

CHINA COLLECTOR TALK RESCHEDULED FOR FEB. 17

VALPARAISO, Ind. – The owner of one of the world’s largest collections of vintage dining car china will discuss his passion for the mementos of America’s historic railroads currently featured in an exhibit at Valparaiso University’s Brauer Museum of Art during a Feb. 17 gallery talk.

Jay Christopher of Hinsdale, Ill., a Valparaiso alumnus and member of the University’s Board of Directors, will explain how he built his collection of railroad china and the historic and artistic significance of the pieces displayed in “The Christopher Railroad China Collection: The Art of Dining on Rails.” The gallery talk begins at 7 p.m. and is free and open to the public. The talk has been rescheduled after its original Jan. 14 date was canceled due to inclement weather.

“The Art of Dining on Rails” is on display through March 22 at Brauer Museum (valpo.edu/artmuseum) and showcases approximately 600 pieces of fine china created for use in railroad dining cars from the late 19th century through the middle of the 20th century.

Christopher first became intrigued with railroad china in the 1950s, when he traveled by train on family vacations.

“I have fond memories of riding the rails of the Chicago and North Western Flambeau 400 to my grandparents’ vacation home in Wisconsin,” Christopher said. “We also traveled out East to Washington, D.C., and New York City on classic trains such as Pennsylvania Railroad’s Broadway Limited and the New York Central’s 20th Century Limited. The highlight of these childhood trips was the time spent in the dining cars enjoying a meal while watching the countryside pass by.”

Among the pieces represented in the exhibit is china designed for passenger trains traveling through the Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana region, including the New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad (commonly known as the Nickel Plate) that was constructed in 1881 along the south shore of the Great Lakes and the Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville Railroad (more commonly known as the Monon Railroad) that operated entirely within the borders of Indiana.

A new book that chronicles the history of railroad china, “American Railroad China: Image and Experience,” has been published in conjunction with the exhibit and largely draws on the Christopher collection. It is available for purchase for \$30 at Brauer Museum.

Accompanying the Christopher china collection are a number of other vintage items related to the history of American railroads, including dining car menus, artwork and railroad car design drawings.

More information about Brauer Museum’s current season, including a complete list of exhibition-related events, is available online at valpo.edu/artmuseum. Brauer Museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, and noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday during the academic year. Admission to the museum and all events is free. Group tours may be arranged by calling (219) 465-7926.