

JUST SO YOU KNOW! MARCH 28, 2024

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

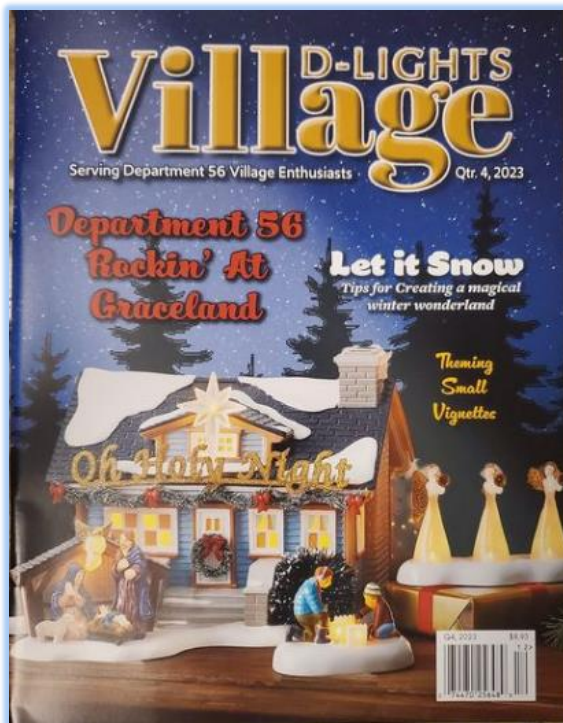
. . . Remember there is no planned 'location,' or 'order,' for content in my columns. In other words, I have no idea what I'm doing.



- Buena Vista Restaurant was the meeting 'home' for our Village North Collectors Club beginning in 1997. We remember it as 'Cloud Nine.' Our group met there for dinner one Wednesday a month for several years. Judith Price, then Ms. Lit Town, even joined us for a meeting. We met in an area to the right of this image with the view shown on the top of the postcard. Note: This structure has been torn down and replaced with a very nice condominium.

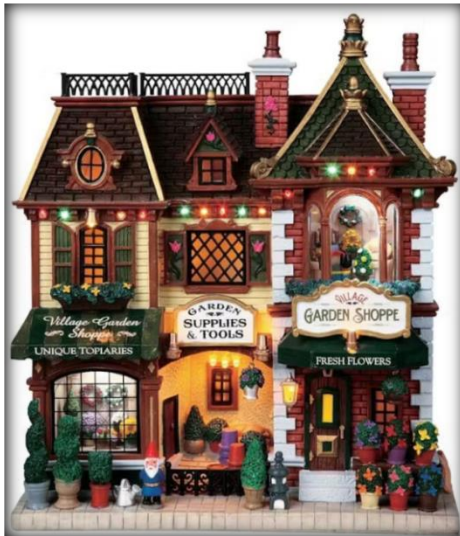
. . . Reminder: Melinda Seegers, Ms. Lit Town, in Village D-Lights Qtr. 3: "The Guesthouse at Graceland will be the host site for the Department 56 **50th Anniversary Celebration in 2026.**"

. . . 'Elf Dormitory,' Lemax – Released 2000 – Retired 2005. 8" tall x 8" wide x 5" deep. Many interesting windows; three stories tall with a tower; multiple roof gables and peaks; green roof and red eaves. Just maybe our elves need a place to stay.



- I saw it first on-line; Mary, from MA, received her *Village D-Lights, Qtr. 4, 2023* on Saturday, March 9. We rec'd ours on March 12th. • The pictures and words of Stephen Pepin 'Graceland Department 56 Village Gallery Setup,' helped me be somewhere I was not able to be. • I enjoyed the 'Village Views 2023 – Best Photo Image of the Year,' 'Christmas in the City,' by Gerard Turner. Great use of the magazine center spread. • 'Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow,' by J. Michael Sanders – comparison in words and pictures of the village snow products made by Noch, Dept. 56, and Woodland Scenics. • Marlis Bennett, suggestions on picture taking with fancy phones. It mostly made sense to me (and I don't have a fancy phone). • 'The Collector's Spotlight' features Linda Stewart, Biloxi, MS. and Don Wolford, Barrington, IL; both by Phil Renninger • 'Choosing A Theme For Your Small Vignettes' by Leigh Gieringer. She used four Dept. 56 North Pole buildings. • Also info from: Polly Clark, *Village D-Lights*; Melinda Seegers, Dept. 56; and Brandon Taylor, Nat'l Council of 56 Clubs. Another VDL comment on page 5.

... *National Council of 56 Clubs Facebook Vignette Contest*: There will **only be four Facebook Vignette Contests** in 2024. The first will begin 'soon' with 'Spring.' It can be a traditional or unique *Spring* display. Remember, contest is open only to members of *NCC Clubs*. The entries will be voted on by the NCC Executive Board (rather than *Facebook 'Likes'* by individuals).



- Garden season is coming; it is very strange saying that during March in Duluth, MN. But I just spotted this Lemax 'Garden Shoppe' and I'm thinking it should be an addition to our facades. H x W x D, 3.27 x 8.86 x 10.43 inches. Rel: 2009 - Ret: 2016. Remember many visitors noticed our new, to us, Lemax 'Wesley Pub.' That fact made it easier to consider another façade.



- Part of the *Dickens' Village Series* from Department 56. 'The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters,' looks like it belongs in our Dickens Village. Intro January 2013 - Retired November 2023. 6.9 in H x 4.9 in W x 5.1 in L. The appearance got my attention. Now I need to find out what a 'Fellowship Porter' is.

**Village North Collectors Club
Duluth, MN/Superior, WI**



• "Connecting collectors to clubs, and clubs to each other for over 30 years." Find information about the *National Council of 56 Clubs* at: <http://www.ncc56.com/>. The site includes contact information for possible clubs in your area. – Linda and I are part of the *Village North Collectors Club*, an NCC member. •

... 'Village D-Tails' – has anyone heard an **update** on this Dept. 56 reference book?

... I was wondering what it meant; 'HWFF' appeared several times in something I was reading. Now I know its 'Hot Wire Foam Factory.' We have/use many of their products.

... As of Monday, March 18, 2024, <http://thevillagecollector.com/> has been visited 55,009 times by unique villagers since March 6, 2023. 84,523 total visits. Have you been there?

... 'The Village Collector' has been with us since 2017. Bill and Kathy Channell have continually worked to build and improve the following columns: David Peters, 'Show your village to the Sue's Christmas Village' • Peppe Europe' • Art Kilmer, 'Christmas Hauntsville 2023,' 'A Dickens' Christmas' and 'Christmas in the Game Preserve.'



Remember you can find Spears, 'Just so you know!' • Jim world' • Phil & Sue Adkins, 'Phil & Apuleo, 'From Italy, Villaging in Corner' - • Larry Treadwell,

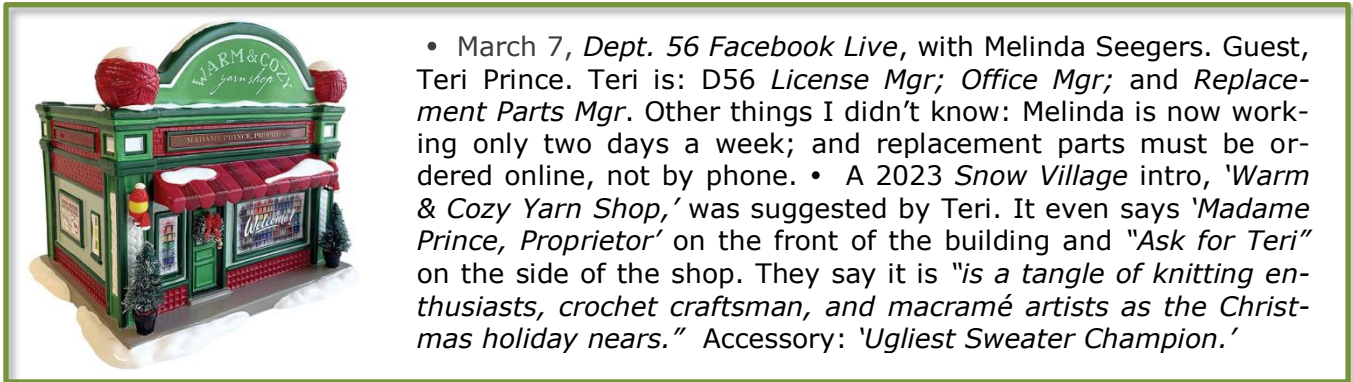
... "Angry people want you to see how powerful they are. Loving people want you to see how powerful you are." • Creek Chief Red Eagle

... As I walked up to the counter in the *Casa Latte* sandwich shop, the owner said "I saw your car pull into the parking lot; I started your sandwich." This is one of the ladies who call me 'trouble.' At least she remembers me 😊 and, she makes great sandwiches.

... "They say with age comes wisdom, so therefore I don't have wrinkles, I have wise cracks."

... "Click on the "Elephant" to see David Spears," That's what it said; am I being sensitive? • I guess it was my own fault; Bill was just inviting his visitors on *The Village Collector* web site to see my recent *JSYK*. I even provided the elephant photo in the column.

... "I finally got eight hours of sleep. It took me three days, but whatever."

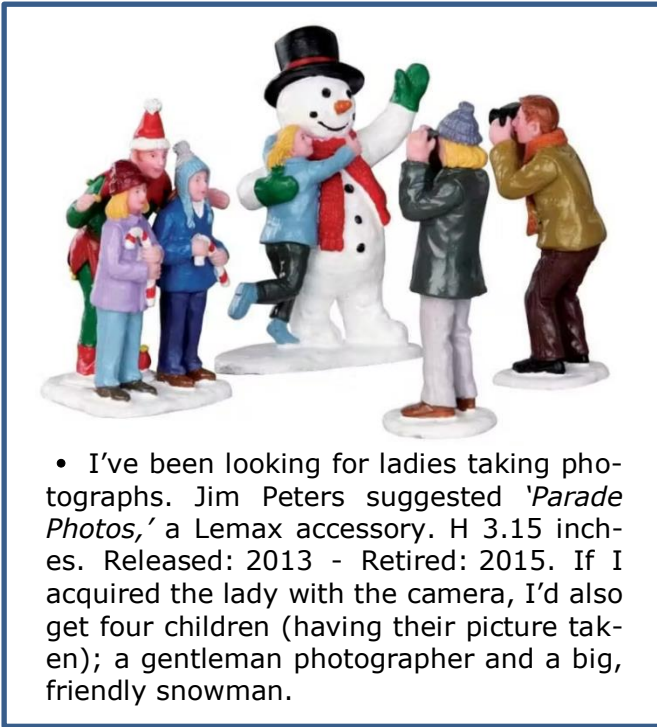


• "Sorry? Not..." - Not sure why, but I like this piece. The cat has 'coloring; it attracted my attention right away.' It took me awhile to **notice** the 'injured' snowman. Intro: by Dept. 56 in January 2022. 1.5 x 1.5 x 2." Note: Have you noticed I've been 'looking at many small items lately?



... 'The Princess and the Pizza,' by Mary Jane and Herm Auch. Linda came home with this book. I thought maybe she had been reading all the recent *JSYK* 'pizza' comments; it wasn't for me.

... 'Vintage Village,' a new feature on *The Village Collector*. Bill Channell has words and drawings of villages from the mid 1800's. He has added village photos from early 1900's. • My first 'village' was in the 1940's with a *Lionel Train*, *Lincoln Logs* and an *Erector Set*. Linda remembers a Nativity and a small lit church at her home.



- I've been looking for ladies taking photographs. Jim Peters suggested 'Parade Photos,' a Lemax accessory. H 3.15 inches. Released: 2013 - Retired: 2015. If I acquired the lady with the camera, I'd also get four children (having their picture taken); a gentleman photographer and a big, friendly snowman.

... March 19, March 19 is the first day of Spring; not *May* 19 as I said in the most recent *JSYK*. Several folks noticed the error including an unnamed person (Thelma) who "didn't want an extra two months of winter." She just got back from a Caribbean cruise.

... I asked about using *D56 Snow Village* 'people' in our non-SV villages. It's been suggested I apply a matte finish to one or two figurines and see how it works. We already have people of many sizes, so I should adapt to the size difference OK. The SV accessory that has my attention is 'Gettin' Our Steps In,' a young lady walking three dogs.

... "Inspecting mirrors is a job I could really see myself doing." • Vince The Sign Guy

... 'Village by Red' on Facebook – shows a wide selection of 3D printed people and accessories. Most are classified as 'Chinatown Pieces.' Not fancy, but many look like they would fit well in our Oriental display.

... "Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people wanting to be important." • T.S. Eliot

... Dept. 56 **swans** – they now sell many different sets, we have several. Now that we see a choice of 'blue ponds,' I seem to be thinking the combo could have a place at our display(s). Maybe in the woods, on the golf course, in the zoo, or with a mansion.

... 'elastomeric' used in a column – huh?



- I've long 'looked at' the 'Mountain Climbers,' 'Vertical Mountain Climbers,' 'Mountaineers,' and 'Rock Climbers' - all from Lemax. I'm sure Linda will tell me I could build a 'big hill/mountain' like this.
- I saw this image on the *Lemax Addicts Facebook* page, posted by - Nora Bonner on March 2, 2024. Note: Doing a Google Search for 'mountain climbers' will show you some from other companies.
- As kids we did more climbing than are parents preferred. We had a fifty foot natural rock wall. A similar height man-made wall and a half block of Weeping Willow trees with hanging ropes. We climbed the ropes and swung from tree to tree.



- I've seen this 'Toy Shop' before. Now I saw it in motion. The three kids, each carrying a gift, are moving round and round in the doorway. Revolving doors I remember as a 'small person.' They were in the big department stores downtown. Here they add motion and good memories at the same time. • I don't know about the building size, company, cost or figurine accessories. Can anyone help?



- 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 •

... We are still looking for suggestions for a name for our village display – anyone?



- Not sure of the source of this sticker. We were going through folders with stuff from past Dept. 56 events; there it was! I could read the "Department 56" logo right away. It did take a bit longer to decipher "Run Like The Dickens." Still haven't figured out how to 'turn it around' or 'inside out.' Happy we still have it.



- Mickey Mantle, Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, and this is **Babe Ruth**; all are famous baseball players from another era. Don't know why, but I'm thinking I just might need one of these for a display. Not sure how and where we would use 'him,' just thinking there should be a place. \$25.00, 2 ½ inches tall • Ruth was in Major League Baseball from 1914 through 1935. "Nicknamed *"The Bambino"* and *"The Sultan of Swat"*, he began his *MLB* career as a star left-handed pitcher for the *Boston Red Sox*, but achieved his greatest fame as a slugging outfielder for the *New York Yankees*. In 1936, Ruth was elected into the *Baseball Hall of Fame* as one of its "first five" inaugural members."

. . . **More:** *Village D-Lights*, Qtr. 4, 2023. On page 46, are maybe the **niciest** D56 CIC 'tall' buildings with a 'big' background I've seen. Display by Francesea Petrillo, Rome, Italy. It includes 'Flat-iron,' 'Empire State,' 'Chrysler,' 'Radio City,' and 'Central Perk.' Article by Phil Renninger

• **"Village Jigsaw"** – a new page is now available on *The Village Collector* web site. Bill and Kathy have created a page to turn our photos into jigsaw puzzles. Bill said "It will launch Sunday afternoon March 24th (after Kathy & I have our "Sunday Brunch"). • As Bill says "I'm always trying something." <https://thevillagecollector.com/> • I 'puzzled' Santa below from the web site.



It took me 32.02 minutes to complete this 9x6 inch, 54 piece Santa puzzle. Note: I did take a few pictures before I put in the final piece (that did take some time). I wanted the picture before the 'puzzle look' disappeared. The puzzle was fun and not difficult to do; it just took me a few minutes to remember how to 'puzzle.' Note: This image was of our display.

• Abbreviations (I frequently 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* with *Melinda Seegers* is Thursday April 4th, 4:00 p.m. CDT. Dept. 56 artist Paul Lundberg will be discussing licensed products and the new *Disney* items.

. . . The *National Council of 56 Clubs* is planning a **Virtual Gathering** for 2024. If you have an event theme you would like to see, let your NCC Regional Rep know. They will pass it on to the Gathering Committee. Our Region 6 NCC Rep is Debbie Oehme, region6ncc@ncc56.com. I'm sure she would be happy to assist you.

. . . Remember, the 2024 Dept. 56 village will be arriving at stores in mid-May, beginning with the 'Halloween' and newly announced 'First Editions.' D56 Update from Melinda Seegers.

. . . I send each issue of 'Just so you know!' to spears.duluth@juno.com Have to know it went!



- How about just the **balloons**? I don't want/need anything except the balloons; maybe the people would be nice too. I would simply 'hang' them on nylon string (the almost 'no-see' type). I could use the balloons above the carnival, circus or our parade. I love the color. • 'Sky-High Park' Set of 7 - Released: 2014, Ret: 2021 - (H x W x D) 14.96 x 11.22 x 10.43 inches. I need no base, motor or rods. •

. . . *National Council of 56 Clubs* reminders: Elections - The *NCC Secretary* and *Treasurer* are up for election in 2024. Nominations are expected this summer; election is in the fall. - Even-numbered Region Reps are also up for election. Our *NCC Region 6* needs to elect a new rep as Debbie Oehme has reached the term limit; I'll miss her. Remember you must be an *NCC* member to nominate or vote in these elections.

. . . Remember I'm always looking for your input. I need the opinions, thoughts and the ideas of others to keep me going. My mind is getting old.



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

- 2,636 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •