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# "It's a Wonderful Life" for Grayslake Collector

Local man brings joy to many with his extensive collection of memorabilia from the film "It's a Wonderful Life."

Posted by [Angela Sykora](#) (Editor) , December 06, 2012 at 01:36 AM

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## Grayslake collector finds his "Wonderful Life"

Growing up, Richard Goodson, of Grayslake, didn't have the warm and loving family bond he craved.

"I grew up with limited means and difficult circumstances. There was no traditional Christmas."

That's why watching the 1946 Frank Capra classic, "[It's a Wonderful Life](#)" for the first time left such a lasting impression.

"It spoke to me on some level," said Goodson, an avid movie memorabilia collector who possesses thousands of items from "It's a Wonderful Life," from an original script and movie stills to call sheets and cast contracts.

Goodson's passion for collecting the film's memorabilia started in 1998, when his wife, Coleen, presented him with an 8x10 black and white photo of the Baileys, signed by Jimmy Stewart, who portrayed George.

It's taken years for Goodson to build his extensive collection, which he has to keep in storage. But nearly every Christmas season, he allows some of it to be displayed at a different venue with no compensation, for the public to enjoy.

Last year, the [Village of Grayslake Heritage Center and Museum](#) hosted the display.

"I have a lot of fun showing the items," he said. "I can never show it all at once though, it's too large. There's no venue to hold it all."

Items from Goodson's collection will be [displayed at the American Blues in Chicago](#) on Sunday, Dec. 9 at 2:30 p.m., at the 100th performance of "It's a Wonderful Life: Live at the Biograph!"

Over the years, Goodson's love for the film has brought him many wonderful experiences, including a longstanding friendship with Karolyn Grimes, who portrayed Zuzu Bailey.

Goodson contributed photos and his thoughts on the appeal of the film to Grimes' latest book, "[Celebrating It's a Wonderful Life: How the Movie's Message of Hope Lives On.](#)"

Goodson said his favorite line from the film was delivered by the angel character, Clarence: "Strange, isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives. When he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?"

Does Goodson ever grow tired of the film? Nah. "I only watch it once a year," he said.

People from across the country, and around the world, have contacted Goodson to share their memories of the film.

One e-mail from Goodson received from a young man in Rome, Italy, particularly struck his heart:

"It's a Wonderful Life" has a special meaning for my life: It was my dad's favorite movie and he used to watch it every year, during all the Christmas period, especially during Christmas Eve. We watched this movie thousands of times and every single time, we used to cry like a baby. He also had a period in his life, very similar to George Bailey's and so he could see himself in this character.

Unfortunately my dad died last year, and this is the 2nd Christmas I'm going to spend without him. Now I love and hate Christmas at the same time, because I cannot imagine this happy period without my dad, but I cannot avoid looking at this movie at least 2-3 times per year.

"This," said Goodson, "is why I maintain the collection."

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