

JUST SO YOU KNOW! JANUARY 20, 2025

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

. . . Corrections from the previous issue are noted, and corrected in this issue if necessary. Remember, other comments are also welcome.

. . . *'The Village Collector'* has been with us since 2017. Bill and Kathy Channell have continually worked to build and improve the web site. Remember you can find the following columns: David Spears, *'Just so you know!'* • Jim Peters, *'Show your village to the World'* • Peppe Apuleo, *'From Italy, Villaging in Europe'* • Art Kilmer, *'Christmas Corner'* • Larry Treadwell, *'Christ-Hauntsville 2023,'* *'A Dickens' Christmas'* and *'Christmas in the Game Preserve.'* • Note: See **update** on Bill Channell below.



• 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* • NP – *North Pole* •

• Bill Channell, is the webmaster of The Village Collector web site. His wife, Kathy Channell, has organized a *gofund.me* for him. Bill and Kathy Channell are true friends of village collectors and deserve our support. He has been our friend since he called to ask me about adding my JSYK column to his new web site in 2017. It has been there ever since. Fundraiser: <https://gofund.me/912766dc> Details below.

David and Linda Spears, spears.duluth@juno.com

Kathy Channell wrote to us:

Hello. I am raising medical funds for my husband. He recently was diagnosed with **Glioblastoma on the right side of his brain** and has undergone surgery. He is now starting the radiation part of the treatment. Because he is wheelchair-bound, I cannot drive him to his 3-6 weeks of radiation at a nearby facility. The cost for this transportation daily is \$400.00 per round trip. In one 5-day week, that is \$2000.00. Our insurance may pay, but at this point, there is no guarantee as I have to pay out of pocket and am supposed to submit invoices for reimbursement to our medical insurance.

If you can help me with these expenses, we would be most grateful. What small savings we have is depleting rapidly.

Plus, after this radiation phase, there will be more transportation costs as we will need to travel to Boston for MRIs, blood work, and consults.

Any donated monies will be greatly appreciated and would help with our expenses and our worries. Thank you for anything that you might be able to donate. I've never done this on GoFundMe before, but am hopeful some out there may help us.

Jan 10, 2025 - Hey David - here's an update for you (from Bill Channell).

I am home and looking forward to radiation being done in a few days. Chemo pills will be continuing for a little while. • On TVC I've managed to go thru the emails with one of the biggest concerning updates. • My next step is to delete all the Halloween stuff still there and then trying to organize the site so it will look good when someone goes on The Village Collector. I will not be adding any new sections. I want you to know that for those of you who have additions to the site, I will try to get those on in the coming weeks (before I have to do more medical stuff) • I appreciate your prayers and hopefully will get on track soon - don't forget to tell your friends.

. . . Big pile of snow with a sign reading *"Free snowman, some assembly required."* - Facebook

. . . We frequently place 'people' in our displays with their **backs to viewers**, i.e., they are looking in store windows, or maybe enjoying carolers; or watching a parade or hockey game. Makes it much more interesting, real (and looks good).

. . . Thanks to Thelma, Bernice and Esme; each 'noticed' I repeated a paragraph in the November 12th JSYK! At least one was on page 2, the other page 4 (and not on the same page). Thelma also said, "Better to have the info twice than not at all."



- 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, David Spears, spears.duluth@juno.com • Region VI Representative: Dan Tuset, region6ncc@ncc56.com •

. . . Lemax 'food trucks;' I counted twelve in an online display. I'm thinking Dept. 56 has four or five. I was considering building a collection. Problem; if I find them, we wouldn't have a 'parking lot/park' large enough to display them all.

. . . Dept. 56, NEV 'Captains Cottage' 1990. Purchased in '96 - glued on packaging tag said we paid "\$44.00," so did the Greenbook. I found this amazing, don't know why.

. . . 'Bumper Fun Ride' Approx. 12 x 11.5 x 7.25 inches - three cars (moving), flashing lights, colorful (most for sale online had comment "doesn't work"). The name always sounded like the piece belonged in our carnival display. The picture, and comments, suggest we really don't want it.

. . . **Judy Severance** has been announced as the 2024 **Collector of the Year** by the *National Council of 56 Clubs Executive Board*. Judy is the editor of the NCC Club Connection (members online newsletter). Judy is the first person to receive the NCC *Presidents Award* and also *The Collector of The Year*.



. . . Individual gunfighters in action poses. They are the actors from the 1960 movie 'The Magnificent Seven.' The film is considered one of the greatest Westerns ever made. The seven were: Yul Brynner, Steve McQueen, Robert Vaughn, James Coburn, Charles Bronson, Brad Dexter and Horst Bucholz. (I have no idea which is who above). We both enjoy our western display features, but they most always feature country dancing (sometimes we include a rodeo). Might be tough working in a gunfight in either one. *King and Country* - www.treefrogtreasures.com 1/30 scale means they could be a bit tall for us. **\$339.00** for the set. • Left - I also noticed the 'lady with gun.' We can't actually see the gun from this angle, but her gun belt and holster are obvious. I also appreciate her outfit, particularly the hat.

. . . The site says the *Dept. 56 Estate Sale Auctions* has done well. They have taken several weeks off to "catch up and will return with fresh lots starting in the New Year." As I write this, the auction has not yet reopened.

. . . Put an ID name on each of the trees for sale at the Christmas tree lot in your display, i.e.; Balsam Fir, Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Scotch Pine, etc. I saw this in a display online, it was a very nice detail.

. . . Our *Home Depot* had only one 'village house' this year. It was a 'not good looking' 'Home Depot' store. Also, the attached figures (people) were smaller than the dogs and cats in our village.

. . . **Name** for our village – we are still looking for the right one. Any and all ideas are welcome. Thanks to those who have made suggestions in the past. We have saved them all.



. . . (left) - Over 10 years ago I was already taking pictures of **pizza** eating places (at least signs). Thelma and Jerry led us there. We were all in town attending the 2012 'My Kind of Town' Chicago Gathering. (Above right) Linda and I were very happy; both of our Chicago 'seminars' were very well attended • The only time I've been asked for an *autograph* was in the 'Hospitality Room' at this event. He said he enjoyed reading my Village D-Lights column. He even had the current copy for me to sign: I was flattered, *JSYK!*

. . . *Disney Wish, 'The Teen Pack,'* Eight colorfully dressed young people plus 'Star.' Their names are Asha of Rosas, Dahlia, Dario, Safi, Bazeema, Simon, Hal, and Gabo. Linda bought them at *Kohl's*; she thought I would find a good use for them. I'd never even heard of the *Disney Wish* sooo? Note: I don't recognize the era of what they are wearing (and they all bend in the middle); about two inches tall. Note: Members of our *Village North* club thought they were 'neat' and 'different.' Haven't used them yet.



. . . We regularly have multiple 'real' cardinals at our feeders; one evening these Dept. 56 pieces showed up on our computer. Well, two of the three did. And no, I've done no recent search for 'cardinals.' These Dept. 56 pieces are (left to right): 'Cardinal Christmas Wagon Wheel,' 'Potters Bench,' 'Adirondack Chairs with Cardinals,' There are more *Cardinal Christmas* accessories; I like them all.

. . . Marriokart – 'Luigi,' green and white race car. I take it Luigi is the driver; I've never met him. Linda found him for me at a *Dollar Store*.

. . . 'Odd Jobs Before The Snow;' didn't bring 'him' with us to the *Village North* meeting. *Fleet Farm, Menard's, Walmart, Kohl's, Dollar Store* – showed the members new 'village' purchases from each of these stores, but our newest Dept. 56 accessory, it just sat right there (he says pointing to our living room display). • Note: I did bring the 'Odd Jobs' piece to the following club meeting.

. . . Don't forget a Dept. 56 **Memphis Gathering** is planned for 2026. We look forward to seeing the many friends we've met at previous gatherings. I've seen no additional info, JSYK!

. . . The NCC *Club Connection* will become a *quarterly newsletter* in 2025. Club Connection deadlines for info submissions are now: February 1, 2025 · May 1, 2025 · August 1, 2025 · November 1, 2025.



• I spotted this 'skier' on Facebook; I liked him! He was posted on the 'Caricature Carvers' Facebook page by Bill Miller on November 29, 2024. A ski on one end, smoking a pipe on the other end – fun! Bill wrote "I carved this 28 years go and it's one of my favorite Christmas carvings."



• I think this is the perfect car to be in front of 'Wesley Pub.' Note the gentleman on his way out to this classy automobile. I saw this posted on *Lemax Addicts*, Dec 3, 2024, by Dennis Figueiredo, Goa, India. Remember, this Lemax façade has long been one of my favorite buildings.

. . . 'David's Bookstore' is located in 'Oxfordshire Village,' a Lemax façade. The bookstore has a good name, mine. I'm always interested when that happens. And, I used to read books. (H x W x D), 10.63 x 10.63 x 4.72 inches, rel. 2024, Caddington Village. The ad says "cozy bookstore inviting literary adventurers." Note: remember facades are wonderful background pieces - they are not deep (4.72 in.).



'Henry Bear Exhibit' – DV

• I found we had a werewolf in the basement. The box said something about 'The Wolf Man's Curse,' Universal Studio, Dept. 56 and Lon Chaney Jr. I don't remember seeing him before. The werewolf did come out of the box for Halloween this year. He is about village size; doesn't look friendly and has a 'trap' secured on his right ankle.



. . . The *National Council of 56 Clubs* web page showed 1,361 visits from Minnesota since June 2017. Total visitors to the NCC web site 64,632 since 2017. Minnesota's total is the 9th most by state; Oregon is by far the highest, 4,043 – congratulations to them.

. . . They were looking at our display featuring 'Steen's Maple House,' Dept. 56 NEV. Visiting from Boston with their parents Kelly and David. **5yr old** Andy, and sister Elena **age 3**, explained to Linda: "First they place a tap into the maple tree; next collect the sap in the pails (his sister added it comes out very slow); then the fluid is cooked down over a fire; finally they take it in the house – it takes a long time." They learned this in class.

. . . While visiting Pennsylvania in 2012 I wrote: "In August, Linda and I visited Lottie Mae Clindedinst, and her husband George, in Gettysburg. Lottie is the owner of Minithings. Several years ago, she took over the village accessory business from her sister Jean. Many Village North members have purchased from them. ▪ She showed us around the workshop in the basement of their home. We were thinking it wasn't a very large area. Then we realized - she makes miniatures. Now it looked like a really big place. Her two newest creations were on a worktable – the 'pumpkin carving table' and the 'Vixen Beauty Spot.' Who knew reindeer had their 'nails' done." ▪ "In the garage, George proudly showed us his very rare, 1969 Ford Talladega. The car is a very limited edition, street version, of a NASCAR racer. He also has a rather large selection of 1:24 scale model cars." ▪ "I had to call Lottie because we didn't visit her when we were in Gettysburg several years ago. We actually, unknowingly, had driven right by their home. I was still hearing about it. Note: For some reason, we made only one small purchase."



. . . 'You can take it with you!' \$60.00, Dept. 56, Snow Village Halloween. I gotta tell you, I recognized the 'mortuary person' before I read the official description of the piece. My congratulations to Richard Puckett; well-deserved recognition for all he means to Dept. 56 and the National Council of 56 Clubs. Featuring the likeness of longtime collector and past NCC President, Richard Puckett, this lighted accessory features nooks so that you CAN take your Village collection with you when you die! Intro, Oct. 2024. 3.7 in H x 3.6 in W x 4.15 in L.

. . . 2025 USA Curling National Championship, January 27 – February 2, Duluth Entertainment Convention Center – We have the Dept. 56 North Pole curling elves and the Lemax curlers already in a vignette. It is nice to be ahead of time with display building.

. . . "That's beautiful" – Linda's reaction when I showed her, up close, the 'fresh farm eggs stand' we just brought home. It's by Lemax in 2024, purchased at Fleet Farm (30% off!). It is brightly colored; eggs are \$3.00 a dozen. There is even a cat relaxing on the roof. ▪ Note: It comes in/with a hard plastic storage box; includes an instruction sheet to get the accessory in and out of the box.

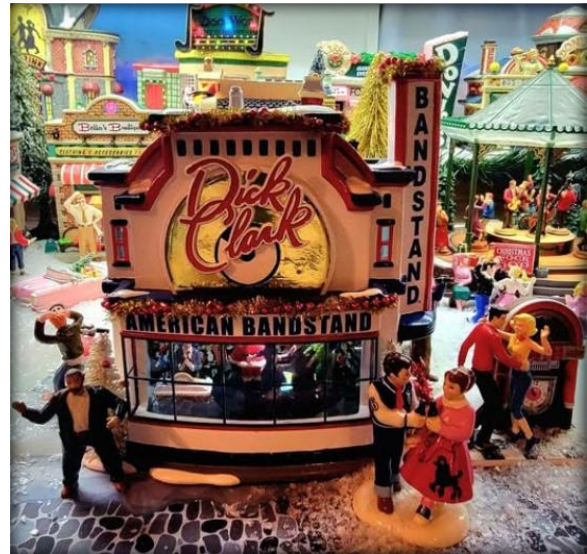
. . . At supper December 9th, Linda announced we were eating a Halloween decoration. She said the squash held up well being inside since Halloween. It tasted just fine, JSYK! She also served salmon and a baked potato.

. . . 'The California 56 Collectors' – Linda and I know quite a few members of the club. It's a bit surprising; we live in Minnesota. Mike Goode was also an unexpected friend; he lived in Texas. We can't imagine a better organization to recognize first as the winner of the Mike Goode Memorial Club Award. Their plaque reads, "Presented in loving memory of National Council of 56 Clubs Past President, Mike Goode. Inspired by Mike's dedication to our clubs and collecting this award is presented to clubs demonstrating the passion for collecting, connecting with fellow collectors, and the passion for passing along the tradition and the excitement of collecting and building those connections." Our congratulations! ▪ Note: We met the folks mentioned at gatherings and on-line.

. . . She says I walk like a penguin. Linda knows it was me who walked out to the garage, i.e., 'penguin footprints' in the snow on the driveway.

. . . "Preorder live bees today" – Email ad from Fleet Farm

... The '50's and '60's; I didn't dance so well in that era, but I still enjoyed TV's 'American Bandstand.' Dick Clark became host in the late '50's. I certainly remember the 'poodle skirts' and 'letter jackets,' even though I never owned either one. The building is the Dept. 56, Snow Village, 'American Bandstand.' I saw this image on 'The World of Christmas Villages,' Facebook, Jan. 6, 2025, Karin Broughton Adams Powell – looks good to me.



Northern Lights
Collectors' Club
Twin Cities,
Minnesota



Village North
Collectors Club -
Duluth, MN -
Superior, WI.



▪ 11" Hornby Footbridge - walking bridge over train tracks. \$60.00, assembled product. Dimensions (L x W x H) 8.66 x 2.36 x 5.12 inches, plastic. These 'bridges' have always attracted my attention on model train layouts. Right now we don't even have room to display our trains, probably means no bridge(s) at our house. Note: looking at the picture, it seems maybe a person or two, with small bases, might fit on the bridge.

... 'Dog Walker,' a woman with three dogs on leashes, Lemax, 2025. We have many such 'walkers' in our real neighborhood; maybe a necessary addition to our 'inside scenes?' ▪ 'Food Truck Patrons', Lemax, 2025, 2 couples; We don't have enough people (very few) who are standing and eating handheld food. We have many 'outside' eating facilities – so maybe we need a few more hungry people? ▪ 'Fun At The Carnival,' Lemax, 2025, six people with carnival stuff; ballons, toys, food, stuffed animals, etc.

... Village D-Lights update - No new info available. We received the most recent VDL issue, '2023 Qtr. 4,' on March 12th 2024. Note: Our subscription is still paid. I sent most recent email on October 8, 2024 to: Polly L. Clark, Publisher, pclark@tandempublishinggroup.com – still no reply.

... If you got this far, I can guess you at least looked at some of the pages. If you read anything you liked or disliked, you must let me know. I need responses to pay me for all the work I do. How did that sound, sincere or ??

... The 'Luville Lantern Lighter' is a young lady in a dress. She is on a ladder about to light a streetlight. A young boy is observing. Haven't seen one like this before.



▪ These are some of the nicest 'pizza supports' I've seen. On Facebook, Maria Nikolajeva posted she 'made' these tables with decoupage in William Morris design. – Posted January 17, 2025, 'Dollhouse miniatures made from everyday things.' – We have maybe a dozen of the supports. Unfortunately, most are still simply white plastic. We just have mugs, glasses, plates, vases, etc., we Tacky Wax them on.

. . . As you are probably aware, JSYK is not written on any planned schedule. However, this time I'm so slow I do even know what I'm writing. I now have a new computer (with Windows 11 - you might know how much fun that change is); new keyboard (backlit with large letters); new backup monitor; new speaker bar; and new headphones. I hope to be back to 'my normal' soon (on the new computer).

. . . My old note says Tom Bates, Dept. 56 artist, has designed a fresh, fun new village lamp post. The new post lights each come with a male USB tail and a female port, enabling you to 'daisy chain' 3, 5, 10, even 20 lights together on one power supply. Haven't seen them yet; don't need more lamp posts; but I'm still very curious. Maybe we need lights on every street.

. . 'Tru-Tone bulbs,' I have seen a lot of mention of these bulbs lately. They seem like a good idea; nice choice of colors, and cool. Through Valentine's Day, February 14, 2025, we can save on the Jeweltone Magenta bulbs! I liked this different red; nice for Valentine's Day.

. . . 'A Peek Inside,' the most recent entry was Dec 05, 2024, 'Crossing Things Off the List: Your Guide to a Festive, Stress-Free Christmas.' It shows many D56 landscape accessories and mentions replacement parts. You can read this blog at <https://department56.com/blogs/from-the-desk-of-ms-lit-town> - It is written by Tim Haney, VP of Product Development @ Enesco/Dept. 56.

. . . Melinda Seegers first Dept. 56 Facebook Live of 2025 was Thursday, Jan. 9th. She began by announcing the Dept. 56 2025 Village Brochure will be available by the end of January – think thick book. ▪ She made comments on the new Scenterville Series pieces (silicone tray for fragrances). Melinda named the series). ▪ Harry Potter, lots of detail; floating candles. Also mentioned pieces from the Grinch, Peanuts, and Christmas Story (An attractive 'A Family Christmas' accessory was shared; nice detail, lit). A very bright, colorful Halloween building with 'Mad scientist at work' was introduced. Note: all new intros will have USB lighting. She made no mention of 'core villages.' ▪ Next Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live is Feb. 6th.

. . . Village North Collectors Club - January 15, 1997 – 1st official club meeting at the Buena Vista Restaurant, Duluth, MN. Several organizational meetings preceded this event; Linda and I only attended some of them.



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.

• 3,604 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •

• Comments •

▪ Response to open house invite: "I would LOVE to attend, but logistics just don't seem to work. Say "Hi" to Linda - and to Snoopy & Woodstock" - Thelma ▪