

JUST SO YOU KNOW! MARCH 1, 2024

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

. . . In response to my 'graffiti mention' in the previous JSYK, Greg Cassidy was kind enough to inform me 'graffiti' is available from model railroad sources: magazines, web sites; and stores. I found a bunch on the web searching: "model train graffiti decals." • Thanks Greg!

. . . I pictured him in my previous column. I asked who was the **Santa** delivering presents. Thanks to Esme for pointing me to the answer. I found it is 'Holiday Deliveries,' North Pole Village, Dept. 56. Intro: 1996 – Retired: 2001. I like Santa at work on his big trike (with presents).

. . . Yes, I had the same comments on Lemax 'Christmas Garden Gnomes' in two places in my February 6th column. It wasn't a test; it was **my mistake**.

. . . Lemax 'Tiny Tikes Hockey Lessons,' Vail Village, 2023. The bases are **blue** on the skating figures (instead of the usual white). Same color as the ice. A different look; not sure if it's 'yes' or 'no' for me. Not an animated accessory.

. . . My 'Christmas cactus' is trying to teach me a lesson. I've discovered it doesn't like being overwatered; it gets 'droopy.' It looks much better now. • It has been blooming 'in season' since I received it as a gift from our friend Betty in 2015; hope it will be back for Christmas 2024.

. . . Greenland, became the 208th **country** with a person to visit 'The Village Collector' on Feb. 8, 2024. • February 10th brought Bill his #209, the Faeroe Islands. The Faroes are an archipelago in the North Atlantic Ocean, an autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark. • People from 209 countries have visited 'TVC' - I'm impressed! www.thevillagecollector.com

. . . "Best way to store figurines is to leave them up :)" Bill wrote this in response to the mention of 'storage' in my most recent column. • I suppose I should not laugh too hard at Bill's 'leave them up' suggestion. We do leave several vignettes up 'til next year.

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

. . . "Well, time for bed. Not sure why, I just went to bed yesterday." - Bill

. . . '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 world' • Thea Heyink, 'The Creation Station' Find her now on YouTube (gone from TVC) • Phil & Sue Adkins, 'Phil & Sue's Christmas Village' • Peppe Apuleo, 'From Italy, Villaging in Europe' • Art Kilmer, 'Christmas Corner' - • Larry Treadwell, 'Hauntsville 2023,' 'A Dickens' Christmas' and 'Christmas in the Game Preserve'



• 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 •

. . . March 10, Daylights Savings Time Begins • March 17, 'St. Patrick's Day' • May 19, Spring Begins • March 24, 'Palm Sunday' • March 31, 'Easter' • April 1- 'April Fool's Day' • April 6, David's birthday •

. . . 'Gettin' Our Steps In,' Dept. 56 Snow Village. I really like the young lady walking three dogs. At a shiny three inches tall, how do you think they would 'fit' in our CIC or NEV displays?

. . . Nine new ads on Linda's Facebook page – ads for the **same** nine accessories I had viewed on the Dept. 56 web site just moments before. It all happened so fast.

... National Council of 56 Clubs **Facebook Vignette Contest** *changes*: There will **only be 4 Facebook Vignette Contests** in 2024. The winners will be voted on by the NCC Executive Board (rather than individual *Facebook 'Likes'*). VP Anna **McPherson** will send out info including a schedule of the contests. Remember, contest is open only to members of NCC Clubs.

... Dept. 56 *Village Brochure 2024*, \$6.50. Available to order. See all the new stuff and more. Ooop's - now \$7.00. Plus \$8.50 for shipping.

• The *Dickens' Village Corner* of the Enesco Gallery and Gift Shop in Memphis, TN. It includes a replica of Charles Dickens' desk, his portrait and the "Twelve Days of Dickens Village," a set of accessories by Department 56. Displays of other D56 villages can also be seen in the Gallery.



... Charles Dickens' published the novella 'A Christmas Carol' on December 19, 1843. *Novella* definition: a tale, story, fable, parable, short story, or short novel; *JSYK!*

... "Royal Movers" "We treat you like royalty." Those words are on the side of the red Lemax, Caddington Village, 'Moving Van.' Is Dark Red maybe a royal color? Year Released: 2007 - Retired: 2013. (H x W x D) 1.89 x 4.92 x 1.89.



• Left - original look; Right - now it looks now. Is there any way to return the 'yellow' back to 'clear?' Lemax 'Saintly Sculpture' released 1998, retired 2006. • The base has remained white on our sculpture. • We have other Lemax ice carving pieces that are still the original clear.



... "I will never regret getting older. I know too many people who never had that privilege."

... "I've earned the older I get, the less attention I get" Age 6 • H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

• 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. •



• I am looking for Major Richard I. Bong for our display or a vignette. I found: *Hasegawa AF7 Richard I. Bong US Army Pilot Figure Kit 1:32* for \$12.99. I thought this might work, but then I realized it had to be painted; Linda didn't think so (she is our resident artist). • Major Bong is the U.S. 'Ace of Aces.' He is credited with shooting down 40 Japanese aircraft flying his P-38 aircraft. • Connection? Bong was from Poplar, WI., less than 30 miles away. My stepfather played basketball against him. He graduated from high school just across the bay in Superior, WI. And, I knew his widow 'Marge.'

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



*Northern Lights Collector's Club
Twin Cities, MN*

. . . 'The Closer' and 'Elementary,' two old TV series, now available, we enjoy watching. We find Capt. Brenda Leigh Anderson and Sherlock Holmes interesting, entertaining, and fun. 'Kojak,' 'Quincy, M.E.' sneak onto the screen as well. Is it good or bad we don't have cable? Or am I happy the 'normal' networks are now beginning their new season. The answer - yes!



• I am looking for a village size Albert Woolson, the final surviving Civil War Union veteran. He enlisted at 14 and died in 1956 at 106 years of age. He was an Army bugler and drummer. • Connection? Albert Woolson lived in Duluth, MN for many years. His home was less than six blocks from ours. I went by his house on the way to school. He certainly wasn't a friend, but I would see him waving from his front porch.

• "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 •



. . . 'Busy City Sidewalks;' In 2000, we paid \$32.00 for this *Christmas In the City* accessory. Currently the price is \$60.00 from D56 dealers (it is not retired). That may be the way 'business' works, but it is still tough for me to comprehend. Note: Used available on line, cost is \$28 to \$45.

. . . The phone rang, she said write down these four words for me: 'Windmill,' 'Gun Shop,' 'Bakery,' 'Powell St. Fire Hall.' She got to the third 'word' before I realized Linda was at Goodwill. She was giving me the names of village houses available on their shelves. They were all Lemax.

. . . "Mr circle is so small when the phone rings I know who it is." • Online

. . . I visited the D56 'North Pole Polar Pizza' again. Can't convince myself I need more pizza.

. . . 'Village D-Tails' - has anyone heard an **update** on this Dept. 56 reference book?



- The snowman needed friends; Lemax made him 'Ring Around the Snowman.' Now there are four kids to make him happy. You can tell; look at the smile on his face. • Saw them in a display on the Lemax Addicts Facebook Page. Lemax Winter Carnival, Dadou Leguen. Feb 8, 2024. Released 2005, 2.36 inches high. X

Richard Puckett has done much work. If you're looking to ID Dept. 56 Village Items, take a look at his site: <https://thevillagechronicler.com/> Lots of other info there as well.

... 'H.J. Heinz Co.' – Dept. 56 Profiles – 2000 Limited Edition – **Thanks** to John Rapacz, we have this interesting *Horseradish Co.* It will look fine in the manufacturing district of CIC or NEV.



- *Kristi Jensen Pierro* retired February 7, 2024. Kristi is best known for her designs of *Snowbabies*, *Snowpinions* and *Izzy & Oliver New Baby* Dept. 56 creations. You will be able see her new, original designs thru 2025. You can leave 'retirement congratulations' for her on <https://www.facebook.com/Department56/> • We did!

... Melinda Seegers, Ms. Lit Town, in Village D-Lights Qtr 3: "The *Guesthouse at Graceland* will be the host site for the Department 56 **50th Anniversary Celebration** in **2026**."

... Village D-Lights 2023 4rd Qtr. – Coming soon, read about it on the January 19th NCC Facebook page. Not yet received – March 1st.

... As of Friday, March 1, 2024, <http://thevillagecollector.com/> has been visited 79,410 times since March 6, 2023. Have you been there?



- Jeep for *Margari-tavlle*; Disney folks for our parade. What do you think? These images were taken in 2017 at the home of *Village North* members Gerry and John. We were on the clubs *Halloween Tour of Homes*.



... The brown shoes were the selling point. I mean a Dept. 56 sisal tree, wearing a bright red and white striped stocking cap, and mittens, and brown shoes. Now he's a gnome! An '*Outdoor Christmas Gnome*' to be exact. Intro October 2022. 4.5 in H x 2.37 in W x 2.37 in L.



- This is a great trailer park and an even better use of a **mirror** as a background. What looks like a pretty large number of trailers, is actually only six. The display was in the garage of Winnie and Jon Sage. It was one of the homes we toured by bus during the *California Gold Gathering* in 2015.



- Linda says I seldom share a big smile. It took me awhile, but I finally found a picture. We were having lunch at 'Papananis Deli' with John and Gerry, *Village North* friends from Duluth. We were all in San Diego, CA attending the 'California Gold Gathering' in 2015. We had fun, learned much, made new friends and conducted two seminars. A couple days were spent enjoying the tourist thing after the conclusion of the event. It was very warm.



- August 2015 - Buildings *Lemax*; Bus, Dominican, Republic; Small people, *Homies*; Large people, *Lemax*; *Cholula Hot Sauce*, *Azteca's Mexican Grill*; Tables/chairs, *Mini Things*; Trees, Linda; Background, calendar page; Signs from everywhere. We were getting ready to build our Southwest display. I am wondering about the green 'grass' and the whereabouts of our SW animals.

... "If attacked by a mob of clowns go for the juggler" • DAILYSTUFF



• Remember, gnomes are not allowed anywhere near Linda's 'fairy garden' in our yard. She did however, say it would be **OK** if a couple *appeared* in an (inside) North Pole display. These Dept. 56 'Candy Cane Gnomes,' with striped hats, are just the thing I need. At 1.6 inches tall they are the perfect size. I've been told gnomes are from the 16th century and are becoming popular again. • Note: I ordered the following D56 items on Feb.16th: 'Candy Cane Gnomes' (set of 2), 'One Santa Special Coming Up!' (pizza), and 'Chinese Dragon Dance.' Yes, I'm smiling.



. . . "National Council of 56 Clubs 1992" is the logo on the front of the invitation. Among the words inside are "Dessert Reception," "10th Anniversary of the NCC," "317 on Rice Park," and "RSVP." With all those words, I sure hope I wore a tie. If memory serves, there was even a 'string quartet' and the head of Dept. 56 was in attendance. I was then either our club NCC rep or the Region VI Representative. • Found the invite in a box of stored memories.

. . . I saw a Dept. 56 ad for 'Light As A Drugget.' I liked the look of the rolled carpet the man is carrying. I had to then see the 'Kingsford Rug Merchant,' the source of the carpet. When I was a child, a family member made hand knotted rugs; I don't know if it was Axminster weaving. I surely hope I don't need carpet now. Both were introduced in 2023. *Dickens' Village.*



• One more 'Surf, Sun & Fun 2015' mention. Above is a hall sign with info on what is happening 'when and where' for the gathering. Arrow above is us!

. . . 'David's Deli' – Just because Lemax has 'stolen' my name, do I really need to own the building? Retired in 2021, I most likely could find one. I do enjoy food. . . . I'll ask Linda • And there's also 'David's Fort' from Lemax, but that's a big, silly treehouse. We already have a smaller one☺

. . . 'The Bell & Feather,' I had to look on a Lemax site to learn it's a hotel. Or maybe it's a boarding house. Lemax Caddington Village. Oops, now I see it's also a neighborhood pub.

. . . A sleigh coming from between two houses; a group of carolers with audience backs to me; two men playing checkers on an elevated dock; many kids in a snowball fight; a girl sitting on a bench reading; it almost looks 'alive' with no animation. Linda started me on the best way to do this stuff – it worked!

. . . How about a 'Water Taxi Café' for your New England village. It looks like a nice, and different, addition to a waterfront dock. Good coloring, small size: H x W x D, 7.09 x 4.72 x 4.61 inches. Would look good on the waters edge. *Lemax, Plymouth Corners, Intro 2023.*

. . . "Built in the forties, original & unrestored, some parts still in working order." - Pandaize

. . . The twins, 'Fred and George Weasley,' are very good Quidditch beaters. But I understand they really like to amuse their friends and terrorizing the professors. They are Dept. 56 Harry Potter characters I really like. Unfortunately we don't have 'The Quidditch Pitch,' so no need for the twins. They coordinate with 'The Burrow,' the very unusual Weasley family home, a popular place for Harry Potter's holiday visits. 3.1 in H x 1.2 in W x 2 in L. Intro January 2019.

. . . NBA 2024 All-Star Game Final score: East 211 - West 186. I could play that kind of defense against those athletes from a chair, in the corner, at home! Don't get me wrong, I do appreciate what they are capable of, how good they are; I just no longer enjoy watching the game.

. . . Alfa Romeo, I do believe there is one of the **2024** cars here – new in Duluth!



- Found a female photographer; it would be our first (except Linda. She takes pictures all the time). We would have to buy thirty, 1:43 scale model train passengers, each in different standing poses. Saw them on Amazon.

- Another artist, this time it's Mickey doing a portrait of his creator *Walt Disney*. I'm sure we can 'make' the 3.5 inch ornament fit in our displays. I like-seeing Mickey in the mirror. '50 Years Magic Mouse Ears.'



. . . Two elves are '*Charting Santa's Course*.' As an accessory to the Dept. 56 *North Pole Weather & Time Observatory*;' they must be a 'weatherelf' and an astronomer. One has a telescope and compass, the other a globe and a book; pretty sure I know which is which. Don't want the observatory, might need the elves. 2.1 inches tall. Intro '95, '97 retired.



- I've been asked if we can assist with the **mystery** of this *Dept. 56 Nutcracker Ballet*. It was purchased around 2010 by Village Idiots members Robert and Misty Argyll. They found it high on a shelf at '*Sleighbells*' of Sherwood, Oregon. Sleighbells is a Department 56 and Christopher Radko retailer. I understand it has a Dept. 56 label and number, but the company has no record of such a product. They did say it could have been a '*one of a kind*' piece made for Sleighbells. I'll include more information next time.

. . . "*Even stupid questions have answers*" • Linus (Peanuts cartoon)

. . . Richard Puckett said '*Touchdowns, Turkey & Pie*' ". . . (is) the first Dept. 56 accessory to be designed with a five o'clock shadow." I had to see the *SV Halloween Series* accessory. Richard was right; the gentleman does need a shave. Intro 2024. I saw the information on his website: <https://thevillagechronicler.com/> '*The Almanac*.'

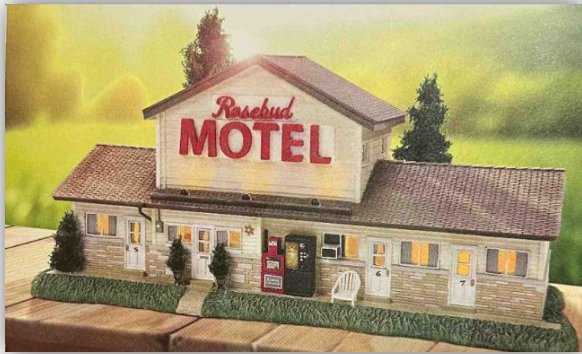
. . . Frances, where are you?

. . . Kim came to our *Village North* meeting with something new. She was just shopping at *Gordy's Gift's and Garden Center*, a former Dept. 56 dealer. She purchased a *Garden Gnome*, part of the *D56 SnowGnomes Snowpinions Collection*. I don't often see Santa with a 'big' white rabbit sitting on his leg and a small wagon with a bunny rider. Note: Coincidence? *Garden gnome* and *Kristi Jensen Pierro* twice in this *JSYK*.

. . . The '*Polar Bear Wash*,' looks like a good idea. Yes, I did notice the two black/brown bears next in line for the 'wash;' **after** the polar bears. I spotted it in the *River City Villages*, '*The Village Voice*,' in the display of David Grubaugh during the clubs Open House Tour.

. . . '*Gerten's Greenhouses*,' the only Dept. 56 Platinum Retailer remaining in Minnesota. Located at 5500 Blaine Ave, Inver Grove Heights, MN. Our GPS says it's 2 hours and 23 minutes (159.8 mi) away from us here in Duluth, MN. That could be the reason we haven't visited for several years. That and our lack of storage space and the rising cost of products.

. . . Palm Sunday and Easter were flip-flopped, date-wise, in the most recent JSYK. It must be OK; my pocket calendar has the dates incorrect as well. My many years attending church means I should have caught it.



- I was led to the 'Rosebud Motel' by reading 'The Village Voice', newsletter of the River City Villagers, February 2024. Not a big fan of actual motels like this, but this is first time I've seen a 'real looking' outside entry motel. 'Rosebud Motel' is from 'Schitts Creek Village,' a new for 2024, Dept. 56 licensed product. 5.75 x 6 x 12.25 inches. \$250.00 • The Village Voice article showed several, and **listed all**, of the new Dept. 56 licensed products.

. . . "When all else fails turn up the music and dance with your dog" • Peanuts - [Collections Etc.](#)

. . . 'Santa's Work Bench,' Hallmark Keepsake Ornaments. Among the 19 items on the three shelves: a tool box, vice, Nutcrackers, snowmen, rocking horse, teddy bear, and train engine. Released 2017. The W3 X D2 X H3 inch ornament might be too large to use in our village displays, but I like the look (in a picture). We should have a Santa of the proper size to be 'the worker.'

- I read this 'Hobbit Hole' would be found in Hobbiton. I have never visited The Shire to see a 'Hobbit Hole' like this. I did notice the obligatory round front door and the domed grass covered roof seen in the 'Hobbits' movies. I understand the Hobbits going on adventures are seen leaving their Hobbit Holes. You see less of Hobbiton in the 'Lord of the Rings' movies. I saw the The Hobbiton in The Shire on Facebook Feb 20, 2024.



. . . Clayton Moore – The Lone Ranger • The only actor with his name, and the character he made famous, on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

. . . "I think happiness is over-rated" • Doc Martin, British comedy on PBS



- I really like the look of diorama's like this. Wow! Looks 'real.' However we can't imagine doing this in our display with over 100 structures (and it is only up 'in season').

- Red Hat Ladies, Ten Pipers Piping, white turbaned gentleman, Linda's elephant from Thailand: very few of our visitors noticed Woodstock. And, most were looking for him.

. . . In the most recent JSYK I pictured elves trimming a tree. My attached question asked can anyone ID this accessory. I just found the actual name; it is 'Elf Tree Trimming.' Should I have known that? From Lemax, Released 2003 – Retired 2008.

Village North Collectors Club



Duluth, MN/Superior, WI

. . . Among 'gifts received' on our wedding list, Linda found multiple 'teddy bears' and 'dance wax.' Tell me we didn't have interesting friends when we were married (October 1994). Note: We received many other 'regular' presents as well, JSYK! Note: We met dancing and were teaching or country dancing five or six evenings a week. The teddy bears were probably based on a previous teddy bear birthday gift I received from ladies in the dance community. Note: His name is 'BU.' He will soon be 35 years old. We don't necessarily speak, but I see him every day.

• It sure looks like she is serving pizza and beer. Would you say 'thick crust' was the selection? How I have to add another piece to my pizza collection. It's Lemax 'Service With A Smile,' Released 2015, Retired 2020. HxWxD 2.68 x 2,64 x 1.22 inches. Even though thick crust is my usual 'buy,' I may buy two of these. Don't know how I missed her before.



. . . Trees in February from our local Joanne store. Linda purchased nine 12 inches tall, three 9 inches tall; all at 80% off. We heard somewhere you "can't have too many trees." The larger 'bottle brush trees' are green with a whole lot of white covering. The smaller have a few red decorations (with white dots) as well as a less dense white 'covering.' All have wooden bases. Brand name for both is 'Place & Time.'

. . . "My favorite color is Spring!" • Collection Etc.

Northern Lights Collectors' Club



Twin Cities, MN

. . . If you got this far I can guess you at least looked at all 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 ??



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.

• 2,271 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •

Comments

"Graffiti at the North Pole! That is edgy! Very cool." • Greg