

JUST SO YOU KNOW! . . . JANUARY 19, 2024

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 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' • Find her now on YouTube (gone & Sue's Christmas Village' • in Europe' • Art Kilmer, 'Christmas Corner' - • Larry Treadwell, 'Hauntsville 2023,' 'A Dickens' Christmas' and **New!** '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. •

. . . February 2, 'Groundhog Day' • February 14, 'Valentine's Day' • February 14, 'Ash Wednesday' • February 19, 'Presidents' Day' • March 10, Daylights Savings Time Begins • March 17, 'St. Patrick's Day' • May 19, Spring Begins • March 24, 'Easter' • March 31, 'Palm Sunday'

• 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, Village D-Lights, "The Guesthouse at Graceland will be the host site for the Department 56 **50th Anniversary Celebration in 2026.**"

• "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 •



. . . As of Friday, January 19, 2024, <http://thevillagecollector.com/> has been visited 72,360 times by unique villagers since March 6, 2023. Join the crowd!

. . . Village D-Lights 2023 4th Qtr. – Coming soon, read it on January 19th NCC Facebook page.

. . . *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 McPherson will send out info including a schedule of the contests.

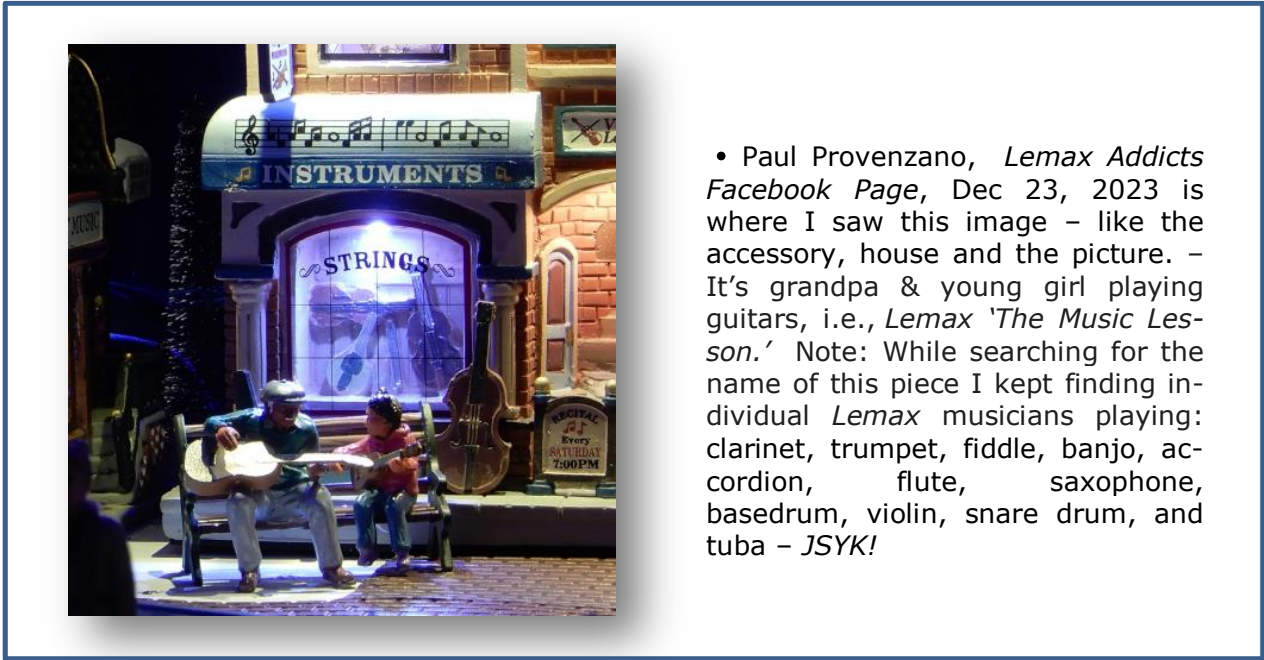
. . . Linda discovered an 'elf hat' in our house; she suggested I try it on. The hat fit just fine – remember I have a big head.

. . . "Nutcracker Auditions Today" - On a sign outside a village display stage featuring 'The Nutcracker.' My question; who can tryout to be a Nutcracker? Are they real people? Saw on *Lemax Addicts*, posted by Dadou Leguen, from Quimper, France on December 30, 2023.

. . . I was reminded why 'Santa's Reindeer Petting Stable' is one of my favorite pieces – I **love the colors!** The Dept. 56 *Christmas In The City* piece was a gift from the members of our *Village North Collectors Club*. It even comes with a small child, and elf, reacting to the deer. Intro 2012.

. . . "Sleeping is so hard when you can't stop thinking." • On-Line

. . . A Dept. 56 house with **lit candles** in the windows; 'Christmas Homecoming At Havenport.' One of my favorites, especially when displayed at eye level on top of a bookcase. It just **looks nice!** – The accessory included is 'Christmas Home For Christmas' (parents with child in sled); plus walls, plus trees, plus snow. *New England Village, 2005.*



- Paul Provenzano, *Lemax Addicts Facebook Page*, Dec 23, 2023 is where I saw this image – like the accessory, house and the picture. – It's grandpa & young girl playing guitars, i.e., *Lemax 'The Music Lesson.'* Note: While searching for the name of this piece I kept finding individual *Lemax* musicians playing: clarinet, trumpet, fiddle, banjo, accordion, flute, saxophone, basedrum, violin, snare drum, and tuba – *JSYK!*

. . . 'Candy Cane Gnomes' set of 2, Dept. 56. 1.6 inches tall makes them a good size for us to use in a display. Think of all the places I could use these 16th century characters with their Candy Cane striped hats. Remember, I'm **not allowed** to have Gnomes near the Fairies in our yard. But this is inside and Linda has *no fairy garden*, soooo \$26.50 • Also a January 2023 D56 intro was the 'Outdoor Christmas Gnome.' It has brown shoes, red mittens, and a red and white striped stocking cap. Now all 'decorated,' the sisal tree is a **cheerful gnome**. 3.5 inches tall, \$25.00. I like it!

. . . "Great hide and seek players are really hard to find." • Vince The Sign Guy

. . . The letter was expected; as was my new medical insurance card. Also in the envelope, a white plastic card saying only, "This card intentionally left blank" – in nice black letters – on both sides! My question - huh?

. . . "9 out of 10 times when I lose something...it's because I put it in a safe place." – The Laughing Christian

. . . We finally have a snow cover on the ground. Now Linda will be able to mention my 'walk like a penguin' footprints in the snow.

. . . Your comments, opinions, and questions are always welcome. I need your input to write this column, just so you know!



- 'Pizza connections,' I found them in the *Replacement Parts* section, Dept. 56 website. The middle image is a 'Pizza Paddle,' in case you were wondering. - Do we need 'all things pizza?'

. . . We are very happy with our 'Wesley Pub.' The Essex Street Façade, Lemax 2004, just arrived at our house. We can see inside, nicely lit throughout. Outside, **on and off** decorative lights (subtle, they look good), three 'stories' tall. Outside looks - the reason we bought it. We have seen the façade in many online displays. I'm sure that had much to do with our purchase. And, our friend Kim has a 'Wesley Pub' as part of her façade display.

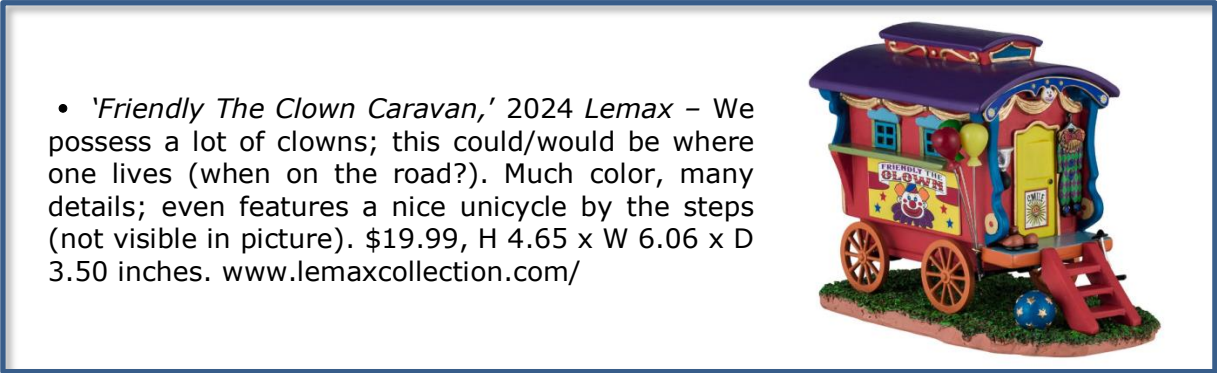
. . . "A clown on a throne is still a clown . . . a king in rags is still a king. . ." • The Order of Pen

. . . The 'Secret Snowman Ball' shows a group having a party on ice; I didn't realize snowmen could **skate**, now I see five doing just that. Several penguins and polar bears have joined the fun (as spectators). Lemax calls it a "harmonious blend of merriment, laughter, and fun . . ." I do appreciate the 'new to me look,' i.e., skating snowmen. H 4.84 x W 12.09 x D 9.96 inches. Just released for 2024. www.lemaxcollection.com/

. . . **Christmas displays!** We are still putting ours up; some online folks are busy taking theirs down. I wrote this on January 1st. Note: We have two open houses; January 6th and January 20th.



- With an interesting look, it's the Lemax 'Victorian Ice Merry Go Round. It says "Children alongside one dog can be seen in three sledges* - whizzing around a snowy track." They are being pulled by 'big' people using ropes on the end of a long pole. Looks like fun to me. H x W x D, 5.12 x 8.86 x 8.86 inches. Released: 2014. Animated table accent. *Sledge: toboggans, sleighs, sleds.



- 'Friendly The Clown Caravan,' 2024 Lemax - We possess a lot of clowns; this could/would be where one lives (when on the road?). Much color, many details; even features a nice unicycle by the steps (not visible in picture). \$19.99, H 4.65 x W 6.06 x D 3.50 inches. www.lemaxcollection.com/

. . . "In three words, I can sum up everything I have learned about life; it goes on." • Robert Frost

. . . 'Busy City Sidewalks' remains **my favorite** Dept. 56 'people' accessory. Set of 4, all are walking: a man with a briefcase; a man walking his dog; a woman pulling a shopping cart; a woman carrying gifts in shopping bag. Nice colors, details and 'movement' on each. Not sure why we haven't purchased another set. Intro 1999, \$32.50; current price, \$60.00 (not yet retired). Note: This was my 2002 Christmas gift from Linda's son Jeff.

. . . 'Sugar Plum Dance Company' - Lemax 2020 - Nice simple music, **moving color** background, lit front edge of stage, three moving dancers (they spin and stage goes in circle as well). The stage show is called "A Magical Christmas." The musical arrangement of 'Jingle Bells' is nicely done (and not irritating). H 6.93 x W 5.35 x D 5.35 inches.

. . . "I appreciate the people who ask if I'm OK." • On-line

. . . \$325.00 or 4 interest-free payments of \$81.25; the cost listed on this Dept. 56 dealer website for the new 'Disney World Haunted Mansion.' This building looks pleasant to me. Neither spider webs on the corners nor the bats in the air scare me. Duluth has many similar looking mansions. I have been in several, none were haunted. - 10.51in H. Intro 2024. <https://countrymoregifts.com/>

. . . Dept. 56 sculptor Kiri Namtvedt will be Melinda Seegers' guest Thursday, February 1, 4 p.m. on Dept. 56 Facebook Live.



- (left) Debbie Oehme and (right) Kim Anderson; Debbie is our Nat'l Council of 56 Clubs Region VI Representative. Kim was host at her home on the Village North Collectors Club 'Tour of Homes.' Her display behind them is 8 feet wide, 3 feet deep and 4.5 feet high. It contains 84 houses plus accessories and people. Top to bottom: North Pole, Christmas In The City, and Snow Village. Above and below is enough storage for all the boxes. Husband Ken did the design and building. It is all wired and has sliding glass doors.

. . . Bill Channell wrote "Villaging" in its broadest sense as celebrated here on TVC, is the collecting, displaying, working with, investing in, or just thinking about . . . miniature buildings. Especially lit ones." I read further in his 'What is Villaging' feature. There he wrote, "The explosion of available "village people" brought about another new look . . . scenes using the buildings not as the main focus, but just a backdrop to the people." – We frequently use people to tell a story. Sometimes the building is the reason; or, it is simply a nice background. <https://thevillagecollector.com/>

. . . Luville 'Grabber' – The accessory is a dad attempting to 'win' a teddy bear for his daughter. He is using one of those 'Claw Machines' you'd see in an Arcade. <https://www.felinaworld.com/> If we had an arcade in our displays, we'd surely like one of these; different and fun!

. . . 'Brooms To Go' - Lemax Spooky Town – "If the broom fits, ride it! Brooms to go" - "Rates \$6.00 A Day, \$12.00 After Midnight, Don't Drink and Fly" - (H x W x D) 3.94 x 4.13 x 2.95 inches. A new table piece for 2024; a location for witches to rent a 'flying broom.'

- This is "staff photographer Galen Rowell (who) not only teaches classes in wilderness photography but is responsible for the images you have been seeing. Prints are available in the gift shop." – This is the caption for one of the many images in Larry Treadwell's latest creation 'Wilderness Game Preserve.' It's a guided tour enjoying the animals, woods, rivers and lakes of this new 'green space.' Remember to read Larry's words; they tell the story. [//thevillagecollector.com/breaking-news](https://thevillagecollector.com/breaking-news) - It's fun to visit!



. . . Several folks have recently asked me for places/people interested in buying Dept. 56 items. One even asked about donating. Any and all suggestions/thoughts are welcome. Thanks!

- I have no idea who, or what, this person (?) is. I just know it received my attention as I clicked through the *Felina World* website. This link ended with "small-message." Don't know what that means. Colorful and active, looks like he/she would be fun to be around. Efteling. 2.75 x W 1.9 x H 2.75 inches. <https://www.felinaworld.com/> →



- Luville Classics 'Flip is painting.' Not sure we want, or even need another painter, but Flip is cool and different; red Beret, big scarf, nice striped sweater; and a mustache. He is painting the Eiffel Tower (behind him). I saw him in another display. ←



... I find interesting figures most every time I go to <https://www.felinaworld.com/> It makes me happy. Now if I could just find a U.S. store.

- I do use a walking stick when traveling any real distance, but this vehicle is beyond me. I would still like to see one or two in our displays. Of course in our displays we'd have to add chains or snow tires; at least a warm hat and coat for the lady. <https://www.felinaworld.com/>

... In his recent TVC 'What is Villaging?' Bill Channell included the 'The Ten Stages of Villaging.' Bill said with "151- 300 buildings - you have an obsession." With our 151 plus buildings I don't feel 'an obsession' - really! But, don't ask me the obsession question about our **3,000 +** village people. Storage is becoming a problem; as is even finding them. <https://thevillagecollector.com/>

... "I've learned that if I don't try new things, I won't learn new things." • H. Jackson Brown Jr.



- 'Road Test' Dept. 56, North Pole, 2024 intro. I had a shiny red wagon as child. No, it "wasn't elf tested and Santa approved." 1.75 in ... 'Friends and Neighbors' - so many uses for these elves - you can't have too many elves? 2024 intro. 2.5 in.





- 'Christmas in the Game Preserve,' the first image of the new picture/story told by Larry Treadwell. Love this sign. I'll have to ask Larry who made it for him. You can find the story, and this picture, at [//thevillagecollector.com/](http://thevillagecollector.com/) - go to 'Breaking News' and 'click on the dock.'

. . . January 4th, Dept. 56 Facebook Live with Ms. Lit Town. Guest Amy Schaeftbauer, Dept. 56 Senior Brand Manager. They talked about something **new** for 2024, '**First Edition.**' 560 hand-numbered buildings in deluxe packaging. Available only at Platinum Dealers. They are: 1). Snow Village 'Jackson's and Sons Hardware.' 2). 'Disney World Haunted Mansion' (great detail, no snow). 3). SV Halloween - 'Gather 'Round For Thanksgiving' (interior scene). 4). CIC 'Lunar Dragon Tea House.' (This is the first of 1 of 12 pieces in this *new series*). All four buildings will also be produced without the First Edition features (and available at other dealers). . . . They also showed the new for 2004: from Grinch, 'Grinch's Santy Suit Shoppe,' 'Peppermint Tea Shoppe,' and 'Who-lectric Light Repair.' From Harry Potter: 'Azkaban Prison,' and 'The Quidditch Stadium.' . . . The 2024 Dept. 56 Village Brochure should be available now. Remember they ran out for a period of time last year.

- It's interesting and different, the 'Pumpkin Hollow Motel' has pumpkins on each end and one on the roof; large pumpkins. Two are motel rooms; those must be rooms between the pumpkins and the office. It has an unusual layout, on a corner - enough, here is the image instead of words. What do you think?



'Pumpkin Hollow Motel,' 'Spooky Town 2024' Lemax says: 'ghastly weekend getaway? . . . make your stay as hellish as possible. . . every corner here hides a horrid secret. I like the look, a lot! \$46.99. (H x W x D) 6.30 x 8.74 x 6.61 inches.



- Cars! (l-r) Models of my actual cars owned; Archer Racing, friends; Ice racing, official (many yeas) and driver (3 times); Coca-Cola van and trailer. 2023 display



• Linda thinks this is truly me; making my selections on the 'goodies bar' at the home of Kim (and Ken) in Cloquet, MN. There was a nice selection of breakfast bakes with appetizers. We were beginning our Village North Collectors Club 'Tour of Homes' to view village displays. Had I realized my picture was being taken, I would have combed my hair. • Photo by Debbie Oehme



• A small town north of Duluth, MN on US Hwy 53.



• 'Me' welcoming visitors to our 2023 New England Village display. This 'David Spears' is courtesy of our friend John Rapacz. • Photo by Debbie Oehme



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.

• 2,737 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •