


JUST SO YOU KNOW! DECEMBER 14, 2022

IDEAS, HINTS, AND OPINIONS

BY DAVID SPEARS

. . . 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 – See more abbreviations on last page.

. . . The *'Coach is Here,'* by Bill Channell is new, many subjects! • Jim Peter's *'Show Your Village To The World,'* Dec. 12, 2022 – *'How-To Secrets of Meshing Lyrics and Scenes'* • Brian Vaill's, *'The Train Station,'* current offering; "CT Heyink with her *'The Creation Station,'* & Sue Adkins, Northampton, England.  Nov. 29, 2022, *'Getting Started'* • Phil Present column: *'Planning village for Christmas 2022,'* auditions • *'From Italy,'* Peppe Apuleo, Nov 7, 2022, *'My Christmas Village 2022'* • *'Christmas Corner'* by Art Kilmer, Dec 1, 2022, *'Thankful for Christmas'* • <http://thevillagecollector.com/>

. . . 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 • *City Lights*, Mankato, MN, Mary Zellmer, mzellmer@hickorytech.net • *D56 Builders and Treasurers*, Janesville, Beloit WI/Rockford, IL, Charlene Swansboro. • Region VI Representative: Debbie Oehme, region6ncc@ncc56.com.

. . . **Village North activities:** Oct 29th, Halloween Party/Tour (cancelled/Covid); Dec 12; Dickens' display assembled at *Aftenro Nursing Home*; Dec 21, *Christmas Party, Blackwoods, London Rd, Duluth*; Jan ??, *Tour of Homes*.

. . . The Dept. 56, *'Ms. Lit Town Facebook Live,'* December 1st, featured Melinda Seegers and Rick Jackson, Dept. 56 Creative Director. Rick is retiring on Dec. 31. They talked about his twenty-five year history with the company, including stories about five of 24 items 'found' in his office. An online auction for the items began after the show. It ended at midnight on December 14th. Proceeds will benefit Rick's favorite charity, the *Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity*. department56.com/pages/habitat-for-humanity-auction Looking at the site I found a couple of items of interest; a never produced SV 'Elvis' and a NP Woods building *'Root Beer Cellar'* and accessories. I can also watched the bids as they changed.

. . . As of December 14, 2022, *The Village Collector* has had a total of 333,151 visits; 226,215 unique visitors. <http://thevillagecollector.com/> - JSYK is among the several columns offered there.

. . . Lisa Johnson, from Dept. 56, talked about the **new packaging** starting with the 2023 pieces. The building packaging will show the coordinating accessory, and all packages will have a 'glamor shot' of the piece and a lot more detailed information. • Info from the NCC November board meeting. Thanks to our Region Rep Debbie Oehme for the assist.

. . . Bill Channell was happy with the numbers for **VillageFest 2022**. If you missed it, it was on *The Village Collector* web site Nov. 14th – through Nov. 28th. They had 13,000 visitors. He says there will be a *VillageFest 2023*.

. . . "You don't have to be crazy to hang out with me – I'll train you" • On-line

. . . "Life is so much better when nobody knows what you are up to." • On-line

. . . The name *David* has sunk in popularity over the years; a top-five name from 1950 to 1984 - now 30th – I notice those things.

. . . **Congratulations Billy Edwards** – *'Collector of the Year'* – National Council of 56 Clubs, member of the Region 7, *Air Cap 56'ers*. ♦ Well-deserved Billy.

. . . Zsuzsanna Magyar, *Lemax Addicts on Facebook* – studied at Miskolci Egyetem (University of Miskolc) a police officer in Poland. First known person I've 'seen' from Poland, Nov 22, 2022 – JSYK!

. . . *Village North* put up our Dickens' display at *Aftenro Home*. Resident Darlene took pictures for us.



. . . **Roundabouts!** Bernice says they are called 'circles' in New Jersey - a challenge for drivers; too many entry points and lanes, you don't really know where to go. A few years ago the state said where doing away with circles; according to Bernice, it doesn't seem like any are missing on the roads they travel. ♦ Jim Peters sent me the opportunity to see a 'sort of' roundabout. You can see it in action in '2014 Claires Christmas Village,' [//www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsubr38SSf4&t=181s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsubr38SSf4&t=181s). (3 minutes in). It's from Lemax, 'Classic Car Set 2-Way Road Pattern,' retired 2008. Note: It is not a true roundabout, but I think it works just fine in a display. Comments are from the most recent JSYK - thanks!

. . . <https://microstru.com/> Miller Engineering - All sorts of 'lit' signs (neon look). I have seen them in model railroad displays. They add a nice touch. A big choice of advertisers on the lit billboards, window and rotating signs. Of course they do require power (available from Miller Eng).

. . . Alita Rabe, PEACHES! PEACHES! PEACHES! Subject of the *Village Addicts Profile*, 'Village Addicts Gazette' - November | December 2022. The Gazette also contained info about "CIC - The Manhattan Alita Rabe October meeting." Not sure what that means. Plus, it said Alita Rabe "is managing her painful wrist." We liked Alita as we shared time with her at several gatherings; had no idea she was this important ☺

. . . "We have reached the point of snow return." • 'Todd Signs,' Hermantown, MN

. . . 'Old Michaelchurch,' Dickens' Village; 'Pennsylvania Dutch Farmhouse,' New England Village; my first Dept. 56 houses. Purchased at *Gordy's Gifts and Gardens*, Hermantown, MN. My notes don't provide a date, but it had to be between 1992 and 1996 - I think!



• I saw these gondolas Nov 16 on the *Lemax Addicts Facebook* page. Not animated (and I'm sure they aren't fancy); Shelly Ferguson Lindegren said she got them on Christmas clearance at *Hobby Lobby* for 75 cents. I've always desired something, other than rope tows, on our ski hill. The available fancy, animated gondolas are rather large, and too expensive for us. Will have to figure out the cable wheel supports, etc. Don't really mind if they don't move. - I had four folks, including the manager, looking at our *Hobby Lobby* - none found (even on their website).

. . . EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS: President, Rosie Hurtado; Vice President, Mirela Gab; Treasurer, Joe Gozzo; Secretary, Eleanor Swiecki, Newsletter Editor leanorswiecki@gmail.com; NCC Club Rep, Mirela Gab; Club Member Seeker /Liaison, Diane Hoffmeyer; Tech Support, Chad Harmon; Fun and Gift Coordinator, Maddie Pimento - CENTRAL VALLEY 56 COLLECTORS - I really enjoy a couple of the Board Member titles. I underlined them, just in case.



- Lemax 2004, 'Yuletide Carolers;' animated, music and lit; it was the centerpiece of a street corner in our 2019 display. We added three D56 children and Woodstock to the singers. Completing the scene, backs to the action, were several spectators. ♦ Note we also had many 'watchers' enjoying the parade in the background. As Jim commented, sometimes you need villagers 'just standing there' to make the 'active' people look good.- I used this photo before.



- Linda spotted 'Roller Derby' on the sign and told me about it. We both thought 'Skate World Roller Rink' might be a fun addition to a display. The ticket booth, 3 people inside putting on skates, plus the 8 animated social skaters, makes it a social thing, not the sporting event we were thinking. The snack bar and skate rental signs made it a sure thing. The 2009 Lemax intro was new to me, but unless we are looking for an addition for our carnival, it won't be ours. H x W X D 9.25 X 9.06 X 8.98 inches.

- I really appreciate the gentleman **properly escorting** the lady. She looks like she belongs on the red carpet going to the 'Winter Ball.' And, she deserved the coach ride to the dance. This was on *Facebook*, November 20, posted by Lara Damgaard, studied at the University of Southern Denmark. – Is anyone able to identify the couple? I would very much consider a purchase. Thank you!



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- 'Holiday Shoppers,' Lemax, 2010, set of 6. ↑ Liked them when we purchased a set ten years ago. Saw a new ad and thought I'd maybe purchase another set – can't have too many people! Looked them up, found Lemax 12016, ↓ Set of 2, 'Holiday Shoppers.' Same name, not the same, obviously.



- 'Gifts for the Grandchildren,' I like this couple – no comments about the age thing please. They look like pleasant people enjoying themselves. I could be 'him;' stylish hat, flying scarf, nice coat. Linda does enjoy herself however, she isn't frumpy so I certainly can't say this couple is 'us.' Lemax, Caddington Village, 2.76 x 2.00 x 2.00 inches (H,W,D) Intro Jan 2022.

- An addition for the shopping district of a CIC display. Might be a bit larger than I'd like, but they are doing something different. Plus we do have a couple 'toy drive' Marine Corps people that would fit right in. Lemax 'Annual Toy Drive' – 2013 (H x W x D), 2.83 x 5.04 x 2.99 inches.

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... 'One Santa Special Coming Up!' Dept. 56, North Pole Village. I have to find these elves; they are a 'must have' for my pizza 'collection.' Introduced January 2021. 1.77 in H x 1.06 in W x 1.06 in L. I understand it is said, "Take out or delivery, they make the best pizza in town!"

... 'Village Video of the Month,' Official TVC Selections: Kentucky; United States; California; United Kingdom; Unknown; Philippines; Unknown; Canada; Unknown; Italy; France; Germany; Florida; Netherlands; Florida; Unknown; Unknown. You have to appreciate how hard Bill works to find all these videos. On Monday, Dec. 26, voting will begin for The Village Collector '2022 Hall of Fame.'

... Your comments, questions and opinions are all necessary to keep this column going – just so you know! Thank you.



- I have used a chain saw; I never held it over my head. And I've never worn a hockey mask – just so you know! 'Clark Trims The Tree,' D56 'National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation.' Intro 2016, coordinates with 'The Griswold Family Buys A Tree.' 4.53 in H x 1.22 in W x 1.61 in L.



- I'm always interested in most things 'pizza;' I saw this very attractive pizzeria on a November 24, 'Lemax Addicts' Facebook post by Stephen Dee. Could someone please ID the building for me? Thank you! I do like a couple of the others also, but . . .

- A couple of cool dudes, not sure of their era. But I think the lady is Victorian; pretty fancy dress and I like her 'walking stick.' Lemax 'Jolly Christmas Shoppers,' 2006, retired 2015. (H x W x D) 3.03 x 2.91 x 1.54 inches.



- The 'San Santiago Parish' got me thinking; every 'town' needs a church. The design and colors would fit right in with our Southwest display. This 2022 Lemax Caddington Village 6.5in x 8.66in x 5.12in.



. . . '2022 Savage Adventure Park,' Lemax Addicts, Nov 23, 2022; one of the **best** 'parks' I've ever seen! Dan Savage says: "Welcome to the 2022 Savage Adventure Park, 34 rides, 4 are handmade 2 large roller coasters, theme areas like the Winter Wonderland with a Christmas maze and working movie theater and Nightmare Before Christmas spooky town, a Dino exhibit, food court, Beer Garden and many, many figurines." It is well worth the visit; just search the name on Facebook.

. . . **Deer update**, December 5, 2022, 105 E Toledo St: An eight point buck 'hurried' down our driveway; not ten feet away from me. Two does passed by a minute before. Hmmm

. . . Saw a picture of the 'Mickey Mouse and Friends Mega Figure Play Set' on line; 20 Disney character that could be fun to add to the right display. It's Mickey and his friends. They are mostly three inches and taller. Advertised at some 'big box' stores, I plan to take a look. \$49.99, online. I also saw 15 females, 'Disney Princesses from Ralph Breaks the Internet.' Not sure we could use these ladies. <https://www.shopdisney.com/>

. . . I spotted a man doing **card tricks**, with two observers, on the side of the road. The display was on 'Snow-Covered Christmas Village' - Kimberly Maness - Hot Wire Foam Factory. Anyone know 'who' the accessory is, and where it comes from? <https://gallery.hotwirefoamfactory.com/>

. . . NCC Mini Virtual Gathering: 'Lots of door and raffle prizes were given out. Shirley Willis from Northern Lights won 2 prizes. Whoot whoot!' Let me add my own Whoot whoot!'

. . . I was informed the **new** D56 zoo animals, elephants and lions, "are too large for the fencing." Thelma went on "The visitors are not safe if the animals, especially the lions, can so easily get over the fence!" - I will immediately inform the proper authorities of the danger; thanks for the heads-up. 😊 Oh yes, I did say "lions" twice last issue, no mention of the elephants; typo or mistake?

. . . Reason to join an NCC Club: To fulfill your lifelong desire to save every piece of Styrofoam that comes into your life.

. . . 'Must Love Christmas' - The CBS Sunday Night Movie (December 11, 2022) had 'village houses' on the table in a living room. Not much to see, but there were several buildings (that I couldn't ID). Not featured or even talked about. I was still very happy to see our little houses considered *part of Christmas* in the movie.

. . . There are 202 videos eligible. The **24 videos** selected for 4th Annual "Village Video Hall of Fame" will be posted December 24 on <http://thevillagecollector.com/>. Everyone may vote December 26th to January 15 for their top 4. The official 2022 inductees will be announced January 22, 2023. It is OK to vote every day. I always vote early and often.

. . . I hadn't noticed 'Limestone Road, Curved,' nor 'Limestone Road, Straight,' for that matter. Now **we need** to have several sets of each available. I can easily see the Dept. 56 'roads' in a display; thinking Dickens at first, but then realized we could use them in CIC and NEV as well. How do I miss these things? Note: They use "a variety of masonry colors, carved to look dimensional . . ."

. . . A change of the bed covering and bedroom accessories; at our house it is the beginning of winter. On the bed we now have a bright, colorful quilt by Linda. The coordinated curtains and pillows by sister-in-law Fran; and a snowman/reindeer wall hanging by friend Sandy.

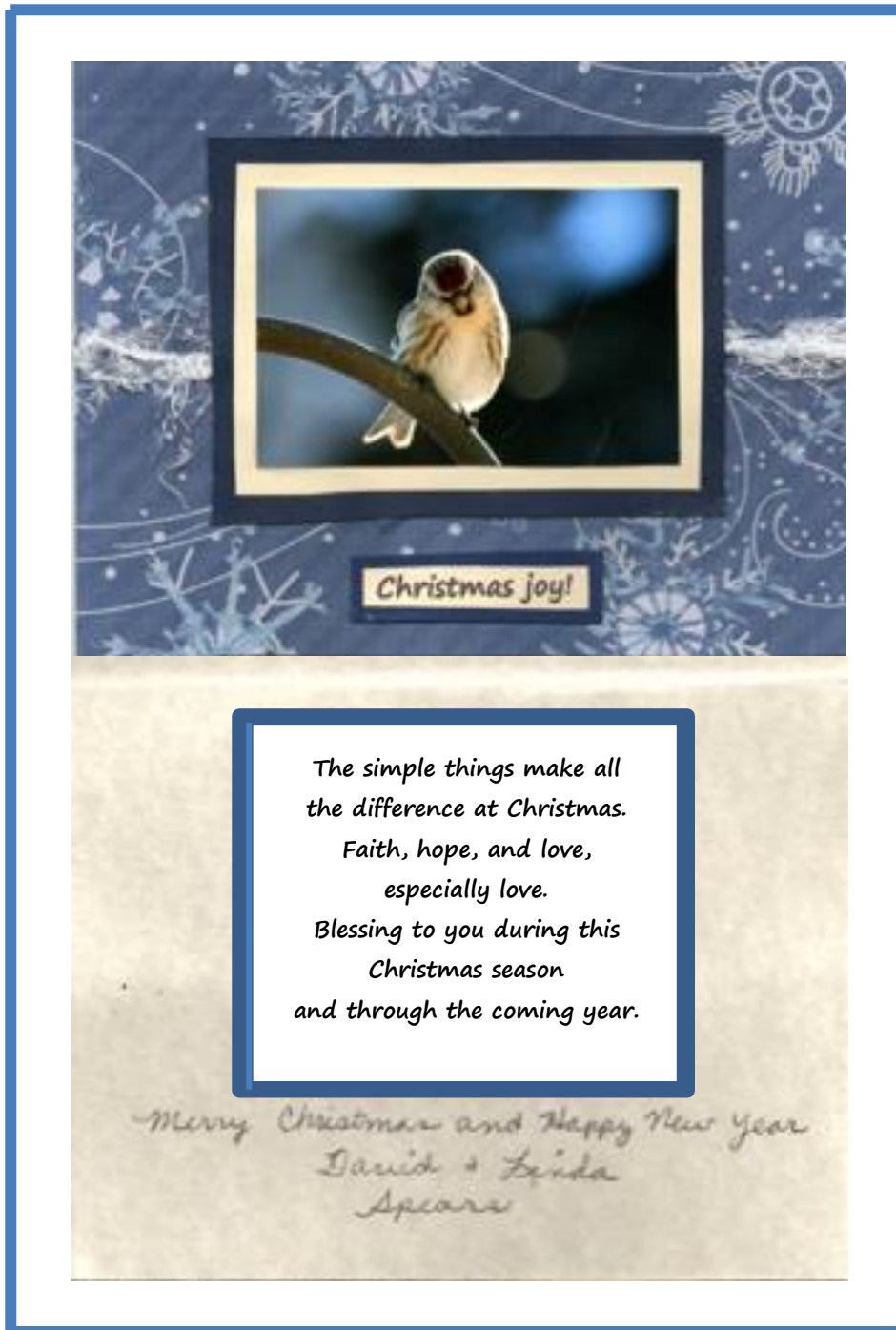
. . . Linda **found** Dept. 56, Dickens Village 'Sweetbriar Cottage,' DV 'Sudbury Church,' DV Snow Village 'Totem Town Souvenir Shop' - at Goodwill in Kenwood, Duluth, MN. They also had two Coca Cola buildings and one unidentified house. She bought nothing.



. . . I saw this image posted by Robin Hervey, November 26, 2022 on Facebook. I asked about the 'houses.' He replied, "This family operated business has been in business since 1545! Töpferi Bauer. The factory is in Lauterbach, Germany. All the houses (as well as the animals) can be used as 'smokers', using a variety of fragranced cones to burn from the inside. They range in size from 3 inches to the larger ones, 8-10 inches! The color in the front are incense fragrances, used inside all the above. Of course, you can use lights!!" Robin and Pablo arrived early for the trip to visit the German Christmas Markets aboard a river boat on the Main. Fifteen Department 56 collectors met on the River Queen for this 8 day adventure, ending in Nuremberg. I enjoyed the videos, images and words on Facebook about the trip. - www.toepferi-bauer.de

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• This is at our 2022 family Christmas card; photo, designed and made by Linda •

... Additional abbreviations (I might use): AV – Alpine Village • CIC – Christmas In The City • DV - Dickens' Village • NEV – New England Village • NP – North Pole Village • SV – Original Snow Village.



Questions, comments and/or suggestions are always welcome. You can contact me at: spears.duluth@juno.com, 105 E. Toledo St., Duluth, MN 55811 or (218) 724-6148.

• 2,848 is the number of words in this JSYK – not counting this line •