the entire process.

“This man calls us, he has no idea who we are. We’re not cardiologists, just having read MyChart only,” Marissa said. “He called out of the kindness of his heart. We had this automatic connection with this man.”

Cambronero was the one who arrived at the official diagnosis of coarctation of the aorta. He also uncovered that Boomer’s body was compensating elsewhere for his heart troubles.

“He (Cambronero) said, ‘Your son is an anomaly.’ this is typically found in utero when the child is born,” Marissa recalled.

Cambronero first put the family at ease, saying Boomer was in no immediate danger, but that the family should explore all surgery options, which ranged not only from entering through the chest, but also through the side and groin.



The three hockey players who reached out to Boomer were (from left) Patrick Kane, Marc-André Fleury and Connor Bedard.

That’s how the family eventually landed on surgeons through Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. In the meantime, though, the family realized the best option for Boomer was for life to proceed as planned. They organized a birthday party for him, complete with 15 kids and a game truck with video games, consoles and other equipment. Was it coincidence or fate, then, that two mothers at the party had children who experienced similar heart issues as Boomer? All Marissa can say is, these women became sources of strength for the family.

And they definitely needed the support. The initial report from Lurie, Marissa says, was not to enter through the side, but to perform surgery where, the explanation of it alone, terrified her. It included dropping his body temperature down to freezing, stopping blood flow, except to the brain, putting his heart and lungs on a bypass machine, performing the surgery, then bringing his temperature back up

to normal.

“That just lost me,” Marissa said, “freezing my child and stopping his blood flow.”

The family then explored heading to Texas Children’s Hospital. Marissa, however, realized the family needed its entire support system with them. And, they needed to make sure Sienna was handling everything as well as she could.

They chose Lurie.

Two days before the surgery, Marissa could tell her son was nervous from the enormity of everything.

“I said to my husband, ‘I don’t care what it takes, what you have to do to get this, but you’re getting three of Boomer’s favorite hockey players to send videos,’” Marissa recalled.

And that’s precisely what Tim did. Patrick Kane of the Detroit Red Wings, Connor Bedard of the Chicago Blackhawks and Marc-André Fleury of the Minnesota Wild each sent heartfelt videos wishing him the best of luck.

Boomer’s reaction? He makes the “mind blown” gesture with his hands. The support boosted his spirits.

“It helped me be calm because I was like, I can’t believe I had to do this,” he said.

The surgery was performed May 5, with recovery at the hospital projected to last seven to 10 days. There were rough patches in the days to follow, but by Day 2 of recovery, he was up and walking. His pain levels then dropped daily. Pretty soon, he was walking the entire length of his hospital floor. By Day 5, the hospital released him.

Once home, the prognosis was six to eight weeks recovery time. By Week Four, he was cleared to swim. To be cautious, of course, but to try and return to normal.

“I couldn’t ice skate, which was very sad,” Boomer said. “I couldn’t, like, play sports. I could walk, but I couldn’t run because, if I fell, it would be bad.”

Marissa admits to being in awe of her son’s recovery.

“It’s so crazy,” she said. “This stuff happens in your life, and all of a sudden, everything stops and nothing else matters. All that matters is your son’s life.

“Now, today,” she continues, “he’s amazing. He’s the bravest kid I’ve ever met.”

**T**hese days, life is pretty much back to normal for the family. Or, as Marissa says with a relieved laugh, “1000 percent back to normal.”

Boomer is back in school, playing hockey, swimming, proudly showing his scar. That he feels well is all that matters to her and Tim.

“Honestly,” she says, “I can tell a difference in him. He looks better. He is more energetic. They say kids are resilient, but it’s so true.”

With each day another step in the healing process, life for Boomer is what it should be. A blessing. And should another child his age have to go through what he experienced, now he can be a source of strength for them.

“I would just say to them, ‘It’s going to be fine. I know you can do it,’” he said, a smile spreading across his face.

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



Boomer received a steady stream of get well cards over the course of his recovery. Photo by Andrew Tallackson

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## Inaugural Hallelujah Gala to Benefit Michigan City Messiah

Proceeds from the inaugural "Hallelujah Gala!" will offset expenses for Michigan City Messiah's 60th annual performances in December of Handel's "Messiah."

The benefit is at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21, at Michigan City Senior Center, 2 on the Lake. Planned are a cash bar, silent and live auctions, a raffle and meals by Scartozzi's Trattoria. Tickets are \$50 for individuals or \$300 for a table of six.

"In the past, we've relied solely on grants and donations to keep us going," music director Philip Bauman said in a press release. "Now, we are adding a dedicated fundraising element to the mix."

A committee featuring Nic Orbovich (chair), Lucia Bim-Merle, Belinda Potoma, Sunny Gardner-Orbovich and Lee Bauman spearheaded the event.

Entertainment is by tenor soloist Matthew Daniel, Orbovich on violin, cellist Pat White, pianist Pat Lee and the Hallelujah Gala Chorus, which participates in the annual Michigan City Messiah. Tickets are



Members of the Hallelujah Gala Chorus.

available at [www.mcmessiah.org](http://www.mcmessiah.org)

The two free performances of "Messiah" are Dec. 14-15 at St. Mary the Immaculate Conception Church in Michigan City.



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Rich Snyder returns to direct "The Boys Next Door" for the second time Sept. 20-22 and 27-29 at LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St. The cast includes Little Theatre's seasoned actors and some new faces. The setting is a communal New England residence where four men with disabilities live under the supervision of an earnest, but increasingly "burned out" young social worker. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$19 for adults, \$18 for seniors 55+ and \$15 for students with ID and younger. Make reservations at [www.laportelittletheatreclub.com](http://www.laportelittletheatreclub.com)

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### Ellen Firme Gallery

“Illuminations: Glass Artists of Chesterton Art Center” runs through Nov. 4 at Ellen Firme Gallery, 92 W. U.S. 12, Beverly Shores.

Participating artists, who work in traditional stained glass, fused glass, mosaics and lamps, include: Susan Anderson, Francie Bean, Machele Bissonnette, Linda Bohney, Lynn Bremer, Bunny Callahan, David Chlebek, Billie Childress, Randy Greiger, Amanda Grove, Lisa Herr, Marlene Hrabota, Jane Kilander, Sue Kozak, Susan Kratzenberg, Rachel Lawrenz, Carol Lawrenz, Melanie Pergiel, Colin Roberts, Cheryl Stanley, Rose Terrazas and Linda Vivirito.



Work displayed in last year's Chesterton Art Center adult student glass exhibit at The Ellen Firme Gallery.

CAC offers glass-related classes, the most popular being stained glass, open-studio stained glass and fused glass taught by Judy Gregurich, Mark Montgomery, Amanda Burton and Mindy Milan, who also are featured in the exhibit.

Visit [www.chestertonart.org](http://www.chestertonart.org) or call (219) 926-4711 for more details.

### Sunflower Fair

The 25th annual Sunflower Fair is from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21, in the Michigan Avenue area of downtown LaPorte.

The event features more than 100 craft and non-profit vendors offering artisan wares, food, entertainment and kids activities. Also planned is the LaPorte Farmers Market, kid's fun zone, a rib cook-off, artists gallery walk and sunflower growing contest.

The City of LaPorte and a volunteer committee presents the event.

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### United for the United Way



Michigan City firefighters participate in the 2023 car wash.

The Michigan City police and fire departments and Michigan City Area Schools again will be “United for the United Way,” holding their traditional car wash fundraiser Thursday, Sept. 19.

Representatives from the three entities will be at the MCAS Plant Planning parking lot across from Ames Field from 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

A “waterless wash” option is available for those who prefer to donate, but do not want to have a vehicle washed. In addition, all donations made Sept. 19 at <https://www.unitedwaylpc.org/> will be credited to the effort.

A minimum \$5 donation is suggested. However, an “elite” wash service goes to businesses or individuals who donate \$100 or more. Donors at this level receive a special certificate and “thank you” gift from United Way of LaPorte County. They also will be invited to a photo opp with MCPD Police Chief Marty Corley, MCFD Fire Chief Barrett Taylor, MCAS Superintendent Dr. Wendel McCollum or United Way Executive Director Kris Pate.

This year, Mayor Angie Nelson-Deutch will wash cars for \$100 during the 3:30-5:30 p.m. shift.

WEFM Radio will broadcast live, and free hot dogs will be offered between 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Since 2011, the event has raised more than \$58,000 for United Way. Additional partners include Sodexo, Captain Ed’s Furniture Showroom, WEFM Radio and WIMS Radio.

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## “Following Light” Exhibit



The plein-air exhibit “Following Light” runs Sept. 20-Oct. 20, with an opening reception from 5-7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 27, at The Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery, 525 S. Broadway. Artists include Kuhn Hong, David Knoebber, Christine Newton and Ron Wennekes. The exhibit is curated by Meg Bero and Julie Kasniunas. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays and 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays. Visit [www.bsdepot.org](http://www.bsdepot.org) for more details. Pictured is Wennekes’ “Vernal Dunescape.”

## Horses Help Foundation Training

Spring Creek Horses Help Foundation, 16771 Pardee Road, Three Oaks, Mich., will hold new volunteer training from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. EDT Saturday, Sept. 21.

The nonprofit offers an equine-assisted learning program on horse behavior, how to care for a horse and how to ride to local, under-resourced children, adults and families. Volunteers are trained to work with children as they learn to groom, tack and ride a horse. Children attend three-hour classes on Fridays and Saturdays in the spring and fall.

Volunteers must be adults with horse experience. Text Alison at (269) 756-3894 or email [info@springcreekhorseshelp.org](mailto:info@springcreekhorseshelp.org) to register. Visit [www.springcreekhorseshelp.org/be-a-volunteer](http://www.springcreekhorseshelp.org/be-a-volunteer) for more details.

## Innovators Café

The Society of Innovators at Purdue Northwest will present the Innovators Café Series from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 27, at ArcelorMittal Global Research and Development, 3001 E. Columbus Drive, East Chicago.

The series familiarizes business and community leaders with innovation in the workplace. On Sept. 27, attendees will learn about ArcelorMittal Global Research and Development’s innovative steel solutions and tour some of its lab facilities.

The café is open to the public, but tickets are limited to the first 75 registrants. Registration is \$15. Tickets include lunch, the presentation, networking and a tour of the facility. More information and registration can be found at [www.pnw.edu/soi](http://www.pnw.edu/soi)

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## “The Shawshank Redemption” at 30: Why It Remains a Classic



Morgan Freeman (right) and Tim Robbins star in “The Shawshank Redemption.”

By the time Stephen King unleashed Different Seasons on the world in 1982, I was a seasoned fan at the ripe old age of 12. There’d even been a scandal three years earlier when a teacher saw me reading “Salem’s Lot,” banishing me to the principal’s office for having on my possession a “wildly inappropriate book.”

Different Seasons was the author’s bid for literary respect. That he was not just a pulp horror novelist. The thrust of its four novellas — the second story, The Body, would inspire Rob Reiner’s 1986 classic “Stand By Me” — was not the supernatural, but everyday pain, loss and discovery.

After finishing the first novella, Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption, I was gobsmacked, honestly. It was like nothing King had done. Andy, a young banker wrongly convicted of murdering his wife and her lover, loses a huge chunk of his life while incarcerated at Shawshank Prison. While there, he befriends a fellow inmate, Red, his gradual buffer to prison life’s harsh realities. Three thoughts remained after finishing the novella:

1. I sure hope Red finds Andy down in Mexico.
2. This may be my favorite Stephen King story.
3. This will make a great movie.

Twelve years later, Frank Darabont proved that

past  
present

Andrew Tallackson



last theory right.

In some respects, what more can you say about “The Shawshank Redemption” on its 30th anniversary? So much has been written, it is the stuff of legend. Despite critical raves and seven Oscar nominations, including Best Picture, the 1994 movie tanked at the box office, largely overshadowed by Tom Hanks and his box of chocolates. The title, most agree, was another problem. It was too weird, hard to pronounce.

Then, the film arrived on VHS and cable. Word of mouth ignited. TNT scheduled round-the-clock showings. A decade later, it was labeled a classic. Today, it outranks “The Godfather” and “Citizen Kane” as one of the most beloved movies ever, capped off in 2015 by the U.S. Library of Congress including it in the National Film Registry.



Again, so much has been written. That Morgan Freeman, with “Shawshank,” established himself as America’s narrator. That for many, the film is a religious experience: the beach finale, in particular, is viewed as a symbolic heaven where past sins are forgiven. That Andy’s motto, “*Get busy living, or get busy dying,*” still galvanizes people. That moviegoers, men included, can openly weep without fear of ridicule because your soul feels lifted.

Why do we return to this movie again and again? No matter how many times I see it, key scenes get to me. They’re like “emotional triggers,” where the tears just flow.

Here’s why.

## The Message

“The Shawshank Redemption” is a rare film that makes the most intangible of subjects tangible.

Hope.

To create a world without it, Darabont wisely hired cinematographer Roger Deakins (“Fargo”), who uses the absence of color to create a world stripped of possibility. Muted grays and blues. You can feel the despair, loneliness and defeat oozing from every brick in the prison. That all sense of worth and identity are being erased daily.

When Red (Morgan Freeman) tells Andy (Tim Robbins), “*Hope is a dangerous thing,*” he is right. How do you keep going when all seems lost?

That’s how Andy surprises not only Red, but us, as the viewer. Andy refuses to let life steal his joy, and he finds it not always in grand gestures, but in small moments. Which leads to “Emotional Trigger No. 1”: the rooftop scene in which Andy, while tarring the surface with other inmates, finds favor with the brutal prison guard captain (Clancy Brown), earning a round of beers for him and the crew. Thomas Newman’s deeply moving “Shawshank” theme introduces itself, and Freeman’s voice-over narration speaks of simple pleasures. As Red observes about Andy, “*You could argue he’d done it to curry favor with the guards, or maybe make a few friends among us cons. Me, I think he did it just to feel normal again, if only for a short while.*”

How many of us live in our own prisons? Not the literal type, as the movie depicts, but conditions that erode our souls? A bad marriage. Toxic work environment. Situations where the unacceptable



The friendship between Red and Andy fuels their buffer against the harsh reality of prison life.

becomes the norm and all feels lost. What “Shawshank” argues is that, by tapping into reservoirs of strength and persistence, we can survive life’s hardships. Those journeys may take longer than we expect, but steadfast patience prevails.

Which leads to “Emotional Trigger No. 2.”

## Institutionalized Inmates

One of the movie’s themes is that prison life does not “rehabilitate” inmates. They are cast away from society, denied the tools to function once released. The routine of prison life, the walls themselves, become comforting. Strip them of that routine, that comfort, and once back in the real world, recidivism not only becomes the option, but the *preferred* option.

Continued on Page 18

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Continued on Page 17

Back to where life makes sense again.

When the kindly Brooks (James Whitmore) is released after 50 years at Shawshank, he is a lost man with no purpose. On the bus ride to town, he clutches the seat railing with a death grip. He's like a brittle twig even the faintest breeze could snap. The image of him is devastating to witness. Newman's score, relying solely on piano and a handful of strings, underscores the painful message that, in this world, the prison system has failed. Its casualties become lost to time.

Which leads to "Emotional Trigger No 3."

## The Passage of Time

Darabont does not solely rely on makeup to suggest the passing of time, the way prison life robs inmates of life itself. He applies consistent visual approaches, but with subtle tweaks.

Take, for instance, the first time we see Red appear before the parole board. Darabont's camera applies the same tactic, venturing through a darkened passageway into a setting of potential rebirth. Red's appeal in the 1940s has the most vigor. He's at attention, determined to prove he is rehabilitated. In the 1950s, again, the camera heads through the darkened hallway, but Red this time is less enthusiastic. Jaded by the reality of expectation. In the 1960s, the camera's trip down that hallway arrives before a parole board where a woman now is among those seated at the table. Progress may exist outside the prison walls, but Red now is so weary from defeat. A stagnant life.

Another brilliant move by Darabont is to stage Red's release shot for shot the same as Brooks. We're overjoyed by Red's exit, but Darabont cuts to him seated on the bus. Like Brooks, he clings to the railing of his seat like his life depends on it, and our hearts heave a sigh of great sadness. Darabont makes the connection between the two men: Life outside prison walls is too terrifying.

Which leads to "Emotional Trigger No. 4"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPLETE REMODELING</li> <li>• ROOM ADDITIONS</li> <li>• SIDING</li> <li>• DECKS</li> <li>• GARAGES</li> </ul>	 <p><b>219-861-6341</b> <a href="http://www.hullingsconstruction.com">www.hullingsconstruction.com</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEW CONSTRUCTION</li> <li>• 4 SEASON ROOMS</li> <li>• CONCRETE</li> <li>• MASONRY</li> <li>• FLOORING</li> </ul>
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The deeply moving finale.

## Friendship

I like what philosopher Alexander Hooke wrote about the movie: *"Andy and Red's true freedom is their friendship, being able to share joy and humor with each other."*

So many times, you never believe characters in movies could be friends in real life. They are paired together because the script dictates so. Or that the casting director believed the actors have strong chemistry. In "Shawshank," year by year, as Andy and Red grow closer, Andy becomes less a mystery. Their friendship is the measure of normalcy, the means with which they survive their oppressive surroundings. So when Andy is no longer at Shawshank, Red and his pals tell stories of Andy's exploits, the effect a brief way to relive their time together. We feel the loss, too. No greater dialogue conveys that better than when Red, heard through voice-over narration, says, *"Sometimes, it makes me sad, though, Andy being gone. I have to remind myself that some birds aren't meant to be caged. Their feathers are just too bright. And when they fly away, the part of you that knows it was a sin to lock them up does rejoice. But still, the place you live in is that much more drab and empty that they're gone. I guess I just miss my friend."*

Am I a mess here? You bet.

Which leads to the final "Emotional Trigger."

## The Last 15 minutes

As debates persists over the there-was-room-for-two-on-the-door debacle from "Titanic," online trolls now plunder through Andy's 19-year tunnel escape from Shawshank, questioning how he could work behind the posters, chiseling away, without the posters dropping, subsequently getting caught. Anyone existing on that plane is overthinking it, refusing to buy into Andy's escape and subsequent exposure of the corrupt prison warden (Bob Gunton, a pitch perfect portrait of moral and religious hypocrisy). The movie does such an expert job of quickly revealing how Andy pulled it off, it's best just to roll with it.

No, what I want to concentrate on are the last 15

minutes, starting with Red's final appearance before the parole board. Rarely has an actor conveyed crushing regret as Freeman does here. Hope is no longer on the table. And who cannot relate to that? All of us have done something at one point that we regret. A moment when we failed to live up to the kind of person we aspire to be. So when Red finally speaks, Darabont arms the actor with dialogue eloquently simple, uttered almost in a whisper: *"There's not a day goes by I don't feel regret. Not because I'm in here, because you think I should. I look back on the way I was then: a young, stupid kid who committed that terrible crime. I want to talk to him. I want to try to talk some sense to him, tell him the way things are. But I can't. That kid's long gone, and this old man is all that's left. I got to live with that."*

From here on out, it's ugly cry time. Red's release, ending up in Brooks' old room. Red, too, appears on the same fatal track as Brooks...until he pledges to keep his promise to Andy, that one day they might meet up again. And with Andy's final gesture for Red to join him, the message of "The Shawshank Redemption" buries itself into your heart. The bond between these two men carried them through prison life and now, it will deliver them back to each other.

In the book, King's last page featured Red on the bus, headed for Mexico. Darabont lifts Red's gorgeous dialogue straight off the pages: *"I find I'm so excited, I can barely sit still or hold a thought in my head. I think it's the excitement only a free man can feel, a free man at the start of a long journey whose conclusion is uncertain. I hope I can make it across the border. I hope to see my friend and shake his hand. I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams. I hope."*

And that's how it ended.

And that is how Darabont ended his film.

Credit Producer Liz Glotzer for basically saying to Darabont, "Hey, come on, man, you can't spend this much time with these two men and not reunite them at the end." Darabont initially filmed the closing beach scene out of spite, but it worked so well with test audiences, he relented, ultimately agreeing it worked. So if the book left you with the *idea* of Andy and Red back together, then the movie provides the ultimate closure. That scene is so beautiful, Newman's score so affecting, I cry buckets...and I am not ashamed to admit it.

"The Shawshank Redemption," to me, is a perfect movie. Perfectly cast, edited, directed, scored. Darabont makes not one false move. It is ageless in its appeal, its message, its ability to spend time with these men so they become people we care about. What Darabont achieved ranks at the top of my all-time favorite movies, an honor shared with another classic that this year celebrates its 70th anniversary.

More on that in an upcoming "Past/Present."

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





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# There Be Dragons

Despite periods of light rain, Dunebrook's Dragon Boat Family Festival fundraiser drew enthusiastic crowds Saturday, Sept. 7, at LaPorte's Stone Lake. Tough-to-beat Applegate & Co. CPAs again took first place. Second place went to Duneland Media-LaPorte Seamless Gutter-MC Doors and third place to Journey Church. LaPorte High School Choir took home the Spirit Award. All photos by Bob Wellinski





## Local Man Finds Life is Richer Thanks to Pen Pal Correspondence

by Cary Heinz

When my mother, Barbara, passed away in September 2018, there were many things I had to do. Sort through a lifetime of family possessions, sell the house and the items inside and, of course, deal with the inevitable grief.

What I never expected was for a pen pal, one even older than my 90-year-old mom, to emerge from the experience.

Enter Dr. Lois Marie Fink, my first cousin, once removed. We share maternal grandmothers. She may not be as famous as Anne Baxter, Scott Dolson, Abe Gibrón, Richard Hatcher or Don Larsen, but she left our hometown and made her mark

Lois sent a Christmas card to my mom that winter. I responded by telling her my mother passed away. She responded with a letter, and our unusual correspondence began. We write letters. Old school paper and pen version sent by mail. A Michigan City native, Lois was the curator of research at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art from 1970-1993. I should note her handwriting remains lovely, while mine is not good.

Lois was born in Michigan City on Dec. 30, 1927. She grew up in a neighborhood once called Canada: the area on Second Street taken over by Blue Chip Casino. She attended Central School and graduated at age 16 from Elston High School. For the next three years, she worked for the telephone company to save money for college.

She graduated from Capitol University in Columbus, Ohio, in 1951 with a bachelor's degree: pretty rare for a woman at the time. In 1955, she earned her Master of Arts degree from The University of Chicago, subsequently teaching in colleges in North Carolina and Nebraska before settling in as an assistant professor at Roosevelt University in Chicago for a dozen years. In one of our letters, she mentioned how her pay was lower than her male colleagues.

Lois became Dr. Fink when she earned her Doctor of Philosophy from The University of Chicago in 1970, and she was off to the Smithsonian. In 1990, she published [American Art at Nineteenth-Century Paris Salons](#). It is a professionally researched, written and illustrated 400-page compendium. Her second book, [A History of the Smithsonian American Art Museum](#), was more challenging and not published until 2007. Her director was less than coop-

erative with that book. Rather than rewarding Lois for an extensive career, her book wasn't allowed to be sold at the museum, which hurt sales.

Dr. Fink is a kindly, Christian woman, but when we discussed that director, her nonagenarian ire appeared.

She recently told me with pride she retired at age 65. She never married, relating how that was frowned upon at the time. A few years after retiring, she met a man named Clarence, a widowed former airline pilot and plane owner. They spent 21 years together before he died in 2020. Sadly, Lois was isolated alone after his passing during COVID-19 lockdown.

I met her for a few hours in the early 1990s when I was in D.C. on an education trip. In 2021, I retired after 34 years as a social studies teacher. With the freedom to travel at any time, we drove to see Lois in October. She lives in a large retirement village, with 2,500 residents, called "Riderwood" in the D.C. suburb of Silver Spring. My wife, Kim, and I visited her twice then, and did "virtual hugs" across her living room at her suggestion.

In mid-August, with me being Michigan City's biggest Bruce Springsteen fan and wanting to see his Aug. 15 and 18 shows in Pittsburgh. What were Kim and I to do on the two days in between?

We drove to see Lois again. She had suffered a fall while waiting by a door to enter a church service. Someone opened it too aggressively. Lois was recovering well, and when she asked me to get a picture from her bedroom to show me, it was the Michigan City lighthouse and pier. I smiled when I saw her office: a typewriter, no computer, on her desk. Remember, this remarkable woman was born the year Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic and Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs.

We hope to return in Dec. 30, 2027, to help her celebrate her 100th birthday.

Life is short. In retrospect, I'm very pleased that I decided to answer Lois and our communication began. As we all get older, it's important to stay in touch with family and friends. I am so happy that as a 57-year-old man, I connected with my then 91-year-old cousin.

My life is richer for it.

(Heinz, a Trail Creek resident, recently retired from Bridgman Public Schools, teaching high school social studies for 34 years and coaching for 20.)



Cary and his wife, Kim, pose for a photograph with Lois Fink.

## Thrilling “Rebel Ridge” Consistently Defies Expectations

by Andrew Tallackson



Terry (Aaron Pierre, right) stands his ground against the local police chief (Don Johnson) in “Rebel Ridge.”

In the opening scene of “Rebel Ridge,” a former Marine bikes into a small Southern town to post bail for his cousin. Having raised the money by selling his truck, and his shares in a local restaurant, he is minding his own business — earbuds blocking out all noise — when he is intentionally hit by a police vehicle.

The Marine, Terry (Aaron Pierre), is black. The cops are white. Their grossly belligerent behavior suggests Terry is the victim of racial profiling. Indeed, the color of Terry’s skin may be a factor, but it’s far from the whole story.

We discover two things from there about “Rebel Ridge.” First, that Pierre, who is British, no less, is about to deliver a career-making performance. Second, Jeremy Saulnier (“Green Room”), the writer-director-producer-editor, has made the year’s most intelligent genre movie. There’s some of “First Blood” there, but more so Season One of “Reacher”... but much sharper than both. It is a thinking man’s thriller that holds off on gunplay until the end, and even then, we are invigorated by the smarts, the



### “Rebel Ridge”

*Running time: 131 minutes. Netflix. Not rated, but containing adult language and violence.*

courage, of the characters.

We know Terry eventually will strike back. Would we have a Netflix movie if he simply rolled over and played dead? The endgame, however, is not what we expect. Even in that opening scene, Terry is no pushover, and not because of his hulking physical presence, but more how his mind is always working. Pierre plays him as a man in remarkable control of words and emotions. The back and forth between him and the officers plays out like a negotiation. Terry knows what words, or triggers, will subdue the officers into a compromise.

Saulnier’s background before becoming a director was as a cinematographer. Whether he was familiar with the law before penning this screenplay, or it’s just that he did a tremendous amount of homework,

I cannot say. But “Rebel Ridge” is extremely well-versed on the mechanics of not just the courts and police, but also the small-town bubble that muddies the morality of local decision-making.

Terry joins forces with Summer McBride (AnnaSophia Robb), who works in the courthouse clerk’s office. A former drug addict prevented from seeing her daughter, she doesn’t want to lose her job, but at the same time realizes Terry needs her help. The police chief (Don Johnson), especially, seems to have a cast-iron grip on the town.

Robb started out as a child actress (“Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” “Because of Winn-Dixie,” “Bridge to Terabithia”) before trying her hand at adult roles. Because she has the face of a demure pixie, I’ve never quite believed her in more grown-up roles. But here, she settles so firmly into Summer’s damaged state, the performance has an edge unlike anything she’s done.

With Summer’s knowledge of the law, and Terry’s military prowess, the two use the legal system to their advantage and *against* those exploiting it to their advantage. Saulnier is far less interested in seeing these two retaliate with violence. How rare is that? I half expected Terry to plant explosives around the courthouse, followed by the slow-motion shot of him, with Summer in tow, bolting as flames erupt. Nope. None of that. Instead, the movie becomes less about race and more about political corruption and the machinery that accelerates it. Watching Pierre, as Terry, allowing himself time to think, to choose his words carefully, is something we don’t get much in action films. The drive of the film is the exhaustive game of cat and mouse, with the highly effective score by Brooke and Will Blair offer-



AnnaSophia Robb has an edge to her performance unlike anything she’s done before this.

ing low, ominous rumbles to convey how the walls are closing in on these characters.

I suppose a film like “Rebel Ridge” cannot fend off the itch for action forever. The last 20 minutes are a blaze of gunfire and car chases, but even then, we witness Pierre, as Terry, trying to outsmart everyone around him, even up to the final breathless moment when justice concludes less with a bang and more with a whisper. We’re kind of in awe of him, and the movie, for defying expectations. Going into “Rebel Ridge,” we think we know it. The thrill comes from realizing we haven’t a clue where it is headed next.



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## Michigan City Municipal Golf Course



North Course, "Early Birdies"  
Sept. 5, 2024

Event: Closest to the Pin Drive, Hole #6 + Gross Minus Putts.

**A Flight**

Low Gross: Mary Beres.

Low Net: Mary Beres.

Event: Mary Beres.

**B Flight**

Low Gross: Mary Lou Marshall.

Low Net: Mary Lou Marshall.

Event: Mary Lou Marshall.

**C Flight**

Low Gross: Pat Collado.

Low Net: Pat Collado.

Event: Pat Collado.

**D Flight**

Low Gross: Kathy Grott.

Low Net: Carol Bernier.

Event: Kathy Grott.



Event: Closest to the Pin Drive, Hole #6: Barb Rumbuc.

Chip-Ins: Barb Rumbuc, Hole #4.

## Michigan City Municipal Golf Course



South Course,  
Par-Tee Women's League,  
Sept. 4, 2024

**Flight A**

Low Gross: Cindy Wolkowitz.

Low Net: Cindy Wolkowitz.

Low Putts: Linda Hirsch.

**Flight B**

Low Gross: Phyllis Roach.

Low Net: Phyllis Roach.

Low Putts: Mary Lou Marshall.

**Flight C**

Low Gross: Florence Stokfisz.

Low Net: Florence Stokfisz.

Low Putts: Pat Collado, Mary Knaup.

**Flight D**

Low Gross: Bev Szybala.

Low Net: Bev Szybala.

Low Putts: Carolyn Cooney, Pam Jaracz.



Pars: Barb Rumbuc, Jane Shuger, Cindy Wolkowitz,  
Sharon Weber, Phyllis Roach, Florence Stokfisz

Birdies: Linda Hirsch, Cindy Wolkowitz.

Chip-In: Mary Lou Marshall.

## Michigan City Municipal Golf Course



North Course, "Early Birdies"  
Sept. 9, 2024

Event: Most Bogeys + 50/50

**A Flight**

Low Gross: Linda Hirsch, Barb Rumbuc.

Low Net: Linda Hirsch, LuAnn Uremovich.

Event: Linda Hirsch.

**B Flight**

Low Gross: Sandy Baldwin.

Low Net: Sandy Baldwin.

Event: Carol Hullings.

**C Flight**

Low Gross: Jane Spang.

Low Net: Jane Spang.

Event: Jane Spang.

**D Flight**

Low Gross: Carol Bernier.

Low Net: Kathy Grott.

Event: Pam Betcher, K. Grott, Charlotte Wozniak.



Chip-Ins: Patricia Czizek, #6, LuAnn Uremovich, #7.

Birdies: LuAnn Uremovich, #7.

Event: 50/50, Mary Lou Marshall.

LBCC Women's Golf Leagues  
9-Hole League

Sept. 5, 2024

Last Round of the Season

**A FLIGHT****Low Net**

First: Peg King.

Second: Cindy Levy, Sue Luegers.

Third: Juli Cronin.

Low Putts: Cindy Levy.

Sunken Approach: Juli Cronin, #9.

**B FLIGHT****Low Net**

First: Mary Kral.

Second: Jo Dodd.

Third: Amanda Ferlmann, Catherine Kelly.

Low Putts: Donna Hennard.

Sunken Approach: Pat Kelley, #14.

**C FLIGHT****Low Net**

First: Beanie Altier.

Second: Katie Murphy.

Third: Teresa Curi, Joanie Doyle.

Low Putts: Sally McCarthy.

**D FLIGHT****Low Net**

First: Jude Stahmer.

Second: Jackie Purcell.

Third: Ginny Hogan.

Low Putts: Jude Stahmer.

Birdie: Ginny Hogan, #16.

Have a story idea for The Beacher?

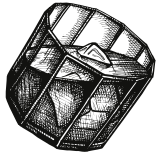
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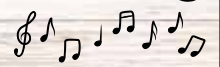
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*The following programs are scheduled:*

- **3-D Pen Workshop (ages 6-17) at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19.** Meet in the children's makerspace, with no experience necessary. Children 12 and younger must attend with a parent or guardian.
- **Bad Art Night for Adults from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19.** Designed as a way to unwind and create, the library provides the paint, canvas and pompoms. An award goes to the piece voted Worst Art. No registration is required.
- **Needle Arts Club to Warm Up America Joining Night from 5:30-7 p.m. Thursdays in September.** 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.
- **Stomp Rockets (kids and teens) at 3:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 20.** Make a paper rocket and watch it soar from a launch pad made with PVC pipe and two-liter plastic bottle. Take an empty two-liter plastic bottle for launch; however, supplies will be available.
- **Cider & Canvas for adults at 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23.** Paint a "spooky" gnome. Light refreshments will be served. Registration is required because supplies are limited. Call Sydney or Anastasia at (219) 873-3044 or Jennifer at (219)

873-3042.

- **Any Book Book Club (adults only) from 5-6 p.m. Mondays in September.** Participants can discuss any books they are reading. Meetings are the second Monday of the month. Light refreshments will be served.
- **Genealogy Help with Pat Harris from 1-4 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24.** Harris offers tips and advice on how to research a family tree or find genealogical record.
- **Creative Tech Activities (ages 6-17) from 3:30-5 p.m. Tuesdays in September.** 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.
- **Tinkercad 3-D Modeling at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25, in the Makerspace.** Registration is required for the program that involves Tinkercad, a free online collection of software tools. This session, for children 9-17, serves as an introduction to 3-D design, art and printing. No experience is necessary. All registered participants receive a 3-D print of his/her creations. Register at the Youth Services desk or call (219) 873-3045 for more info. Space is limited. MCPL 3-D printing rules apply, and the printing fee is waived for this program.
- **Reading Scavenger Hunt in September.** Find the pictures hiding in Youth Services and receive a prize. The theme is "Minecraft."
- **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.

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

### Art Blitz

Designed to immerse visitors in artmaking, the eighth annual Art Blitz is from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21, at Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso.

The event includes sunflower and butterfly gardens, live music, food and the "Butterflies & Beyond" exhibit featuring pollinator and native plant-themed works by regional artists.

Call (219) 462-9009 or visit [www.artbarnschool.org](http://www.artbarnschool.org) for more details.

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## PechaKucha 20x20

The 31st volume of PechaKucha 20x20 St. Joseph/Benton Harbor is from 8:30-10:30 p.m. EDT Friday, Sept. 20, at The GhostLight Theatre, 101 Hinkley St., Benton Harbor, Mich.

PechaKucha, which means “chit chat” in Japanese, is a presentation format involving 20 images shown for 20 seconds each. This gives presenters 400 seconds to tell their story, with visuals leading the narrative.

Doors open at 7:30 p.m. EDT. Tickets, which cost \$5, can be purchased at the door. A limited amount of chairs will be provided, so guests are encouraged to take their own seats. If the event has to move inside due to the weather, seating is limited to the first 85 ticket purchasers. PechaKucha T-shirts will be on sale at the event.

Email [pechakuchastbh@gmail.com](mailto:pechakuchastbh@gmail.com) for details

## Potawatomi Audubon Society

Potawatomi Audubon Society meets at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at LaPorte Library Exchange, 807 Indiana Ave.

A brief meeting and discussion are followed at 6 p.m. with a program by Deb Marr, Indiana University-South Bend professor of ecology. She will discuss how urban landscapes improve air and water quality, cool neighborhoods and support biodiversity.

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## Monday Musicale Seeks New Members

Monday Musicale will kick off its 113th season at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 23, with one of the goals being to boost membership.

This year’s theme, “Music Unites the World,” will feature music from different countries. The temporary meeting place is Simeon Square, 1207 S. Woodland Ave. Bev Griffith will chair a program celebrating Austria. Appointments are Candace Archer, Frank Casorio, Sue Cassler, Connie Hendricks, Steven Mast, Nancy Nichols, Judith Sawyer and Joe Stewart.

The group’s history dates back to 1909 when 20 women met to organize a music study club. In 1926, after two name changes, the club was renamed The Michigan City Monday Musicale. Today, the purpose is largely unchanged: encourage musicians to use their talents and increase the scope of their musical awareness.

In the 2019-2020 season, membership stood at 58, with 40 active (performing) and 18 associate members. The 2020 pandemic led to a 2 ½ year hiatus. Amid plans in 2022, Lee Meyer, the group’s longtime program chairman, accompanist and mentor passed away. A core group of board members, led by Felicia Thomas, stepped up to ensure the group’s longevity. At present, the membership is 36, including 24 active and 12 associate members. Sought are members 18 and older, including vocalists, keyboard players (piano or organ) and instrumentalists (strings and winds). Associate (non-performing) members are welcomed.

Monthly meetings are from September-November and January-May, typically on the fourth Monday of the month. Programs revolve around an annual theme.

Contact Anthony Holt at (219) 928-6964 or Sue Cassler at (219) 362-1421 for more details.

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### In the Area

**Sept. 19** — “United for the United Way” car wash fundraiser, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Michigan City Area Schools Plant Planning parking lot (across from Ames Field). Requested donation: \$5. Online donations: <https://www.unitedwaylpc.org/>

**Sept. 19** — 3-D Pen Workshop (ages 6-17), 3:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Sept. 19** — Cooking With Kids, 5-6 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 19** — Bad Art Night for Adults, 5-7 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Sept. 19-21** — “Voices from the Heartland,” Dunes Summer Theatre, 288 Shady Oak Drive, Michiana Shores. Times: 7 p.m. Thur.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$10/show, \$35/all performances. Reservations/info: [www.dunesARTS.org](http://www.dunesARTS.org)

**Sept. 20** — Stomp Rockets (kids/teens), 3:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Sept. 20-22, 27-29** — “The Boys Next Door,” LaPorte Little Theatre Club, 218 A St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$19/adults, \$18/seniors 55+, \$15/students with ID & younger. Reservations: [www.laportelittletheatreclub.com](http://www.laportelittletheatreclub.com)

**Sept. 20-Oct. 20** — “Following Light” plein-air exhibit, The Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery, 525 S. Broadway. *Reception*: 5-7 p.m. Sept. 27. Info: [www.bsdepot.org](http://www.bsdepot.org)

**Sept. 21** — 25th annual Sunflower Fair, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Michigan Avenue area of downtown LaPorte.

**Sept. 21** — Sunflower Fair Book Sale, 9 a.m.-noon, LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 21** — Once Upon a Story Workshop, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Coolspring Library Branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 21** — Virtual Author Talk with Liane Moriarty, 6-7 p.m., through LaPorte County Public Library. Registration: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 21** — “Hallelujah Gala!” (Michigan City Messiah benefit), 6 p.m., Michigan City Senior Center, 2 on the Lake. Tickets: \$50/individuals, \$300/

table of six. Reservations: [www.mcmessiah.org](http://www.mcmessiah.org)

**Sept. 23** — Cider & Canvas for adults, 5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info/registration: (219) 873-3044, (219) 873-3042.

**Sept. 23** — Mario Kart Tournament, 5-6:30 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 23** — Tai Chi Easy for Health and Relaxation, 6-7 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 24** — Genealogy Help with Pat Harris, 1-4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**Sept. 24** — Readers Corner-Book Club, 6-7 p.m., Coolspring Library Branch, 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Info: [www.laportelibrary.org](http://www.laportelibrary.org)

**Sept. 25** — Tinkercad 3-D Modeling, 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Registration: (219) 873-3045.

**Through September** — Work by Bill Cavalier, The Legacy Center Gallery at Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Legacy Center hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Thur., 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun. Info: [lucia@qas.org](mailto:lucia@qas.org)

**Through September** — “Kingsbury History Pop-Up,” LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, 2405 Indiana Ave. Info: (219) 324-6767.

**Through Oct. 19** — “KAPOW! Mighty Mythos,” Lubeznik Center for the Arts, 101 W. Second St. Info: [www.lubeznikcenter.org](http://www.lubeznikcenter.org)

**Through Nov. 2** — “Illuminations: Glass Artists of Chesterton Art Center,” The Ellen Firme Gallery, 92 U.S. 12, Beverly Shores.

**Through Nov. 27** — “Lost Cemeteries of LaPorte County” exhibit, 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 September** — Any Book Book Club (adults only), 4-5 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

**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, 1506 Washington St. Doors open: 3:30 p.m. Bingo: 6 p.m. \$30 entrance fee (includes specials except Winner Takes All & Jackpot). Info: (219) 336-3099.

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

**Wednesdays** — Al-Anon meeting for Friends/

Family of Alcoholics, 6 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 600 Franklin Square. Enter at Sixth Street Barker Hall side. Info: Candy at (708) 927-5287.

**Thursdays in September** — 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 through Oct. 26 in Michigan City** — Michigan City Farmers Market, 8 a.m.-noon, Eighth & Franklin streets. Info: tinyurl.com/bdd5mxxr

**Saturdays in LaPorte** — Farmed & Forged Market, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Lincolnway & Monroe, LaPorte.

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

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

### **In the Region**

**Sept. 19** — Beach Mysteries Hike, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Sept. 19** — Turtle Time, 2 p.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

**Sept. 20** — Science Fridays Series, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.

**Sept. 20** — The Save the Tunes Council, 7:30-9 p.m., Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.

**Sept. 20** — Toronzo Cannon & The Chicago Way with Jack Whittle Trio, 8 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Tickets: \$25 + \$4.50 convenience fee, \$50 + \$4.50 convenience fee (reserved). Reservations: www.acornlive.org

**Sept. 20** — PechaKucha 20x20 St. Joseph/Benton Harbor, 8:30-10:30 p.m. EDT, The GhostLight Theatre, 101 Hinkley St., Benton Harbor, Mich. Tickets: \$5. Reservations: pechakuchastbh@gmail.com

**Sept. 21** — Art Blitz, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Info: www.artbarnschool.org, (219) 462-9009.

**Sept. 21** — New Buffalo Beach Cleanup (ages 13-18), 11 a.m.-1 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Meet at Youth Services. Info: (269) 469-2933.

**Sept. 21** — Annual “Fall Into Art” Pop-Up, 10

a.m.-4 p.m. EDT, The Courtyard Gallery, 813 E. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich. Info: (269) 469-4110.

**Sept. 21** — Lake Effect Jazz Big Band, 7-9 p.m. EDT, Box Factory for the Arts, 1101 Broad St., St. Joseph, Mich. Tickets: \$12/advance at www.ticketstripe.com/lakeeffectjazz2024, \$15/door, free/children 12 & younger.

**Sept. 21** — Led Zeppelin 2, 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

**Sept. 21-22** — Chellberg Farm Open House, 1-3 p.m., Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.

**Sept. 22** — Bog Gone Wild, 9-11 a.m., Pinhook Bog/Upland Trail, 946 N. Wozniak Road, Michigan City. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.

**Sept. 22** — The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Rebecca Dewey Chapter Blessing of the Graves, 2 p.m. EDT, Lakeside (Mich.) Cemetery. Email: rebecca.deweyto@gmail.com

**Sept. 22** — Open Mic Night featuring Sadie Gustafson-Zook, 7 p.m. EDT, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Performer inquiries: openmic@acornlive.org. Info: www.acornlive.org

**Sept. 24** — NBTL Book Club, 10 a.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Meet at Youth Services. Info: (269) 469-2933.

**Sept. 24** — BookTok Open Workshop (ages 13-18), 4-6 p.m. EDT, New Buffalo Township Library, 33 N. Thompson St. Registration: (269) 469-2933.

**Sept. 25** — Potawatomi Audubon Society, 5 p.m., LaPorte Library Exchange, 807 Indiana Ave.

**Through September** — Monthly visual art shows, The Episcopal Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, Mich. Artist: Bill Boyce. Hours (Eastern): 9 a.m.-noon Mon.-Thur., 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sun. Info: www.Mediatorharbert.com

**Through Oct. 6** — “Against the Grain,” Montague/Urschel Gallery at Porter County Museum (PoCo Muse), 20 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso. Also: “Building Memory: Artistic Interpretations of Notable Landmarks.” Info: www.pocomuse.org

**Through Oct. 20** — “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Studebaker-Packard Corporation,” 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 Oct. 13** — “Resist!” exhibit, Beutter-Kernan Hall, Community Learning Center, St. Joe County Public Library, 305 S. Michigan St. Info: www.historymuseumSB.org, (574) 235-9664, Ext. 6256.

**Through Oct. 17** — Photographer Deb Potis,





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Continued from Page 33

The Village Gallery, Pines Village Retirement Communities, 3303 Pines Village Circle, Valparaiso.

**Through Oct. 30** — “Of Giants and Warriors” (local artists Diane Grams/Tim Lace), Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. *Reception*: 4-7 p.m. Sept. 20. *Artist-led gallery/discussion*: noon Saturday, Sept. 28. *Fresco painting demonstration*: noon Oct. 19/RSVP to gallery@chestertonart.org. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

**Through Nov. 10** — “Language as Form: Calligraphy & Sculpture by Gwen Yen Chiu”/Nick Colvard’s “Forest,” Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph, Mich. Info: www.krasl.org

**Through April 6, 2025** — “From the Speedway Comes Their Stamina: Studebaker Racing & Record-Breakers,” The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St., South Bend. Hours (Eastern): 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-5 p.m. Sun. Admission: \$11/adults, \$9.50/seniors 60+, \$7/youth ages 6-18. Info: (574) 235-9714, (888) 391-5600, www.studebakermuseum.org

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

**Saturdays in Chesterton** — Chesterton European Market, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., 220 Broadway, Chesterton. Info: tinyurl.com/3wvav7pw

**Sundays Through Sept. 22** — 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/indu

**Sundays in September** — Feeding at the Farm, 4:30-5 p.m., Chellberg Farm, Mineral Springs Road between U.S. 12/20, Porter. Info: (219) 395-1882, www.nps.gov/indu

**Vickers Theatre** — *Now Showing*: “Dr. Strange- love or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb.” Rated PG. Time: 7 p.m. Sept. 19. *Also*: “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice.” Rated PG-13. Times: 4 & 7 p.m. Sept. 20-22. All times Eastern. Theater address: 6 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, Mich. Info: www.vickerstheatre.com, (269) 756-3522.

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# American Red Cross

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

- Converge Community Church, 601 W. Buffalo St. (U.S. 12), New Buffalo, Mich., noon-5 p.m. EDT Thursday, Sept. 26.

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

## New Buffalo Township Library

- **Essentrics Exercise for Seniors.** The program is at 10 a.m. Fridays, Sept. 20 and 27. Cecily Crowther leads the low-impact, health-and-fitness, full-body rebalancing program. The workout helps improve posture, mobility, flexibility and range of motion while building strength across muscle chains.
- **New Buffalo Beach Cleanup (ages 13-18) from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21.** Meet in Youth Services for orientation and supplies. Register is required.
- **NBTL Book Club.** The program is at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24.
- **BookTok Open Workshop (ages 13-18).** The program is from 4-6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24.

### 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.-4:30 p.m. Wednesdays while supplies last.
- Teen Maker Space from 3:30-7:30 p.m. Thursdays.
- Chess Club from 6-8 p.m. Thursdays.
- Spanish Story Time at 10 a.m. Fridays.
- Lego Club from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Saturdays.

All times are Eastern. New Buffalo Township Library is located at 33 N. Thompson St. Call (269) 469-2933 for more details.

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## New Studebaker Museum Exhibit



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“From the Speedway Comes Their Stamina: Studebaker Racing & Record-Breakers” runs through April 6, 2025, at The Studebaker National Museum, 201 Chapin St., South Bend.

Explore a selection of artifacts, including a collection of early 20th century racing trophies, and record-breaking Studebaker automobiles from the late 1910s-early 1960s. Featured vehicles include:

- The No. 6 1928 Commander Roadster.
- The 1948 Studebaker-powered Bonnie Doon Special.
- The No. 9 1963 Avanti Bonneville record-breaker.
- The museum’s latest acquisition: the 1933 No. 34 Studebaker Special Indy 500 race car.

Museum hours are (all times Eastern) 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$11 for adults, \$9.50 for seniors 60+ and \$7 for ages 6-18. Call (888) 391-5600 or visit [www.studebakermuseum.org](http://www.studebakermuseum.org) for more details.

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Visit <https://granorfarm.com/events> for reserva-  
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**Burn** by Peter Heller (hardcover, \$28 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook or audiobook. 291 pages.)

It is an annual trip. Storey and Jess take several weeks out in autumn to go somewhere different for fishing, hunting and hiking. This year, they pick the upper part of Maine.

Before they leave, newspapers and TV are full of secession talk in that very state. Say what? Surely, the government will sort it out by the time they return to their home state of Vermont. Their naive acceptance of the government solving the whole problem comes to a screeching halt when...

They reach a bridge that was obviously blown up — no way to cross the river — so they follow it to where it widens to a large lake with a small town arranged around it.

What they see is the stuff of nightmares: every building burned to the ground, some bodies scattered around, bombed-out cars every which way. Strange, though, the many boats, signifying this as a fisherman's destination, are untouched. A woman comes into view frantically rowing across the lake. Suddenly, a helicopter flies low above her, turns around and shoots her and the boat into pieces. No insignia on the 'copter, so it must be the secessionists. Just how far has this situation gotten out of hand?

Not long after, a pleasure cruiser comes into sight. The men try to hail them just as an explosion tears the boat — and all in it — to pieces.

In only the two weeks Storey and Jess are in the deep woods, their world goes insane. Wherever they go, there is a shoot-first, ask-questions-later mentality.

Finding a battery radio, Jess manages to get a French station out of Quebec. The news is not good. The president of the United States had been assassinated by Maine secessionist Lamar Blodgett. Since the vice president is a former general and a "hawk of hawks," the French fear for what will happen next.

Searching boats for food to take with them, the pair is shocked by what they see in the hold of one boat — and it isn't a store of food. She is about 5 years old, and says her name is Collie. No parents

## Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter



in sight. She shows them her house and a piece of paper in her coat with latitude and longitude lines leading...to her parents? After figuring out where the directions lead, they take the girl with them, walking along the river, avoiding all the boats, afraid to chance being out in the open water with all the crazies shooting everything in sight.

While trying to keep a low profile, not knowing who they can trust or approach, and keep Collie safe, the wild north Maine landscape provides a pivotal part in the story. Finding safe trails to keep them moving south stretches their knowledge of the dense forests. It also provides a quiet place for Jess to think back on his life and remember things both heart-lifting and heart-breaking.

Dragging a wagon with meager supplies, the male bonding between Storey and Jess is realistically told in words and action. But there's one secret hanging over Jess' heart — a secret he cannot tell his best friend. The gravity of it sits on Jess' shoulders like a sack of cement. Not knowing whether you will live to see tomorrow leads

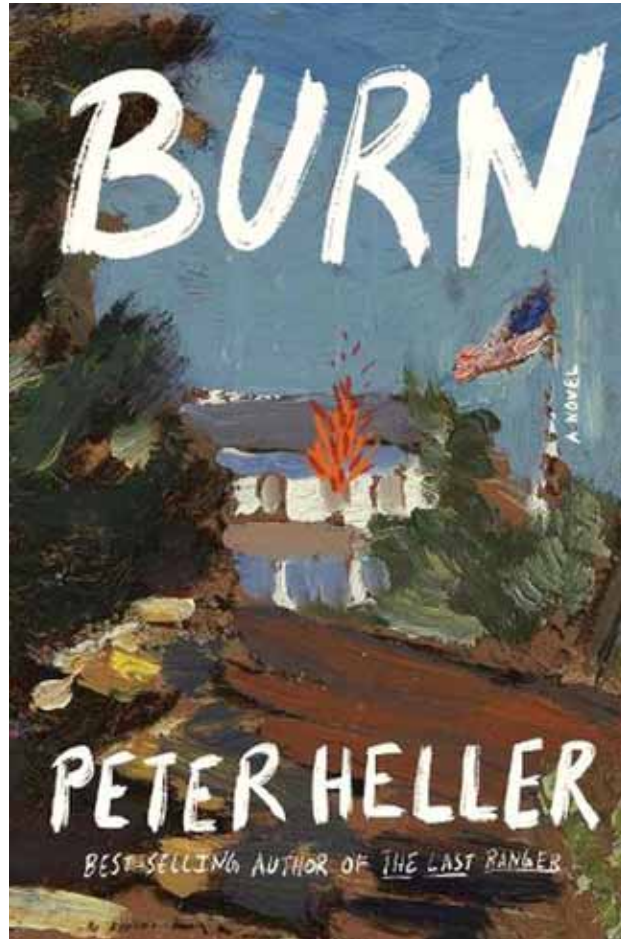
Jess to a lot of soul searching...

There's plenty of time for Jess to think back on his childhood, his times with Storey's family and the love of Jess' life who walked out on him just before the trip began. And Storey is worried about his wife and children back in Vermont. Is it safe there? Is the fighting confined to Maine? Or has it worked its way to other states.

Survival, secession and friendship are major themes here. Only Heller pulls all these together in a thoughtful, gotta-keep-reading way.

*The final word:* This book is the whole package: A fascinating plot, believable characters and a description of the land and its impact on his characters that is always a highlight of Heller's stories.

Till next time, happy reading!



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