

JUST SO YOU KNOW! . . . JULY 5, 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.

. . . The date Village D-Lights, **Qtr. 2**, 2023 received at our home – not yet!

. . . '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' • Brian Vaill's, 'The Train Station' • Phil & Sue Adkins, 'The Creation Station' • Thea Heyink, 'The Creation in Europe' • Phil & Sue's Christmas Village' laging 'Christmas Corner' • Larry Treadwell, 'A Dickens' Christmas' • Art Kilmer, 'Tips & Tricks.' • Mark Frendo, 'Tips & Tricks.'



- 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.

. . . June 3, *National Repeat Day* (I said "Repeat Day") • June 28, *Paul Bunyan Day* • July 1, *International Joke Day* • July 2, *Canada Day* (Dominion Day) • July 2, *World UFO Day* • July 4, *Independence Day* • July 6, *National Kissing Day* • July 7, *World Chocolate Day* • August 4, *International Beer Day* • July 20, *Moon Day* • August 17, *Linda's Birthday* • September 4, *Labor Day* •

. . . The 43rd *Annual Golden Glow Convention*; Arlington, VA on August 16-19, 2023. <https://goldenglow.org/convention> • 'A Christmas Story' in the Nation's Capital. **Note: Additional tours and workshops** starting August 12. **The NCC will be there.** - 12 page registration form/packet available of the web site.

. . . The Dept. 56 Club web site is still 'down.' I see Brian Viell 'talking' on Facebook. He is working on a new display and showing 'new' model railroad engines. Remember the display will be built around *Dept. 56 Christmas In The City* – it should be fun for them; and helpful to others when upgrading displays. • <https://d56club.com/> (when they are back on-line).

. . . For regular readers; the **deer continue to return** to our yard on East Toledo Street. Only four deer in the current herd. Mom brought her approximately week old fawn for a visit. When she spotted me in the window, she sent the little one away (and quickly followed herself). - Now a doe allowed her twins in the backyard. - Too many deer last night; very tough on our Hosta. - Bear cub crossed Toledo St. prior to noon the other day. He/she didn't stop for lunch. It was 'cinnamon' in color. No maternal supervision seen. – Bear has now decorated our yard. He bent over a Shepard's Hook to bring two flower pots to the ground. Nothing for him to eat.

Village North Collectors Club



Duluth, MN/Superior, WI

. . . "Chicago Gathering 2018;" my old note says: "Thelma and Jerry, pizza"- can you image that?

- 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.

On April 30 I emailed my longtime friend Frances saying:
"It has been since last year; are you still available to say 'Hi!'"

The reply from her granddaughter included:

"I'll let her know that you were thinking of her. She loves your articles. She has a box of print outs of what I believe is every one you've ever written and reads them aloud to me over the dinner table."

. . . Village D-Lights, 2nd Qtr., 2023; not yet received or, heard about, at our address, JSYK.

. . . 'The Village Collector' • Number of *unique visitors* since rebuild March 6, 2023 – 15,112; total visits 26,546. Bill is adding more and more information all the time. Note: I check in every day. Many of my past columns can be seen there, JSYK.

. . . 'The Village Chronicler' - website and *Facebook Page*; both by Richard Puckett; built to share all the Dept. 56 knowledge he has compiled. <https://TheVillageChronicler.com>

. . . Next *Village North Collectors Club meeting*, Wednesday September 20, 5:00 p.m., *Fosters Sports Bar* in Hermantown, MN. Members will be discussing our summer picnic (Kandi/Rod's), Halloween tour (3 houses), and Christmas Dinner 2023.

. . . 'Hauntsville 2023,' www.thevillagecollector.com/. Larry Treadwell is bringing us the construction of this year's *Hauntsville creation in story form*. The display theme is *Witch Hollow*. The *Hauntsville Coven* is the focus of the display. The lead witches are *Hecate* and *Circe*. I can hardly wait to meet them; another resident is 'Everglades Joe.' • Larry is moving ahead; he has added a **new story** on his progress. It is on *TVC*. • This year's *Hauntsville Village Display* will be built in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and, displayed at his home in Southern Florida. • If you have questions, or comments, feel free to send them to Larry at treadwl@comcast.net.

. . . I saw the 'Kodiak's Sled Dog Training' building online. I really like the idea of what it is, and the look, of this retired *Lemax* piece. Plus all the dogs have names: 'Nitro,' 'Bonnie,' 'Mugsy' (sitting on top of a dog house), 'Ranger,' 'Tank,' 'Zorro' (also sitting on top of a dog house). Another dog is in the 'Sled Garage.' Size, HxWxD 6.10x8.78x6.22 inches. Intro 2017, retired 2018. <https://www.lemaxcollection.com/> - lighted-buildings. • Looking on the web site I found quite a list of *Lemax* houses/buildings I wasn't familiar with. Many of them I liked. Some would be just fine in a New England Village display; others maybe only in a 'Lemax village.' Many interesting stores and businesses; maybe I'm looking for some of them now. Note: Duluth is the home of the annual 'John Beargrease' sled dog race.

. . . 'Rivian,' a 'for the road vehicle' I'd never heard of. It was parked next to us at *Rice Lake Gardens*. All I know is: made in Normal, IL; no gas engine; four electric motors, one for each wheel; all wheel drive; 300 miles on a charge; 22 inch wheels; owners were on the waiting list for 3 ½ years. Their other vehicle is a Tesla. I could find very few words about Rivian online. Note: I liked the looks of the truck we saw. The quality, and features I was able to see, looked good. Note: Saw my second Rivian two days later, three miles from the first sighting. This one was a different color, white.

Northern Lights Collectors' Club



Crystal, MN – Central MN

. . . This year there will be an **election** for the offices of President and Vice President of the *National Council of 56 Clubs*. Current President Brandon Taylor and Vice President Anna McPherson are eligible for re-election. Nominations will be accepted until July 1st at 11:59pm EDT. More information has been sent to members of NCC clubs.

. . . Four very lovely displays in the April 'Celebrating Card Writing and Correspondence Contest.' Congratulations to **Linda Roberts** for being April's winner of the *National Council of 56 Clubs* Facebook Vignette contest.

. . . Keep smilin' - there's only 173 days 'til Christmas. "I know because I saw it on TVC" by Bill Channell.

. . . "In the open air," I believe, is the definition of 'Plein Air.' I asked myself that question when I discovered Dept. 56 had two pieces using those words. 'Plein Air Painter' in *Alpine Village* and, in *Possible Dreams*, Santa is a 'Plein Air Artist.' 10 inches tall (not village size) so no picture needed. Below are the other Dept. 56 'painters' I found - who knew there were that many.



• Above - Dept. 56 Alpine Village 'Plein Air Painter,' 2.24"

• Below - *Plein Air Portrait;* Lemax. 2.6 in. H. I've included it here because of the name.



• 'An Artist Touch' - Dept. 56, New England Village.



• 'Sunday in The Park with Lynn' Dept. 56 Snow Village. Retired accessory artist, Lynn Maderich. 3.7 in H.



• Department 56, 'Leonardo & Vincent,' North Pole Artists. 2 "H.



• Department 56, Seasons Bay, accessories of 'Parkside Pavillion.'

. . . I also found other Dept. 56 painters: 'Painting Our Village Sign;' New England Village 'Village Fresh Paint;' NEV, 'Master Sign Painter.'



- This wonderful 'Portrait Painter,' \$99, and 'The Sign Painter,' \$67, would be good/ interesting additions to our artist 'collection.' <https://www.sagerssoldiers.com/streets-of-old-hong-kong/> Found these images in JSYK, February 25, 2021.



- Right - 'Sign Painter,' Le-max - This talented sign painter is adding a few finishing touches to the Merry Christmas sign displayed in the village square. 4.3" H



- Left - Look what I found; another canvas/easel, artist/muse. Do you think someone is sending them my way? JSYK Jan 15, 2022.



- 6 Vintage Hawthorne Village Thomas Kinkadee "Painter" figurines – these appear quite small for village use. • OK, now I've stopped looking for artists. If you find more, please don't share - **unless** they say 'Plein Air.'

... *Schleich* 'age rates' their toys; this one was (5 - 13 years). Does that mean I'm '**not eligible**' to buy one of their wombats to use in our zoo? I was at 'Legacy Toys' in the *Miller Hill Mall*, Duluth.

... *Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live*, **Melinda Seegers**, next on September 7, 2023, 4:00 p.m. • Reminder, she has no June, July or August shows on *Facebook Live*.

... 'An upcoming event will reunite you with old friends.' • Fortune cookie



• I saw this 'balloon' on-line; right away thought it would be a nice 'background' piece in a display. How about above a carnival or amusement park; maybe over a grassy field or the ocean. It might be too large at 5 in x 5 in, 15 inches in height. I'm hoping the support chains are a large part of the height - have to see this one in person. Their ad said "*Beautifully hand-painted multi-colored glass work in the most popular hot air balloon colors. - Special flickering LED solar lights create the appearance of flames shooting up from the burner engine in a real hot air balloon. - Truly an eye catching addition to any garden hanging on a tree, shepherd hook or a pergola. - Uses solar panel 2V 100mAh, using Ni-MH AA 600mAh 1.2V battery.*" Note: just realized I don't know the cost. <https://www.lightbulbs.com/>

- ... Figure manufacturer ID's: 'Cozy Christmas,' Lemax (young couple on a bench), ID'd by Jim Peters. **Thanks!** • 'Pastor On A Bike,' I accidently found it for sale online; I now know it's from Luville.
- ... 'Now is a lucky time for you - take a chance.' • Fortune cookie
- ... 'When I find it, I don't need it. When I need it, I can't find it.' • On-line

• Linda and I both smiled when we saw this picture of **Queen Elizabeth**, not sure why. Of course her small Pembroke Welsh Corgi dogs are an important part of the image. For \$75, we might purchase the set, but where would we use it? She really doesn't belong in *Dickens'*, or any of our other villages. A small vignette, with a D56 *Dickens'* building that is still around, could work. Besides this Royal Purple, she is also available wearing an Emerald Green or Tangerine Orange (my favorite) outfit. Available - <https://trainsandtoysoldiers.com/>. Queen Elizabeth's love for dogs began with her first called 'Dookie' in 1933 - just so you now!



• We regularly have a 'golf scene' based on the Dept. 56 'Putting Greens.' With these 3 additions we'd have enough golfers for a 2nd foursome. I really like the look of the 'derby' wearing gentleman in grey. Found the Thomas Gunn Miniatures www.treefrogtreasures.com \$55.00 each. - How tall? I don't know.



... Dept. 56 will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the company in 2026. They began with six lighted buildings for the *Original Snow Village* in 1976. They are **asking** collectors to help the celebration; maybe with the **re-issue** of a piece, or maybe have the designers **create special** pieces to celebrate. • Let them know what you think.



• More lovely ladies for any summer display we plan; we don't have many (lovely summer ladies). Left – Wearing "her new and fashionable dress and hat" she says 'I Feel Pretty,' a 2023 Dept. 56, Dickens' Village intro. She goes with the new 'Mary Margaret's Fine Dresses' building. 2.65in H. • Right – With her umbrella and pretty flowers, the 'Lovely Lady, a 2020 Lemax introduction. 3.23 in. tall (with umbrella), \$6.99.



• 'River Moors Christmas Street Festival' is the Lemax, intro 2018, façade featured here in our CIC display. I like the lighting, colors and the size; (H x W x D) 10.04 x 9.88 x 3.23 inches. Note, **3.23 inches deep** is a nice space saver. Makes for a larger 'town square.' • Don't know if you can make out the little boy from *Holiday Time, Walmart*. He is clutching the properly folded American Flag. He is one of my very favorite village people.

... "Don't wait for sleep to start dreaming." • Dove candy wrapper



• Left - Lemax, 'Snowboard Sliders,' (H x W x D) 3.66 x 4.02 x 1.50 inches, Year Released: 2023, Vail Village

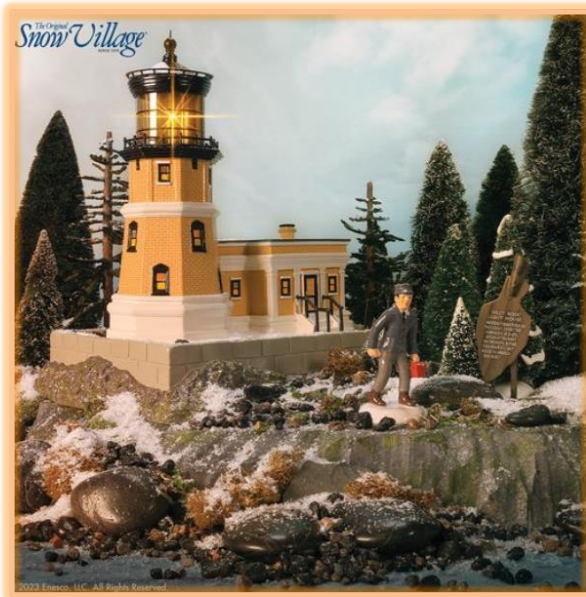
• Right - Lemax, 'Boarding Fun,' (H x W x D) 3.66 x 4.17 x 1.57 inches, Year Released: 2023, Vail Village

I wasn't looking, but how about something(s) different for our ski area.



... "Our contribution to *Village Display Tips Vol II* included our small New England Village display on pages 83 and 92. It was mostly showing '**napkins trees**,' '**calendar page**' backgrounds, and EnviroTex/spider web **waterfalls**. We continue to use versions of all three in our displays. The books were published by Leigh Gieringer." • From July 10, 2020, *JSYK*.

... A simple zoo entrance, a neat Southwest style building, and a whole bunch of garden fairies. I visited them all at *Gordy's Gift and Garden*. A reminder to **look where you are** for things you might 'need' for a display. • We only purchased annual plants and a Hosta – just so you know!



- OK, I gotta say it; *Split Rock Lighthouse* is 25 minutes **out of** Two Harbors. **Not in** Two Harbors (as the *Dept. 56* ad says). My memory tells me there are two other lighthouses in the town. Split Rock is 130 feet high above Lake Superior on a cliff 20.4 miles north/up MN Hwy 61. • The original was built in 1910; *D56, OSV* version released in 2022. Size: 10.83 H x 8.54 W x 7.87 in L. Places we have visited, we like to have (if possible). That means this should be on our 'buy' list. • The brown sign explains the purpose of this lighthouse. Accessory, '*Odd Jobs Before The Snow.*' It is the lighthouse keeper on his way to replace a piece of glass at the top of the tower. There is always something to do to keep things operation-

- • • '*Villaging in Europe*' by Peppe Apuleo – He made a '*Historic Arch,*' now I want to design and make us a new railroad tunnel entrance. Should I be saying thanks to Peppe? Really, should I? - May 26, 2023. www.thevillagecollector.com/ see '*From Italy.*'
- • • '*Success is a journey, not a destination.*' • Fortune cookie
- • • "I would go out of my mind, but I can't find the exit." • On-line



- So sad they are G Scale; this couple would make an attractive addition to our 'biffy' collection. The 'quarter moon'? is something I've seen on the door. Not familiar with the 'heart' on the other door.
- Piko 62719 Outhouse 2-Pack Built Up Buildings G Scale - \$97.99
<https://trainsandtoysoldiers.com/>
Yes, G Scale is too large for our displays.

• "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. •



- Always looking for new/different 'people' for our parades. I've not seen musicians dressed like this '*Five Piece Zouava Band.*' www.treefrogtreasures.com I can see them marching down 'main street' in our parade. • Zouava means a member of former infantry unit in the French Army, originally Algerians, noted for colorful uniforms. A limited number were volunteers, on both sides, during the U.S. Civil War.

. . . Lemax 'Carnival of Carnage;' has a 'Shoot-A-Clown' feature. How dare they? I believe it is 'target shooting,' not a real clown – I think. <https://www.lemaxcollection.com/>

. . . Next articles and club activities for the August/September National Council of 56 Clubs 'Club Connection' are **due** August 1, 2023.

. . . Lemax Village Collection 'After School Hockey Match,' 2009, boys, not girls. Three moving skaters didn't bother me when one turned his back on the other two. In the 2023 version, with girls, one is a goalie (who would never turn away from someone with the puck). Of course in the new release, there is not a player with the puck. Same movements on both. 'Girls Play Hockey,' see both on: <https://www.houseofholiday.com>

• 'Come One, Come All!' - 2022, Dept. 56, Dickens Village. He sure looks like the person we should have directing people to the 'market area' in our display. D56 calls him a 19th Century "sandwich man." 2.4 in H x 1.26 in W x 1.57 in L.



. . . Thelma McKenzie sent me the following email. She said: "From the daily "newspaper" of a cruising community I belong to: Today (July 2) in History: 1679 Europeans first visit Minnesota and see headwaters of Mississippi in an expedition led by Daniel Greysolon de Du Luth." Duluth has been around for a long time.



• Another personal connection item, well sort of. He is *Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant*; American Civil War Union soldier. No, not a relative. However for grades 1-6, I attended the *Ulysses S. Grant* elementary school in Duluth. – This is a *Ron Wall Designs* version made in the USA. I saw him on: <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/>



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.

• 1,844 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •