

JUST SO YOU KNOW! . . . MARCH 20, 2023

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

. . . It's February 25 and the pages are blank from here to our photo on the last page. Now I get to fill the empty pages – wish me luck.

. . . 'The Village Collector' has been with us since 2017. Bill and Kathy Channell have continually worked to build and improve the web site. If you haven't noticed, several weeks ago, TVC had a major problem. Bill has it back online and he is adding pieces most every day. Soon you can again find the following: David Spears, 'Just so you know!' • Jim Peters, 'Show your village to the world' • Brian Vaill's, 'The Train Station' • Thea Heyink, 'The Creation Station' • Phil & Sue Adkins, 'Phil & Sue's Christmas Village' • Peppe Apuleo, 'From Italy, Villaging in Europe' • Art Kilmer, 'Christmas Corner' • Larry Treadwell, 'A Dickens' Christmas' • And now, Mark Frendo, 'Tips & Tricks.' - He didn't mention the 'Coach is Here.'



• 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 • D56 Builders and Treasurers, Janesville, Beloit WI/Rockford, IL, Charlene Swansboro. • Region VI Representative: Debbie Oehme, region6ncc@ncc56.com.

. . . March 20, *Spring Begins* • April 1, *April Fool's Day* • April 9, *Easter*. • April 22, *Earth Day* • May 14, *Mother's Day* • May 20, *Armed Forces Day* • May 22, *Victoria Day* • May 29, *Memorial Day* • June 14, *Flag Day* • June 18, *Father's Day* • June 19, *Juneteenth* • June 21, *Summer begins* •

. . . *City Lights*, Mankato, MN, a long time *Nat'l Council of 56 Clubs* member, has disbanded. A sad time. Remember them when I was NCC Region rep. Personally, I sure hope they remain my friends.

. . . *Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live*, see **Melinda Seegers** next on April 6, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

. . . A commemorative **limited edition village signpost** is available for the 43rd *Annual Golden Glow Convention*; Arlington, VA on August 16-19, 2023. Four inches tall, black, weighted at the bottom and featuring the *Golden Glow* logo. Thanks to Esme, I will be able to add it to our growing selection of signposts. Note: They have to be ordered by April 1 and picked up at the convention.

. . . I have **1:43 models** of nine 'real' cars I have owned; still looking for models of six others: 1946 *Oldsmobile* 2 door coupe - dark blue • 1954 *Chevrolet* Bel Air 2 door sedan - dark blue • 1963 *Chevrolet Corvair Spyder* 2 door coupe - silver • 1987 *VW Jetta GLI* 4 door - black • 2002 *Subaru Outback* - white • 2014 *Subaru Outback* - silver. **Please** let me know if you have seen a source for any of them.

. . . 'The Village Chronicler' - website and *Facebook Page*; both by Richard Puckett to share all the Dept. 56 knowledge he has compiled. I've looked over the web site a couple times; just finished reading the entire '*Almanac 1976-2023*' page(s). Don't begin the read without time to finish the numerous pages. I learned many things and was reminded of much more. The web site was built and is maintained by Pete Baer. The Facebook page has 186 members and has been there since 2019 – it is a private page; I have not yet visited (not officially on Facebook).

. . . "I've learned eating chocolate won't solve your problems, but it doesn't hurt anything either." • H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

. . . "260 feet in length, the longest wind turbine blades ever transported through the port of Duluth-Superior." - North Star Port, Duluth Seaway Part Authority. I didn't realize they were that large; **and**, how are they transported from the Duluth harbor to a large tower somewhere? 260 feet??

. . . Next *Village North Collectors Club meeting*, April 19, 5:00 p.m., *Fosters* in Hermantown, MN.



- 'Christmas Morning Express' drew my attention when I first saw it; then it was featured March 2 on [Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live](#) - now I want it! The *animation*, Melinda Seeger's *enthusiasm*, and seeing the *small size*, made the difference. 2.87 in H x 2.8 in W x 3.23 in L. Introduced in October 2022, the Dept. 56 Cross Product will be available this Spring. \$82.50

- Not sure I agree with an elf judging Santa's moves, but I like the look of the animated 'A Perfect Ten' skating rink. And, 4 in H x 5.7 in W x 8.5 in L is a nice size for our displays. This is a new Dept. 56 Cross Product available this Spring. \$100.00



- Because 'collectors' want more sitting people, Dept. 56 introduced the 'Village Hipsters.' This Cross Product will be available in Spring 2023. Two people sitting, one standing (all drinking coffee). 3.39 in H x 1.06 in W x 1.54 in L. \$48.00. Bench not included. Melinda Seegers suggested their use with the new 'Central Perk.' I discovered the Hipsters were SV and wouldn't fit in our 'almost no SV' displays.

... "Found this while looking for something else. It said, **Purchases** --'The Seasons of Michigan 2010 - David and Linda Spears:' From [Tracy's Collectibles](#): Clown on hand unicycle; Sitting witch with red and white stockings; Running Chinese man with red lantern on pole; Witch in tan dress black cats on skirt, with broom; Sitting Oriental girl, lavender outfit, pink vest, pigtails; Moonshine still (2). From [Minithings](#): Curling brooms (2); Two reindeer playing Twister - Hasbro; Fruit press; Charlie Brown throwing baseball; Golfer, bending over; Babies lying on stomach wearing diapers (3); Howling baby wolves, brown/gray - (6); Lemax weeping willow trees, three sizes, one each. From the [Gathering](#): Event pin and 'Village Collectors of Michigan' pin. The list of **gifts and prizes** was twice as long. With our seminar material, and display contest entry, we really filled our Subaru Out-back on the way home." • From [JSYK](#) Sept 11, 2017

... "The idea is to die young as late as possible." - Ashley Montagu



• Another reminder of my childhood. In the 50's and '60's my best friend was a bird nut. That meant in migration season we were part of a small group counting hawks and eagles at *Hawk Ridge* in Duluth. Yes, we were young, but Bob was very bird knowledgeable and I was dependable. I continue to visit the 'count' site most years, but no longer participate in the work. I'm thinking the Lemax '*Eagle Point Lookout*' would be a memorable addition to our displays. 2009 - 2014 (H x W x D) 5.12 x 6.89 x 6.18.

... "*O Gauge Railroading* (December 2014 issue) has an article by John Rapacz. The title is 'Buildings for the Holidays and Beyond.' The subtitle, 'Easy ways to customize porcelain structures.' This article is about using Dept. 56 buildings in a model railroad layout. Descriptions and lots of pictures to explain/show what he has done. Worth taking a look, even for the purists among us. Most of his suggestions/ideas don't harm the building. - Many of you may remember John. He visited a Village North club meeting to show his homemade, mostly wooden, display accessories. Linda and I have a ski jump, bridge, advertising sign and fireplaces that he built. He also sold at a couple of Dept. 56 gatherings. John is from the Twin Cities." • From JSYK- November 2014

... "Need to actually get light to an area in your display? Lemax introduced 'Field Lights' this year. They are like stadium lights and can be aimed in several directions. We used two in our displays - very effective." 12 3/8 inches. JSYK Spring 2015

... There is still snow on the ground, well, still on our wooden living room floor. Where is it coming from?? It has been over two weeks our displays have been 'down.' Yes, **that snow!**

... Linda came out of the 'Dollar Store' saying "she found something for me." What a nice wife. They were 2 1/2 inches tall - from Mattel - Barbie 'Soccer Doll,' and Barbie 'Baseball Doll.' - should I know why both are #59? - Yes, more different people for a future display.



... I don't believe our local ski hills have a true need for a 'rescue' snowmobile, but I still like the idea. I saw one posted on *Lemax Addicts Facebook*, March 4, 2023 by Jøris Téhos-Saïko - Lille, France. Colorful, looks 'active;' would be a nice touch in our ski hill display - don't need the tree.



... '*The Village Collector*' is now listed as a "Safe Site" by *Bravenet*; This is for those of you that have a need to know such things. Bill made the addition even though he asks for no personal info for us to look at his site - just so you know!

... Your words in return are always welcome; comments, opinions, questions are all good. If you can suggest something I should look at, I'd appreciate knowing that as well. Remember corrections are always welcome. My special thanks to anyone that provides an answer to the questions I ask.

• 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. •



. . . How about the different look of the **identical buildings**; signs and accessories ('Nutcracker Delivery' - 'Presenting The Hollymen'/'Sing a Song For Santa' - 'Snowflake, The NCC Snowgirl' - 'The Santa Palooza Masterpiece'). The inside light bulbs of different colors give a distinct look (through all the windows). Our four 'NCC Traders Pin Shops' become 'The Nutcracker,' 'Merry Makers,' 'NCC Traders Pin Shop,' and 'Bridgeman's.' Note: Immediate background is a wallpaper border. This image appeared in a 2017 [JSYK](#).



- Linda and I can use an addition for a parade, or maybe our Christmas festival. This Lemax "Christmas Van" looks like it would fit right in. \$9.99. 3.07 x 4.69 x 2.13 inches (H,W,D). Plastic. Intro 2023. (Might a bit larger than we desire; will have to decide when we see it on a store shelf).



- 'The Guests Arrive' Lemax, 2006 - 2011. I like they are doing something! H, 2.76

- Is it OK to 'use' a cellphone in a village display? I realize she is only taking a picture; I still use a camera for that purpose. Somehow I see our villages as 'older' than cell-phones. Note: I don't own a cellphone; Linda does have her second flip-phone. 'Ski Trip,' Set Of 2 - Year Released: 2015 Year Retired: 2022 Approx. H 2.99 inches - Lemax



. . . **Mark Frendo** will soon be sharing his 'Tips & Trix' with us on '[The Village Collector](#).'

. . . I realize it is only mid-March 2023, but has anyone see the 1st Quarter Edition 2023 of [Village D-Lights](#)? It should be time to begin looking.

- Music, musical instruments (guitar's especially) have long interested me. One day all these figures appeared on my computer screen (at different times). Is my computer trying to tell me something?



- l-r: 'Guitar Player' Lemax, 2004-2007, 2" H x 1.5" W x 1.5" D; 'The Music Lesson' Lemax 1.89 x 2.36 x 1.69 inches (H,W,D); Lemax 'Merry Christmas Songs,' Set of six, 3.98 inches, Year Released, 2020; 'Mickey Mouse' - Disney Mega Play Set 20 characters, \$49.99 for set.

- I always seem to find things 'pizza;' the trend continues. This posting, on Facebook, is a 'Pizza Shop' Joanna Villegas made with a **3D printer**. Also shown, was her 'Brew Pod Café,' and 'Smoke Shack Roast N' Grille.' In my opinion, she is very good with the printer. - The delivery scooter was with the images; I know nothing about it, but I like/need it.



- At \$59.00 'Sir Harry Perry Robinson Adventurer Extraordinaire' is a whole lot more than we usually pay for a village figure. However he is a 'styling photographer' different than any we have so maybe He is 'from' the 1800's. By King and Country. <https://www.treefrogtreasures.com/>

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



. . . "Having a supportive partner can literally change your life." - Online

. . . Checked our banks - because of the recent financial failures. Discovered we only have 'First Metropolitan Bank,' Dept. 56, Christmas In The City, 1994 -1997. Found it was OK in our basement storage, so not concerned with bank failure (and the tag says we have less than \$60 invested).

. . . Lemax Norman Rockwell houses; does anyone use any of them in their Dept. 56 New England Village displays? I've noticed several that seem to me, might 'work.' We are maybe looking to add an additional street in New England. • Hey, how about 'Schwartz's House' 'Ralphie's House' 'Bumpus House' and several businesses from Dept. 56, 'A Christmas Story Village?' A **good match** for NEV?

. . . My note says "Judith Price, Village North meeting, May 21, 2003, Dept. 56 North Pole, 'Santa's Workshop.'" Not sure if it was a prize for a contest, or a drawing - we must have won (and we still have the workshop). Note: Judith Price was Ms. Lit Town, in case you are very new.

Northern Lights Collectors' Club



Crystal, MN - Central MN

. . . Info from 'The Village Chronicler' The Almanac, 1999 - "A Special Edition, Numbered Limited Edition (5,500 pieces) of The Old Royal Observatory - Gold Dome Edition is sent to all Department 56 retailers as a thank you and to honor 15th anniversary of Dickens Village Series. A cream dome version of 35,000 numbered pieces is made available for retail sale." • Our 'cream dome' Observatory was purchased in July 2000 at Mainstreet Gifts in Duluth - it is one of my favorite pieces. I also appreciated the people in the store. The two 'main ladies' answered many questions for us, then 'newbies' - thanks to Donna and Gail. We miss Mainstreet, and our other Dept. 56 dealers - all gone!



• The 'Frank Lloyd Wright Heurtley House' would look very out of place where we live on East Toledo Street in Duluth, MN. All houses here are two or three bed bungalows built in the '50's. I remember seeing a picture of 'Heurtley House' in our eight grade architectural drawing class. It looks much more interesting to me now. I like his Prairie Style Homes; low pitch roof, broad eaves and wide porches. This one was built in 1902 near Chicago. • I've visited several FLW structures, including the 'service station' he designed in Cloquet, MN. • Dept. 56, Christmas In The City, 2017-2018.

. . . A break-in and **burglary** recently occurred at The Ronald McDonald House-Oak Street in Minneapolis. I can't understand how anyone could do this to an RMH. Our Village North club contributes pop tabs, nonperishable food, and proceeds (from a garage sale fundraiser), to the RMH in Duluth. I know other clubs also support their local Ronald McDonald Houses. • Questions or donations: Ronald McDonald House Charities, Upper Midwest," ejohnson@rmhc-uppermidwest.org.



. . . I really appreciate the look, color, signs and, of course, the pizzeria! This façade could make a very nice background in a display. My problem is we've never featured a canal in a display. Not sure we would have enough buildings that would fit on a 'water street.' Lemax, Caddington Village, 11.02 x 9.80 x 5.28 in 'Venice Canal Shops'

. . . Bill Channell is working hard; 'The Village Collector' is on-line and adding 'pieces' every day. He has changed host companies for his web site. Stop by often and see how things are going; plus Bill likes visitors.

. . . *National Council of 56 Clubs, 15-Year Timeline* by Bob Obenland and Peggy Culler-Hair: August 17-19. Dept. 56 Silver Anniv. Celebration, St. Paul, MN. NCC special memorabilia display of 40 club banners. NCC produced and sponsored the collectors' display contest with 57 displays. 10th Anniversary Kick-Off Dessert Reception hosted by Department 56 for club reps, special guests and board members. NCC exclusive "Jack's Umbrella Shop" unveiled by Judith Price. A special 10th anniversary pin was introduced. Final color (silver), "Under the NCC Umbrella" accessory and pin introduced.

. . . From the start of 'The Village Collector' on May 20, 2017, until the start of the rebuild on February 27, 2023, TVC had 362,021 Total Visits from 240,316 Unique Visitors. • Unique visitors since rebuild March 6, 2023 - 2,725. Note: I check in every day. My past columns are there including February 23, 2023; this new JSYK will be posted very soon.



• It is maybe 33 degrees as this surfer heads for the waters of Lake Superior. It happens when, as The Wall Street Journal recently said a, "big arctic storm (is) blowing down from Canada." 4-wheel drive vehicles, neoprene boots, wet suits and ice beards are all part of the sport in Minnesota. Note: more 'surfing' images can be seen on a recent The Wall Street Journal on-line story.



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.

• 2,957 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •