

JUST SO YOU KNOW! SEPTEMBER 10, 2022

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

. . . 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 – See more abbreviations on last page.

. . . The 'Coach is Here,' by Bill Channell is new, many subjects! • Jim Peter's 'Show Your Village To The World,' August 22, 2022, "Best Christmas Village Videos of 2015". • Brian Vaill's, 'The Train Station Car,' current offering; 'The Observation Station' projects • Phil & Sue column: 'Planning village for Christmas' • It is nice to look at Villages of the



• Thea Heyink with her 'The Adkins, Northampton, England. Present mas 2022' • 'From Italy,' Peppe Apuleo, friends' • <http://thevillagecollector.com/>

. . . 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 • City Lights, Mankato, MN, Mary Zellmer, mzellmer@hickorytech.net • D56 Builders and Treasurers, Janesville, Beloit WI/Rockford, IL, Charlene Swansboro. • Region VI Representative: Debbie Oehme, region6ncc@ncc56.com.

. . . Linda is a 'corn snob!' This time of year she looks forward to selecting fresh corn from parking lot produce stands. She's good at it - we both enjoy her 'finds.'

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

. . . Yes, the Bradford Exchange's 'Bring Home The Tree' piece was featured on page 5, and also page 7, of my last JSYK. Seems I made a correction that created a duplication (my proofreading then missed it). Appreciate those that called it to my attention (without smiling too big).

. . . Cleaning up my computer desk area, I discovered two receipts: 'Fitzula's Gift Shop,' Greenwood Lake, NY; and 'Villages of Fun,' Folsom, LA – One is all D56, the other all Lemax. Both are for people and accessories; not a lot of money spent but worth remembering. I'm very happy the on-line stores are available; but I would have preferred the stuff be available locally.

• When I saw the 'Calming The Bees' D 56 SV 2021, I commented it was first village bee-keeper I'd seen. Now I know there was a previous, the Dept. 56 'Honey Harvest,' Dickens' Village 2017. My friend T.M. brought this to my attention. She said "remember, T.M. also stands for Trouble Maker!" Those are her initials – JSYK!



. . . Tampa Bay 56ers 'The Beacon,' Editor's note ... "Are we the only club that has Santa Claus as our president?" - I saw his image in their club newsletter on the NCC web site. He does look the part (of Santa). Note: I think Dennis Hoffman is his 'other name.'

. . . "When entrusted with a secret, keep it." – Rules To Teach Your Son.

. . . Why it **isn't safe** to stop at rummage sales; a mirror surrounded by 'big metal' and a 1:43 scale model Pontiac. The mirror might be used in our yard (or maybe the place for a small vignette). The car is missing its front bumper and grill. I'm thinking maybe we will add a display car accident. Rummage sale was a Village North Collectors Club fundraiser for Essentia Health Hospital Duluth NICU.

. . . "There is no need to drive me crazy. I'm close enough to walk." – Online

. . . Welcome to new readers – Hi! to all others as well. Hope to hear from you.



••• In August, our local *Menard's* stores began **placing Halloween** on their shelves. Very little Lemax Spooktown at one store, none at a second store. They now sell a new line, 'Pumpkin Hollow,' made for *Menard's*; and a second line, *FG SQUARE*. People at both stores told me Lemax Halloween will no longer be available. Note (this is funny to me): On a Lemax Spookytown building on the shelf at *Menard's* in Hermantown the label said "Exclusively at Michael's."



• Note the **nice inside lighting**: 'Hot Blood,' 'Sweet Bones,' 'Pumpkin for Sale,' 'Eyeball Donuts' are all *Pumpkin Hollow* illuminated street shops, \$7.99 each. Nicely lit, decent, battery operated, small, but not bad. We would seriously consider purchasing each/all if we 'did' Halloween. From *Menard's*.



• 'Skeleton on Hammock' \$8.99 – *FG Square*. I haven't seen anything like this before; nice size, good price, different; that always gets my attention. Found at *Menard's*. Note: at both stores Halloween village display shelves are 20 feet long, five shelves high; two are planned for displays, the others for boxed product for sale. Not as much space as in years past.



• "Parade!" Sure looks like a natural leader for a Halloween event on our main 'display' street. This image was taken by Robin Hervey at 'Roger's Gardens,' Newport Beach, CA. Robin said he and Pablo "Spent some early morning time in a line to get initial glimpses of this highly anticipated annual Halloween event. This year's theme is "Nightmare." So well displayed!" On Sept. 3, he posted over forty images, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ncc56/>. Nice images, with comments; well worth a look. Note: Robin Hervey is the Membership Chair of the NCC. You can contact him at: membershipncc@ncc56.com



... Art Kilmer will soon begin the 'Christmas Corner' column on *The Village Collector* web site. The new column will appear September 12th. Art also has a blog titled 'A Cozy Christmas.'

... Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom, died on September 8, 2022. I look forward to seeing displays recognizing Queen Elizabeth. I expect to see Dept. 56, Dicken's Village, 'Balmoral Lodge;' not the castle but it does share a name. My condolences to the royal family and citizens of the British Empire.

- 1956 Buick Super; you can see this model used in Brian's display on <https://d56club.com/>. 1:43 scale, nicely done, great colors, wide whitewalls.
- Growing up, this Buick would have been a 'fancy' car in our neighborhood. We had many Chevys, Fords and Plymouths. And of course, a few Kaisers, Studebakers and Packards.



... *The Annapolis Villager* - *'The Village Crier'* asked, "do you have other hobbies?" Millie said: "Line dancing and counted cross stitch." Is she related to Linda? My wife and I met in a country dance class (she still line dances whenever possible); she also loves counted cross stitch - JSYK!



- Disneyland's *'Haunted Mansion'* by Dept. 56. If I were to live in a big house, I like this one. I appreciate the colors, the balconies, the cupola, the pillars, all good things. I would need an elevator (or an escalator) to get upstairs on an everyday basis. \$300.00, height: 9 inches. Note: I wouldn't require the pumpkins on an everyday basis. I do like the 'no snow.'
- The Haunted Mansion in 'real life' is a *dark ride attraction* located at 'Disneyland,' 'Magic Kingdom,' and 'Tokyo Disneyland.' This is the Disneyland version.



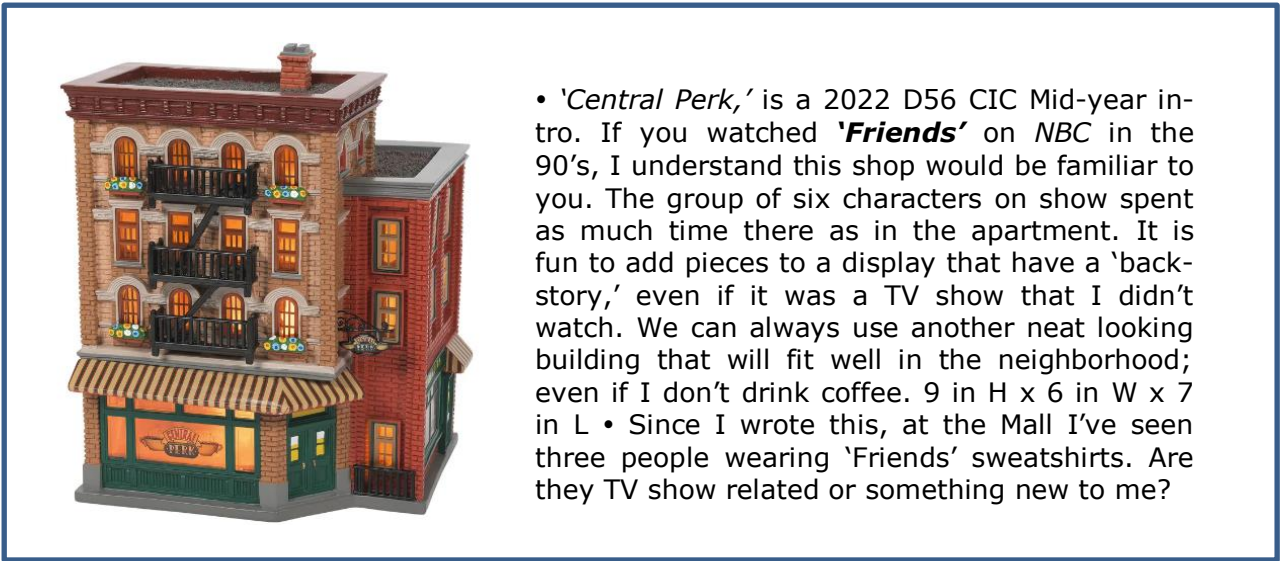
- **Still looking** to ID *'Father Brown'* (?). Someone out there has the display this image comes from - please. I'll stop asking pretty soon.

- I lost the source for this couple. I just know they would be a nice addition to our display. The man's hat, and the ladies outfit, would be a pleasant difference from what most of our other Southwest 'people' look like. • **More on page 6**



... *'The Village Voice,' 'Tip Jar,'* River City Villagers, San Antonio, TX - "Do you create footprints of your buildings? Summer is a good time to pull out all the new pieces you've purchased over the last year?" • Is anyone creating these footprints? We do have maybe seventy-five of our building base tracings; haven't really used any while planning for several years. Not sure why/when we stopped.

... Remember you can view **'new' village videos** on <http://thevillagecollector.com/>. Webmaster Bill Channell will replace the videos on Thursday, September 15th, Saturday, October 15th, and Tuesday, November 15th. All shown will be eligible for the *TVC 2022 Village Hall of Fame* video competition. You will be able to see the twenty-four selections on Friday, December 23. - You can send your village video links to: tvc@earthlink.net



- 'Central Perk,' is a 2022 D56 CIC Mid-year intro. If you watched 'Friends' on NBC in the 90's, I understand this shop would be familiar to you. The group of six characters on show spent as much time there as in the apartment. It is fun to add pieces to a display that have a 'back-story,' even if it was a TV show that I didn't watch. We can always use another neat looking building that will fit well in the neighborhood; even if I don't drink coffee. 9 in H x 6 in W x 7 in L • Since I wrote this, at the Mall I've seen three people wearing 'Friends' sweatshirts. Are they TV show related or something new to me?



- We always enjoy finding unexpected pieces in village displays. These two dogs playing in a park would be a fun find. 'My Stick,' was introduced in January 2022 by Dept. 56. The ad says "Sometimes a little dog "thinks" he is bigger than he actually is! Who will win this tug of war? 1.25 H x 1.5 W x 2.75 L Note: D56 doesn't tell you who wins.

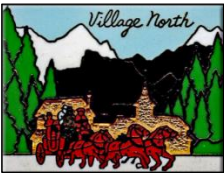
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- Linda talked to 4 year old Liam and his father. Liam was playing with 'Magna Tyles' on a table in Casa Latte, Hermantown, MN. Linda brought a small set to our table; I constructed a little 'something.' Liam looked it over, went to get another piece to **fix** what I'd built. He and his family were vacationing from Niverville, Manitoba. Product description: "Mag-Genius Award Winning building Magnet Tiles Clear Colours 3D Brain Building Blocks." Not sure about display possibilities for the Magna Tyles, but there always seem to be a way to use everything. • Linda purchased a couple of sets on the way home. Christmas/birthday gifts for a nephew, not for me (this time :-).



... At least sixty lit, village size, **advertising signs**; you will recognize most companies. \$49.95, and down, in cost. I've spotted them in model railroad layouts. Most are used as an add-on to a building. Not over-done, they are a nice plus. <https://www.sceneryexpress.com/Neon-Signs/products>

Village North Collector's Club



Duluth, MN – Superior, WI

... The Village Collector web site continues to grow. In August, after 5 years, it reached two milestones; **300,000 visits**, and **200,000 unique visitors!** Congratulations to Bill, Kathy and all their contributors. <http://thevillagecollector.com/>

... "After this we're getting pizza." – The words on Linda's exercise mat

- A sign like this appears on the side of each major highway where it enters Minnesota. The shape is *Minnesota*; the wavy line from top to bottom represents the *Mississippi River*. I intended to include the height, but couldn't find it mentioned anywhere. I would have measured a local one, but the Minnesota Highway Patrol doesn't agree with me parking on the side of the freeway to measure a sign. Note: It's taller than me!



- This is *Checker's Model A* for Chicago/Kalamazoo, 1940 to 1941. I've never seen one, real or model; this **green** taxi would be new to our automobile collection. Its limited production; \$119.99; you can see the best detail/quality of the model at: <https://www.automodello.com/1940-to-1941-Checker-Model-A-1-43-Green-Chicago-p/43c401.htm>. This image is from the CIC display of Brian and Elizabeth <https://d56club.com/>. They have two green versions; not sure how **many dozen** yellow taxis serve their *Grand Central Station*.

... From Brandon Taylor, President, National Council of 56 Clubs, August 30, 2022: ... "There are a few things I would like to send out to you. First I know this is late but the nominating committee did receive one nomination for the office served the board in the position of re-year his term will end. As he was the on-duty, given to the president, by our by-him duly elected for the office in 2023. The above information is a portion of what was sent to all NCC clubs.



of secretary, Jeffrey Kirchner. Jeffrey has gion 2 representative and at the end of the ly person to turn in the nomination it is my laws to dispense with elections and consider Bruce Lucas was the only one who showed interest in the office of treasurer so he also will be continuing in that position in the 2023 year. . . ."

... End of August at our *Michael's 'Lemax Spooky Town,'* very little remaining of the original small supply. • Lemax Christmas had two houses, bags of snow and some funny trees; plus empty shelves meaning, to me, they are receiving more product (I hope).

... D56 **Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live**, 1st Thursday of the month, 4:00 p.m. CST. Next show, October 6th. Melinda Seegers plans to have a Dept. 56 artist as her guest.



- 'A *Huggable Christmas,*' \$35.00. D56 says, "This elf has the Pluto stuffed animal with just the right amount of soft stuffing. Now it's ready to be taken home and hugged by one lucky girl or boy!" Introduced January 2021, Department 56. 1.77 H x 1.57 W x 0.83 L • Right - My **personal 'huggable'** is 'BU', a 32 year old teddy bear. Not as flashy as Pluto, but is friendly, soft and a 50th birthday gift from 30 country dance ladies. Here he is participating in a Tea Party hosted by Linda's nephew Cian.



. . . Further information on the 'southwest couple' on **page 3**. They are Vaquero 'Dressing For A Fight' from the Cattle Drive series. \$99.00 from King & Country. The description says: "Every well-dressed 'Vaquero' would not be fully turned-out unless suitably attired with a pair of rifle bullet bandoleers across his chest. As this Mexican gentleman adjusts his jacket his female companion hands him a pair of bandoleers of rifle ammunition."

. . . August 31 - "The Scrooge" was the **first Christmas show** I saw on TV this season. Andy Griffith was 'Matlock,' a very expensive criminal defense attorney, who charges one hundred thousand dollars to take a case. Fortunately, he's worth every penny.

. . . Jim Peters wrote: "Thanks for sharing! Very interesting epistle to Collectonians." – I understand 'episitle;' my Thesaurus is trying to help me with the 'other' word. I still appreciate his reaction/response to my most recent JSYK.

. . . Sly Granny, Esme, SuzyQ, Lottie; great to get emails from all four in the same week. Made me smile – thanks! It was a 'week from the past.'

. . . End of August 16, more Christmas stuff being put on the shelves at Hobby Lobby. Didn't see much 'village wise.' Will check back later; they usually have a few things, i.e., trees, an accessory or two, and maybe a few people.

. . . **Sisal trees** are growing alongside Hwy 53 in NW Wisconsin; Linda and I thought the same thing at the same time. Yes, they are way too large for our village. • We were traveling to our Village North Collectors Club potluck picnic at Kandi and Rod's.

. . . The subject of the Dept. 56 email ad I received was "Return to Westeros." - Westeros?? I had to click on the web site, it said: "Welcome to the world of Westeros: when you play the **game of thrones**, you win or you die." I should have known; the buildings from this D56 Licensed Brand have always attracted my attention.

. . . Silicone Mold(s) for baking five, village houses approx. 2 ½ x 2 ½ x 2 ½ inches' each. From 'Celebrate It,' Christmas, Noel. It was a Linda birthday gift (not from me). I'm interested to see if I like small 'house cakes.'

. . . Six 'Neon Rescue Vehicles' '**Paw Patrol**' 2.5 to 3 inch 'cars.' They are a gift for a nephew person. Linda put them on my desk; thought I'd better at least mention them. Maybe we could use them in a parade or our carnival.

. . . "The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for." - Will Rogers



• Lemax Spooky Town 'Killer Clown Mobile Home,' a 2012 Michael's Exclusive. Out in the woods, it could be good place for all of our clowns to visit; a replace to relax and have some fun. Too small, however, for our thirty plus clowns to visit at one time. I don't think they get along well anyway. (H x W x D) 6.02 x 9.69 x 5.51 inches.

. . . Found in our refrigerator, a package of "Crazy Fresh Watermelon Spears," just saying

. . . **Pop tab program, Ronald McDonald House**; every time we stop in with 'pop tabs,' they are grateful and happy to see us. The program continues to be a successful money-raiser for RMH. You can check on-line for a donation location near you.

. . . "I need a new friend. The last one escaped." – Online

. . . "I thought growing old would take longer."



• How about an 'Original Highland Shot Putt Game Figure?' We are always looking for unusual/different people for our displays. I'm pretty sure he fits right into 'unusual.' 2 plus inches tall, \$12.95.

• 'Little Free Libraries' – Seems to me we should have this Dept. 56 item(s) (Lemax has one also). **Linda reads**, and talks about books, all the time. She likes romance, and mystery, *with happy endings*. 3.23 H x 1.26 W x 1.46 L.



Northern Lights Collectors' Club



Crystal, MN – Central MN



• Saw the 'Golf Club House' at a local Goodwill; I asked Jim Peters to ID it for me. He replied "It was made/sold by Kurt Adler/Copperfield Keepsake. It's 8"W x 6"D x 7"H. It went nicely adjacent to the Old Course's 18th hole in my 2015 St. Andrews village." I notice Jim's version (rt) has a new name 'Tom Morris Golf Shop.' He continued, "I may have the world's largest Christmas village golf collection." • Jim is a PGA Teaching Professional.



. . . Members were asked to construct a vignette highlighting either their *favorite school subject or activity*. **Billy Edwards won** the 'August National Council of 56 Clubs Vignette Contest!' See images of the entries: <https://www.ncc56.com/>. • For the September contest, the NCC is asking members to create a scene using your *very first building* – the one that started it all. The deadline to submit is September 30th. Details, see the NCC web site.

. . . Additional abbreviations (I might use): AV – *Alpine Village* • CIC – *Christmas In The City* • DV - *Dickens' Village* • NEV – *New England Village* • NP – *North Pole Village* • SV – *Original Snow Village*.



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

• 3293 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line • plus 25 images •

Comments

- small stuff - "I really like the red vespa girls." •
- Bernice - "Thank you for the latest JSYK which I thoroughly enjoyed reading." •