

RAILROAD CHINA EXPERT TO DISCUSS EXHIBIT

VALPARAISO, Ind. – One of the world’s preeminent scholars of historic railroad dining car china will discuss the Valparaiso University exhibition “The Christopher Railroad China Collection:

The Art of Dining on Rails” during a Feb. 18 gallery talk at Brauer Museum of Art.

Richard Luckin, author of “Dining of Rails: An Encyclopedia of Railroad China” and an award-winning documentary producer, will discuss the history and artistry of railroad dining car china, how china designs reflected American culture and the significance of Christopher Railroad China Collection during his 7 p.m. talk. The gallery talk is free and open to the public.

“The Art of Dining on Rails” (valpo.edu/christopherchina) showcases approximately 600 pieces of fine railroad china in the first public exhibition of one of the world’s largest collections of the colorful mementos of America’s historic railroads. Jay Christopher of Hinsdale, Ill., a Valparaiso alumnus and member of the University’s Board of Directors, is owner of the collection and will present a 7 p.m. Feb. 17 gallery talk at Brauer Museum.

Luckin, author of six books on railroad dining car china, says Christopher’s china – on display at Brauer Museum through March 22 – is the premier collection of railroad dining car china in the United States.

“His collection ranges from early to recent patterns which cover a span of more than a century of dining service on American and Canadian passenger trains,” Luckin said. “The collection represents how Americans traveled before the jet-age and super highways, when railroads provided the primary method of travel. A meal in a dining car was one to be savored and the chinaware helped make the experience enjoyable.”

Among the chinaware represented in the exhibit are pieces 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.

Luckin has written the column “China Corner” for the magazine *Railroadiana Express* for nearly 25 years and has won more than 30 national awards for his television work, which has included films on America’s railroads broadcast across the country on PBS.

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. The book “American Railroad China: Image and Experience” has been published in conjunction with “The Art of Dining on Rails” and is available at Brauer Museum.