

JUST SO YOU KNOW! APRIL 16, 2024

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

. . . *National Council of 56 Clubs Facebook Vignette Contest*: There will be **four** Facebook Vignette Contests in 2024. The first will be '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). Details when available.



- Since November, when relaxing in my recliner, these four Nutcrackers have been in the bay window looking at me – **looking at me!** They are now downstairs, on a shelf, in a box, 'til next fall.
- Note in the background our 'end of March' fifteen inch snowfall. Before this blizzard, we have had no snow on the ground for a month.

. . . Bernice wrote, "I liked that Babe Ruth figurine, but you didn't mention the source in case anyone was interested in buying one." <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/> is where I found the baseball figures I mentioned in a recent JSYK. Thanks to Bernice for reading (and writing).

. . . Some people sign our 'Village Open House' visitor's book with **first names** only: Why? How are we going to find them, especially the ones that asked to be invited next year?



• "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. •

. . . As of Tuesday, April 15, 2024, <http://thevillagecollector.com/> has been visited 57,775 times by unique villagers since March 6, 2023. 88,081 total visits. Have you been there? I go there all the time – so does 'Just so you know!'

• *Bob Richardson* of the *OKC Class of 56 Collectors Club* passed away April 3, 2024. We certainly remember Bob from gatherings. And yes, we remember competing with him in convention display contests. A very nice gentlemen. Our best to his family and friends •

. . . <https://thevillagechronicler.com/> a free online resource for Department 56 Collectors. Lots of information available. Created by Richard Puckett, maintained by Pete Baer. Take a look! Email: Chronicler@TheVillageChronicler.com

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



Remember you can find Spears, 'Just so you know!' • Jim world,' new column. • Phil & Sue Village' • Peppe Apuleo, 'From Kilmer, 'Christmas Corner' - • Lar-

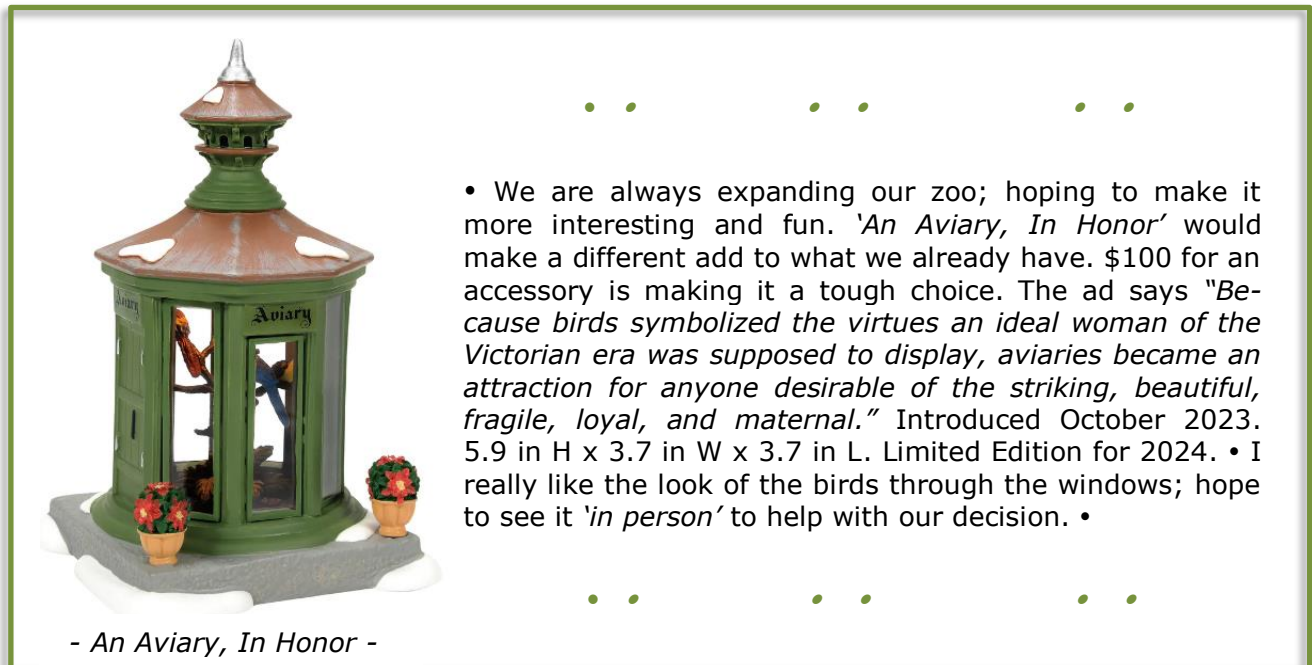


• 'Collectors in the Cornfield,' October 4-6, 2024. NCC Associate Member 'Cynthia's Hallmark' and the 'Hoosier 56ers,' Greenfield, IN. I very much look forward to seeing the details. •



• 'Snowy Delivery' - Lemax says the mailman is delivering in a gentle winter snow. I'm old and receive mail most every day; I've never ever seen a letter carrier using an umbrella in the snow - JSYK! And remember, we live in northern Minnesota. (H x W x D) 3.31 x 2.09 x 1.50 inches. Released: 2024, Lemax, Vail Village. •

... Dept. 56 artist Paul Lundberg joined Ms. Lit Town, Melinda Seegers on the April 4 Dept. 56 Facebook Live. They discussed 2024 licensed products and Disney items.



- An Aviary, In Honor -

• We are always expanding our zoo; hoping to make it more interesting and fun. 'An Aviary, In Honor' would make a different add to what we already have. \$100 for an accessory is making it a tough choice. The ad says "Because birds symbolized the virtues an ideal woman of the Victorian era was supposed to display, aviaries became an attraction for anyone desirable of the striking, beautiful, fragile, loyal, and maternal." Introduced October 2023. 5.9 in H x 3.7 in W x 3.7 in L. Limited Edition for 2024. • I really like the look of the birds through the windows; hope to see it 'in person' to help with our decision. •

... 'Hot Wire' has added new features to their Industrial Scroll Table. I will probably never own one. However, we use their smaller tools **all the time**. Just today Linda used one of our 'Hot Wire Sculpting Tools' to build a box liner for a recent house purchased without a box. Our 'Engravers' are also used on a regular basis. <https://hotwirefoamfactory.com/>.

... Would the 'Knight Bus' work in *Christmas in the City*? I like the look, and the purple(?) color. Dept. 56, *Harry Potter*. They say if you have eleven sickles, and stick up your wand hand, the bus will take you anywhere. 4.25 H x 2 W x 5.5 L, inches.



- 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 •

... "Maybe I was raised wrong, but I was taught if you wanted something, you worked for it." • The Old Words

... I planned to write about: 1. Nikki at the sandwich shop calling me "memorable." 2. List display musical groups– ones we own/online. 3. Image of nice figurines from Walmart. • No room!

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



- Thanks to Thelma, I was reminded a 'Run Like The Dickens' was featured at the **Dept. 56 Silver Anniversary** event. It was held in the Twin Cities in 2001. I didn't 'run.' They even offered this orange collectors pin for participants. • One of the other pins was this one for those attending the *Saturday Night Gala Banquet*. I did eat!•



... *National Council of 56 Clubs Facebook*, March 29, 2024 - Jeffery Kirchner · Sandpaper "great for roads sidewalks and pathways the possibilities are endless. Walmart hardware department" – I'd forgotten that use for sandpaper. And, I didn't know it came in so many colors.

... 'Umbrellas to Mend or Sell' is an umbrella vendor; a man on the corner with 'stock' to sell. Lemax has many other 'one person vendors' new for 2004. I like their size, variety and cost.

... The next Dept. 56 Facebook Live with Melinda Seegers is Thursday, May 2, 4:00 p.m. CDT. They will discuss *Dickens' 40th Anniversary* and several new *Christmas in the City* pieces.

... 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. • When I know more I will share it with 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.

... Thelma offered several sources for this definition: 'Fellowship porters were laborers who transported goods by carrying them – fish, fruit, salt, coal.' - From a Dickens' pubs website. I had asked the question in a recent JSYK.

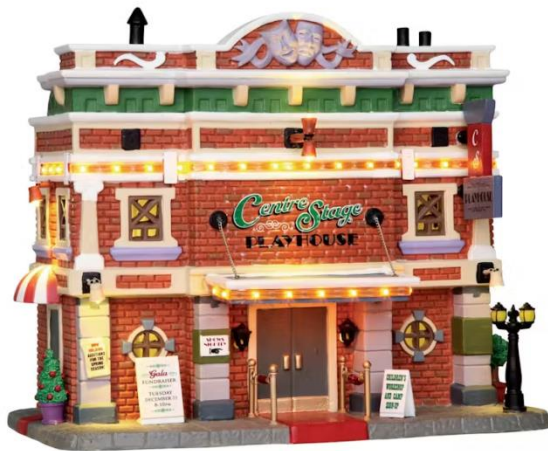
**Village North Collectors Club
Duluth, MN/Superior, WI**



- OK, I found another picture of me smiling. Yes, I know Linda's smile is much brighter. It's from January 2014. Regular readers should understand.

... Cardinals in our yard, a female and a male. We have been hearing them for a couple of days, April 7th was our first 2024 sighting. Time to put out their safflower seeds.

... "Take time to smell the flowers." • Dove candy wrapper



- There is a small community theater near Duluth where Linda and I regularly attend plays. We really enjoy the entertainment provided by local performers. As folks say: it's cozy, no bad seats, always close to the action. This 'Centre Stage Playhouse' is bigger and more 'city like' than our 'County Seat Theater' in Cloquet, MN; but we are looking for small venue.
- The most recent production we enjoyed was 'No Body To Murder' as seen below on stage during a recent performance.
- 'Centre Stage Playhouse,' Lemax, Year Released: 2012, Year Retired: 2022 (H x W x D) 7.68 x 9.13 x 5.75 inches •



... 'The Nut Hut,' a 2024 introduction from Lemax. "Nuts of the Day: Pecans, Peanuts, Chestnuts, Almonds." They sell just what the name implies. The 'Nut Butter Loft' is upstairs.

... 'Dog Walker' - We should have this accessory; we have many **dogs walking** their people past our house. It's new for 2024 from Lemax; this one is a young lady following three dogs.

- I'm thinking the 'Who Light Bulb Tester' would be a fun addition in several different places in our displays. Country fair, carnival, street fair, North Pole. We enjoy placing 'unusual people' in places no one would expect to see them.
- Dept. 56, Grinch Village, \$28. L 2.6 x W 2 X H 3 inches. "It's often discussed that the Who with most trust is the one who bulb checks when bulb-checking's a must." •



... 'Saddle For Sale,' Lemax Coventry Cove; 'Dog Peeing,' Holiday Time, Walmart; 'Toasting,' Lemax, Menard's. I have these three empty packages sitting on my desk; we can't find the figures for them. I only knew what one of them 'was.' I had to look up the other two online. Bet you knew which one I could ID.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. •

- In my mind, this is a good and different look. The 'Christmas at the Park Pavilion' features a nineteen person choir (plus an organist and two puppies). (H x W x D) 9.65 x 11.02 x 7.17 inches. Released: 2024 Lemax, Caddington Village. It is listed under 'Sights and Sounds,' with Volume Control and a Power Switch for all functions. The sign says 'Joy to the World.' That must be the song they are singing. Nice color, stained glass windows, a large pipe organ, and an interesting ceiling; it doesn't deserve the large candy canes. •



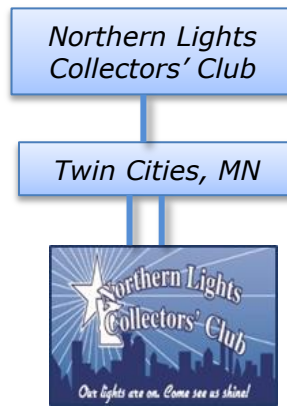
- Our display 'take down' assistants all saw figures and things they hadn't previously noticed in our displays. Carol and Margy were with us for two days cleaning and placing figures and accessories in their packaging. One has been to see our displays a couple of times; the other has been here many times. It was amazing and fun to hear them talking about their discoveries. Kim, a member of our Village North Collectors Club, helped us a couple days later. She kept busy finishing up the figurines and putting houses away. We are **fortunate** to have friends like this. - Linda moved the stuff to the basement. •



- This will give you an idea on what our living room looked like when we began 'putting away.' Now the tables, boxes, 'Styro,' village pieces, and backgrounds are all stored. The other room is the same. Pretty soon we will have all the furniture where it belongs. Next: gardening season! •



- I was not aware of a 'Lemax Collector's Club;' Then I saw it mentioned on Facebook. The post included a new to me exclusive, the 'Lemax Mailroom.' It includes a 'Collectors Club' sign on the front porch. A notice on the box says 'For Members Only;' dated 1998. •

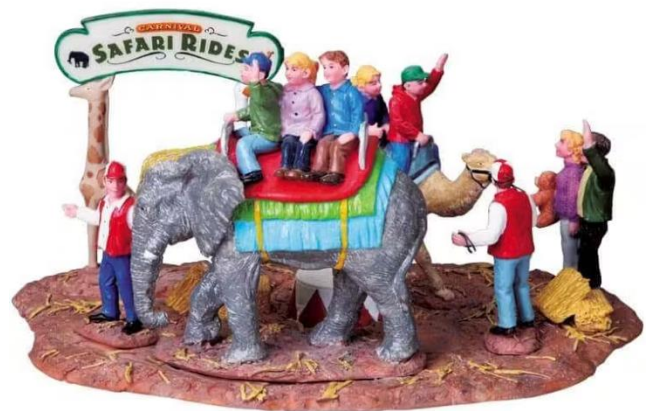


... 'Clearing The Ice' - something I did on our neighborhood **skating rink**. It was in the 50's, JSYK! Lemax Caddington Village offered this animated skating rink from 2017 'til 2024. It has two young men moving, busy with shovels, removing snow from the rink; also a boy and two girls, with skates, waiting to 'play.' Plus a puppy. H x W x D, 5.31 x 11.22 x 7.87 inches.



- Didn't know what this Lemax house is called, but I liked the idea. Two different buildings in one piece is very interesting. It could be a good addition, in the right neighborhood, to our Christmas in the City display. Not fancy, but definitely a city piece. Box says 25th Anniversary, Michael's Exclusive, Limited Addition 2018. • Finally found it online, it's called Michael's 'Christmas In The City' - how appropriate. (H x W x D) 8.66 x 8.15 x 4.84 inches. Released: 2018. Retired: 2019. •

- Not sure about this piece after seeing it on my screen for a few days. I did noticed there is a camel behind the elephants; both with riders. 'Safari Riders' could fit in our carnival; can't have too many rides. 'Lemax, (H x W x D) 5.71 x 8.66 x 4.33 inches. Released: 2008, Retired: 2010. •



... 'Merida' - Disney Pixar Brave - Red-headed girl born a Scottish princess, an adventurer by spirit; independent and brave. She loves archery and horseback riding. • 'Miguel' - Disney Pixar Coco - A young boy playing a large white guitar. The 12-year-old aspiring musician has an ear for music and taught himself how to play guitar. He is from Santa Cecilia, Mexico. • Linda brought both back to the car when shopping at Dollar Tree. She always seems to know what I would like (or need). 2 1/4 inches tall and colorful. Yes, parade or carnival use.

... I try to use the 'official name' of the Lemax pieces I talk about. I don't always show the web site in JSYK. Most pieces I mention can be found at: <https://www.lemaxcollection.com/>

... "Hands are meant to be held." • Dove candy wrapper



• The big letters say 'Aba's Olive Oil.' I have no idea who this building is, but I like it. Especially if it's a **façade**. Nice colors, steps, good lighting. Anyone have an ID for this piece? I saw it unnamed on line.

• Do I need another *Coca Cola* vehicle? It is unlike any of the several I already own. The color yellow adds a different look to the normal red and white; so maybe. 1:43 die-cast delivery vehicle, real rubber tires, genuine graphics and logos. \$79.98 (set of 2) <https://www.bradfordexchange.com/> 5-1/2" L. Our parade likes *Coca Cola* vehicles. •



Village North Collectors Club

... *National Council of 56 Clubs, California 56 Collectors, 'Connection at Sea' . . . 2025'* We're going on a Cruise! This West Coast cruise is to take place September 15-19, **2025** from the Port of Los Angeles, aboard the *Navigator of the Seas*. 4 Day Catalina/Ensenada Cruise. Check with Nathalie Liu for much more information. NATHALIE@TRIPMATTERS.NET or 949-386-8325.

... I have enjoyed the several Renaissance's we attended. Some were very large, others were almost 'backyard' size, but they were all fun. I liked the costumes, atmosphere, handcrafted jewelry, etc.; but mostly it's the food. Maybe that's why I'm attracted to 'Renaissance Fair Shops,' new for 2024 from *Lemax Caddington Village*. They sell *Tom's Turkey Legs* for a hearty meal with a cup of ale! Plus wooden swords. (HxWxD) 6.69 x 8.07 x 4.72 inches. • I seldom drink ale, JSYK!

... I keep finding *Snow Village* pieces that I like. That means I wonder how they would look in a non-shiny village. The Dept. 56 'Cracker Box Snack Shack' seems like something we could use in our *New England Village* display. Menu offerings include bratwurst, cookies and (homemade) chili. I'm afraid at 5.1 in H x 4.25 in W x 7.4 in L., it may be a bit large. Some *NEV* houses aren't much larger. We'll see what happens.

... On 'Countrynmoregifts.com' they posted, "We will not have any limited edition signed and numbered available for purchase." That would be the 2024 Dept. 56 pieces. I talked to a very helpful Juanita at *CountryNmoregifts* to confirm the information.

... It was interesting to find 'village houses' at *Saver's* in April. – From *Lemax*: a church, the 'Plaza Opera House,' a restaurant; and from D56, the Dickens' 'Bayly's Blacksmith.' Linda brought me pictures. We may have to return and see if we need a blacksmith shop.

... The new **Village Jigsaw** pages are very popular on 'The Village Collector' web site. I'm doing better solving them all the time; a very fun time. <https://thevillagecollector.com/>

... Responding to postcard in *JSYK*, John wrote, "We had supper at the Buena Vista Restaurant. I remember you saying, "The food is okay but the view is unbelievable. You were right!"



- We are sometimes looking for new and different places (in real life) to eat. Haven't seen an 'Igloo Café.' This one is different and cute; it includes three customers. Approx. \$30.00. L 5 x W 6.25 x H 3 inches. Luville Schneewald.
- I also noticed 'Selling Wooden Clogs.' One man with a selection of good looking shoes for sale; very different. L 3 x W 2.5 x H 4 inches. \$13.00. Luville Molendam
- I also found some unusual animals that would be good in our zoo. <https://www.felinaworld.com/> Note: Approximate size and cost.



- Since my first look I was attracted to 'Light as a Drugget!' New for D56 Dickens' Village for 2024. Maybe I thought he would be good competition for our 'Persian Rugs For Sale' accessory. It says "Average citizens of London might purchase a drugget rug for their residence or flat." Drugget is an old French word, a coarse durable cloth used in London residences.



'Light as a Drugget!'

. . . 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.

- 3,367 is the number of words in this JSYK - not counting this line •

Comments

"Good job David. Always interesting information. Thank you for doing this." • Gerry & John

"Another great column just consumed by me. When they arrive I devour it like a hungry boy receiving a warm donut." • Jim

"I always appreciate and thank our friend in Minnesota, David Spears, who consistently creates "Just So You Know"- a newsletter worth its read!" • Robin

My thanks to all who responded!