



CLUB CONNECTION

Keeping Clubs Plugged in to Collecting and Each Other

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February 1, 2024

is the next Club Connection deadline

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President's Message

By Brandon Taylor, NCC President

It has been a fabulous year for village collecting. Department 56 has introduced amazing designs, our Associate Members have hosted outstanding artist signing events, the NCC put on an incredible in-person Gathering followed up afterward with a fun and informative Virtual Mini Gathering. We have seen growth! Several clubs have reported adding new members. And the BIGGEST part of the year—the Grand Opening of the Department 56 Gallery!

In August, while attending the Gathering, collectors were surprised by the announcement of the creation of the Enesco Gift Shop and Department 56 Gallery at Elvis' Graceland in Memphis, TN. This announcement had collectors excited and guessing what this amazing place would be like... but we had to wait another 3 months before the grand opening of it. The Gallery comprises several different rooms taking up over 75% of the building it resides in. They are set up in each of their respective villages, vignettes, separate special displays and museum style cases.

Why Graceland you ask? Department 56/Enesco's new owner Joel Weinshanker is Managing Partner of Elvis Presley Enterprises. Elvis loved Christmas, he loved to decorate and would have loved what Department 56 villages mean to collectors and the holidays. Joel's vision was to share the history and spectacle that is

Department 56. Nothing has ever been done publicly on this scale before.

NCC board members were invited for a special preview of the Gallery before the public Grand Opening. I had the opportunity to be the third person outside of employees to enter the gallery. I was both speechless (something that many know doesn't have often) and talking a mile a minute about what I was seeing.

Before venturing into the World of Department 56 the board had the pleasure of meeting Jack Soden from Elvis Presley Charitable Foundation.

The Elvis Presley Charitable Foundation (EPCF) was formed by Graceland/Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. in 1984 to continue Elvis' own tradition of generosity and community service and to honor his memory. The EPCF is overseen by the management team of Graceland/Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. The Elvis Presley Charitable Foundation is a separate, purely philanthropic 501(c)3 charitable organization. The staff operate the foundation in addition to their regular responsibilities and the company underwrites all the EPCF's administrative expenses. Therefore, all the EPCF's funds are used for charitable donations, with nothing deducted for staffing or any other costs of operating the foundation.

The EPCF created the Elvis Presley Endowed Scholarship Fund at the College of Communication & Fine Arts at the University of Memphis to assist students majoring in areas that relate to Elvis' own career: music, film, television, theater, etc. The EPCF also has a long-standing relationship with one of Elvis' favorite charities, Goodwill Homes, a Memphis facility that provides counseling and services for abused children and their families. The EPCF has also quietly assisted numerous other charities through the years, especially focusing on arts, education and children's programs.

EPCF was the chosen charity with the proceeds raised from the Christmas at Graceland Sample Piece and the VIP Trip to the Grand Opening at the auction at our Village Luncheon in DC. The NCC board members in attendance presented the check for \$12,000. The oversized check was then donated to the Elvis Presley Archives.



Presentation of the Charity Check. L-R: Lisa Johnson, Jack Soden, Jeffery Kirchner, Bruce Lucas, Richard Puckett, Anna McPherson, Pete Baer, Brandon Taylor, Ellen Somerwill.

Collectors are greeted in the foyer of the Gallery by the original 6 Snow Village buildings each on their own encased pedestals. They are flanking the Sparkling Gold Department 56 Dot Logo. The first



room you encounter is referred to as the Timeline Room. As visitors progress through the room you see highlights from the last 47 years of the company. Historical documents, Showroom Awards, various village pieces including an extremely rare Dickens' Village *Mill* sample that belonged to village designer Neilan Lund. Lund brought the idea of Dickens' Village and using porcelain as a medium for villages to Department 56. What makes this piece even more special is that it was signed by Neilan himself.

Department 56 made sure to celebrate 1992 on the timeline. Part of the NCC exclusive pieces are in the gallery, representing that year. This is just the beginning of the NCC display; there will be more added to it in the future including a display of various club, Gathering and NCC pins.

This part of the gallery will continue to grow as the years pass by.

You quickly pass into the next room on your way to the Snow Village main display. This room has a beautiful wall mural of the original six with shelves on both sides housing the early years of Snow Village. In addition to the Snow Village, there is

another area that shows the process from concept to paper mock-up to the wax mold to the final product.

The next area that also catches your eye as you enter the Gallery is the Snow Village Pyramid. This 20' x20' x20' structure houses most of the ceramic village arranged in yearly fashion. This design has many aspects to it. It allows for expansion, it gives an overview of the collection and it also shares the same design as the Memphis Pyramid. This structure used to be a music venue now houses a Bass Pro Shop. Throughout the peripherals of the room are other displays showcasing different Snow Village subsets, licensed pieces from the past and the original 2000s Snow Village *Elvis' Graceland*.



The next stop is Dickens' Village. The massive centerpiece houses a majority of the collection with the early limited editions on the very top. It shares the space with a corner dedicated to Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, a staple in the collection for most of its creation. The desk sitting in the Christmas Carol Corner was used at Department 56's former headquarters One Village Place. And was also used in a past issue of former Department 56 publication *The Quarterly*.

The third room is a shared space between the Christmas in the City and North Pole. The City showcases some of the most beloved structures since the beginning, including all of the city skyscrapers (most with silhouettes of the building behind them). The North Pole is next with two different full scale displays. But before you get there it's time for a potty break. Between the restrooms is a

hilarious banner of the North Pole Up North Outhouse. After enjoying the twinkle bright forest in the North Pole display you enter the final area of the Gallery.



This last area is filled with several villages. A selection of both New England and Alpine are nestled in one corner. Those are then followed by groupings of licensed villages: Peanuts, Nightmare before Christmas, Mickey's Christmas Village, Mickey's Pumpkin Town and the following displays had hidden surprises for those attending the Grand Opening; both the Grinch village and Harry Potter showed off yet unreleased 2024 pieces in their displays!

The last display in the final room is fenced off to keep the ghouls and goblins in—Snow Village Halloween. The display holds many highlights from all 25 years of Halloween. It had the best of the creepy, the number ones of the spooky and pieces that are special to Halloween's own story as a village.

After taking in all of this, you enter the gift shop with its exclusive pieces.

The Grand Opening officially happened after the Christmas lights were turned on at Graceland. The Gallery was flooded with hundreds of visitors, village collectors and Elvis enthusiasts alike. Media outlets were there for this momentous occasion. The Gallery

means a lot to village collectors, to Graceland and to the City of Memphis. They interviewed Enesco President Michael Griffin for the perspective of what it means to the company, followed by an interview with myself and NCC Vice President, Anna McPherson and NCC Secretary, Jeffery Kirchner to understand what it means for the collectors. For the next two and a half hours guests flowed through the doors. The NCC board assisted the Department 56, Enesco and Elvis Presley Enterprise (EPE) team. We were met by so many people amazed at the displays, wanting to know more about the history of the company and collectors wanting to connect with others that love villages.

The weekend was just beginning.

The next two days were filled with time at the gallery. Friday and Saturday village artists Scott Enter and Tom Bates along with Ms. Lit Town Melinda Seegers greeted collectors, signed pieces and enjoyed sharing stories about collecting and designing the *Christmas at Graceland* piece and the *Lisa Marie Plane*. It is always a great time hearing the artists perspectives on pieces they create especially when it is a real life building.

Even though the Gallery creation was put into motion by Joel, it would not have been possible or even happened without a dedicated crew that included members from EPE, Kiri Namtvedt who designed the Harry Potter from Department 56 headquarters, Stephen Pepin, of Showcase Displays— the King of Styrofoam carving, and the Lady of the Gallery, the queen of fresh fallen snow, our favorite village sales rep Lisa Johnson, who took on this project making it her baby. She spent days, weeks, months making sure that this amazing place was ready for collectors; she made sure each display was perfect; and she opened hundreds (if not thousands of village boxes) that included finishing one display just moments before the NCC Board's early tour. We can not thank her enough. She made sure villagers have home! Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

I encourage you all to make the trip to visit the Gallery and all that Graceland has to offer.

Over the past few *Club Connections* we have offered a contest inside of the President's Article, in the last issue you were asked to send me two of the meeting

ideas that you found in the "Connecting with Our Clubs" section that you want to share with your club to try. The winning club is...The Arkansas Villagers! Thank you Maleah Bufford for finding two meeting ideas to share with your club.

For the last President's Contest of the Year...I am challenging you to share with your Regional Representative and myself, your favorite village moment from this year. Was it your club's open houses? Could it be going to the Gathering? Did it involve going to your favorite Associate Member? Or maybe it was setting up a public display? All members that submit their favorite moment will be put in a drawing for a prize for their club and themselves as well.



Lisa Johnson and Melinda Seegers.



Scott Enter and Tom Bates.

On behalf of the NCC board, we want to wish you and yours a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

NCC Financial Report

By Bruce Lucas, NCC Treasurer

*H*ope everyone had a good Thanksgiving and are ready for the Holiday season. I'm sure everyone has their villages up and proudly displayed. I've seen a lot of fantastic pictures out there on the NCC website and other individuals posts. Thank you everyone for sharing. We had a great time at the Enesco grand opening last month. We presented a check in the amount of \$12,000 to the Elvis Presley Charitable Foundation. It was an exciting time to see all the years of Department 56 collections. I'm looking forward to making another trip over there and taking more time. Thank you to Lisa Johnson and her crew for making it all happen. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone!

Bruce

Treasurer's Report

	2022 Actual	2023 Proposed Budget	2023 Current Budget
Beginning of Year Balance	\$12,137.73	\$19,075.64	\$19,075.64
Income			
Club Membership Dues	\$2,118.21	\$2,124.00	\$2,047.72
Associate Member Dues	\$1,100.00	\$1,400.00	\$1,596.52
Merchandise Sales	\$550.00	\$250.00	\$355.27
Miscellaneous Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
GLOW Income	\$1,278.40	\$0.00	\$20,658.46
Gathering Income	\$7,865.96	\$8,000.00	\$3,533.90
Total Income	\$12,912.57	\$11,774.00	\$28,191.87
Expenses			
Advertising Expense (<i>Village D-Light</i>)	\$1,580.00	\$1,580.00	\$395.00
Federal Tax Fees	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Bank Service Charges	\$134.29	\$50.00	\$0.00
Board Expenses	\$469.23	\$1,400.00	\$784.91
Contribution/Donations	\$1,600.00	\$0.00	\$12,000.00
Gathering/GLOW Expenses	\$882.19	\$7,000.00	\$4,700.25
Merchandise Shipping	\$245.28	\$125.00	\$275.29
Merchandise Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$57.51
Postage and Delivery	\$0.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
Professional Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$132.14
Web Site	\$773.77	\$750.00	\$260.85
Club Development Activities	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$0.00
Zoom	\$249.90	\$250.00	\$349.80
Total Expenses	\$5,974.66	\$11,665.00	\$19,115.75
Net Income	\$6,937.91	\$109.00	\$9,076.12
Balance	\$19,075.64	\$19,184.64	\$28,151.76

From Ms. Lit Town

By Melinda Seegers, Department 56

Dear NCC collectors and friends:

Let me start by wishing each and everyone a very happy holiday season! Hopefully, by now, you are putting the final touches on each of your village displays. Now take some time to sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labor – what do you like about this year's display that you didn't do last year? Did you take pictures? Photos can be very helpful when trying to build next year's display. (Don't trust your memory!) I think that it's kind of fun to make some changes every year, it keeps things fresh and your visitors will love looking for those changes in your display.

We were pleased to be included in the grand opening of the Enesco Gallery and Gift Shop in Memphis, TN on November 16, 2023. The Gallery includes the largest collection of Department 56 lighted pieces and accessories that have been designed and manufactured over the years. When the company was started in 1976 we began a collection, holding back one of every piece that was designed. These pieces were put into an archive and stored in a warehouse. Over time, a few pieces have either broken or were lost. This past summer we went through the hundreds of cartons choosing the most popular pieces to display at the Gallery. As you enter the Gallery you are greeted by the original six ceramic pieces that comprised the first offering back in 1976. It seems appropriate that we honor these, they are the roots of our company. Each of these special six pieces is displayed on a pedestal with an acrylic protective cube covering each piece. To the right, you can enjoy a newly produced video that shows how these pieces were designed and manufactured. Also in this room are examples of some of our early giftware pieces, special Dickens' Village pieces and examples of some of our more memorable giftware. It is a pictorial history of our company.



A huge pyramid of Snow Village pieces (arranged chronologically) gives the collectors a good look at how the pieces have changed in the last 48 years. Our factories have learned to add more details, use other mixed media attachments, decals, lighted window fronts, sound, animation, etc. to create some of the best pieces for collectors to add to their collections. From there you will see the Dickens' Village display, and some special vignettes that call out some of your favorite Dickens' pieces in the last 39 years. We have the Alpine Village, New England Village, Christmas in the City, North Pole, the Grinch Village, Mickey's Merry Christmas Village, Peanuts, Harry Potter and Downton Abbey.

For the opening weekend, we were delighted to have two of our Village artists on hand to sign the pieces that were designed exclusively for the Gallery. Scott Enter signed *Christmas at Graceland* and Tom Bates signed the *Lisa Marie Plane*. Right now both of these pieces are only available at Graceland.



Lisa Marie Plane.



Christmas at Graceland.



Tom Bates signing pieces.



Scott Enter signing pieces.



Scott Enter with NCC Region 9 Representative Julie Jacky and husband Steve.

So whether you are an Elvis fan or a Village fan, these two pieces are must have items to add to your collection.

With Christmas right around the corner, that means that the January introductions are scheduled to be released in just a few weeks. In October we got a sneak peek at some of the new Halloween Village pieces, Snow Village and Dickens' Village pieces for 2024. In January we will be adding some of the new licensed items – and there are some good ones coming!

'Til next time, stay safe and happy collecting!

Melinda Seegers

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Christmas Traditions from Around the World

Excerpts from various sites

Christmas Pickle

The Christmas pickle is a German-American Christmas tradition. A decoration in the shape of a pickle is hidden on a Christmas tree, with the finder receiving either a reward or good fortune for the next year. There are a number of different origin stories attributed to the tradition, including one originating in Germany. This theory has since been discounted, and it is now thought to be a German-American tradition created in the late 19th century. In fact, the New York Times reported that out of 2,057 Germans polled, YouGov determined 91% were unaware of the legend.



Giving Poinsettias in Mexico

Poinsettias, which bloom in winter, are indigenous to central America, specifically to southern Mexico around Taxco del Alarcon and the state of Oaxaca. A Mexican legend tells of a girl who had nothing but a bunch of weeds to offer the baby Jesus at a Christmas Eve service. When she knelt to place the weeds by the nativity, the bouquet burst into bright red flowers. Ever since then the flowers, whose leaves are said to be shaped like the star of Bethlehem, have been known as the Flores de Noche Buena, or Flowers of the Holy Night, and become synonymous with Christmas.

Decorating Fir Trees in Europe

Pagan Europeans would bring a fir tree into the home during the winter solstice. Tree worship was common, and they would also decorate a living tree outdoors with candles and ornaments symbolizing the sun, moon and stars on the tree of life. In Scandinavia, people decorated their homes and barns with greenery for New Year to ward off evil. Since evergreens symbolize eternal life, greenery helped Europeans visualize the spring to come.

It's not known exactly when Christians began to use fir trees as Christmas trees, but the cities of Tallinn in Estonia and Riga in Latvia lay claim to the first documented use of a public tree at Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Sweden's Yule Goat

The Yule Goat has been a Swedish Christmas symbol dating back to ancient pagan festivals. However, in 1966, the tradition got a whole new life after someone came up with the idea to make a giant straw goat, now referred to as the Gävle Goat.

According to the official website, the goat is more than 42 feet high, 23 feet wide, and weighs 3.6 tons. Each year, the massive goat is constructed in the same spot. Fans can even watch a livestream from the first Sunday of Advent until after the New Year when it's taken down.



Japan

Although Christmas isn't a national holiday in Japan (an estimated one percent of the population is Christian, according to Smithsonian Magazine), its citizens still find an interesting and delicious way to celebrate. Rather than gathering around the table for a turkey dinner, families head out to their local Kentucky Fried Chicken. The tradition began in 1974 after a wildly successful marketing campaign called "Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!" or "Kentucky for Christmas!" The fast food chain has maintained its yuletide popularity, causing some people to order their boxes months in advance or stand in two-hour-long lines to get their "finger lickin' good" food.

The National Council of 56 Clubs...Is it for Me?

By Robin Hervey, NCC Membership Chair, membershipncc@ncc56.com

The following article is intended for multiple online Facebook groups at the beginning of the New Year. Most of us agree as to the importance of NCC club membership. But, have you personally ever considered multiple membership in geographically close or online clubs?

Myself and many others have benefited greatly from the variety and scope of other meetings, with programming that you choose to select based on your interest.

Our time is valuable. We become Google and YouTube experts in our attempt to absorb the ideas that will increase our knowledge and skills. In so doing, we make our villages all the more pleasurable for ourselves and those that will see them.

Everyone is welcome to browse The National Council of 56 Collectors website (NCC56.com) and see what our collectors collect and how they display their villages.

But, if you truly want to be a part of the villaging world, then you should consider becoming a member of a club.

Here's the News! By joining a local or online club, you automatically become entitled to the membership and benefits of the parent organization, the National Council of 56 Collectors, or NCC!

Our NCC Member (collector) Clubs, both local and online, have something for every level of collector. By becoming part in a club, you receive a subscription to the *Club Connection*, the NCC newsletter, which is emailed in February, April, June, August, October, and December. The *Club Connection* contains dozens of pages specifically for members of the NCC, including wonderful articles and pictures provided by our knowledgeable members and their clubs. Information from Department 56, notice of artist signings, collecting and display tips, services, news about current happenings with Department 56 as well as with our collectors throughout the country are included in this amazing newsletter.

And, as of October 16, 2023, the brand new Department 56 Gallery has opened in Memphis, Tennessee, making Graceland a destination for all of us. It's been said most everything ever produced in our villages will be on display!

As a member of an NCC Member Club, joined by the most nominal dues ever, you have the opportunity to attend and participate in annual national conventions called Gatherings (there is a separate convention/registration fee). Gatherings are a great place to connect with people

who share the same passion you possess for villaging! Meet new collectors or catch up with old friends. Find out what's new in the world of Department 56 collecting and rub elbows with their artists and executives. Attend a Make 'n Take and create something unique for your village. Enjoy the camaraderie of networking with other collectors and learning from peers that are experts in display design. There is also the opportunity to give back to charity and winning unique, one-of-a-kind buildings and artist proofs, signed by the artist.

It has been mentioned that in 2026, Department 56 will host a Gathering at Graceland at the Hotel on the property. Now is the time to get in on the action as it unfolds.

When you become part of an NCC Member Club, you get access to the expert advice and ideas from veteran villagers, as well as access to local Home Tours during different holiday seasons. If you are an Associate Member (dealer), another great benefit of becoming a member is having the opportunity to list your website on our NCC Associate Members site page. This is a wonderful place to draw exposure for your business.

We invite you to join the wonderful world of villaging in the best way...Belonging to a National Council of 56 Clubs (NCC) Member Club.

Here's how do it:

1. Go to the National Council of 56 Club's website: NCC56.com
2. Click on the 3rd link down on the left: CLUB LOCATOR.
3. Click on: TO SEE A SORTABLE LISTING.
4. Read over and choose one or more clubs that support online programming. Or, if you are within a local proximity, choose an In Person club. With either option, request a response. Choose several! There is benefit to creating options for yourself.
5. Await their reply for membership information.
6. Waiting too long? Contact Robin Hervey, NCC Membership Chair, membershipncc@ncc56.com

Connecting with Our Clubs

REGION 1

Club Lamplighters of Québec (CN)

October. We had our last meeting on October 28. The elections for the executive positions were held with most members present. The current committee was retained by unanimous consent: Linda Di Tomasso as President, Pierre Di Tomasso as Vice President and Paul Roy as Secretary-Treasurer. Our club has so many helpers that it just makes their job easier. Congratulations! We also had the pleasure of being in communication with Rosie and the Central Valley Club. Since part of our meetings were going on simultaneously, we dropped by on their Zoom call to say hi and to show some of our displays. That was fun but we all wished we were with them in California.

There were many great Halloween presentations:

Ricky created this wonderful display for his mother Lise's Disney Halloween collection. There is still plenty of room so let's hope Department 56 continues to add pieces to this wonderful collection.



Ricky and Lise's Disney Halloween display.

Jean-Claude Forand presented the story of the Satis Manor and Miss Havisham's self-imposed exile and seclusion in the literary classic *Great Expectations* from Charles Dickens. Very interesting.



Jean-Claude Forand's display.

Diane and Jean-Claude Forand also presented a spooky Halloween display using directional lighting.



Diane and Jean-Claude Forand display.

Linda spoke of the history of Christmas luminaries.



Linda's Christmas luminaries.

November. Our Christmas party was held on Friday, November 24. We had a buffet style meal with a substantial portion of appetizers and cocktails. Santa was also very generous this year since we had gifts for everyone. We thank our sponsors Michel and Diane Bourgeois for many of the gifts.



Some of the members at the Christmas Party.

Jean-Claude brought a pretty North Pole vignette to add to the decorations.



Jean-Claude's North Pole display.

Ginette talked about her Bethlehem village, a gift from Ricky. Purchased in the early nineties from the Sears Christmas catalogue, it was the first of many village pieces he acquired. It was his inspiration for

collecting and it brought him much joy throughout the years.



Ginette's Bethlehem display.

Happy Holidays to everyone!

The Village Elves Club of Quebec (CN)

Lyne Lange set up her Christmas village during "Christmas in July", because she wanted to admire it before leaving for Florida for the winter. Here are some pictures of her village. If you want to see more, we encourage you to visit our website "Les Elfes du Village".





REGION 2

Annapolis Villagers (MD)

In the recent issue of the *Village D-Lights* magazine, the visits to the homes of The Annapolis Villagers members Pete and Trudi Baer and Dean and John Stevenson during the bus tour conducted at the Golden Glow of Christmas Past Convention & NCC Gathering in August were recognized. In the "Historic Ellicott City Village Home Tour" article, Leigh Gieringer (Managing Editor) and Judy Severance (NCC *Club Connection* Editor) describe (with excellent photos) in detail the visits to the homes during the bus tour. The article characterized the village displays as stunning. In the "News from the NCC" article, Brandon Taylor (NCC President), Anna McPherson (NCC Vice President) and Jeffrey Kirchner (NCC Secretary) provide a recap of *The 2023*

Golden Glow of Christmas Past Convention & NCC Gathering that took place in August. The article mentioned that the first villaging experience at the Gathering began with the bus tour of the homes and noted that both homes had mind-blowing village displays.

During the November membership meeting, the Village Display Exposition was held. Nine displays were entered. Each entrant was entered into a drawing for two \$25 gift certificates for *The Forget-Me-Not Factory* in Ellicott City, MD. The winners were Stella Angelucci and Rosetta Clarke.

At the November meeting, President Dean Stevenson presented the annual donation of \$500 to American Legion Post 175 in Severna Park, MD. The donation shows our appreciation to the Legion for allowing us to use the hall at no charge for meetings and activities. The donation also reflects the Villagers support for organizations that provide services and assistance to veterans, military personnel, families, and local community. Michelle Cavegn, Legion Manager, accepted the donation on behalf of the Legion. She thanked The Annapolis Villagers and told us our donation will again help the Post continue to support Veterans so that "No Veteran is forgotten".

The club is looking forward to the annual Christmas Party in December and the House Tours in January.

Garden State Village Collectors (NJ)

October. Guests from the Department 56 Villagers of Central PA club and the Heritage Treasures Collectors' Club of Long Island club joined us for our meeting at Ferris Brothers on Sunday, October 8. It was a fun-filled informative and entertaining afternoon. Following lunch everyone enjoyed the demos which included Pennsylvania club members Tricia and Howard McConahay, featuring trees including how to make Palm trees, and enhancing sisal and other trees with festive decorations. Ed Anderson, from the PA club, also focused on trees and talked about using dried Sedum plant blossoms for trees after painting them. Nancy and Steve Mattson, from the Long Island club, displayed the AirBright Lighting System for our villages and Jeffery showed various items that can be used in our

villages from different sources. There were raffles and prizes as well as a silent auction.



Sheldon brought many beautiful Advent calendars and invited everyone to take some home. Thank you, Bill, for your generosity. The main event was a Make 'n Take of a holiday lantern, followed by the drawing of winning tickets for today's prizes. As always, it was an enjoyable afternoon of villaging fun.



Holiday lanterns.

Georgian Bay Villagers (CN)

October Display Pictures



November. Sunday, November 12 found us meeting at Carol Donatucci's home once again. Thank you, Carol, for hosting our meeting and thank you to all who contributed to our grazing table. Jeffery welcomed our two guests, Jeff and Camille, Etsy Shop owners from Easton, PA, who spoke about their resale shop. During our general business meeting Jeffery and Donna spoke about the opening of the Enesco Gift Gallery that they attended in Tennessee. Jeffery also showed photos of some of the new 2024 Department 56 introductions and said that there will be more additions announced in January followed by surprising everyone when he announced that he and Chris will be moving to Texas in February. Bill



Amy Eves' Peanuts vignette.



One of Cherie Sano's Mickey's Pumpkintown display.



Norm and Hilary Redpath's Nightmare Before Christmas display.



The other Cherie Sano's Mickey's Pumpkintown display.



Norm and Hilary Redpath's Sleepy Hollow display.



Norm and Hilary Redpath's Day of the Dead display.



Martha Jack's Sleepy Hollow display.



Martha Jack's Halloween display.



Martha Jack's Zombies Go for Tacos display.

Heritage Treasure's Collectors' Club of LI (NY)

October. At the October meeting Steve LaMantia explained about the different sizes of trains and showed us different items that you can purchase from Red Lion Depot a store on Ebay where you can get items to help you make your street, parking lots etc. come to life.

November. The club collected 72 pounds of can food for Long Island Cares a local food bank. This is the second year we have done this to help the community. We also had a Make 'n Take day. Donna R. showed us how to make 3D Trees from a kit and Nancy M. showed us how to make palm trees. Not her idea—a shout out to Trisha and Howard McConahay from Central PA 56ers who showed her to make them at the mini gathering Region 2 had in September.



3D Trees by Donna.



Palm trees by Nancy.

Plans are underway for their annual Holiday luncheon on December 16 and wondering what games Nancy has in store for them. They will also be having a secret Santa accessory exchange. The members would like to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukkah and a Happy New Year.

Trillium Village Collectors (CN)

June. Our traditional May meeting was held on June 4. A few people presented summer vignettes. The activity involved guessing the names of spring/summer flowers from the clues provided. Seed packets were handed out.



September. On September 17, TVCC gathered to celebrate Halloween/ Fall. With the large turnout and 11 displays, it was like the meetings we used to have in the past. One of the best parts was the display makers talking about their displays. Always entertaining and informative. The quiz about Halloween gave everyone something to think about. Really—the original Jack o lantern was a turnip? Display hints and hacks suggested materials and techniques that could be used in your displays...bottle caps, resin for ponds and gumdrops and holiday themed straws for roads, pathways, or walls to name a few. Of course, the food was great. So good to meet in person.

Displays at the September meeting:





The Halloween Spirit has a made an apperance in several places in Richard J's home.



A couple of Richard's displays.



Another of Richard's displays.



Tyler C. bringing the Halloween Spirit into his home!



Tyler's Halloween decorations.

Halloween displays from members homes:

Halloween Display Bases from Stephen Pepin. Showcase Displays on Etsy. Cherie S. got these displays for our Pumpkintown Disney Village. We worked with Stephen to design 2 slightly different display pieces in a great brown color that fit the fall/ Halloween theme. This is not a final display of buildings but just placed to show how it looks. For next Halloween, we will have a polished and completed scene.



Cherie's Pumpkintown display.



Another of Tyler's displays.

Celebrating the fall harvest at Dennis and Ruth's. Then the witches came and took over the allotted display area. Nasty witches!



Dennis and Ruth's fall display.



Close-up of Sue's Snowbabies display.



Dennis and Ruth's Halloween display.

Gail and John H. have the Grim Reaper and his motorcycle reeking havoc in their village.



Overview of Sue's display.



Gail and John's Grim Reaper display.

Winter/Christmas displays:

From Sue B.:

Snowbabies are ready to have fun now and Old Man Winter is just around the corner, their smiling faces always help me get ready for the season.

I've had this blanket for many years, and it was purchased on one of my many trips to Florida with Peggy. Those were the days when we spent most of our time looking for D56 items to fill in our collections.

The blanket appears on the sofa every winter and is a beautiful throw!

From Gail and John:

We inherited this old stereo cabinet years ago and removed the electronics that didn't work. We have always used it for a village display, but really, it's just a bulky tabletop. Back in September we had the idea to cut out the front panels and replace them with glass or plexiglass.

We took off the dusty pleated fabric that covered the speaker area and put the wire mesh aside and moved on to getting rid of the inner wood shelves. Well, some of the insides were very glued on and so after some fun with a hammer and chisel, and a lot of perseverance over a few weekends, we finally managed to completely gut the inside.

We attached the plexiglass to the front of the cabinet with turn buttons, like you find on the back of picture frames. Then we layered in the Styrofoam sheets.

We decided to display our North Pole village, so we don't have to change it so soon. The cabinet looks so much better now, and it is a lot more useful.



Before the "remodel".



After the "remodel".

Cherie S.

I don't have a vast collection of Snowbabies but some of them grab me with their simplicity and message. This one fit in with my gingerbread collection as well.

How could you go wrong with milk and cookies for Santa.



Cherie's Snowbabies display.

REGION 3

No report 🙄.

REGION 4

Magnolia 56ers (MS)

Well, it's been a hot minute since the Magnolia 56er's have reported in. Life just seems to happen sometimes. Gail and Joe Garbo hosted our August meeting for a cute Make 'n Take session. In Gail's quest for donations to one of her favorite causes, a no-kill animal rescue group, she has been able to land us some cute containers that bottles of rum come in. If you recall, last year we made a cute mini vignette with one of these. So, y'all visit your local liquor stores to see if they carry Pyrat rum, as apparently, they take the bottles out of the packaging and discard them. Here are a couple of our creations. Being her creative self (I wish I had her knack for that) we also turned a grape stem into a tree! Who'd a thunk, right?



Vignette from a rum bottle.



Gail creating a tree from a grape stem.

A couple of weeks ago, we met at Richard Puckett's home. He "treated" (no tricks were involved) us to a Fall-o-ween with all his decorations and Snow Village Halloween village displays and a great lunch of Firehouse Subs while we enjoyed watching the NCC's Mini Gathering, "Lighting Our Way Home".



One of Richard's displays.



Another of Richard's displays.

These two got me inspired and I managed to get my Halloween village out of the attic, without killing myself and set up my small display.



One Regina Birdwell's displays.



Another of Regina's displays.

The Village Landlords (FL)

September. George Fells, created a very enjoyable and enlightening demonstration on his remarkable talent of Styrofoam sculpturing at our September 24 meeting. It was amazing and his creations were included in our prizes.



Bonnie Eichholtz Halloween Open House:



October. During the month of October we had two Halloween Open Houses. Then on October 22, we celebrated our 32nd Anniversary and had our Halloween party, costume contest and Halloween Vignette competition.

Halloween Party and 32nd Anniversary Celebration:



First Prize Halloween Vignette.



Second Prize Halloween Vignette.



Bill's display.

REGION 5

Ducky 56ers (IL)

In October the Ducky's held their event at Gloria and Bill Mudd's house. Their village and decorations inside and outside are just fantastic. Everyone enjoyed good food and had a great deal of fun. Here are some pictures of his village and outside decorations.



Bill's display.



Bill's display.

Our next activities will be in December.

Queen City Villagers (OH)

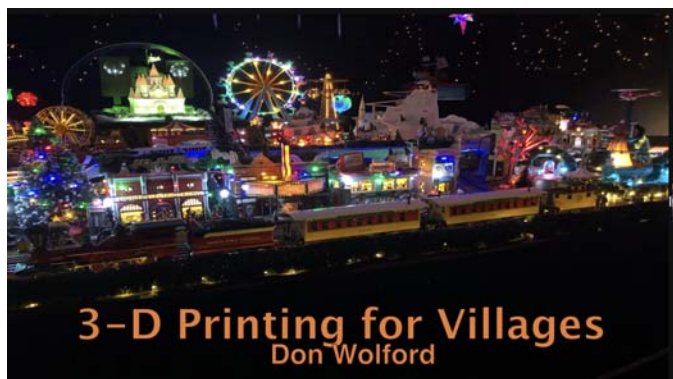
November. Our November event was our 4th annual Trunk 'n Show! Event was moved from October to November this year so themes were mixed from fall to winter. Members create displays in the trunk or rear of their vehicle—similar to Halloween Trunk 'n Treats that so many areas are doing now. We have a lot of fun each year.



Second City Collectors (IL)

October. At our October meeting club member Don Wolford presented and discussed 3D printers and the items you could make for your village displays. It was very informative. You can see it on YouTube - Magical731.

These are some slides from Don's PowerPoint presentation.

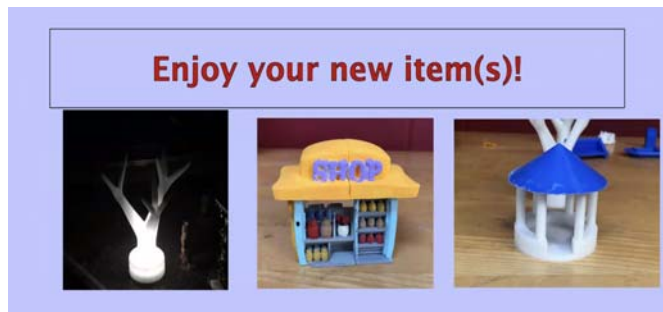


Why 3-D printing?

- Create items not commercially available.
- Create replacement parts (flags, signs, etc.)
- Add detail.
- Save \$\$\$ on volume items (landscaping, set decoration, peeps).
- Opportunities for creativity!



Things you can print in 3D.



Club member, Dan Mercurio showed us his Spooky Halloween display.



Dan's display.

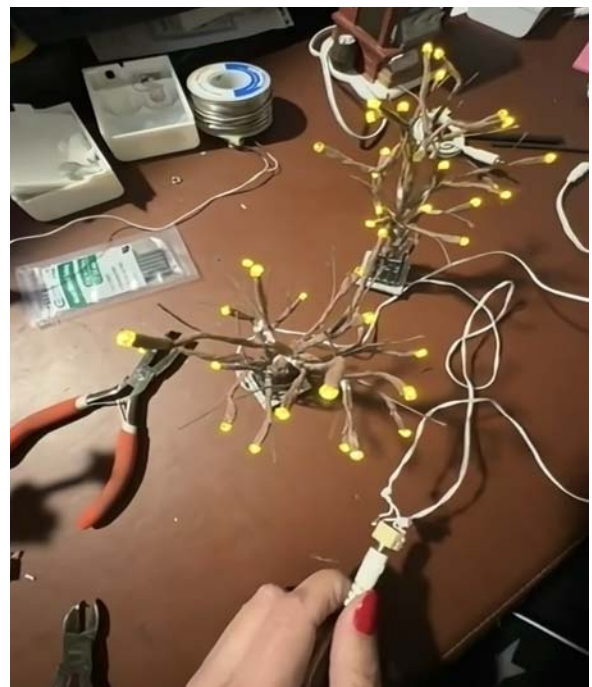


Dan's display.



Dan's display.

November. At our November meeting, club member, Anna McPherson did an excellent job of showing us how to remove battery boxes from Department 56 accessories and how string a group of accessories together. This process allows for combining several pieces together like streetlights. Also removing battery boxes frees up display space and the frustration of hiding these boxes in our displays.





Several club members went to the Grand Opening of the Enesco Museum and Gift Shop in Graceland, Memphis, TN. It was a great event, and several members thought the historical display of Department 56 was amazing.

REGION 6

No report 🙄.

REGION 7

No report 🙄.

REGION 8

Arkansas Villagers (AR)

October. Our meeting was fairly small due to many prior engagements. We discussed the upcoming opening of the Enesco gallery, and who would be in attendance. Ideas thrown back-and-forth for our annual Christmas Make 'n Take. And like all villagers say, "You can never have enough trees". We decided to build another tree this year.

November. In November several of our members were in attendance for the grand opening in the festivities around the Enesco gift gallery featuring Department 56. We look forward to making another trip over there as a club.

OKC Class Of '56 Collectors Club (OK)

The OKC Class of '56 Village Collectors Club has been busy.

Lisa Remy held her Halloween Open House before we met October 15 at the Warr Acres Library. We welcomed Cheral Crossland from the OVCC of Tulsa to teach us how to make Village Parade Floats. Dan Crossland, Brad Terry, and Mary Terry also visited from OVCC. Each member chose his/her own items to use in the floats, and the club's vast creativity was shown in the different floats. It was a great meeting. Thank you, Cheral. Dan and Cheral invited us to the OVCC's Halloween Open Houses. Ronald Cox, Lisa Remy, and Roger Remy attended and all commented on how wonderful the displays were.

Next, on November 5, Ronald and Karen Cox opened their beautiful home to the club to view their amazing Halloween displays and partake of some blood punch, fingers, toes and other interesting and tasty surprises.

We were pleased to welcome another new member, Stacy Schrank, to our club's regular monthly meeting on November 12, 2023 at the Village Library in OKC. That makes six new members since May, 2023! After the business part of the meeting, the club discussed options for our annual Christmas Party and decided to combine it with open houses. We have seven members (including four who just joined in 2023) who want to open their houses for the fun (six homes). We will travel from home to home, but at each location, we will have different small bites, and enjoy our time-honored traditions of a Dirty Santa ornament exchange and our yearly door prize giveaway where every member present wins a door prize.

Then Donna Murphy, a new club member as of May 2023, demonstrated carving two snow hills from a large block of Styrofoam and decorating the hills with trees and fences. She provided many hints and tricks on using the leftover Styrofoam as well. Next, Lisa Remy, did a recap of the Golden Glow Gathering that she and new member Bonnie Ciabattari

attended in August. Many members also shared memories of past Gatherings. Finally, club president, Ronald Cox, provided info about the newly-retired village pieces.

Our next “meeting” will be December 10 for the Christmas Open Houses/Christmas Party.

Oklahoma Village Collectors Club (OK)

October. Halloween was celebrated by the OVCC with two open houses. The first display filled Dave and Cindy’s garage. The displays and backgrounds were very well done. Next stop was the Crossland’s. As usual there was a variety of Halloween displays and lots of other spooky encounters. The group is looking forward to our Christmas open house and tour.



Display by Dave and Cindy.



Crossland’s display.



Display by David and Cindy.



Display from David and Cindy.



Crossland's display.



Crossland's display.

River City Villagers (TX)

The River City Villagers October program was a Halloween Extravaganza! Several members shared photos of their Halloween displays. The program started off with Vic and Martie Watson showing us their village. Their vignettes were beautifully

displayed with lots of trees and accessories. They added a great deal of moss to give the displays a spooky effect, and as Marty reminded us, it is also useful in hiding those pesky cords.



Next, Margaret Farris explained to us how she recycled a lighted branch to incorporate into her Halloween village. She cut it, spray painted, added bats, and finally added the ghost lights. For additional effect, she crumpled craft paper for her background. It's always great when you can repurpose something old in a new and exciting way!



Cindy Hernandez made all her own Halloween display platforms by carving and painting Styrofoam. She took the display outside and used a meat cleaver to pound the foam, then she brush-painted them shades of black and purple. She also painted the trees on a background of posterboard and added fairy lights for a spooky effect. Cindy free hand carved the stairs going up to the Cryptic Cave, then added dried flowers and foliage. Impressive!



Melissa Misslehorn had filled 15 display cabinets at the Giddings Public Library. Her theme was "Spook Street". Each cabinet had a uniquely different spooky display. A few of the themes were: Munsters and Addams family, Hansel and Gretel poisonous apples, Hocus Pocus, Cemetery Dance Party, and Wicked Witch of the West to name just a few. Melissa also created her own craggly trees. In addition to her displays, Melissa had creepy organ music (that her sister performed) playing in the background. Such an amazing display for the local community to see!



So much fun seeing so many creative ideas!

Villages by the Bay (TX)

What a great time we had for our October off month road trip to the Madisonville Christmas Co and then on to Sharon and Joe's Farm for dessert! The store is worth the trip, they have lots of beautiful displays and lots of unique décor. There is a café right there on site where we had lunch. Then it was a short drive to Sharon and Joe's farm, where we met Sharon's Babies and enjoyed a variety of desserts and beverages, before we headed back home.



Members at the Madisonville Christmas Co.



Sharon's Babies.

REGION 9

Village Idiots (OR and WA)

In November our club always meets an hour earlier than usual to put up holiday decorations in the Clackamas Community Clubhouse. The pine garlands with lights, the Christmas tree with "presents", and beautiful wreaths make the hall look so festive. After that we had a chili feed with baked potatoes, bread, and pumpkin pie. It's so fun! There's always a great turn out.



Village Idiots chili feed after decorating community meeting hall.

For the program portion of the meeting, Village Idiot Jason Padden showed us how to build display tables out of PVC pipes, which are easy to take apart for storage. He also showed us how to take advantage of ordinarily unused space for displays by hanging shelves from the ceiling, or refurbishing an old table from a thrift store into multi-tiers. Jason also brought a string of large LED lights to show how they put off hardly any heat and are as bright as regular incandescent bulbs. He plans to replace all his house exterior string lights with LEDs to save money on his

power bill, and save time because they last so many years. We learned a lot.



Jason Padden demonstrates how to make display tables using PVC pipe.



Jason shows comparison between LED and incandescent exterior colored light bulbs.

Several Village Idiots couples had Halloween Open Houses: Todd and Audrey Vogel in Washington and Jeff and Mary Kay Saty in Oregon. Both homes had fa-booooo-lous displays of Department 56 full-size and medium-size Halloween villages, along with lots of other Halloween decoration figures and decor. Vogels had life-size skeletons in their formal dining room; a large glowing mummy in a bedroom; a Pirates cove treasure room that looked like it was underwater; and windows draped with Halloween backdrops that created a spooky ambiance in several rooms. At Satys', guests entered by going under a ginormous hairy spider. Their TV/bar room had a tall scary animatronic vampire "bartender";

the patio had two motion-activated singing “Dueling Banjos” skeletons; and display shelves filled with every Department 56 Halloween series and all the new releases.



The Vogel's coffee table Halloween centerpiece with mesh ribbon wreath by Debbie Shelgren.



The Vogel's waterfront scene with ships and buildings.



Jeff and Mary Kay Saty host a Halloween Open House.



The Vogel's seashore village landscaped with pebbles and moss.



The Saty's living room shelf units with many Department 56 Halloween series.

John and Dana Egle also put up their double-car garage-size Halloween display with trains and railroad tracks running all through it. John loves animated pieces with blinking lights, so he always has a large carnival section. Dana displays antique Halloween collectibles, tchotchkes, books and cards.



John and Dana Egle with their Halloween villages and railroads.

October 14 the Village Idiots (who do the displays at St. Mary's) got together for breakfast at Lynn and Dick Nichols' house to participate in the Fall 2023 NCC Virtual Mini Gathering. Afterwards they put together bags of Halloween treats to give to the students at St. Mary's. The candy treats were made possible by a contribution from Cedar Mill Safeway and a financial donation from the Village Idiots.



Village Idiots meet to watch NCC Mini Gathering, and assemble bags of Halloween treats.

Hal Beighley changes out the village display shelf in the hallway of his retirement residence almost every month. He usually features one of the special collection churches from Dept. 56. This month he chose the Cathedral Church of St. Mark. For

Halloween he put out the Disney Halloween Village Haunted House with all its adorable Disney characters. So many people came by to see it, he had a hard time keeping the candy dish full.



Hal Beighley's Disney vignette for Halloween.

We are very sad to tell you of the passing of long-time member Bev Takahashi on November 2, 2023. Bev and Dave have been members of the Village Idiots for over 25 years. They often attended Dept 56 national gatherings. Many of you were lucky enough to meet Bev here in Portland in 2017 when our club held the Village Idiots Fall Fling. The first night's "Icebreaker" get-together and dinner was at their home. She will be greatly missed by us all.



Bev Takahashi with husband Dave.

Our club has lots of get-together events on the agenda in December and January. Seven homes have scheduled Open Houses so far.

We wish all of our fellow villagers across the US and Canada, a joyous holiday, creating and sharing your beautiful displays. Happy Holidays!

REGION 10

California 56 Collectors (CA)

As with most clubs this time of year, the California 56 Collectors have been quite active. An outstanding Zoom meeting combined with a Department 56 Signing event, fabulous Halloween Open Houses, and an over the top Holiday Party for 70 filled the calendar! And, now comes Christmas! The December 16 Zoom meeting will take place live at the homes of Betty Roberts and David Urban, revealing their unbelievable displays. We realize many online meetings can be broadcast from sites that are of interest to the satellite members, as long as WiFi exists. Robin and Pablo will host their Open House December 9, displaying the Train Tree. We hope to share many other member homes on our club's FaceBook page.

Fom our club to yours, we wish you and those you love the very best of the Holiday Season!



Debbie Shelgren having fun at City Lights.



Invited to the amazing world of Judyth Rischall.



A feast for the eyes at Marianne Burton's.



To see it is to believe Julie Rose's outside build.



Holiday Party like none other!



This vignette was made by Jeffery Kirchner at the Golden Glow.



Can you imagine a room just for desserts?



Hilarious gift exchange circles the room.



Robin Hervey's Train Tree

Central Valley 56 Collectors (CA)

October. Our October meeting plans were to announce our Fall/Halloween display contest winners and have house tours. Mark Snyder and his staff selected the winners from the anonymous display photos that Eleanor sent to him.



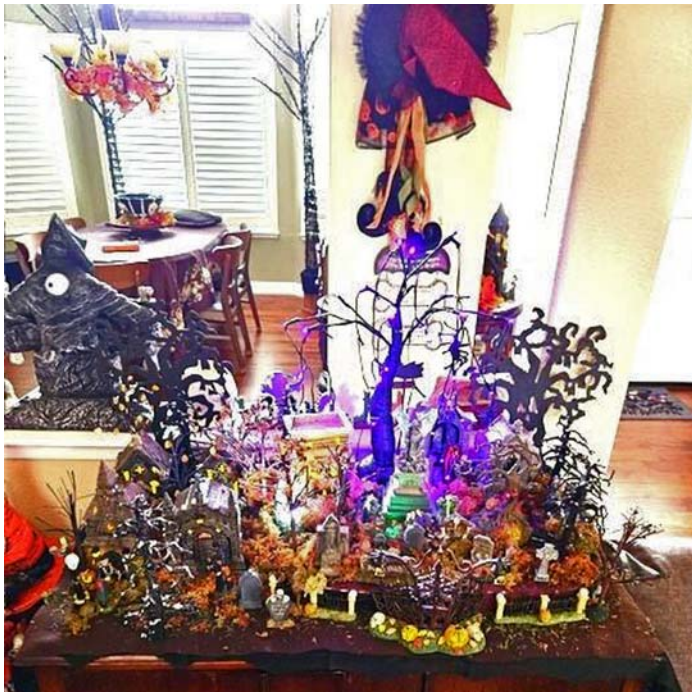
Grand Prize: Adeline Logsdon.



Honorable Mention: Mary VanderBloomen.



Additional display photo by Mary.



Runner-up: Joe Gozzo.

Halloween displays by Eleanor Swiecki:



Christmas display by Mirela Gaboreanu:

There are 2 Horses, 5 Cats and 23 Dogs in her display. Sorry, during newsletter creation I did not have enough room to include closeups so folks could count. That would have been fun to find them.





Club 56 (CA)

Members of Club 56 attended a lovely reception hosted by Cliff's family on November 18, 2023 at the Daw Home in Dublin, California. Before his passing in late December of 2022, Cliff started work on an ambitious, large, beautiful and unique Dickens' Village that eventually took up most of the living room of the Daw home. Cliff's health did not allow him to finish the village, which was eventually finished by his daughter, Wendy, and grandson, Devin. The Daw villages in recent years, including the Dickens' Village viewed by club members on November 28, contained small Star Wars and other small figures placed on roof tops and other spots around the village. Finding these small figures has always been a delight for viewers. This tradition started many years ago for Cliff's children and now his grandson is carrying on the tradition.

Cliff was a very early member of Club 56 and a dedicated and enthusiastic Department 56 collector and village builder. Cliff was always a gentleman, an active church member and volunteer, a former US Army captain, and a civil engineer who worked for the California Department of transportation for more than 41 years.



Carly and Wendy Daw.



Cliff's Dickens' display that his daughter and grandson finished.



Another view Cliff's Dickens' display.

Club 56 again created a Christmas Display at the Library in Pleasanton, California. Thanks to long time club member Susan Thomas for securing the opportunity for the club to have a Christmas display for the entire community to enjoy for the Christmas Holiday. Ken Garcia loaned his North Pole collection with accessories and Wayne and Sue Cunningham loaned part of their Dickens' collection to create a wonderful Christmas display. Jaylene added fantastic backdrop created by a former member of the club, Shirley. Wayne, Ken, Jaylene, and Jim exercised their talents and put this display together.



Display at the library.



L-R: Jim Muir, Jaylene Wilson, Wayne Cunningham, Ken Garcia is seated.

Southwest Villagers (AZ)

September. Southwest Villagers in Phoenix, AZ celebrated our 30th Anniversary on September 30, 2023. It was a wonderful evening of celebrating our many memories, village fun and special times throughout the years.

In July 1993, our first meeting was held in Patty Duncan's living room. Three months later the group had outgrown Patty's house and moved to meeting in restaurants and then found the perfect large meeting room in an office building. At the end of our first year, we had 36 memberships on the books and we enjoyed 14 Christmas Open Houses that holiday season. At the end of the 2nd year, we had grown to 100 members and 17 open houses on our holiday home tour. Thirty years later, we are so pleased to have 50 memberships in the club.

It's been an amazing 30 years of workshops, display contests, annual picnics and Christmas parties, over 275 open houses and many road trips over the years. We are proud of our four award winning club displays at National Conventions: "Alcatrazle" at the 2003 Halloween on San Francisco Bay Golden Gate Gathering; "Hooray for Hollywood" at the 2004 California Gold Gathering, "Happy H-Alamo-ween" in 2009 at the San Antonio Region Gathering and "California Route 1-derful" at the 2015 California Gold Gathering. Plus, we've co-hosted 2 National Gatherings and 2 Arizona State gatherings. In 2011, we published a special memory book of the gathering, "Happy Trails to Arizona." Everyone who attended could purchase this special memento of the fun times had during the convention. We believe this is the only time a special memory book has been published after any convention.



2011 Happy Trails Gathering committee.



Club winning display at the 2015 Gathering.

In 1998, we participated in the Arizona State Fair by setting up over 30 vignette displays in the Exhibition Hall. During these 30 years, we have set up a North Pole Village at the main Phoenix Ronald McDonald House for 25 years; 10 years at the smaller RMD house at the Phoenix Children's Hospital and raised thousands of dollars for our designated charities each year. In 2015, we won

"Best Newsletter" in a NCC Newsletter Contest and Melinda Seegers and her hubby, Mark, came to Arizona to visit and celebrate with us.

We are very proud of our many talented and creative members who have individually won display contests at National Conventions and the monthly NCC vignette themed contests. We are also proud that we have several of our members who regularly contribute to the national magazine for collectors *Village D-Lights* and several others who have also submitted articles which were printed in different issues. Many of our members have taught workshops and classes at National and State Conventions, and regularly at our local Department 56 dealer, Millie's Hallmark.

So many memories. So much fun. And best of all, so many life-long friendships!



Members at the 30th Anniversary Celebration.

October. On October 14, "Oktoberfest" hosted by Jeanne Freeman, Mike and Nancy Sanders was just fantastic. They thought about every detail to celebrate this fun event. Outstanding village displays by Mike. Yummy German treats and foods by Jeanne and Nancy. And all 3 of them added the festive decorations inside and out.

Jeanne's village displays included a complete Alpine village, Dickens, Snow Village Santa Comes Town, North Pole Elfland and Christmas in the City in San Francisco.



Jeanne's Elfland display.



Jeanne's San Francisco display.



Jeanne's Alpine and Dickens' display.

We had two Halloween Open Houses on October 21. Both open houses were awesome with Halloween decor and displays.

Sue and Jeff Chretien's displays:



Skeleton playing the piano display reaching for a drink.



Tribute display to the Happy Trails Gathering.



Display with background wall and inset lighting.

Mary Jewell's displays:



Large Halloween display.



Disney Halloween display.



Display in a coffin.

Village Addicts Anonymous (CA)

Village Addicts Anonymous' October meeting featured a presentation by Alita Rabe on creating water for our displays. One product called Ice Crystals creates a great frozen pond look when sprayed on a mirror. Alita suggested purchasing paper products at aquarium stores. The glossy paper makes a good looking water. She also posted by email the types of water and supplies discussed at the meeting.

Vignettes for October:



North Pole *Beard Barbershop* created by BJ Allen won by Linda Pressman.

October featured Halloween Open Houses



Alpine Village *St. Nicholas Kirche* created by Dayleen Dutcher won by Linda Pressman.



Grace Pritchett.



Judyth and Jerry Rischall.



Snow Village Halloween *Mordecai Mansion* created by Cora Smith won by Marianne Burton.



Marianne Burton.



Paula and David Vaccaro.

INTERNATIONAL REGION

Christmas Village Club of the Netherlands

After the annual Club Gathering at the end of September, we visited five garden centers with the members to look at their displays and make new purchases for the new season. In the Netherlands we can only buy our houses in a garden center or of course via an online store or shop.

We were the first to visit Amsterdam garden center Osdorp on Sunday, October 15. More than 220 members were present here and it was a very nice large group of like-minded people. The Ottenhof family welcomed us in the garden cafe with coffee, tea and something tasty. In addition, six Lemax houses were raffled among those present.



We then visited the department together and enjoyed the various scenes of Lemax, Luville, Efteling, Jagherdorfer and MyVillage, among others. In addition to the garden center employees working on the display, the Christmas village builders (<https://www.youtube.com/@dekerstdorpbouwers>) also members of our KerstdorpClub, worked on the Lemax display.

See photos: <https://kerstdorpclub.nl/2023/10/11/verslag-tuincentrum-meeting-osdorp-2023/>

In this garden center we also saw the new Lemax Norman Rockwell series in real life for the first time and were very surprised with this addition. Unfortunately, there is still no Department 56 for sale in the Netherlands, but this series comes close

to this for the Dutch. All members received a 35% discount on everything related to Christmas villages when paying for their new purchases. A beautiful and generous gesture!

Photos can be found: <https://myalbum.com/album/fyCLAPNh4y6B9E/>

On Sunday, October 22, we traveled with more than 100 members to Oegstgeest in South Holland and there we visited the Bosrand garden center. Here too, Mickey and Boy from the Christmas Village Builders worked on the entire Lemax Display.



<https://kerstdorpclub.nl/2023/10/21/verslag-tuincentrum-meeting-de-bosrand-oegstgeest-2023/>

After the welcome with coffee, tea and something tasty, we visited the display and saw many members buying beautiful new items. Members receive a 20% discount at the checkout.

Photos can be found: <https://myalbum.com/album/RiNcXcALhLuodk/>

On Sunday, October 29, we traveled with more than 80 members to Lochem in Gelderland and there we visited Intratuin Lochem. Members of our Christmas Village Club work there and have invited us to visit for the second year in a row. We are also welcomed here with coffee, tea and something tasty and our member can give away six nice Lemax prizes on behalf of the employer.



<https://kerstdorpclub.nl/2023/10/29/verslag-tuincentrum-meeting-intratuin-lochem-2023/>

After this reception we go through the beautiful garden center to the Lemax and Intratuin own brand department. Here too, members received a nice discount and this time on the entire range of the garden center, not just on the Christmas villages.

Photos can be found: <https://myalbum.com/album/oLGQnq5SwwgZqZ/>

On Sunday, November 5, we traveled with more than 100 members to Hoogwoud in North Holland and visited the De Boet garden center. Members are welcomed in the garden care with coffee, tea and a delicious piece of gingerbread. After our chat we will look for the Christmas village department together again. There you can see various villages including Lemax, Spooky Town, Luville, Efteling and Dickensville.



<https://kerstdorpclub.nl/2023/11/04/verslag-tuincentrum-meeting-de-boet-2023/>

The members always enjoy themselves immensely in this beautiful looking garden center and people in the Netherlands are slowly getting into the Christmas spirit and you can clearly see that here. In addition to the nice discount at checkout, there is also a nice gift waiting for all members at the cash register.

Photos can be found: <https://myalbum.com/album/pqg69xm4GZZbVe/>

And as a final meeting, we traveled to the Intratuin Ter Aar garden center in South Holland on Sunday, November 12. Here too, more than 100 members made the effort to come here. As promised, this is a very attractive garden center with a beautiful display of Lemax, but also of Luville, Efteling and Dickensville.



<https://kerstdorpclub.nl/2023/11/12/verslag-tuincentrum-meeting-intratuin-ter-aar-2023/>

With coffee and tea, a local chocolate delicacy was also waiting for us and all attendees received a foldable sheet from MyVillage. After this we made a completely new tour through the garden center and it is really clear that enthusiasts have been at work here.

Photos can be found: <https://myalbum.com/album/im4MxgYWN2VEVV/>

I hope I have been able to give you a nice picture of our activities this season. All that remains is to build a 45 meter long Christmas village in the Dome Cathedral in Haarlem, but we will save that for a next edition!

We wish you a very Merry Christmas from the Netherlands!

On behalf of Floris en Ramon, Jan
www.kerstdorpclub.nl

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

ARIZONA

Millie's Hallmark

5027 E. Elliot Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85044
Phone: 480-893-3777
www.millieshallmark.com
Email: customerservice@millieshallmark.com

Millie's Hallmark is a family-owned business, known for its extensive selection of fine gifts, collectibles, greeting cards, gift wrap, and spectacular Christmas items—including Department 56 villages. They strive to provide customers with the highest standard of service available, as well as the finest product selection in the Phoenix, Arizona area.



Pattie Murphy is the proprietor of Village Realty & Landscaping, a wonderful business specializing in providing those special miniatures that make displays come to life. She was a regular at many of the earlier Gatherings (most recently making a very welcomed reappearance at the 2018 Sweet Home Chicago Gathering) and is great at demonstrating how to bring life to village settings by adding miniatures that she personally hand-picks and manufactures, plus other items readily available to the village collector.

CALIFORNIA

City Lights

Brian Young
1212 Knoxville St.
San Diego, CA 92110
Phone: 800-262-5335
Email: info@citylightscollectibles.com
www.citylightscollectibles.com



City Lights Collectibles, Southern California's largest holiday store with over 28,000 square feet of displays and product, would like to welcome you. The store is one big holiday wonderland, where children and adults alike get whisked away into the holiday spirit, viewing awe inspiring displays of villages, collectibles, wonderfully decorated trees, and trains that will blow the mind.

Hot Wire Foam Factory

216 East Laurel Ave.
Lompoc, CA 93436
Phone: 805-735-9255
Email: faqs@hwff.com
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Hot Wire Foam Factory provides professional quality foam cutting tools that make cutting EPS foam (polystyrene foam and Styrofoam) fast, fun, and easy.

ARKANSAS

All Thru the House

Janice Turnage
11316 Huron Ln.
Little Rock, AR 72211
Phone: 501-907-8999
Email: thruthethehouse@yahoo.com
Facebook Page: All Thru the House



All Thru The House is a family owned business of over 30 years located in Little Rock, Arkansas. They specialize in home décor, baby items, and collectibles. It's also part of Market Place Pharmacy... a one-stop pharmacy and gift store all wrapped up into one, if you will! They have anything you need "all through your house" including a wide variety of home décor and all of the Department 56 villages!

Village Realty & Landscaping

1840 Royal Drive
Conway, AR 72034
Phone: 501-329-4016

Knott's Berry Farm

Marketplace Emporium
8039 Beach Boulevard
Buena Park, CA 90620
Phone: 714-220-5324
www.knotts.com



The Marketplace Emporium offers an unique collection of gifts centered around the rich history of Knott's Berry Farm. Visitors can shop fine collectibles; that include Department 56 and Jim Shore's Heartwood Creek, clothing, and everyday gifts for everyone. Knott's Berry Farm's village history includes two commissioned pieces: The first for Snow Village Halloween – "Knott's Scary Farm's Billboard." The billboard celebrated Knott's annual Halloween extravaganza. The second "Knott's Berry Farm's Boysenberry Pie Stand," this piece showcases the Knott's family's World FAMOUS Boysenberry Pies.

COLORADO

St. Nick's Christmas and Collectibles

5221 So. Santa Fe Dr.
Littleton, CO 80120
Phone: 630-232-4200
Email: admin@stnicks.com
www.stnicks.com



St. Nick's is a family owned and operated Christmas store in Littleton, Colorado. In their 22 rooms they feature over 90 inspiring theme trees with thousands of ornaments and collectibles from around the world. They also specialize in artificial trees and lighting for all your decorating needs. Please come in and visit one of the most beautiful Christmas stores in America.

FLORIDA

Robert's Christmas Wonderland

2951 Gulf to Bay Blvd.
Clearwater, FL 33759
Phone: 727-797-1660
www.robertscw.com



Everyday is Christmas at Robert's Christmas Wonderland. Enter the shop and be treated to wonderful displays of Department 56 products along with many other holiday and gift items. Perfect for giving and receiving.

ILLINOIS

The Thoughtfulness Shop

102 Cass Street
Woodstock, Illinois 60098
Phone: 815-308-5417 or 815-338-5651
Email: Info@MyLittleBowPeepsShop.com
MyLittleBowPeepsShop.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/
thethoughtfulnessshop
Etsy: www.etsy.com/shop/MyLittleBowPeepsShop
Instagram: www.instagram.com/explore/tags/
mylittlebowpeepshop
Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/
MyLittleBowPeepsShop/

The Thoughtfulness Shop has existed on the Woodstock Square for over 50 years and has been a Department 56 retailer for many decades, under former ownership and it continued under Janice and Craig from March 2020 to present. In the past two years Craig has also purchased collectors private collections so our inventory contains the new pieces, and over 1,000 retired pieces in all lines. We maintain our three-tiered display on the main floor, it currently has retired North Pole, retired Snow Village, and retired Christmas in the City displayed. One of our favorite events is during the holidays having The Madrigal Carolers singing in the shop surrounding the Victorian Dickens' display.

INDIANA

Cynthia's Hallmark

Kelley Holden
1584 N. State Street
Greenfield, IN 46140
317-462-4749
Email: 1584shop@gmail.com
cynthiashallmarkstores.com



Cynthia's Hallmark prides itself on its large variety and plentiful stock of Hallmark favorites. However, at Cynthia's, you will find interesting and unique gifts for anyone. Many of your favorite lines are in stock year round at Cynthia's, including Yankee Candles, Willow Tree, Nora Fleming, Department 56, RibbonWick and WoodWick Candles, Fannie May Chocolates, Lolita Hand Painted Wine Glasses, Tervis Tumbler, and Jim Shore.

IOWA

Village D-Lights Magazine

Polly Clark, Publisher
Tandem Publishing Group
10 Lincoln Place Drive
Des Moines, IA 50312
Phone: 1-800-765-1690
Email: editor@tandempublishinggroup.com

Village D-Lights magazine is the premier publication for Department 56 enthusiasts. Published by Tandem Publishing Group, *Village D-Lights* is distributed quarterly via subscription to Department 56 collectors in the United States and Canada. The magazine focuses on the latest and most exciting news regarding the Department 56 village lines.

MARYLAND

The Forget-Me-Not Factory

Barry and Nancy Gibson
8044 Main Street
Ellicott City, MD 21043
Phone: 410-465-7355
Toll Free: 1-866-445-4879
Email: fmnf2000@yahoo.com
www.forgetmenotfactory.com

The Forget-Me-Not Factory is a store where bubbles and fairies meet to create shopping magic, both in-store and online. We are in the largest and one of the oldest buildings located in the heart of Historic Ellicott City, Maryland. Browse 3 floors loaded with items ranging from Department 56 Villages, dragons, fairies, toys, jewelry, Snowbabies, costumes, and more! Even a player piano on the 3rd floor!

MICHIGAN

Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland

Maria Sutorik
25 Christmas Lane
Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Phone: 989-652-9931
Email: msutorik@bronner.com
www.bronners.com

Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland...making Christmas memories since 1945. The Bronner family and staff hope you enjoy visiting our web site and invite you to visit our store located in Frankenmuth, Michigan's "Little Bavaria." Home to over 50,000 gifts and trims for

all seasons and reasons, Bronner's is the world's largest Christmas store.

MINNESOTA

Bachman's

6010 Lyndale Ave. S
Minneapolis, MN 55419
612-861-7600
Phone: 866-222-4626
Email: customerservice@bachmans.com
www.bachmans.com

Over 40 years ago, Bachman's and Ed Bazinet gave birth to Department 56! The company has played a very important role in the collecting of Department 56 products, collector gatherings, and so much more.

Department 56

Melinda Seegers
7400 Flying Cloud Dr., Suite 100
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
Phone: 800-548-8696
Email: MsLitTown@Dept56.com
www.department56.com

Some forty years ago, Department 56 began as part of Bachman's, a premiere retail florist in Minneapolis. Bachman's used a numbering system to identify each of its departments. The number assigned to wholesale gift imports division was, you guessed it, 56.

NEW YORK

Fitzula's Gift Shop

Bill Fitzula
140 Windermere Ave.
Greenwood Lake, NY 10925
Phone: 845-595-1550
Email: bill@fitzulas.com
www.Fitzulas.com

Fitzula's Gift Shop has strived to stay at the cutting edge of meeting the needs of their customers through their many business ventures. Fitzula's began over 52 years ago as a variety store through the efforts and vision of Bill and Rosanne Fitzula. The business subsequently evolved into a fine jewelry emporium in the 1970's and now serves as a great source for every collectible you could imagine. This family owned and operated business is well known for its small town

charm, variety of product, and superb customer service. The family's customer service credo is to *"Take your time looking around the shop and don't rush! While we are glad to see you, we are in no hurry to see you leave!"*

NORTH CAROLINA

Ann Crittenden Hallmark

1312 Bridford Parkway
Greensboro, NC 27407
Phillip Vanderveer
Phone: 336-632-4440
Email: phil@ashby3.com
www.anncrithmk.com

Ann Crittenden Hallmark has been a family owned business for 28 years. Over the years they have had as many as 13 stores, in 2015 they have downsized to two stores. Their flagship store on Bridford Parkway in Greensboro, NC opened in 1997 and is approximately 5500 square feet of retail space. They feature a display of Department 56 villages that are completely lit and accessorized appropriately and innovatively. Ann Crittenden Hallmark has their Department 56 villages displayed year-round.

Department 56 Retirees

Harry and June McGowan
Pam McGowan Ladetto
178 St. James Drive
Winston Salem, NC 27107
Phone: 248-705-0296 (June)
Phone: 248-882-1208 (Pam)
Email: hmcgo@citlink.net

Department 56 Retirees is managed by Harry and June McGowan and Gary and Sheila Andrews. Harry and June have had the greatest time with Department 56 Retirees collectors for over 25 years, after selling a small builders supply of 26 years in 1987.

PENNSYLVANIA

Christmas Tree Hill

Jason Stauffer
2801 S. George St
York, PA 17403
Phone: 717-741-2669
Email: jcstauffer@christmastreehill.com
www.christmastreehill.com



For over 40 years, Christmas Tree Hill has delivered to their customers the newest, most exciting, and most unique showcase of fine gifts, candles, collectibles, and home accessories found anywhere!

TENNESSEE

Christmas Place

2470 Parkway
Pigeon Forge, TN 37868
Tony West
Phone: 865-453-0415
Email:
Twest@christmasplace.com
www.christmasplace.com



Christmas Place is part of a family owned business that was founded by Hurshel and Marian Biggs in 1986. No visit to Pigeon Forge is complete without a visit there! Nestled in a Bavarian-style shopping village, what began as a small gift store in the Old Mill in Pigeon Forge, has grown to a complex of over 43,000 square feet of wall-to-wall Christmas!

TEXAS

Good Things for All Seasons

334 S. Main St.
Grapevine, TX 76051
Phone: 817-251-3673
Email: contactus@goodthingsforallseasons.com
www.goodthingsforallseasons.com

We are located in the beautiful historic downtown of Grapevine, Texas - quaintly nestled between Dallas and Fort Worth. Since 1998 we have been decorating the lives and homes of North Central Texas and beyond. We are a Club 56 and Gold Key Dealer for Department 56, with an incredible display of their Villages, as well as their everyday and holiday lines. Good Things For All Seasons also has a large selection of Byers' Choice Carolers and Mark Robert's Fairies. But there is so much more to our store!! So look around and stay a while. Or better yet, stop by and say hi, and you'll find out why our designers have won so many awards. Be sure to bring your camera, our village room is a showstopper! If you're just visiting online, take your time and look around. We pride ourselves on fabulous displays and great customer service. We always do our best to please our customers.

S & H Trading Post

Hazel Willis
209 W. Polk
Burnet, TX 78611
Phone: 512-756-2820
Email: sh.tradingpostandmore@gmail.com

S & H Trading Post and More is a 16,000 square foot store with an intriguing amount of merchandise to please everyone including a Man-Cave and a Christmas Everyday Room!

William Glen

116 Old Agnes Road
Weatherford, TX 76088
916-737-5616
Email: info@williamglen.com
www.williamglen.com

Where it's Christmas everyday!

Founded in 1963, William Glen, Inc. is one of the premier specialty retailers of giftware, collectibles, housewares, and Christmas decor. Our products, selection and service are among the most notable and highly regarded in the industry.



ONLINE ONLY

Showcase Displays

Stephen Pepin
www.showcase-displays.com

Stephen has over 200 Department 56 buildings, and his main collection series are Christmas in the City, Snow Village Halloween, and Winters Frost, but he also collects his favorite pieces of all the other village series that are displayed in vignette scenes.

Stephen writes the Village Workshop column for *Village D-Lights*, showing various ways to enhance displays and creating different projects. In addition, he creates store displays for Millie's Hallmark in Phoenix, AZ, where he also teaches display classes on a regular basis.

The Village Chronicler

Email: Chronicler@TheVillageChronicler.com
www.thevillagechronicler.com/

The Village Chronicler website is a free, online resource created for present and future generations of

Department 56 collectors. The website provides a wide array of background information on the company and its history along with trustworthy, insightful, and informative information, in a "real-time" format, regarding anything Village related. This site also provides the most accurate and up to date History List(s) of individual Villages including pictures, item numbers and years of availability. Every Village also includes a listing of the individual subseries' (past and present) that run in each, along with a direct linkage of all accessories to their respective buildings, product pictures, and much, much more!

The Village Chronicler is also on Facebook with real time news as it happens in the Department 56 world of collecting!

Tru-Tone

David Andora
Email: info@tru-tone.com
www.Tru-Tone.com

Tru-Tone is a lighting company providing vintage style LED lighting. Their C7 Candle Glow Bulbs are awesome in our villages especially in Dickens, older CIC, New England, Alpine, and others depending on the style of house and the look for your specific village. They sell more than just replacement bulbs they have light sets, and different styles of vintage lights.

Village Display Studio

Stephanie Stuart
512-608-8450
Email: stephaniestuartsells@gmail.com
etsy.com/shop/VillageDisplayStudio

I love sculpting village display platforms from reclaimed materials so you can easily create beautiful scenes for your village collection. Drop me a line for your suggestions and custom work requests! I'd love to hear from you!

Remember I use reclaimed materials so sometimes scuffs will be in places on the bottom completely out-of-sight. You're helping the environment and supporting my family. Thank you so much for that!



1.denotes Platinum Key Dealer designation by Department 56. These retailers provide the ultimate in selection including current and hard to find retired products. Consider visiting one of these retailers or shop one of their websites with honored reputations. Platinum Key retailers will have early or exclusive access or new Department 56 product.

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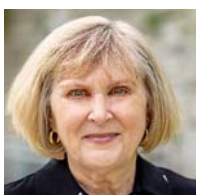
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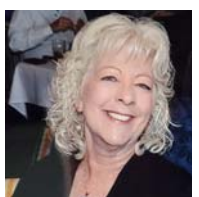
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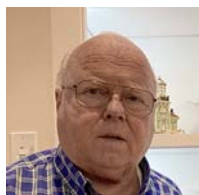


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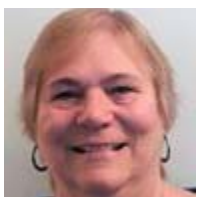
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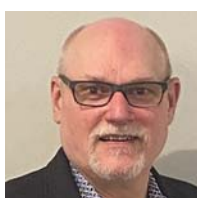
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upcoming EVENTS

Facebook Live

Melinda Seegers, Ms Lit Town, hosts a Facebook Live session with the latest introductions and news from Department 56. The sessions happen the first Thursday at 4:00 p.m. Central Time (unless otherwise announced). Check the Department 56 Facebook page for the upcoming sessions. You can find these sessions as well as other events on their Facebook page.

Next Club Connection

Articles and club activities for the next *Club Connection* are due **February 1, 2024**.



Articles contained within the *Club Connection* are solely for NCC Member Clubs. Any other use requires the express, written permission from the National Council of 56 Clubs executive board.