

JUST SO YOU KNOW! . . . AUGUST 29, 2023

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.

. . . Village D-Lights, 2nd Qtr, 2023; was received August 11 at our address in Duluth, MN; JSYK!

. . . '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' • Phil & Sue Adkins, 'Phil & Sue's 'From Italy, Villaging in Europe' • Mary Treadwell, 'Hauntsville' and 'A Dickens' Christmas' • Mark Frendo, 'Tips & Trix' •



• 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. •

. . . August 1-7, 'International Clown Week' • August 7, 'National Lighthouse Day' • August 9, 'Book Lover's Day' • August 17, 'Linda's Birthday' • September 4, 'Labor Day' • September 5, 'Be Late for Something Day' • September 5, 'Cheese Pizza Day' • September 9, 'Teddy Bear Day' • September 11, 'Grandparents Day' • September 15, starts 'Rosh Hashanah' • September 19, 'Talk Like a Pirate Day' • September 21, 'World Alzheimer's Day' • September 23, 'Autumnal Equinox' •

. . . The 43rd Annual Golden Glow Convention; Arlington, VA was held on August 16-19, 2023. <https://goldenglow.org/convention> • 'A Christmas Story' in the Nation's Capital. **The NCC was there.** Appreciate all the images, especially those posted by Robin with names and explanations.

. . . Congratulations **Chad Harmon** - National Council of 56 Clubs, 2023 Collector of the Year - Saw images of Chad, and his wife Melissa, taken at the recent *Golden Glow* convention (where the honor was announced). He is a member of the 'Heritage Treasures Collectors Club,' 'California 56 Collectors' and 'Central Valley 56 Collectors.' He is also the NCC 'Zoom Coordinator.'

. . . For regular readers: the deer no longer seem to pass through our yard. No sightings and only one plant damaged this month. • We are now seeing small holes provided by skunks putting noses in the ground looking for food. Have not seen the animals or 'enjoyed' any skunk odor. • We are also enjoying the low flying eagles; a benefit of living on the tip of Lake Superior during migration.

. . . 'Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass but learning to dance in the rain.' - Online

. . . **Rope** for displays - I didn't realize I had so many choices of size and color. They have pages of different ropes available on: <https://modelexpo-online.com/> - Now I need to need rope.

. . . 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 our Christmas cards Linda makes each holiday.

. . . The new Village D-Lights tells me 'Colonial Williamsburg' has **not** been **retired** by Dept. 56; nor have they resumed production. Info in article by Phil Renninger begins on page 13. - Not sure why we didn't buy all the people; we do have most of them.

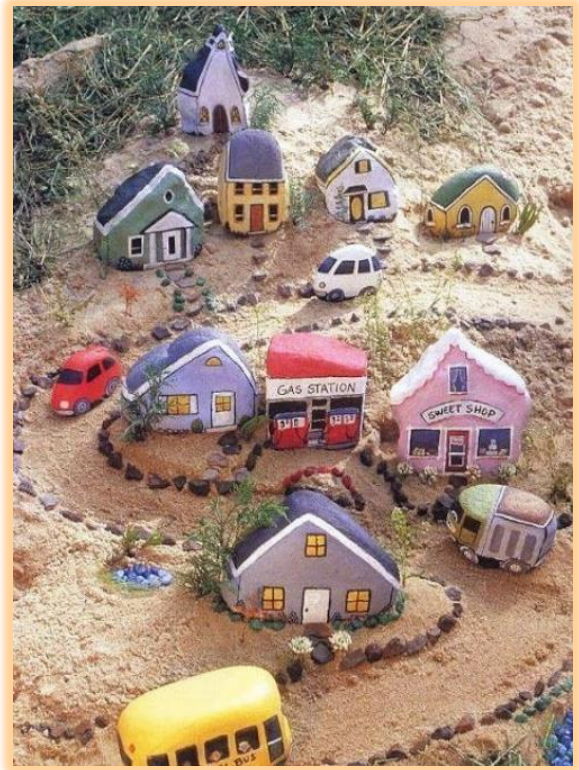
• Abbreviations (I use): NCC – National Council of 56 Clubs • JSYK – Just so you know! • TVC – The Village Collector • VDL – Village D-Lights • D56 – Department 56 • VN or VNCC – Village North Collectors Club • AV – Alpine Village • CIC – Christmas In The City • DV - Dickens' Village • NEV – New England Village • NP – North Pole Village • SV – Original Snow Village. •

Village North Collectors Club



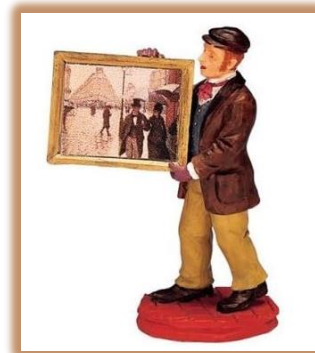
Duluth, MN/Superior, WI

- 'Painted Rock Village' – Facebook, July 6, 2023. Posted by 'Sustain My Craft Habit - Clever DIY, Crafts & Upcycling Ideas' – Do we need a village like this in our gardens? I'm thinking **yes**. I like the 'scene' - and the idea. Every piece is a rock, JSYK! ➡



- 'Cripple Creek County Jail' from Menard's. 10 x 5 3/4 x 9-3/4 inches. Lit upper floors, two prisoner transfer trucks/vehicles, police and criminals and, of course, 'Jack the German Shepard.' An old building built as a jail, and it looks the part. CIC or maybe NEV. – Saw it in July/August 2023, [Classic Toy Trains](#) • 'Rocket Launching Tower,' 13 1/2 inch rocket being launched – also a Menard's ad in the same magazine. It's from the 60s when the world was racing to put satellites into orbit and place astronauts on the moon. 'Rocket launching' goes very well with the 'The First Moon Landing' vignette we already have. Note: The ad says if it was true O Gauge, the 360 foot tower would be 7 1/2 feet tall (and not look good with an 'O,' 'S,' or On30 gauge train).

- Info from Jim Peters on an additional painter - Lemax Village Collection 'Next Time Have Delivered,' Approx. 2.5" H x 2" W x 1" D – We have this piece; not sure how I missed it. But I was looking for 'plein air' paintings. It is a different and interesting figurine (which is why we made the purchase).



... Keep smilin' - there's only 117 days 'til Christmas. "I know because I saw it on TVC" by Bill Channell.



- Gordon 'Gordy' Beier- Nov 13, 1945 – died July 4, 2023 •
Gordy and Tammi Beier owned 'Gordy's Gift and Garden Center.' As a Dept. 56 dealer, they supported our Village North Collectors Club. Among his everyday quotes: "No, I did not change my mind, I upgraded my thinking." He always had a sparkle in his eyes and will be dearly missed. Linda and I saw him at the store a week before he died. He was happy to see us, we visited a few minutes, and then Gordy was off to water plants.

- Next Village North Collectors Club meeting, Wednesday September 20, 5:00 p.m., Fosters Sports Bar in Hermantown, MN. Members will be discussing the recent summer picnic (Kandi/Rod's), Halloween tour (3 houses), and the clubs Christmas Dinner 2023.

... Ms. Lit Town, Melinda Seegers, was a judge of the COOKIE Contest's at the GLOW. If you take a look at me, well, I like cookies. Had I been there, being a judge would have been a natural job for me. My wife Linda likes to bake, as did my mother. Both very good at it. That means I've had years of 'cookie experience.'

Northern Lights Collectors' Club

Crystal, MN – Central MN

- Look closely, Santa is providing the 'power,' towing Snoopy & Woodstock. This 2012 display also featured our Dept. 56 'Emily Louise,' 'Dudley Docker,' plus D56 snow on 'jean cloth' water, Styrofoam sea caves, pirates, fishermen, and seagulls.



- 'Legion Post 56 Wreath For Sale' and the 'Hot Cocoa Stand' came to my attention (after I mentioned the 'little shop' idea in a column). Their ads say I should purchase one because "Selling wreaths has always been a great fundraiser. . . the other "will be a hit 'cause baby it's cold outside." Dept. 56 introduced both in 2022.



• "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. •



• "Leaders are like eagles, they don't flock. . . you find them one at a time." – Fortune cookie



- The instructions said, "Make a display with your favorite flower shop." Janice Alonsagay, from the Philippines club, **won** the June, *National Council of 56 Clubs*, vignette contest on *Facebook*. Nice display, congratulations! • It shows Linda and I what we could do with our Dept. 56 'Lilycott Garden Conservatory.'

- "It is much more difficult to judge oneself than to judge others." – Fortune cookie
- "Maturity: Do your duty without being supervised." - Fortune cookie
- "It's the roving bee that gathers honey." – Fortune cookie
- "Living with a commitment to excellence shall take you far." – Fortune cookie

. . . *Brandon Taylor*, President, and *Anna McPherson*, Vice President, have been duly **reelected** to their leadership positions of the *National Council of 56 Clubs*. Announced to the clubs on July 12th. Thanks to both of them for continuing to work with village collectors.

. . . 'The Village Collector' • Number of *unique visitors* since rebuild since March 2023 – 22,371; total visits 37,672. 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.

. . . 'The Village Chronicler' - website and *Facebook Page*; both by Richard Puckett; built to share Dept. 56 knowledge he has compiled. <https://TheVillageChronicler.com>



- I've no planned use for these figures; never really done any arm wrestling; I don't drink much either; just have never seen 'anybody' quite like these two. They are attendees at a *Rendezvous* of the early 1800's. These events were described as "full of myrth, songs, dancing, shouting, trading, running, singing, racing, target-shooting, yarns, frolics, with all sorts of extravagances that white men or Indians could invent!" Look on the web site to see the many festivities at these annual events. "The Underdog," Arm Wrestling by John Jenkins Designs. www.treefrogtreasures.com/

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- Dept. 56 will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the company in 2026. They began with six lighted buildings for the *Original Snow Village* in 1976. They are **asking** collectors to help the celebration; maybe with the **re-issue** of a piece, or maybe have the designers **create special** pieces to celebrate. • Let them know what you think.
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- King & Country's, 'The Green Dragon Boat' - <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/> \$500.00 – Size? Drummer is 2 inches, feet to drumstick. • Superior, WI (across the harbor from Duluth) hosts dragon boat races every summer. They have a 60 crew limit for the event. I have viewed, photographed, but not competed.



. . . 'Goodwill' stores are beginning to put out a **Christmas** item or two. We found several buyable D56 things very early last year; Linda has already been checking.



- *Bjornberg Photography* posted this image. It was taken in Duluth as the *Blue Angels* passed over the Aerial Lift Bridge. They had performed at our local air show. Note the sixth F/A-18E/F Super Hornet taking images of this 'salute' to Duluth. The *Vista Star* tour boat is passing from the harbor to Lake Superior. • Piloting #3 is Lt. Amanda Lee, a native Minnesotan. She attended the University of Minnesota in Duluth. Lt. Lee is the first woman to fly as part of the U.S. Navy demo team.

... *Porsche Taycan* - saw our first ever (in person) today; very nice looking 4dr sedan. Linda even liked it. Don't know if it was the \$88,000 version or the \$188,000 model. At either price, we are not making a purchase, *JSYK!*

... The *NCC Club Connection* deadline for club activities and articles is October 1, 2023. Note: I already have three images, and eleven words, ready for our *Village North Collectors Club* to submit.

... I received the following email response to the invitation to our 'Garden Party.' "*I must be important. I got 2 invitations!! Since I'm still working, I wouldn't be able to attend on a Monday. But 5 months and 1 day from now (December 15th), I will finally be retiring. So, plan to see me a year from now. Have a great time showing off your gardens.*" - signed *Tom* • I posted this here because Tom is important; and he reads (and comments on) my column.

... '*Tru-Tone Lighting*' is a **new** National Council of 56 Clubs Associate Member. Their "*LED Bulbs offer that warm vintage style glow for your villages without the heat and the energy cost.*" They offer a variety of sizes, colors, etc. I look forward to hearing more about them. <https://tru-tone.com/>



- I feel as I've walked down this street. Although, to be honest, I've only been in Stillwater, MN in summer months. '*Stillwater Collectibles & Antiques,*' is one of the very few Dept. 56 *Original Snow Village* pieces we own. I enjoyed this image on a *Facebook* post by *Jasna Susic* on July 18th. • Remember, we really like village items to remind us of places we've been and things we've done.

• "*I don't just want words. If that's all you have for me, you'd better go.*" - F. Scott Fitzgerald



- 'The Combat Photographer,' \$55.00, King & Country – Don't know where a WWII German soldier would fit in a display. Maybe we could use this guy on roof taking a picture of Superman on a nearby building. I'm sure we could come up with something.
 - Linda and I are always taking photos; I'm guessing that would be the reason we purchase most 'village size' photographers we see (to use in our displays). With his guy, we would have a picture taker that most others don't.
- <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/>

. . . 7½ inch **plastic plate**; when I got it, it came with birthday cake and ice cream. Bright white in color, shiny silver ¾ inch stripe around the edge (looks like it's from a fancy wedding or anniversary). I immediately thought it is something we could use in a *vignette* (so I brought it home).

. . . In Larry Treadwell's recent explanation of constructing *Hauntsville 2023*, he shows a view taken from a **Broom Cam** attached to *Circe's* broom handle (as she flies over the village). *Mistress Juniper* is the other witch Larry is working with on this display. I understand she is 'doing' the water.

<https://www.thevillagecollector.com/hauntsville> - its fun reading. Note: He keeps writing more.

- A reader of JSYK still has the following question. Any suggestions?

"Is there a web site that has lists of all of the D56 village items that can be downloaded into a data base? I have a very large collection and want to use it for inventory, organization, and reference. I'd also like to be able to remove pieces I don't have, add pieces I've made or bought that are not D56, and add the storage location of the pieces (bin no., item no. within bin). I saw the Village Chronicler D56 History Lists, but didn't think these would work for this purpose."



- Boating on our rivers has always been popular in Minnesota. 'Fur Traders Descending the Missouri' would add an interesting look on our *Mississippi River* (or lake/river). It is from a painting by George Cleb Bingham (1811-1979). The *toque cap* the father is wearing suggests that he is a voyageur of French descent. Notice the tethered *bear cub* on the bow. - *John Jenkins Designs* - \$138.00
- <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/>

. . . *The Golden Glow of Christmas Past*, 44TH Annual Convention, 'A Lone Star Christmas' – August 7-10, 2024, Dallas, TX, <https://goldenglow.org/convention-44/>

. . . For those of you following along, in the March 17, 2021 JSYK, I was looking to add to my 'Village People.' I now have a choice of 'American Indians' to go with my (already possessed) 'Construction Worker,' 'Soldier,' 'Cop,' and 'Cowboy' for our version of the 'Village People.' All **we are missing** is 'The Biker/Leather Man.' He should be about 1¾ inches tall and not fancy. Suggestions are much appreciated. Hint: Sing 'YMCA.' – thanks!

. . . It read "Tim Haney, VP of Product Development Enesco/Department 56." Saw his name; now I have to learn about him.

. . . '24 Die-Cast Cars with Case.' I right away had the thought to make a vignette featuring these NASCAR race cars. No plan yet, or any details. 1/87 scale – Saw the set in a *Collections Etc.* catalog.

. . . In the same catalog, above, I also spotted a 'Coca-Cola VW Kombi Die-Cast Van & Trailer.' 1:43 Scale. Would be a nice addition to our annual display parade. I may have already ordered it. ☺

. . . Jeffery Kirchner, 'Garden State Village Collectors' and Anna McPherson, 'Ducky 56'ers,' 'California 56 Collectors' are the Nat'l Council of 56 Clubs **2023 Presidents Award Winners**. Anna is the NCC VP – Jeffery is the NCC Secretary. Club president Brandon Taylor said, "I cannot thank the two of them enough. They have put up with me and pushed me to be a better leader."

VillageFest 2023 The largest independent gathering of Villagers Worldwide. Coming Monday, November 13, 2023.



The Second Annual Mega-Event. Don't miss it, it's free! Your village will thank you.

[Forums & Links \(thevillagecollector.com\)](https://www.thevillagecollector.com)



- *W. Britain* – 'Maple Tree, Autumn' - 10" tall, 7" spread, base: 2" long, 2 3/4" wide. \$79.00. The ad even includes the definition of Photosynthesis, the process that changes the color of leaves. I really like the look; but we can't afford a maple forest. <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/>

- 'The Paper Studio' variety of flowers/plants, maybe an inch tall, *Hobby Lobby*, \$6.00 for six. \$4.19 on sale. All succulents! →



- Past and present, presidents of the Nat'l Council of 56 Clubs. l-r; *Bob Obenland*, 2004 – 2007; *Peggy Culler-Hair*, 2000 – 2003; *Richard Puckett*, 2016 – 2018, Co-President, 2020-2021; *Brandon Taylor*, 2022 – Present. They were in attendance at the GLOW in Washington D.C. I remember each of them from past gatherings; they might remember me. Image from *Facebook* page of *Jeffery Kirchner*.

. . . Ms. Lit Town, Melinda Seegers, was a judge of the *COOKIE Contest's* at the GLOW. If you take a look at me, well, **I like cookies**. Had I been there, being a judge would have been a natural job for me. My wife Linda likes to bake, as did my mother. Both very good at it that means I've had years of 'cookie experience.'

- 'Down the stairs on wheels' by Arnout Ense, The Hague, Netherlands. He posted this image on Facebook. **Looks like fun!** (and something I might have tried; 75 years ago).
- Then I noticed the new Lemax 'Downtown Busker.' Her puppy is relaxing as she is plays joyful songs to help everyone enjoy the Christmas season. I understand "she even takes reuests if you have time to stop and listen." (H x W x D)3.54 x 3.86 x 1.77 inches, \$8.99, introduced 2023.



. . . Enesco announced that on November 16, **2024**, they will be opening an *Enesco Gallery* featuring the *Dept. 56* and *Jim Shore* lines. It will be between *Graceland* and the *Guest House* in Memphis, Tennessee (will include a *Gift Gallery*).

. . . Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live, **Melinda Seegers**, next on September 7, 2023, 4:00 p.m.



- Two parts of the Lemax 'Snowmen Friends' I really like. First is the 'snow-dog;' don't ever remember making one of those - **nice idea!** Second, the snowman in the middle reminds **me of me** as a kid; dark rim glasses and a bright red tossle cap. Lemax 'Snowmen Friends,' \$ 17.99, (H x W x D) 2.91 x 6.69 x 3.15 inches. Year Released: 2023.

. . . Dept. 56 will host a 50th Anniversary Gathering in Memphis, Tennessee in **2026**. "**Celebrating 50 Years of 56**" will be held in conjunction with the *National Council of Department 56 Clubs*. 'The Guest House at Graceland' will serve as the host hotel.

. . . "Lemon Drop Committee": Andy MacTarnahan, Hal Beighley, Lorna Freeze, Lynn Nichols, Dick Nichols, and Fae Gimbol. **Nice** to see this group of *Village Idiots* is still changing their village vignette each month at *St. Mary's Home For Boys* in Oregon. Keep up the good work.



- The 'Simpson & Sons Opticians' could/should have a **historic place** in our displays. Reason? My mother told me I began wearing glasses when I was three years old – a long time ago. I wasn't planning to include an image; but I couldn't find the words to do justice to the colors of the building – particularly the blue. The ad says "With its Victorian architecture, lovable characters, and inviting shops, this Dickensian village will help you relive the Christmases of years gone by." I'm not Dickens' old, just so you know! Lemax 'Caddington Village' new for 2023. HxWxD, 8.46 x 7.78 x 5.12.

. . . Congratulations to *Ethel Jeffries Campbell*; **winner** of the NCC56 #july2023vignettecontest. Ethel is a member of the *The Four States Village People*.

. . . Please remember to comment on, or question, anything you see in this column. If I don't hear from you, I don't know what to write.

. . . A Super Chipmunk is the plane flown by Art Scholl. He was a well known stunt pilot who provided a pre-race show at *Brainerd International Raceway*. I happened to be a volunteer track worker. It is fun who you meet at unexpected places. Saw him a couple week later on the 'Johnny Carson' show.

. . . 'City Lights' is a must visit when you are in San Diego. It's good to see they continue as an *Associate Member* of the *Nat'l Council of 56 Clubs* and, they always have their ad in *Village D-Lights*. • It was fun meeting owners Brian and Spencer Young when we were in California for a gathering.

. . . Folks have mentioned some *Michael's* stores are starting to '**show**' Lemax *Halloween*, and *Christmas*, on their shelves. Haven't checked our local store, but I guess it is getting close to September, then October (and Halloween), soooo



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.

- 3,692 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •