

# JUST SO YOU KNOW! . . . OCTOBER 25, 2023

## IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

. . . Remember there is no planned 'location,' or 'order,' for content in my columns. In other words, I have no idea what I'm doing.

. . . Village D-Lights, 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr, 2023; has not yet been received at this address in Duluth, MN; JSYK!

. . . 'The Village Collector' has been with us since 2017. Bill and Kathy Channell have continually worked to build and improve the following columns: David Spears, 'Show your village to the world' Thea Heyink, 'The Creation Sta-Sue's Christmas Village' • Peppe **posted Oct. 12, 2023** • Art Kilmer, 'Christmas Corner' - **posted Sept. 5, 2023** • Larry Treadwell, 'Hauntsville 2023' - **posted Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> 2023** and 'A Dickens' Christmas' • Mark Frendo, 'Tips & Trix'



• National Council of 56 Clubs Region VI: Northern Lights Collectors Club, Twin Cities, MN, Tom Iacoviello, tiacoviello@yahoo.com • Village North Collectors Club, Duluth MN/Superior, WI, Adelaide Cline, amcline@chartermi.net • Region VI Representative: Debbie Oehme, region6ncc@ncc56.com.

. . . October 31, 'Halloween' • November 2, *Ms. Lit Town*, Facebook Live • November 5, *Daylight Savings Time Ends* • November 11, 'Veterans Day' • November 23, 'Thanksgiving Day' • December 8, 'First Day of Hanukkah' • December 21, *Winter Begins* • December 25, 'Christmas Day' • December 26, 'Boxing Day' - Canada • January 1, 'New Year's Day' •

. . . Linda and I have a vignette entered in the monthly **Vignette Contest** on the *National Council of 56 Clubs Facebook Page*. We invite NCC members to take a look. Anna McPherson posted it for us. [www.facebook.com/groups/273518842669320](http://www.facebook.com/groups/273518842669320).

. . . They will look good as an accessory in the Southwest area of our village display/vignette. That was my response when Linda shared with me a set of **earrings**. Her best friend Sandy recently passed; family and friends were invited to share her memory by selecting a piece of jewelry, a quilted wall hanging, or? • You just never know when the next display idea/piece is going to appear.

. . . The Oxford Language Dictionary has a definition that says a collection is "a group of things or people, as in a rambling collection of houses." **Collection** is the subject of *Jim Peters* recent 'Show your village to the world' column posted on 'The Village Collector' web site. Note: I couldn't believe all the village collections he found.

. . . Billy and Sharon Edwards were traveling, shopping and eating – again! I believe they called this their 'Unofficial Celebrate the 45th Anniversary of Dept-56 and Snow Village Tour.' Images posted on the *National Council of 56 Clubs Facebook page*, October 7, 2023. They always enjoy their trips (and so do I).

. . . October is *National Arts & Humanities Month*. To celebrate, NCC club members are invited to build vignettes using a museum, gallery or performance center/theater. You then tell about your favorite form of art, your favorite artwork, or artist. #october2023vignettecontest - For more info check with Anna McPherson on the *National Council of 56 Clubs Facebook page*. We entered one of the monthly contests earlier – we didn't win. **Note: We entered October 2023!**

• Abbreviations (I use): NCC – National Council of 56 Clubs • JSYK – Just so you know! • TVC – The Village Collector • VDL – Village D-Lights • D56 – Department 56 • VN or VNCC – Village North Collectors Club • AV – Alpine Village • CIC – Christmas In The City • DV – Dickens' Village • NEV – New England Village • NP – North Pole Village • SV – Original Snow Village. •

. . . The next Dept. 56 *Facebook Live Ms. Lit Town* is Thursday, November 2, 4:00 p.m. Central Time!!! November guest is Dept. 56 artist Paul Lundberg.

. . . Dept. 56 **Artist Signing Events** at NCC Associate Members this Fall: 'Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> - Paul Lundberg, 'St, Nick's, Littleton, CO • Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> - Scott Enter, 'Bronner's,' Frankenmuth, MI • Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> - Paul Lundberg, 'Millies Hallmark,' Phoenix, AZ.

• Lemax 'Ice Delivery' - This type of horse drawn wagon went up the alley beside our house in the 40's and early 50's. Several of our neighbors had the necessary 'ice request sign' in their window. I only remember one 'worker.' He would give us ice shaving (small chunks). Replaced by an ice truck for a short time period 'til home ice boxes were all replaced. Intro 2020 - Retired 2013.



. . . 'First Aid' house - White with red and blue trim; Small, Alpine shape, look and trim. Includes a St. Bernard rescue dog named 'Brandy.' I saw this in a mostly *Luville* display by Christelle Gabriel. *Lemax Addicts Facebook*, October 11, 2023. I was a medic and hospital orderly; maybe I want this.

. . . I mentioned stores, **not known country-wide**, where we locally shop for Christmas stuff. I mentioned *Kohl's* being a Midwest department store. I've was informed that *Kohl's* also appears in at least NJ, CA, and NH. • Thanks for reading what I write, and offering corrections when necessary.

. . . Linda said I had to get all those coins off the top of my dresser (she put them in large plastic bags). Our credit union has coin counter available to members. We made a \$71.68 deposit.

. . . Congratulations to *Maleah Fairley Bufford*. She **won** the September *Nat'l Council of 56 Clubs* September Facebook vignette contest. Clever idea, the display included a real fire truck.

. . . "A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it." • Saw on sign in restaurant

Northern Lights Collectors' Club



Crystal, MN - Central MN

. . . "The deadline for complaints was yesterday." • Saw on sign in restaurant

. . . "We reserve the right to refuse service. . . No matter who you are; who you think you are or who your daddy is!" • Saw on sign in restaurant

. . . Brandon Taylor, NCC President **changed** the club's *Facebook* name from 'NCC56' to 'National Council of 56 Clubs.' Sounds right to me.

. . . "Scarecrow 2 Pack" - I read the name on the package when we returned from *Menard's*. I had only seen the little 'guy in white;' I thought he should be an addition to our growing group of clowns - ooops! Note the name, 'Scarecrow 2 Pac.' The ghost scarecrow is **not a clown**, JSYK.

. . . 'Swinging Under The Old Oak Tree' and the 'Elfin Snow Cone Works' - two Dept. 56 pieces Linda bought for us at *Saver's*. Total cost \$11.53 for the *Fall* accessory and *North Pole* house. The little girl 'swinging' is already with our *Fall/Halloween* display. Linda really likes the small size of the 'Cone Works.' Pretty sure that means it will be in our *NP* this season.

. . . My **first** village buildings were purchased at *Target* in the early '90's - *Coca Cola Towne Square*.

. . . A **Pileated Woodpecker** just visited our yard; they have seldom stopped by this year. We usually have two or three on a regular basis. Large, 15-19 inch, eats ants and stuff like that.

. . . 'H. Jollie's Music Store' LEGO® Holiday Main Street, Winter Village. Guitars in the window, brightly lit, colorful. Bet we could use this on a side street of a CIC display. A different look, but sometimes that's OK. <https://www.lightmybricks.com/>

. . . bloviating – verb, "talk at length, especially in an inflated or empty way." • Thanks to Jim Peters for introducing me to a new word.



• Lemax Collection, Vail Village, titled 'Eagle River **Ski Lodge**' - Who's shown in the picture? Multiple snowball throwers, a busker, several bicycle riders - **no skiers**. I just happened to notice. I like the use of multi-colored lights on the cornices; and especially the glowing fireplace at the base of the outdoor chimney (looks much better in other pictures). 7.17 x 6.69 x 5.71 inches (H,W,D), \$49.95, Year Released: 2020. Enjoyed this in the display by Renessa Rutland on the *Village Addicts Facebook Page*, Sept. 28, 2023.

. . . From Cindee: "I have an answer to your question about 'Whale Tale.' It is a seafaring tall tale; kind of like the one that got away." – I asked the question in my last JSYK; this was the first of several replies. • Bill even passed along a few words from the movie '20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.' He said Kirk Douglas sang a song to the sailors on the sailing ship, "Got a whale of a tale to tell ya lads, a whale of a tale that's true, I swear by my tattoo ..." Thanks to each/all of you!

. . . *AirBrite the Universal Wireless Lighting System* – reminder, folks are finding ways at use this new system in village displays. Still very interested to see in person. [www.airbritelighting.com](http://www.airbritelighting.com)

. . . I enjoyed singing with our Jr. high school choir; was looking forward to more singing. I wish my voice hadn't changed when I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I should find/buy the '*The Barber Shop Quartet*,' Lemax, 1998-1999, to use as a 'memory piece.'

. . . '*Village Dishwasher Magnet*,' 23 L x 26 H in. – It looks like a snow covered New England village all decorated for Christmas. The catalog also shows a matching rug, 20 x 30 inches; and a runner, 20 x 48 inches. Magnet \$19.99, braided rug, \$19.99; runner, \$21.99. They look nicely done. [www.collectionsetc.com](http://www.collectionsetc.com)


. . . "You spend most of your life inside your head, make it a good place to be." • On-line

. . . A *Spiderman* band aide! I went home with one on my arm after a recent blood draw (as part of a physical). They don't see to have 'plain ones' anymore. I guess it could have been '*The Little Mermaid*.'


. . . Mulish-Regular 10.5 – Microsoft Word just informed me that was the type style/size I was using. 'Mulish' doesn't even appear on the Microsoft 'font list' on our computer.



- This variety of bright colors attracted my attention (in an ad). I like most things about '*Pierre's Restaurant*;' but I have no idea where it would fit in a display. I just can't see it in either a Christmas In the City or a New England Village display; maybe in a vignette? It's from *Caddington Village - Lemax*, \$49.99. Approx. size (H x W x D) 7.01 x 8.39 x 4.61 inches. Year Released: 2015.

- '*LED Lantern Posts*' – Set of 4, \$42.00. <https://dwarvenforge.com/>. These are called tall stone pillars with lanterns. They each come with LED lights. They could easily be used with a castle or for lighting a town square. No size provided on-line. The shown walls are also available. Plus a whole lot of other stuff. 



- OK, these guys won't look 'normal' in our zoo, but that's still what I thought of when I spotted them on *Pinterest*. They are really dressed for a jungle tour; we don't have room for a jungle and a zoo. Probably a good thing; I have no idea of their size, cost or even a real source. 

. . . *Isle Royale* is a massive island surrounded by Lake Superior. Within this island are several smaller lakes. I've been to Isle Royale.

. . . Dept. 56, Ms. Lit Town, October 5, 2023 *Facebook Live*. Melinda Seegers had a very nice interview with D56 Halloween artist, Scott Enter. They enjoyed the 30 minutes and so did I. I was reminded: His first piece was the *Snow Village 'Green House'* in 1991. He is now working on designs for 2024 – Scott enjoys 'hidden messages;' an example: '*Me and you and a dog named Blue*' on the side of a building. • New for 2024 they showed the '*Water Tower*,' *Witches Hollow*. Also the new '*Darn Good Darn*' accessory. It features witch Samantha sitting on a red mushroom (wearing funny stockings). Also showed accessories for 2024; Two sets of mostly sisal trees; black or gray; 3rd set of trees, many different, bright colors. Also new for next year ground cover, choice of black or brown. • Retirement date, December 3<sup>rd</sup> • New village pieces officially on-line in January.



- 'Nightwatch' -

- What do you think, how about using 'Nightwatch' with our, not yet purchased, SV 'Split Rock Lighthouse?' I know he's from *Dickens*, but I'm still thinking he could check out the shoreline of Lake Superior for us. Hope he doesn't mind being 130 feet above the water. Intro by D56 in Oct. 2022. 2.5 in H x 1 in W x 1.75 in L. We could still use 'Odd Jobs Before the Snow,' the light house accessory. It would be kinda neat (different) to have a worker carrying a piece of replacement glass for the top of the tower. October 2022; 3.35 in H x 1.69 in W x 1.65 in L.



- 'Odd Jobs Before The Snow'



- **Homemade Halloween** decorations are always a nice feature. Our friend Carol's daughter Dawn, from California, did this one for her. She cut the top off the harvested pumpkin, cleaned out the inside and filled it with potting soil. She then planted Chrysanthemums and Gaura around the edge before replacing top. A very nice look!



- This is a pretty big trick or treater. I do believe 'it' would even **frighten** me! I would still like to have the new 2023 Lemax Spooky Town 'Scared Tenant.' Size: I can 'see' several Halloween neighborhood display scenes where they would fit right in. 1.34" D x 2.72" W x 2.48" H Released: 2023.

- Dept. 56 **Vintage Pumpkins Set** - These five 50's and 60's style pumpkins "will add a little color and charm to your Halloween Village display." Introduced October 2022. 1.3 in H x 1 in W x 1 in L.

. . . Food trucks are, seasonally, very popular here in Duluth, MN. A Lemax ad just saw showed these four: 'Funnel Cakes Food Truck,' 'Taco Truck,' 'Peppermint Food Truck,' and 'Johnnie's Hot Chocolate.' We only have the Taco version; but I do also like hot chocolate – just so you know!

. . . Lowe's 'Carole Towne' 2023 village is on-line – I like the hockey game with 4 animated skaters. Also, first time I've seen an **electronic** 'Count-down to Christmas Clock' included in a building. A snowman and boy standing on their heads were also featured. The dog watching made it interesting. – 'Winter Camping' accessory looks fun! – I also liked the five children, snowboarders and skiers, in action. - I feel the buildings and animated pieces are pretty expensive; accessories not so much. No local Lowe's so I won't see them 'real' for a while.

- What do you think; could we use the 'Dino Research Station' in our zoo? We are planning to expand it a bit this season. It is large at D 14.2, H 14.2, W 17.7 inches; and at \$97.49, costly. And, it comes with dinosaurs; yes, this Schleich Playset comes with **dinosaurs**. We saw it at [www.fleetfarm.com/](http://www.fleetfarm.com/)



. . . Lemax, Sugar N Spice, 'Snowshoe Walkers,' this duo could be a '**different addition**' to our ski area. Presently we have no **gingerbread walkers** on waffle snowshoes. I understand they are "on their way to Cookie's Waffle Cafe to enjoy a plate of delicious dessert to help them warm up." (HxWxD) 1.81 x 2.52 x 1.26 in. Released: 2023. \$7.99.

. . . From a company ad, "Department 56 looks to take Villages to new heights beginning in 2024 with the introduction of our **Aerials**. Part ornament, part accessory, Aerials are placed within your Village and can be raised or lowered to help decorate the space above your display." • Interesting!

. . . "I'm on my second guardian angel. My first one quit and is now in therapy." • On-line



• The 2023 Lemax 'Speed Skater' are somebody we need. We have curlers representing U.S. Olympic Champions from Duluth; Hockey players representing Univ. of MN Duluth, NCAA Div. 1 Champs. In both cases, Dept. 56 and Lemax are the suppliers. Can't find any local speed skating National champions but maybe if we begin it with three in our display it will start something. These are from Vail Village. Size: 1.38" D x 6.38" W x 2.13" H.



• Aren't they great?! Four working oxen. I have no plans for them, and at \$160.00 probably won't make a buy. But geez, I really like their look. They come from *John Jenkins Designs* who also makes carts and a Cannestoga Wagon for the oxen to pull. <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/> Remember the site does sell many interesting people as well – take a look.

. . . Larry Treadwell writes: "Please come along for a tour through my imagination as we visit Hauntsville. If you have been with me before you just might meet some old friends, and there are a host of new residents to spice things up a bit." [www.thevillagecollector.com](http://www.thevillagecollector.com) then go to 'Hauntsville.'

. . . Have I mentioned our Fleet Farm has Lemax Christmas on a whole aisle of shelving. They have a sample of most pieces 'un-boxed,' but certainly it is not a display. As in other stores, I noticed the different scale of the Lemax First I'll tell you I bought three 'Hockey Lessons,' 'Bunny Country Christmas.' Linda JSYK! They also had 'Johnnie's again this year - didn't get (again). 'Tubing Trio' is an-liked; bright orange inner tub one pushing. Also a couple 'News' and 'Cocoa Corner' - if are nicely done. • Duluth had 'End; 'West End Brewery' perfect vignette building for now they call it the 'Lincoln maybe not. • The image here is from the new 'Tea with Mrs. Claus.' Not a fan of the big building itself; smoking chimney, moving tea cups and waiter, lots of color and lights. I just like this picture; elves having tea, waiting passing.



• items: 'Tiny Tikes Makes a Friend,' and 'A wasn't with me - Hot Chocolate.' I didn't 'No Postage Required,' that one either other new piece I with two kids riding, new booths, 'Village we need more. They an area called West would have been a us. Many beer places, 'Park Craft District.' So

- Left - Lemax Spooky Town 'Creepy Balloon Seller.' 3.54 inches. Intro. 2021. Not sure I agree with his frightening look, but he is a clown.
- Right - 'Free Candy Clown.' Looks kinda helpless. Size, 2.95 inches, Intro 2013.

These Lemax Spooky Town figurines should fit right in with our many other clowns.

. . . Just re-read 'Hauntsville 2023.' Linda may have become a bit upset with me; constant interruptions to read her another of Larry Treadwell's 'image stories (photo captions).' It's obvious; he enjoys writing as much as building. • For the 'Pub View' image Larry wrote: "I can see witch Ursula trying to admire herself in a mirror, She has probably had one too many of the drinks in the tall tumblers, even I know a witch cannot see her reflection in a mirror." [www.thevillagecollector.com](http://www.thevillagecollector.com)

. . . "Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."  
 • Warren Buffett

. . . November 16 is the **opening date** of the new *Enesco Gift Shop & Gallery* featuring Department 56. It is located at *Elvis Presley's Graceland* in Memphis, Tennessee. They say it "will be the ultimate destination for collectors and be home to the world's largest display of Department 56 Lit Villages. Pictures available when displays are completed." Artist Jim Shore will be available on the 16th. Meet Village Artists Scott Enter and Tom Bates on November 17 and 18. All will be available to sign up to two pieces purchased at the gift shop. Folks can also visit Melinda Seegers, Ms. Lit Town. Pictures available when displays are completed. <https://www.graceland.com/holiday-lighting-weekend>

. . . Saw the Lemax 'Polka Dot's Clubhouse.' Living in northern Minnesota, we have a lot of polka. Thought I should find a larger photo. The building is nice looking, pretty or cute, but the sign says "Finger Prints Craft Club." I caught on; it's **not** a music shop. Year Released: 2023.

. . . Dept. 56 new for 2024 'Friend & Neighbors' Three figures each in 'North Pole,' 'Christmas In the City,' 'Dickens,' and 'Snow Village.' NP elves have a sled dog, packages and ornaments; very nice!

. . . Linda, and a girlfriend or two, enjoy **'chocolate wine.'** The Lemax *'Carmella's Wine and Chocolate Tasting Room'* immediately got my attention. Then I saw the word *'and.'* I'm pretty sure they don't sell the wine.



- The *'Book Nook.'* New and different, perhaps use in *'Christmas In the City,' 'Dickens',* or maybe *'Harry Potter.* The building opens in the front; there is a multi-level display inside (and it's lit). How tall, guessing maybe ten inches. *Magic Wand Shop.* [LKWood,](http://LKWood.com) \$189.00. <https://lkwoodonline.com/>



. . . *'City Zoo Souvenirs'* by Lemax. Building/enlarging our zoo, thought this booth might be an addition. After seeing a picture, don't think it fits what I'm seeing for our display. A bit disappointed.

- The *'E. Langston Toy Shop'* is another interesting structure that found me on-line. The small sign says "Est. 1812" Maybe *CIC* or *Dickens'*? Offers unusual siding and color. A teddy bear is among the toys in the windows. <https://mychristmasvillage.co.uk/> \$150.00 (on sale). No mention of size; that seems to be a new problem for me.



. . . I've been told *Lowe's Santa's Best* has offered a *'Chick-fil-A.'* I understand it is smaller than the D56 version, and expensive on eBay, but if they open in Duluth I may be interested. Thanks Jim!

. . . Tell me what you know so I know; I need help being informed (I was going to say "smart.")



*Questions, comments and/or suggestions are always welcome. You can contact David and Linda at: [spears.duluth@juno.com](mailto:spears.duluth@juno.com), 105 E. Toledo St., Duluth, MN 55811 or (218) 724-6148.*

- 3,917 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •

### Comments

*"Thank you for this blessing!!! I love your words of wisdom!"* • □ Stephen

*"Thanks for the good read. It has put me in the mood for Halloween. However, since we are traveling now and won't be home again until Oct. 18th, it will have to wait. Something to look forward to!"* • Cindee

*"Thank you for the jsyk! . . . . A lot of good info in here, some I didn't know. Glad you keep us up on all these good things in general. Thank you for your hard work in doing this. We know you enjoy doing this, but it takes a lot of doing. . . . . Thank you again."*

Gerry & John

You bet. Funny, I get on a roll until I get to yours. Then I HAVE to stop and read it first.  
Love your stuff. • Bill