

Submit community event announcements, news items and photographs to editor@OelweinDailyRegister.com • Phone: 319-284-9258

# Christmas tree history lesson from the Wilder



KRIS MORAREND photo

Look for the museum’s beautiful, flocked Christmas tree at the library. We have a basket on the desk next to it with slips to fill out and place in the basket for the chance to win a lovely doll these next few weeks.

By KRIS MORAREND  
Museum director

Look for the Wilder Memorial Museum’s beautiful, flocked Christmas tree at the Strawberry Point Library! There is a basket on the desk next to the tree with slips of paper to fill out and place in the basket for the chance to win a lovely doll in Friday drawings these next few weeks.

The tradition of Christmas trees dates back to the 16th century in Germany. It blends ancient pagan winter solstice rituals (evergreens symbolizing life) with 16th century German Christian customs. Fir trees were decorated with candles, apples, and wafers as “Paradise Trees” for Adam and Eve plays.

The trees were later popularized globally by German immigrants and Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in the 1840s, evolving from candles to electric lights and becoming a symbol of holiday cheer with gifts.

Simple cedar trees from the roadside or the woods have been and are used in homes for Christmas with decorations of berries, nuts, “au natural.” I still find myself watching for the perfect cedar tree, even though our Christmas tree at home is artificial.

A very good Christmas memory that I have is that when we were growing up, we used cedar trees for Christmas. It was hard to find exactly the right one, size wise, with good branches, and not impossible to get, but as long as the majority of the tree was nice, we put the best side outward and turned the poorer side to the wall. The fragrance of cedar is Christmas to me, too!

Maybe you have been watching for your next Christmas tree to cut along the road, in the timber, at a tree farm to cut your own, or pick a real tree out at the businesses that offer them.

Artificial trees have been around a long time. I remember my Grandpa and Grandma Becker had a small silver foil tree, in the early 1960’s. Artificial trees are routine now. There is very little mess with them and they don’t naturally smell like cedar. Of course you can insert little cedar fragrance sticks or use cedar fragrance candles that you can buy.

Now artificial Christmas trees are commonly made with their light system ready to plug in. Voila! You put them up and decorate for Christmas and put them away after Christmas.

Remember the meaning of Christmas. It is real!



# A can’t-miss story for nonfiction and history fans

A book review

By TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER  
The Bookworm Sez

You wouldn’t call yourself a perfectionist.

Still, if something is amiss, you feel a need to make it right. Something’s broken, you fix it. If it’s off, you make it right. That goes for minor issues or, as in the new book “The Grave Robber” by Tim Carpenter, matters of grave importance.



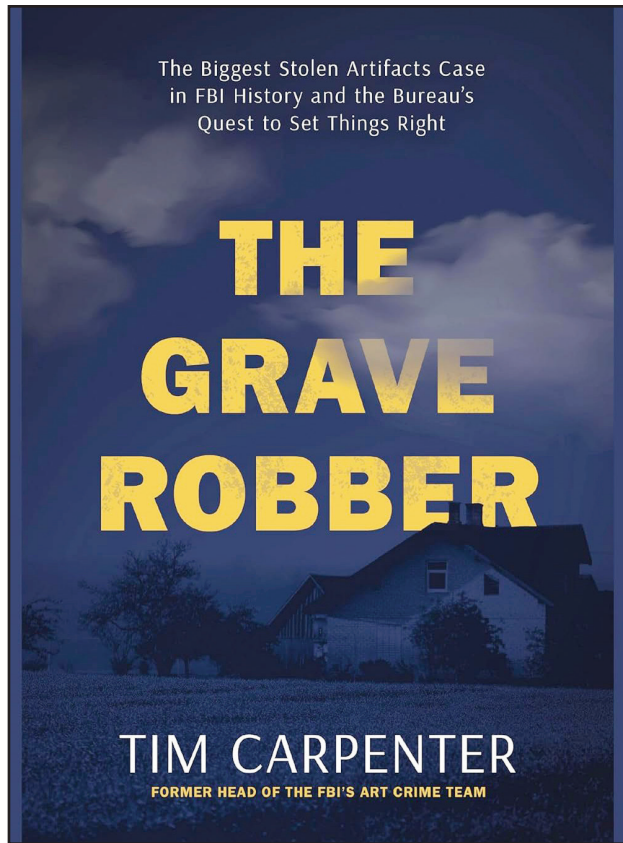
Author Tim Carpenter

LeMay Photography  
by Tim Carpenter, matters

The tipsters were adamant. Don Carlin Miller had “Indian bones.”

And so, on a cool, cloudy fall afternoon, FBI bomb tech coordinator and sometime art crime expert Tim Carpenter and one of his associates headed to a remote property near Indianapolis, in search of the truth.

Miller was well-known to the FBI; years earlier, he’d bragged that he was involved in the Manhattan Project and had some uranium in his possession. A case was filed in 2008, and he gave up those souvenirs, but this was different: Carpenter, who was “eager for a good art crime case,” had gotten



photographs of Native American remains on Miller’s property.

A meeting was arranged and Carpenter was careful to stay above the law. Introduced as someone with interest in antiquities, he paid close attention as Miller showed him around, and he noticed items that gave him pause. Furthermore, Miller, then around 90 years old, loved to tell stories and some of his tales confirmed what Carpenter suspected.

Over the course of decades, Miller had robbed Native American graves. Recovering them would take enormous effort.

Miller ultimately gave

up the remains and stolen items without a fight and so, over the course of several days, Carpenter waded through many months of bureaucracy and red tape before leading an FBI team of experts, students, and agents through Miller’s home and outbuildings. There, hidden in secret rooms, moldering closets, paper bags, and in plain sight, they found “hundreds of people’s bones” – most dug hastily and amateurishly, some in abysmal shape, most stored or displayed disrespectfully.

Miller considered himself somewhat of an expert in the field, but that wasn’t the case at

all. Says Carpenter, he “wasn’t just a bad digger, he was far worse – nothing more than an unabashed grave robber.”

Wow. Be prepared to say it loud and say it often because “The Grave Robber” is a stunning story on many levels.

There’s the book’s raison d’etre: the sometimes-thrilling tale of horrifying plunder and wrongly assumed privilege, both set right like a skewed, often obscene treasure hunt in reverse. True crime fans and those who love a good FBI procedural will be excited to see how author Tim Carpenter explains his case, how it proceeded and how it ended, with just enough biography inside the tale to make it personal. And history buffs will absolutely relish the backstory and the reasons the case came about in the first place.

If you’re a fan of all the above genres, well, what are you waiting for?

Though it contains what is often a confusing alphabet soup or FBI acronyms, “The Grave Robber” is a can’t-miss story that’ll have you glued to your chair. For nonfiction readers like you, it’s perfection.

“The Grave Robber: The Biggest Stolen Artifacts Case in FBI History and the Bureau’s Quest to Set Things Right” by Tim Carpenter  
c.2025, Harper Horizon — \$29.99 — 299 pages

## EVENTS CALENDAR

Add your event to this calendar or change it by sending details to news@oelweindailyregister.com, editor@oelweindailyregister.com, mailing them attn: Calendar or bringing them to the Daily Register, 25 First St. SE, PO Box 511, Oelwein, IA 50662. Specific prices will not be included, so include contact info or a website.

### SUNDAY, DEC. 14

Family Christmas Day at American Legion Post 9 Oelwein from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Christmas festivities include cookie decorating, Christmas crafts, gift wrapping station, hot cocoa bar, music and more. All children under 12 will receive gifts.

### MONDAY, DEC. 15

Oelwein Senior Meal Site service by The Kitchen of Decorah, 11:30 a.m., V.F.W. Post 1725, 120 N. Frederick Ave. Meals by Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A), open Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Older adults can reserve a meal two days ahead by calling the Oelwein Senior Center, 319-239-8019. Diners under age 60 must pay the cost of the meal. Spaghetti, meatsauce, veggie, fruit, dinner roll.

### TUESDAY, DEC. 16

Prevent Relapse 12 Step Program, 6:30 p.m., Evangelical Free Church, 225 20th St. SE, Oelwein, 319-240-9135

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17

Oelwein Senior Meal Site service by The Kitchen of Decorah, 11:30 a.m., V.F.W. Post 1725, 120 N. Frederick Ave. Meals by Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A), open Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Older adults can reserve a meal two days ahead by calling the Oelwein Senior Center, 319-

239-8019. Diners under age 60 must pay the cost of the meal. Hearty chicken noodle soup, veggie, fruit, dinner roll, crackers.

### THURSDAY, DEC. 18

Healing Hearts (formerly Grief Support Group) meets at 1:30 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church. Contact Linda Jensen 563-380-7758

TOPS meeting, 5:15 p.m., Grace United Methodist Church. Call 319-283-0147 for more information.

### FRIDAY, DEC. 19

Hootenanny, 6 to 9 p.m., Oelwein Coliseum. Live music, fellowship and dancing. Includes a potluck at 7:30 - please bring a dish to share. Guest musicians are always welcome. Free will donation.

Oelwein Senior Meal Site service by The Kitchen of Decorah, 11:30 a.m., V.F.W. Post 1725, 120 N. Frederick Ave. Meals by Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A), open Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Older adults can reserve a meal two days ahead by calling the Oelwein Senior Center, 319-239-8019. Diners under age 60 must pay the cost of the meal. Ham slice, veggie, mashed potatoes, bread, fruit.

### MONDAY, DEC. 22

Oelwein Senior Meal Site service by The Kitchen of Decorah, 11:30 a.m., V.F.W. Post 1725, 120 N. Frederick Ave. Meals by Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A), open Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Older adults can reserve a meal two days ahead by calling the Oelwein Senior Center, 319-239-8019. Diners under age 60 must pay the cost of the meal. Chili, veggie, fruit, crackers, brownie.

### TUESDAY, DEC. 23

Prevent Relapse 12 Step Program, 6:30 p.m., Evangelical Free Church, 225 20th St. SE, Oelwein, 319-240-9135

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24

No Oelwein Senior Meal Site service. Merry

Christmas!  
THURSDAY, DEC. 25

First United Methodist Church, 207 East Clark Street, Fayette, 6 p.m. Christmas candlelight service.

## Daily Register

(USPS 403-100)  
25 1st St. S.E., P.O. Box 511 Oelwein, Ia 50662  
Telephone (319) 283-2144  
www.oelweindailyregister.com

Tracy Cummings  
Publisher

Cindy Klendworth  
Sales Manager

Deb Kunkle  
Editor

Dave Gelhausen  
Production Manager

James Barbutes  
Circulation Director

Legals  
classifieds@oelweindailyregister.com

Regular business hours are  
8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Subscriptions  
In-County Rates:  
52 Weeks . . . . \$195.00  
26 Weeks . . . . \$106.00  
13 Weeks . . . . \$56.00

Out Of County Rates:  
52 Weeks . . . . \$215.00  
26 Weeks . . . . \$129.00  
13 Weeks . . . . \$80.00

General  
Published Daily except Sunday+ Monday and New Years, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas by Daily Register. Periodicals Postage Paid at Oelwein, Iowa 50662. Register Established 1881; Daily Register Established 1906; The Oelwein Iowan Established 1911; Consolidated with Register 1923.

Due to the size and value of premium editions, there will be up to a \$4.00 surcharge on each date of publication of any premium editions. There will be no more than 2 premium editions per calendar year. Rather than bill you an extra charge for premium editions, we will adjust the length of your subscription when you receive these premium editions

We accept:



Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Register, P.O. Box 511, Oelwein, Iowa 50662

CALL US WITH  
• NEWS • DISPLAY ADVERTISING • CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING  
• TO SUBSCRIBE:  
(319) 283-2144 FAX: (319) 283-3268

ADVERTISERS  
This advertiser agrees that the publisher shall not be liable for damages arising out of errors in advertisements beyond the paid amount for space actually occupied by that portion of the advertisement in which the error occurred, whether such error is due to the negligence of the publisher's servants or otherwise, and there shall be no liability for non-insertion of any advertisement beyond the amount paid for such advertisement. For information how to advertise, see the classified page.