

# JUST SO YOU KNOW! . . . . APRIL 17, 2023

## IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

. . . '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 Pe-Brian Vaill's, 'The Train Station' • & Sue Adkins, 'Phil & Sue's Christmas Laging in Europe' • Art Kilmer, 'Christmas Corner' • Larry Treadwell, 'A Dickens' Christmas' • And now, Mark Frendo, 'Tips & Tricks.' - He didn't mention the 'Coach is Here' being back - yet.



• 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 • *D56 Builders and Treasurers*, Janesville, Beloit WI/Rockford, IL, Charlene Swansboro. • Region VI Representative: Debbie Oehme, region6ncc@ncc56.com.

. . . April 22, *Earth Day* • May 14, *Mother's Day* • May 20, *Armed Forces Day* • May 22, *Victoria Day* • May 29, *Memorial Day* • June 14, *Flag Day* • June 18, *Father's Day* • June 19, *Juneteenth* • June 21, *Summer begins* •

. . . *Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live*, see **Melinda Seegers** next on May 4, 2023, 4:00 p.m. • Reminder, no June, July and August shows. *Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live* will return to monthly in September.

. . . "I've learned that any activity becomes creative when you try to do better than you did it before." - H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

. . . The 43<sup>rd</sup> *Annual Golden Glow Convention*; Arlington, VA on August 16-19, 2023. <https://goldenglow.org/convention> • 'A Christmas Story' in the Nation's Capitol. NCC will be there.

. . . *The Dept. 56 Club* web site is 'down.' Brian Viell had an accident; he fell at home and fractured his left hip. Brian has joined his wife Elizabeth as a patient in a rehab hospital. He is blessed to have her with him for most of the day. They are both much improved. • The other two managing members put the website on hold until Brian is better. He is hoping no more than an additional 3 weeks at the hospital. • While in the hospital, Brian and Elizabeth are working on plans for a new display. They plan to use a static train, use modern innovations, with a touch of nostalgia. It 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).

. . . "Thirty years is a long time and since its inception the GSVI still has one **founding member**, Bernice DiVincenzo. Her dedication to the club from the start has been incredible and she continues to be a part with her input on the board and the writing of our newsletter, *The Village Reporter*." • From the *Garden State Village Collectors - The Village Reporter* by President Jeffery Kirchner.

. . . For regular readers; the **deer have returned** to our yard on East Toledo Street. Only five so far, but they must be my 'friends' from previous summers. When I went out to chase them away, they came to me to say 'Hi!' The next step; the newborn fawn they leave at 'David's Deer Day Care.'

Village North Collectors Club  
Duluth, MN/superior, WI

. . . When I ask a question in a column, please don't think someone else will answer. I would really appreciate the assistance. Thank you!

. . . *The Village Idiots* wished me **Happy Birthday**. I received their card in the mail - *thanks!*



- Susan Olson sent me this image of the actual *Heurtley House* (after reading my most recent column). She volunteers at the *Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio* down the street in Oak Park, IL. She wanted me to know FLW didn't do a flat brick to the home. She said "If you expand the picture you will notice two different colors of bricks with the lighter color being extended out maybe a 1/4 to 1/2 from the darker color brick emphasizing the horizontal." Note: I've driven by, never been inside.

... Village North former member Mary reminded me Judith Price was at our meeting at *Buena Vista*, a former restaurant in Duluth. Mary said "Judith was asked to judge our displays. She was unable to judge between us (or maybe just trying to be neutral and accommodating to both of us.) You got 'Santa's Workshop.' I got the 'North Pole Chapel.' My display was the DV 'Mrs. Brimm's Tea Room' with spring outside accessories in a very large pink wicker basket covered with tiny pink flowers." - Visit was in May 2003; I mentioned it in my last JSYK. We can't remember the subject of our display. Nice to hear from Mary again!

- "Merry Christmas View Our Holiday Displays" - the sign above the door reminds me of the many flower shops displaying and **selling Dept. 56**. Of course that includes *Bachman's*. • Lemax, Cad-dington Village, 'Conservatory Gardens.' (H x W x D) 7.48 x 8.27 x 5.91 inches. Released 2022. \$74.99. • Nowhere in the building description does it say they sell Dept. 56 - just so you know!

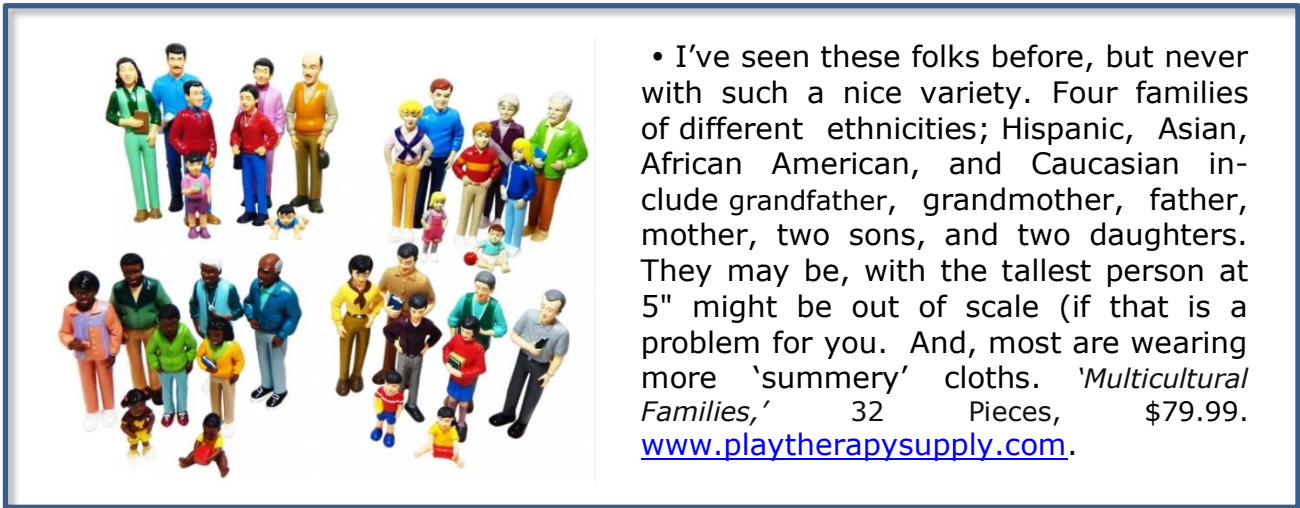


... Visitor Kim said "Hey, you have several recliners, and a big TV in the living room". . ."and cobalt blue hanging lights in the kitchen." She has been to our home multiple times, this was her first without our Christmas village displays (in place). What a difference a display makes!

... We are all being invited to **submit a question** to *Ms. Lit Town*. They will select as many as possible to answer May 4<sup>th</sup>, 4 p.m. Central Time on *Facebook Live*. Please put "Ask Ms. Lit Town" in the subject line; also include your name and mailing address. Three lucky winners will be drawn and receive a prize from Dept. 56. • [msslittown@dept56.com](mailto:msslittown@dept56.com) • Please submit your questions **no later** than April 24th.

... 'The Village Collector' • Number of *unique visitors* since rebuild March 6, 2023 - 3,609; total visits 7,274. 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*.

• 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. •



- I've seen these folks before, but never with such a nice variety. Four families of different ethnicities; Hispanic, Asian, African American, and Caucasian include grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, two sons, and two daughters. They may be, with the tallest person at 5" might be out of scale (if that is a problem for you. And, most are wearing more 'summery' cloths. 'Multicultural Families,' 32 Pieces, \$79.99. [www.playtherapysupply.com](http://www.playtherapysupply.com).



- Can you have too many Scrooge's? If you have a need, how about adding this 'ol villain to your collection. He looks good to me. 2 1/2" in height. \$3.49 - also from the [www.playtherapysupply.com](http://www.playtherapysupply.com).



- Lemax, Vail Collection, 'My Hero!' Crisis averted, fireman returns kitty to owner. \$8.99, 2.87 inches. 2022. Agree with the idea; but it's sort of a big, funny looking cat.

... Just received an email saying: "Notice of July 20 Annual Pizza Lunch at *Downtown Sammy's* - 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of high school graduation." How old does that make me? - I already know!

... 'Tips & Trix' by Mark Frendo - 'City Sidewalks' - March 21, 2023: I read his recent column on [TVC](http://www.thevillagecollector.com) - Now I know about: 1) display building use of an apple peeler 2) their display is called *Frendoville* 3) Pisa in Italy is crooked 4) and a bunch of other stuff. See it all [www.thevillagecollector.com](http://www.thevillagecollector.com).

... [Village D-Lights, Otr 1, 2023](#) , available soon - Posted on NCC56 by Phil Renninger, April 3. Cover feature, "*Celebrating The Alpine Village 1986-2021.*" - *Happy to hear it's coming - still late!*

... "David, Thank you for writing what I read! *Thelma*" - March 20, 2023 • *Thelma* is clever. I had to read the note several times before I 'got it.' I guess I do say that a lot, 'sort of.'

... "RECYCLE ME See you again soon!" I discovered these words on a plastic *Diet Coke* bottle. How will I know when 'it' comes back.



- Coventry Cove, Lemax, 'New Tattoo' - It says: *Polyresin; Figurines; Not a Toy; Recommended for indoor use only.* Retired 2015. I'm **not looking** for this one.

- Lemax Park Statue - 'Charles Darwin' - Been thinking we need some different statues in our parks. I recognize the name and a search says he is "*widely known for his contributions to evolutionary biology.*" 2.52 x 1.46 x 1.54 inches - Year Released: 2016



... Contained within Lake Superior is a whopping 10% of the world's fresh surface water.



• I think the figure looks like the real Elizabeth Strohfus. Elizabeth was an actual *Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP)* during World War II. She was one of the first female military pilots in the U.S., an instructor and transported/flew military aircraft to needed destinations. This allowed more combat flying time for male pilots. • I met her, in her '70's, when she was able to arrange a ride in an *Air National Guard* fighter aircraft. I'm not a pilot, but I was her host for the event. She was interesting, and a very nice lady. It was an honor. • <https://trainsandtoysoldiers.com/> \$45.00



• 'Suckling Pig' - A young butcher preparing roast suckling pig. I'll try most things; not sure I need to see it like this before I eat it. However this example of a Chinese delicacy would look good in Linda's Oriental display. 1 1/2 inches tall. \$69.00, *King & Country*. [www.treefrogtreasures.com/](http://www.treefrogtreasures.com/)

. . . I wrote this in *JSYK*, February 23, 2023 - "Checked our banks - because of the recent financial failures. Discovered we only have 'First Metropolitan Bank,' Dept. 56, Christmas In The City, 1994 -1997. Found it was OK in our basement storage, so not concerned with bank failure (and the tag says we have less than \$60 invested)." - I loved the following response:

"Hi David - Reading about your banking situation in this issue slightly concerned me because I have a bank in my collection. I immediately went to the Blenheim Street Bank (part of the Dickens Village collection). I have not visited the bank recently and when I looked through the windows I was shocked to see the bank was completely empty. No Tellers, no office furniture, even the entire vault was missing. Heck, even the floor for the second story was completely gone!! I'm checking with my various business owners and home owners to see how many actually own their own home or business establishments so they may not be affected. I stopped to check out the Melancholy Tavern and found everyone inside was at least three sheets to the wind so I'm guessing everything is OK with them. The Priest at St. Paul's looked like everything was completely normal but then the Vatican can always support their London Branch. I'm pretty certain most of the oldest establishments will be fine. Many of the old timers at those buildings keep their money under the mattress. No one keeps money buried in their gardens since their landlord (me) digs up and throws those gardens out after every Christmas season. If I discover any other issues, I'll let you know. - Cheers, Larry Treadwell" - 'A Dickens' Christmas'

Northern Lights Collectors' Club



Crystal, MN - Central MN

. . . March 23, 9:17 a.m.; The 'Lee A Tregurtha' passed under the *Aerial Lift Bridge*. The first boat to leave the Duluth Ship Canal beginning the 2023 shipping season.

. . . "The older I get, the more clearly I remember things that never happened." - Mark Twain



• 'Heinz Hitch,' I forgot it even existed. Reminded as I was paging through the *'The Village Chronicler.'* 9" x 3 1/2." It is a 1999 piece from Profiles - H. J. Heinz Co. by Dept. 56. The series also featured 'Heinz Town Clock,' 'Heinz Evaporated Horseradish Factory,' 'Heinz Grocery Store,' and 'Heinz House.' • The white rims are a very nice touch.

... Some of our **favorite people** from Dept. 56 are *Simple Traditions, Pine Isles*. We have eleven of the accessories, one from *Menard's*, the rest purchased at *Kohl's*. We both like them very much; images of several of them have been featured on the Christmas cards Linda makes each holiday.

... Still finding **Disney character** labels on our bananas. Small tags, 7/8 x 5/8 inch, full color. They could be used as signs on a store, maybe a fence or even on a vehicle.

... Our **first** Christmas Village *open house* was in 1997 – *just so you know!*

• I'm always finding additions for a carnival midway; The 'Bean Bag Toss' from Lemax. 2019, retired in 2020, but I hadn't noticed it before. (H x W x D): 7.67" x 5.12" x 5.12." This set includes three figurines and the bean bag toss stand. The girl with a dog (with ice cream cone), the boy throwing the bean bag and helpful attendant make it interesting (and colorful). Made of plastic and resin.



... Sly, did you recently ask me a question? Your name jumped on and off Linda's *Facebook* page the other night.; don't know how/why • Either way – Hi!

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• I have no idea what a 'Dungeon Cart' is; but it being a 2023 *Lemax Spooky Town* intro, is a big hint of the season. It is different to me, but I like it. Not sure I would enjoy riding in the cart. A *Michael's Exclusive*, I saw it on 'Mike's Christmas' Village' site.



• The 'Rustic Water Tower' is from the *Lemax Vail Village*. It adds height and color to a rural display; or maybe as a town Christmas square 'decoration.'  
\$9.98, 8.07"T/  
3.15"W/ 3.15"D,  
2021, resin.

... There has been **25 years** of *Dept. 56 Snow Village Halloween*; watch for Anniversary Specials.



• 'Perfection on a Plate' - Dept. 56 has Romero holding a panettone; "a towering round of sweet bread speckled with raisins, citrus, and almonds with a plush, buttery texture that is popular both here and all over Italy during the winter holidays." Intro, Jan 2022, Christmas In The City. 1.97 in H x 1.26 in W x 2.17 in L. • I know it's not a pizza, but it still looks good to me.



... Dept. 56, Ms. Lit Town Live, April 6, 2023. Following are my notes from the show, plus some images: Melinda Seegers did a short 'April History' of the U.S (mostly old gov't stuff); She reminded us this is the **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversery** of Snow Village Halloween. D56 artist Kiri Namtvedt was with her; They showed the 2023 Mid-year releases from Halloween: 'The Silver Bullet,' 'Ichabod Crane's House,' 'Ichabod Crane' (3.7H x 1.7W x 2.1L inches - the schoolmaster is reading a book as he walks); 'Werewolf Hunter'-ese (showed Kristis' sketches up to the 'blunderbuss-very interesting); and 'Gunpowder' horse. They even hooked up a three piece train using the new 'Silver Bullet.' • Kiri Namtvedt, is the Village artist who designed the new Halloween Village accessories.



• 'Werewolf Hunter' •



• 'Gunpowder' •



• 'Ichabod Crane' •

... "Is there something never seen before?" from "The Formula for a Successful Village Video" hints by Jim Peters. "Is there something never seen before?" - I like that idea when we welcome visitors to see our village displays.

... 'The Village Chronicler' - website and Facebook Page; both by Richard Puckett; built to share all the Dept. 56 knowledge he has compiled. I've looked over the web site several times. I have to figure out what is the new stuff; there is a lot of reading. <https://TheVillageChronicler.com>

... "The CA56ers had a terrific program set up by Debbie Shelgren and Marvella in March. They put together three identical boxes of "stuff," one building and a stack of Styrofoam. They provided three hot knives, three pinking shears, three regular scissors, three glue guns, etc. Three teams of three each worked 30 minutes while the rest of us socialized. At the end were three completely different and excellent displays, which were raffled off. A good time was had by all." • Thanks to Esme, [esmeg@aol.com](mailto:esmeg@aol.com) for the information.

... Next Village North Collectors Club **meeting**, Wednesday April 19, 5:00 p.m., Fosters in Hermantown, MN. Linda and I both plan to be there.

. . . The first five mentioned here are round, fenced in cages enclosing the animals: 'Gorilla Habitat,' 'Lion Cage,' 'Mom & Baby Elephants,' 'Monkey Habit,' and 'Panda Cage.' The 'Zebra Family' is a rectangular, fenced in cage and the 'Reptile House,' a closed in building with the animals inside. All are Lemax Carnival, Table Accents. They are easy to see on-line. • We are looking to add one or two to the 'zoo parts' we already have: 'City Zoo Visitors,' 'City Zoo Entrance,' 'Petting Zoo,' 'Giraffe Cage.' The start of our zoo was 'Penguins' and 'Polar bears' from Veronese/Pacific provided by Tom I.

. . . The 'Federal Dart' was the **first ocean going vessel** of the 2023 shipping season. She arrived under the Aerial Lift Bridge 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Mar 28, 2023. That set a new record for earliest arrival of an ocean-going vessel in the Duluth/Superior harbor.

• Not sure where 'Urgent Delivery' would 'fit in' with our rodeo; I guess I could just feature him riding through our western town. The action of both horse and rider attracted my attention and the coloring is good as well. • Grandfather Spears was a rural Mailman. However he used a jeep as his delivery vehicle.  
<https://dekerstdorpbouwers.nl/>



• These 'Smoke Shop Old Timers' reminded me of past times when I was much younger and still smoking. I haven't smoked my pipes since the 70's. But I still enjoy the aroma of a good tobacco in the air. I also have my Meerschaum, corn cob, and four other pipes in sealed box downstairs somewhere.  
<https://dekerstdorpbouwers.nl/product/smoke-shop-old-timers/>

. . . Thank you for reading JSYK; your comments, questions, and opinions are always welcome! Either way, I'll see you next time.



*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.*

• 3,209 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •