

Club Happenings Across the US & Canada

Can you believe that it is that time of the year again to change our clock? Yes, on March 11th we sprung-ahead. Here in the northeast we have had one of the un-snowiest winters ever. A real change from last year and most welcome.

If your club has a special event either in the future or recent past please send an email to: penny56r@aol.com and I will work it into a future Party Line. And if your local Department 56 dealer is involved or has a special event going on – I would also like that information. A few clubs have started doing this and it is a great way to get the news.

What do you have planned for St. Patrick's Day? Is your display done or did you go straight to a spring or Easter display. I combined my display into a St. Patrick's Day / spring display. Our grandchildren had fun placing all the accessories and telling me where to put the houses.

Don't forget to get your room reservation done and send in your registration form for the upcoming Chicago Gathering. This is our one event for 2012. The website for the gathering is www.chicagogathering.org.

Looking ahead to 2013 – plans are progressing nicely for the Northeast Harvest Gathering. More details will be forthcoming as they become available. There are 7 clubs involved in the planning. Pioneer Valley 56ers, North Shore Village Association, Departmental 56ers, Garden State Village Collectors, Heritage Treasures of Long Island, Delaware Valley 56ers and Department 56 Villagers of Central Pennsylvania. The hotel is the Sheraton Hotel at Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT. If there is something you would like to do as a Make-n-Take or have a seminar suggestion, send Randy Miller an email at rgmlight@penran.com. The website for the event is www.northeastharvestgathering.com. It will be updated as news becomes available.

Please remember that the link you used last year to access the NCC Bulletins on-line has been changed. This is done on a yearly basis.

Now let's check and see what some of our clubs have been up to.

Club Lamplighters of/du Québec (Canada) planned out the coming year at their January meeting. Coming up is a trip to the Sugar Shack, a spaghetti dinner in Mary, Corn Roast at the Barbe's in August, a Swap & Sell in September, and many other events. At the January meeting, Paul Roy did a presentation of his collection of different Ivory Churches. Four members, Diane Beland, Paul Roy, Anita & Nicole Poitras participated in making the Village display for the Ronald McDonald house situated in Montréal. If you happen to be in Montréal the end of March, plan to attend the 32nd Annual Miniature Show & Sale.

While the **Trillium Village Collectors Club (Canada)** does not have a formal newsletter they do have a blog that is updated frequently. Check it out - <http://www.tvcc56.blogspot.com/> - there you will find loads of photos and news of interest to one and all.

Department 56 Housing Authority (AL) had a great program in March. Members met and assembled some Department 56 puzzles. Prizes were given to the pair completing the puzzle first. I wonder if one of them was the Snowbaby puzzle. With all the various shades of blue & white this one takes quite a bit of time. Plans were made also in March to travel to an estate sale of Department 56 in Gwin, AL. The club's website is www.d56housingauthority.com.

Southwest Villagers (AZ) started their February meeting with a celebration of Arizona's 100 years of statehood. Cindy Shanks, an Arizona author, was the guest speaker. Ken Bradford, Patty Duncan, Don & Eileen Gorman and Judy Severance volunteered and put together the North Pole Display at the Ronald McDonald House. The club also welcomed new members: Barb & Denny Nicol and Eileen & Don Gorman,

Club 56 (CA) held a house tour party at Shirley's in January. In February there many things to discuss - did you have a good time on the home tours? Was it fun? What type of road trips would you like to go on? What about sharing more of our displays with the public? So many things to discuss plus have fun at the meetings.



San Diego 56ers (CA) are busy as ever with home tours and creating new village displays.

Village Addicts Anonymous (CA) held their annual White Elephant Sale meeting in February (they raised over \$500). Congratulations to member Ridi Lauritzen for her article in a recent Village D-Lights magazine on her North Pole Display. It tells how she built it from scratch and includes lots of photos of the building process. A photo was also included of her prize-winning display at the Arizona Gathering. The club has started a North Pole Village display at the Shriner's Children's Hospital in memory of Ethel Higgins. David Guerrero donated his parents North Pole Village for display in "Ethel's Village". The club's website is www.villageaddicts.com

Anita Sanford, president of the **North Florida Village Collectors (FL)** sent in this report. In November 2011, the North Florida Village Collectors Club celebrated our 15th anniversary as a club. We are located in Jacksonville, FL and have club members that also come from Gainesville, Amelia Island and Palm Coast. Mark and Anita Sanford hosted the event at their home and we had a great turnout. We had many clubbers come that we had not seen in several years and it was a fun time of food and fellowship and reminiscing about all of our fun times with our club. We remembered the fun and crazy times we had at Southern Regional Village Gatherings in Atlanta and Greenville and also fun times at

events in the Ft. Lauderdale/Deerfield Beach area and Clearwater, FL. We would love to have another Gathering in the southeast that we could attend. Our club has remained strong and we continue to get together every 2 to 3 months at a club members home. In November we also set up the North Pole display at the Ronald McDonald House. Our club started doing this about 10 years ago and we have continued the tradition each year. The families really enjoy the village and it brightens up the House for the holidays. Our next meeting will be Sunday, April 29 at the home of Larry Shughart. Larry is a huge train collector and has built a barn to house his train collection and his village collection. It is an amazing sight. If anyone is in the area at that time you are welcome to join us (especially if you started out as a train collector and then became a D56 collector). My e-mail address is msan71082@bellsouth.net if you are interested.

Tampa Bay 56ers (FL) is one busy club plus they are fortunate to be near several baseball Spring Training Camps. The club is collecting backpacks for homeless children. They donate them to a group and they in turn fill them with food so the children are not hungry over the weekends. The club is also collecting golf clubs for a donation to the Manatee County schools. These clubs are given to children in the golf program at school who can't afford a set. Photos from the recent annual tour of homes can be on the club's website <http://www.tampabay56ers.com/>.

The Treasure Coast 56 'ers (FL) held an interesting January meeting. The topic was "History of the TC 56 club forging bonds thru the years." A video or two weekends of open houses from the late 1990's was shown. The photo is of the Season Bay display at the Life Care Center.



Village Landlords (FL) welcomed Feliz Cruz, Dept. 56 rep, to their January meeting. At the February meeting they held their annual swap & sell. They welcomed duplicates, broken houses, and any other village related items. Jerry Fernon showed pictures of the 2011/2012 Open Houses at this meeting. The club has some new members: Stephanie & Scott Taggart, Elizabeth Bron, Shelly & Robert Beauvais, Michael Wiggins, Orlando Arroyo and Phil & Raw Campello. This club also has a presence on Facebook along with their website - <http://www.villagelandlords.com/>

A Dickens of a 56 Club (IL) wrote in their newsletter that the Annual House Tour was wonderful. In the latter part of March the club will meet at a local inn to discuss what club members would like to do

outside of the regular get-togethers. Looking ahead to the summer, the annual picnic will be held in July at Alpine Park.

Ducky 56ers (IL) member Carol Cavanaugh was recently featured in the Village D-Lights magazine.

In lieu of a regular meeting, the **Lincolnland 56ers (IL)** traveled to the home of Craig Brandy in St. Peters, MO to view his huge Snow Village display.

Wacky Willagers (IL) welcomed the Department 56 rep, Irena Tomova. She is the representative for the Chicagoland area. The club also welcomed two new members: Michael Leppin and Lou Gasperec. Judy Rekar was elected to the office of Vice President.

The Windy City 56'ers (IL) March meeting featured a discussion on Charles Dickens led by Claude & Dora. Julie Jacky escaped the cold winter with a 2 week cruise to the Caribbean in March.

In March keeping with their "Irish" heritage the **North Shore Village Association (MA)** continued with their home tours visiting the Appollini home. Looking ahead they will be visiting the Stenquist home in New Hampshire in April. At the March meeting the club held their annual auction. Members were encouraged to wear green and bring green in their pockets to take home that special auction piece. The club's charity for 2012 is the *Wounded Warriors Project*. Their mission is to honor and empower the wounded veteran. The WWP provides programs and services to severely injured service members during the time between active duty and transition to civilian life. The club also received a wonderful thank-you note from the President of the USO Sloan D. Gibson. The USO commended the club on their generous donation citing that very few other donations have been as generous. As a result, the club received the highest level of recognition that the USO could bestow. Congratulations!

Annapolis Villagers (MD) welcomed Cathy Kramer, Dept. 56 Regional Sales Rep to the March meeting. In January, members traveled over the 1st weekend in January to 7 households. Phil & Kerry McCutcheon coordinated the tours to the following homes: Millie & Paul Hurlbut, Marsha & Larry Voigt, Kate & Bob Eustice, Trudi & Pete Baer, Dean & John Stevenson, Dick & Jean Baker and Maxine & Jim Underwood. The club will be celebrating their 20th anniversary in September so plans are underway for this gala event. Pete Baer is in the process of updating the club's website. Hopefully he will upload some of the wonderful house tours photos in the near future. The club's website is <http://annapolisvillagers.org/>

Detroit 56'ers (MI) held a potluck brain storming meeting in February. Some of the ideas for upcoming year were: cruise on the Detroit River, shopping in Frankenmuth, the Dickens Festival in Cambridge, OH, visit to a winery & wine tasting and many others. One suggestion from Carol Olgren was a **brown bag take home**. Fill a brown bag with items, draw a name(s) and the person or persons would take home the bag, make a small vignette using ALL of the items in the bag along with whatever they want to add. They would then bring it to the next meeting and all the members could vote or judge the vignette for a prize.

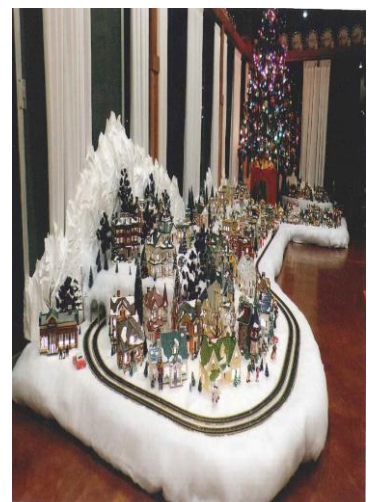
The Four States Village People (MO) installed Jim Everitt as their new president. Brock Sapp invited members to an Open House Tour of his home. The North Pole Village display at the Ronald McDonald house was taken down by Jim & Stephanie Everitt. Joplin still continues to rebuild after last year's tornado.

The Magnolia 56ers (MS) filed this report. The club celebrated Christmas in January by having the annual tour of homes. The first stop was at the home of Bill and Margarita Stanford where members and guests were treated to a Snow Village display with floor to ceiling mountains formed from plaster of Paris strips over frames made with lumber and newspaper. There were various activities depicted including carnival rides and games, a ski chalet with ski lift, and numerous houses, churches, and retail establishments.

The next stop was at the home of Malcolm and Celia Culpepper. Many village vignettes were displayed throughout the home. One of particular interest featured the Graceland and Rockabilly village pieces set against a backdrop of green netting fashioned into a Christmas tree, with 45 rpm records attached. Last, but not least, was a visit to the home of Mac, Donna Jo, Macy, and Joey Culpepper where a large Snow Village city was displayed, which included a train running through the town. Sculpted Styrofoam mountains formed the background for the display. We also viewed several Little Town of Bethlehem pieces placed on top of the living room piano, complete with a real sand and rock terrain.

Food, fun, and fellowship were enjoyed by all during the tour.

Members enjoyed "Dinner and a Movie" for the February meeting. A potluck dinner was enjoyed by all and afterwards club member Gail Garbo, presented a DVD movie of her Halloween and Christmas displays, complete with graphics and music throughout. Gail also demonstrated how she created a Styrofoam base by using a cake decorating tip and caulking for the edging. Red paint was used to accent the edging. Gingerbread themed ornaments were also used, making it a great base for use with many of the village buildings and accessories which feature gingerbread.



WNC 56'ers (NC) collected 58 pounds of food in December for the local food bank. In March members brought in canned fruit. Paper goods and toiletries will be collected in April. Member Don Kelly had received a gift certificate which was turned into dollars so more food could be purchased. The club made a donation to the local VA Hospital to help reinstate the coffee/snack cart usually available to chemo patients. Due to budget cuts this had been cut.

Garden State Village Collector's (NJ) held a St. Patrick's Day celebration at the March meeting along with a game of Bingo. Members were asked to bring in pennies, beans, chips, etc. to use as bingo chips. In April a display expo will be held along with club elections. At this year's display expo members were not limited to Department 56 villages but any collectible. The only restriction was to limit their display to a two foot square area.

New Mexico Townspeople (NM) held their 19th Village Tour of Homes with stops at Ed & Judy Hornbeck, Pat Phillips and Janet & Bob VanAllen's. At the February meeting Pat Phillips demonstrated some unusual wiring techniques that she uses in her vertical displays. Welcome to new members Stephanie & David Thompson.

Our condolences to Debbie Bush-Conte of the **Heritage Treasures Collectors' Club (NY)** on the recent passing of her mom. Please send good thoughts and wishes to Liz Bader as she recovers from a bone marrow transplant. Hard to believe but the January meeting had to be cancelled because of snow. It must have been one of those freak snowstorms that Long Island received. At the March meeting the annual charity auction was held. The money raised from this event will benefit Autism Speaks. There will be an election of officers at the May meeting.

Twenty-two years ago, 50 people gathered in the West Linn Library to decide if they wanted to join a club called the **Village Idiots (OR)**. Fast forward to 2012, the club is still going strong. Of those from that initial gathering, these people are still members, Mary Jo Carr, Dave Seward, Jane Sprando & Carol Wilkins. News of the *Lemon Drop Committee* and the wonderful displays that they do for various charitable organizations has spread. Cornell Estates (senior living) was a recipient of such a display done by Cheryl Mulhearn & Lorraine Hopper.



In January members of **Delaware Valley 56ers (PA)** traveled to the home of Tom & Stephanie McCurry for the 1st open house of the year. The following weekend they were at Armand & Mary Vagnoni's

home. The annual potluck was held in March. Congratulations to Mark & Mac Sockwell on winning the D56 contest that saw their house being selected as one to have a miniature made of it.

Department 56 Villagers of Central Pennsylvania (PA) celebrated March with a Bingo & Pot Luck Dinner meeting.

Palmetto 56'ers (SC) at their February meeting the Palmetto 56'ers enjoyed an evening traveling down memory lane. The theme for the evening was "Remembering Elvis". There was an Elvis Trivia Game, displays of Elvis memorabilia, grilled peanut butter and banana sandwiches(Elvis's favorite) and then the evening was topped off with a viewing of an Elvis movie, "Speedway", on the theatre sized screen at the Terminix Training Center. One couple reminisced about their first date being a visit to the Drive-In-Theatre to watch Elvis's first movie.

In December the club decided to really have a *Christmas Party* and took a road trip to Charleston, SC to attend a Sunday afternoon musical performance of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" at the Dockstreet Theatre, the oldest American theatre. Some of the group went to Charleston on Saturday and enjoyed the sights and shopping and then the complete group met for Sunday Brunch at a locally famous restaurant, Poogan's Porch, before attending the play. The day was completed with dinner at the High Cotton Charleston Restaurant. At the end of dinner President, Peggy Culler-Hair gave each person a red envelope containing a candy cane and a copy of the "Legend of the Candy Cane".

Pat Campbell of the **Nifty Fifty Sixers Celebration Club** has let us know they will now be known as **Texas Nifty 56ers (TX)**.

River City Villagers (TX) welcomed Angela O'Bara and Lori Knapp to the club this year. The annual display contest was held in February. The club's website is RiverCityVillagers.com. Check it out for photos of their recent house tour featuring the homes of: Joey & Diane, David & Pat, James & Sandy's, and Don & Glenn's. David Grubaugh was the tour coordinator for this event.

Villages by the Bay (TX) members will be visiting the San Jacinto Monument & Museum in April. Looking ahead to May, Shirley Boxs will be hosting the club's annual picnic. Congratulations to Mike Walsh, the new president of VBTB.

Spirit of 56 Collectors Club (TX) is celebrating their 20th Anniversary in April. Congratulations!

Big D 56ers (TX) were asked to take a picture of recent vignettes they made at the January meeting and send those photos along to David Morton for inclusion in a vignette CD. Look in this newsletter for a Display Tip on how to make BOO Trees.

The 4 Seasons 56 Collectors Club (VA) is thinking of having a Birthday party for Mr. Dickens. This is the 200 anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens.

For the past holiday season, the **Cardinal 56ers (VA)** installed the “Kringles Mountain” North Pole display at the Mary Washington Hospital. There were so many presents and bags of food that it took a couple of cars to deliver the items to the club’s Adopt-a-Families. Congratulations to Karen Watson – the new president for the club.

Village Traders of Puget Sound (WA) are still talking and reminiscing about the wonderful Dickens Tea they had with the **Village Idiots** & Melinda Seegers last September. Some of the **Village Idiots** went on the house tours the **Village Traders** held in January. In March, Phil and Ann Kane shared with the club photos of their recent trip to Africa.