

JUST SO YOU KNOW! . . . DECEMBER 23, 2023

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

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

. . . 'The Village Collector' has been with us since 2017. Bill and Kathy Channell have continually worked to build and improve the following columns: David Spears, 'Show your village to the world,' Heyink, 'The Creation Station' (TVC) • Phil & Sue Adkins, 'Phil & Sue', 'From Italy, Villaging in Europe' • Art Kilmer, 'Christmas Corner' - • Larry Treadwell, 'Hauntsville 2023' and 'A Dickens' Christmas' •



Remember you can find the 'Just so you know!' • Jim Peters, Rehabbed/repurposed pieces • Thea Find her now on YouTube (gone from Sue's Christmas Village' • Peppe Apuleo,



- 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. •

. . . December 25, 'Christmas Day' • December 26, 'Boxing Day' - Canada • January 1, 'New Year's Day' • January 15, 'Martin Luther King Jr. Day' • February 2, 'Groundhog Day' • February 14, 'Valentine's Day' • February 19, 'Presidents' Day' •

• 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. •

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

. . . Dept. 56 'Simple Traditions' – really like the people, might have said before, but it's still true. Reminded when putting up displays this year. We have all of the people, none of the houses.

• "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 •



. . . "One day you will wake up and there will be no more time to do things you have always dreamed of. Do them now." – Paulo Coelho

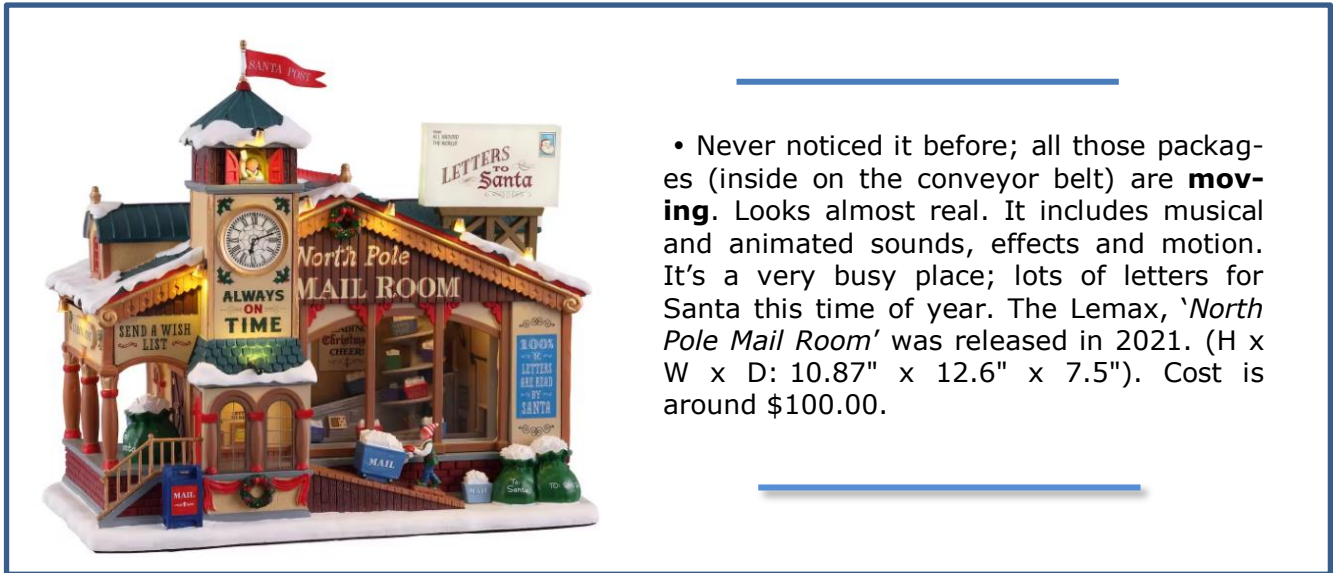
. . . 'Amazing Rehabbed and Repurposed Pieces' - As Jim Peters said, lots of pictures, and few words in this column. I've viewed every page. You will find it at <https://thevillagecollector.com/> 'Show Your Village to the World.'



• I'm not a Gingerbread fan, but I'll bet no one will know the 'Gingerbread Button Treats' true ID (if I don't tell them). He looks like he belongs at any event in our display. Dept. 56, North Pole, intro Oct. 2022, 1.61 in H.

• I clicked on a different image on the Dept. 56 web site. Now I know the North Pole 'Ready For Paint' elf is finishing up a wooden rocking horse – wasn't sure before. We may need this 1.85 inch height, already retired, elf.





• Never noticed it before; all those packages (inside on the conveyor belt) are **moving**. Looks almost real. It includes musical and animated sounds, effects and motion. It's a very busy place; lots of letters for Santa this time of year. The Lemax, 'North Pole Mail Room' was released in 2021. (H x W x D: 10.87" x 12.6" x 7.5"). Cost is around \$100.00.

... "The box delivered by the mailman was addressed to *"David Spears or current resident."* Contained inside were the return address labels we'd ordered on line. Note: The labels inside were 'correct.'" • [JSYK](#) – November 10, 2017

... Linda and I continue to look for a permanent **name** for our village. Thanks to the people who have offered suggestions – you know who you are. Anymore ideas; anyone??

... "An inch of time is an inch of gold." • Fortune cookie

... I didn't know they served a fried mushrooms side dish at the 'Grapes Inn.' Of course also the best Fish and Chips, ale, and plum pie (served during the holiday season). • I learned this reading Larry Treadwell's 'A Dickens' Christmas 2023.' <https://thevillagecollector.com/>

... "Keep on keeping on." • Fortune cookie

... 'Snow,' floral pins, and Styro 'chips' everywhere! We have no 'empty' chairs or flat surfaces anywhere our house. - Display building season is really here!

... As of Friday, December 22, 2023, <http://thevillagecollector.com/> has been visited 65,384 times by unique villagers since March 6, 2023. Join the crowd!

... Still waiting! – [Village D-Lights](#) 2023 4th Qtr.

... "The "Arizona Daily Star" newspaper has been doing something fun for the holidays. One page of each issue is **free wrapping paper**. They've done it every day for the last 2 weeks. Each day has a different design done by local artists in Tucson." - 106.3THEFOX.COM, 'Good News: Wrapping Paper (???)', December 18, 2023, Steve Artessia

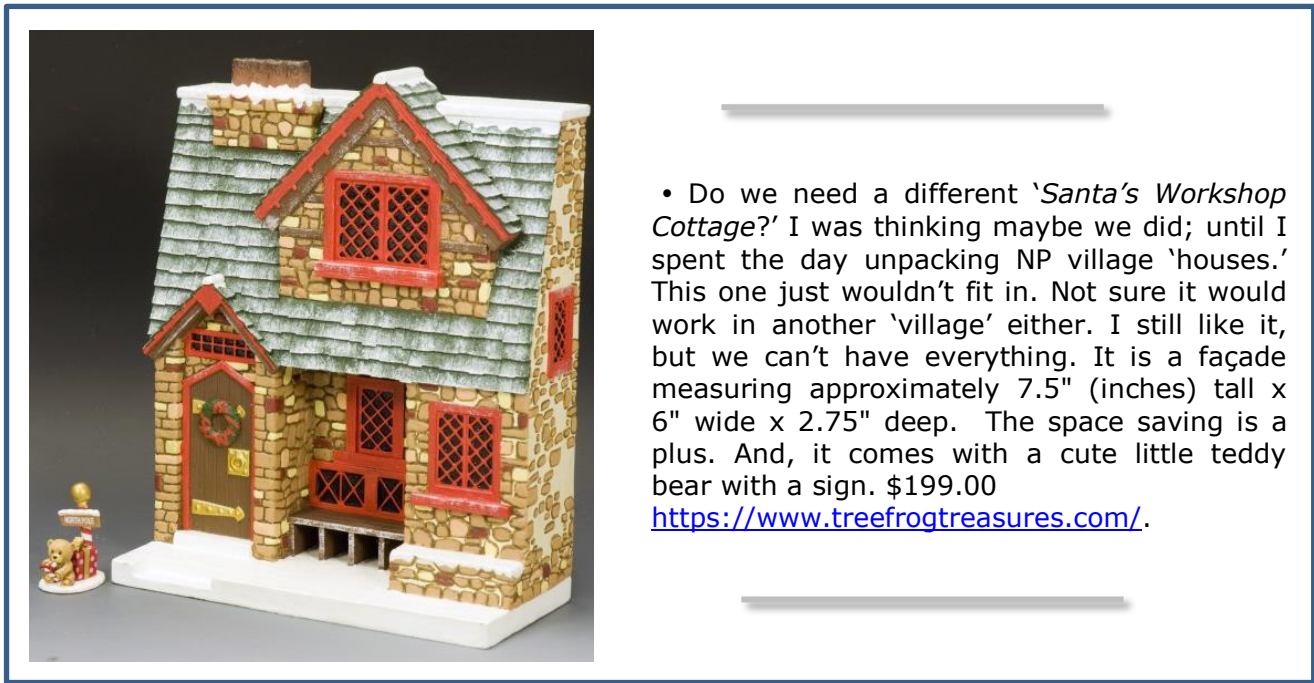
... We just bought these items at Saver's: Dept. 56, DV, 'The Horse and Hounds Pub,' \$20.99. And, the Lemax, Enchanted Forest, 'Icy Perch.' We now know it's missing a barrel, garbage can, chimney, hand cart, wooden box, ice cutter, and stool. For \$1.04, we still think it is well worth it.

... **Correction:** In the November 29 [JSYK](#), I mention Ed Anderson and his Sedum (flower) suggestion for making display trees. Bernice informed me Ed is a member of the *D56 Villagers of Central PA*. I incorrectly placed him with the *Garden State Village Collectors Club*. Members of *The Heritage Treasures Club of Long Island* were also present for the joint meeting. Note: I still have plans to use our new Sedum trees.

... "Whenever you return a borrowed pie pan, make sure it's got a warm pie in it." • Wise Advice from a Farmer's Wife

... Why do many folks use such a **fast** speed for the trains and streetcars in their displays? To me it just doesn't look good. • I've found it always gets my attention when there is a pause in the movement – especially on the 'back and forth' streetcars.

... "We either make ourselves happy or miserable. The amount of work is the same." Carlos Castaneda



• Do we need a different 'Santa's Workshop Cottage?' I was thinking maybe we did; until I spent the day unpacking NP village 'houses.' This one just wouldn't fit in. Not sure it would work in another 'village' either. I still like it, but we can't have everything. It is a façade measuring approximately 7.5" (inches) tall x 6" wide x 2.75" deep. The space saving is a plus. And, it comes with a cute little teddy bear with a sign. \$199.00
<https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/>.

... Has this ever happened to you (it contained 'village stuff')? "Box received last January-not opened. Neither of us could even remember what we ordered." I read that on 'Phil & Sue's Christmas Village 2023,' Dec 1, 2023; TVC <https://thevillagecollector.com/>

... "The D56 Original Snow Village 'Grand Ole Opry Carolers' would be with us if it wasn't big and shiny. I remember (thanks to Richard Puckett) the musicians look like: on guitar, Hank Williams; singing, Patsy Cline; and fiddle, Eddy Arnold. Sometimes I wish I wasn't so fussy. We've been to the Grand Ole Opry; Ryman Auditorium and the new version. Remember, we like 'memory' things." • JSYK, March 30, 2021.

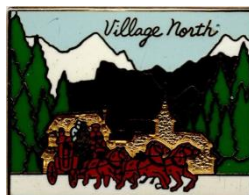
... 'Old, Mild, & Bitter Ales;' I didn't know that's what the sign says on 'The Grapes Inn,' Dept. 56, Dickens' Village. Just confirmed it's true by looking at our display right over there (I say pointing). Note: I don't drink/like ale – JSYK!



... An Applebee's 2023 TV ad has a small village scene. Jim Peters sent me to see it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7EEU0gK1KI> – If the Dept. 56 limited edition in 2004 looked like this, I would have stood in line to buy one. It was in recognition of 25th anniversary of Applebee's Bar & Grille. Note: We enjoy eating at the restaurant


... 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 Facebook 'Likes'). VP Anna will send out more info including a schedule of the contests. - Info from Debbie Oehme - NCC Region 6 Representative - Note: Linda and I entered twice in 2023. I think we were second each time.

Village North Collectors Club



Duluth, MN/Superior, WI

. . . The parade goes 'marching' by; Jim Peters has a track that makes me 'need to have one' of those 'moving circles.' The street level video, with the people in motion, is great. You can find the link at: <https://thevillagecollector.com/>, 'Show your village to the world.' Page 8-9 of 'Collections #4.' - It's a long address, but I know you'll enjoy the viewing.



- Everybody's display needs a guy sleeping on a bench; 'Tired tourist Jonas' might be just the right person. *Luville*, 612077. Intro 2015. - Not sure I could do much sleeping in that 'feet up, heads up' position, but then I don't have to. • I did actually once slept like that; *Chicago O'Hare Airport*, over-night, returning from ANG basic training and tech school.

• *Bentleyville*, as seen from across the harbor in Duluth, MN. Rated the best 'walk thru' holiday light display in the country. The visit is free! After 20 years, there are 5,000,000 lights. The 'tree' on the right is 129 feet tall. Note this year there is no snow or ice in the Duluth harbor.




. . . Looking at images on the computer - and there it is again! I didn't realize we have displayed the *Green Bay Gathering Event Piece* most every year since 2006. 'Sleighride On The Bay,' a 1,000 limited edition piece for the gathering and PJ's. We appreciate the nice look and smaller size.

Northern Lights Collectors' Club



Twin Cities, MN



- I've been looking at the 'Christmas Van' since *Lemax* introduced it for 2023. I like the colors, the roof accessories, and the words, 'Have a Holly Jolly Christmas.' (H x W x D) 3.07 x 4.69 x 2.13 inches, plastic. They are 50% off at our *Michael's*, now \$9.99. I still haven't made the move.

. . . Linda and I have completed our Alpine, New England, Dickens', North Pole displays. We also have six vignettes and a pretty large zoo completed; working on CIC and a couple more vignettes.



- The *Village People*: We own (pictured) 'The Construction Worker,' 'The Soldier,' 'The Policeman,' and 'The Cowboy.' We are **missing** 'The Native American,' and 'The Leatherman' (motorcycle rider). The standing people are 1 3/4" tall. They are all *Homies*. **Looking for** a source for the two missing members of the 'Village People.'

- This might be the aircraft soon seen over our North Pole display. OK, it's a Christmas tree ornament, but let's not tell the elves. It's by *Ashley*® and sells for \$4.99 at *Michael's*. It's also available in other color combos, but red and white seem right for our NP. Size: 4.5 x 4 x 2.75 inches.



- I wasn't aware people were taking photographs in the Dickens' era; especially on the road. I can't image working in a darkroom; in a wheeled trailer. The Lemax 'Traveling Photographer Wagon' is a Table Accent from Caddington Village; released in 2021. The ad says it is photographer H.G. Williams "taking the portrait of a couple wearing their best Victorian Christmas attire." None are in this picture. The ad shows a wagon, horse, photographer and couple. (H 3.70 inches).

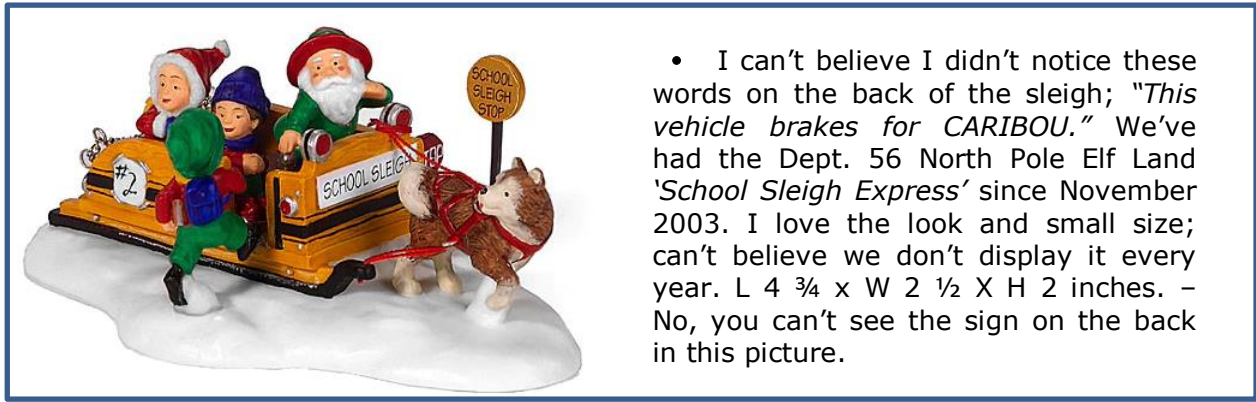


- (left) - I really like this couple on the blanket, and (right) the three clown 'heads' in a carnival (?). • Saw each of these in a Kenie Flarez display on the *Lemax Addicts Facebook* page. • **Who** can tell me **who** they are?



. . . In my November 29th *JSYK*, I noted I had no idea what 'fascinator' meant. Our friend Lottie informed me *fascinator* is "a small fancy sort of hat. It does not go on your head like a regular hat but is held on with combs, headbands or pins." **Thanks Lottie**, for the answer. Note: If you look at my picture, you will see personally, I'd have to use the headband method.

. . . *Kiri Namtvedt*, Dept. 56 Senior Sculptor, will be **signing** Dept. 56 village pieces on January 6, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. and January 7, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. She will be at the *Enesco Gallery Gift Shop*, Graceland Crossing, 3717 Elvis Presley Blvd.



- I can't believe I didn't notice these words on the back of the sleigh; "*This vehicle brakes for CARIBOU.*" We've had the Dept. 56 North Pole Elf Land 'School Sleigh Express' since November 2003. I love the look and small size; can't believe we don't display it every year. L 4 ¾ x W 2 ½ X H 2 inches. – No, you can't see the sign on the back in this picture.

- . . . I appreciate each response I receive from a column. Even a simple 'Hi!' is great. A comment, suggestion or question is even better. I also happily accept corrections. 'Talk' to you next year.
- . . . "*People want me to tiptoe around their feelings, while they tap dance all over mine - remember - I can dance too!*" • On-line
- . . . "*Fresh mistletoe \$6.99 (results may vary)*" • On-line



We wish you a Merry Christmas.
 It is a time of remembering,
 of loving, and giving.
 May the miracle of Christmas
 live forever in your heart.
 Warm wishes from
 our home to yours.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New year
 David and Linda*

Our bears are B.U. and Patsy. They are in the house most of the time.



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.

- 2,416 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •