

little village

Iowa city's news & culture magazine

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and bring joy to the world

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by Thomas P. Johnson



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We must fight

The votes have been counted, and the result: Everyone loses. In the last couple years, a package of fear propaganda was manufactured and put up for sale, wrapped with ill-defined patriotism and adorned with a ribbon of hypocritical morality; it has been purchased at a great cost.

Those voting "pro-life" ignored the deaths of thousands in a war based on lies. Those voting for national security seemed not to realize the persons they voted for caused the increased danger.

Those of us who mourn our wounded democracy do so with fear, anger and some amount of hopelessness. How can we participate in a society who's opportunity to be world leader has

been election validated as "evil empire?" How can we watch as progress made toward individual rights seems doomed? We've turned down a road of destruction previously traveled by pre-WWII Germany and the Roman Empire.

We who oppose must stick together and wear our fear, anger and hopelessness as a badge of pride, proud that these changes occurred without our validation. We must fight to remind the world what patriotism and democracy are supposed to be.

I am proud to be an American who supported our troops and our country by voting against Bush.

— Marv Hain Jr.
Coralville

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THIS MODERN WORLD

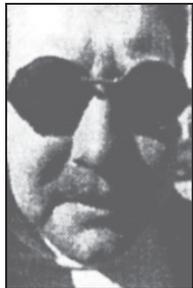
by TOM TOMORROW



Nothing is over

As the great Hunter S. Thompson aptly points out in *Hell's Angels*, "Even a small, inept street-fighter has a tremendous advantage over the average middle-class American, who hasn't had a fight since puberty. It is a simple matter of accumulated experience, of having been hit or stomped often enough to forget the ugly panic that nice people associate with a serious fight."

I say this by way of explanation to those of my friends and correspondents who, having gotten used to an email barrage or long distance phone rant from me over



**GO
FISH**

E.C. FISH

obscure pull-quotes from the Congressional record, have expressed dismay and concern over my comparatively subdued reaction to the election (again, hold that re-) of George W. Bush to the presidency of the United States. It goes like this—having lived through the elections of Nixon (twice, both of which qualify as childhood trauma), Reagan (twice) and Bush the Father, my tendency to confuse election night with Christmas morning has long since gone by the wayside.

Which is a lot of the reason why my own concern and dismay of late have been pointed squarely at the reactions I've been hearing since election night. If the media are to be believed—and they aren't, which is a big part of the problem—the activities of the average Kerry voter since Nov. 3 have involved contact with their nearest Canadian consulate and fevered research into what Blue State constitutions have to say about secession from the Union. While both emigration and secession share one obvious problem—they're chickenshit—both are also based on the impression that the Bush victory represents a huge and irretrievable

shift in the American political landscape that will result in a permanent Republican hegemony—a notion that is shit from a somewhat larger animal.

While in the Neverland of the non-reality-based community the results of this election represent both a mandate for the Republican agenda and a mortal wound to the opposition, those of us who don't consider a sense of proportion a mark of Satan should be aware of the fact that the Bush margin of victory is the narrowest

While it is a critical point of Republican PR that we think otherwise, there is no particular reason to be found for either Republican triumphalism or Democratic defeatism.

in history for any incumbent president who actually kept his job, that the popular vote results of the Senate races taken together show a larger aggregate voter turnout for Democrats than Republicans (pity we don't apportion our senators that way), and that the Republican gains in the House of Representatives are largely the result of reapportioning schemes in Texas and elsewhere that are likely to be thrown out in federal courts as unconstitutional. While it is a critical point of Republican PR that we think otherwise, there is no particular reason to be found for either Republican triumphalism or Democratic defeatism.

It is buying into Republican PR points that got us here in the first place. As Bill Clinton aptly pointed out at the Democratic convention, with no particular facts to run on, the Republicans have to make the Democrats unacceptable in order to win. Unfortunately, the reaction of both Democrats at large and the Democratic leadership to this Republican onslaught of smear is to take it somewhat to heart, becoming apologetic and conciliatory over things we should take as points of pride, or at very least as points of civil debate. Already there are voices within the Democratic Party suggesting that the party's only hope is to emulate the Republicans—that having been beaten by pandering demagogues, the party needs to get better at pandering and demagoguery.

The message needs to be delivered, loud and clear, that this is indeed unacceptable. To quote Thompson again, "...politics is the art of controlling your environment.... The first law of controlling your environment is to get the hell off the defensive as fast as you can." If anything, it was pandering that lost John Kerry the White House. The military tattoo of the national convention, the silly little hunting trips and above all the "like Bush, only smarter" policy statements all

were knee jerk responses to an agenda set by the Republicans. None won over anyone not already inclined toward Kerry's positions in the first place, and all displaced what might have been a forceful, factual case against the unacceptability of continuing the Bush presidency and our national direction.

Those of us who voted to the contrary in this election constitute almost 50 percent of this country's citizens. We have nothing to be ashamed of, and nothing whatsoever to gain from shutting up and going away. The passion, commitment and, above all, the organization shown by those who supported John Kerry for president are needed all the more now that he isn't.

In short, we need to chalk this fight up to experience, collect those teeth that might still be reimplanted off the pavement and keep right on punching. It is hard and tedious work, to be sure, and early indications point to precious little help forthcoming from the Democratic party establishment, but unless we are ready to accept a political system that means nothing more than the naked exercise of power and privilege, we have few choices.

Those not inclined to join the fight are advised to drive roughly due north, jogging to avoid the Great Lakes as necessary, until wholly irrelevant. Write if you get work. **lv**

Could Democrats' salvation lie in the Midwest?

Since their November loss, Democrats have engaged in much hand-wringing, tooth-gnashing and other forms of self-flagellation. And well they should. The 2004 presidential election was the Democrats' to lose, and they did. I'm no political pundit, but there are some obvious lessons. Primary among them are 1) run a good candidate and 2) have a vision and craft a clear message from it. From there, we devolve into all kinds of disputes about values, principles, demographics, personalities and so forth. My one and only contribution to the cacophonous chorus of "what should we do?" is geographic: Think Midwest.



**UR
HERE**
THOMAS
DEAN

If we look at the electoral map, the "blue" states are incontrovertibly in three areas: the Northeast, the West Coast and the upper Midwest. I hope the Democrats have overcome their New England candidate fetish. I wouldn't give the Republicans the satisfaction of pinning "West Coast wacko liberal" on anyone, warranted or not. And, for now, I would put the "retake the South" fantasy on the back burner and hold off on the savior from the "red" Mountain West. So that leaves the Midwest. And, frankly, that's exactly where the recovery of the Democratic Party could—and should—come from.

I'm not saying the Midwest has been ignored or taken for granted in recent years. With more swing states per capita than almost anywhere else, we actually experienced campaign overload the past couple of years. And with Iowa going to Bush, and with Wisconsin and Minnesota being closer than they should have been for the Democrats, our regional "swing" is only becoming more vertiginous. Before the Democrats can set their sights back on Dixie, they need to shore up the Midwestern foundation.

But what I'm suggesting goes deeper than mere electoral map strategy. The Democrats need to rediscover their heart and soul, true. But they also need to rediscover how to talk to people honestly and reasonably, no matter what their political stripe or pedigree. That's where the magic of the Midwest lies. The cultural cliché about our region is that we are modest, reasonable, respectful, honest and humble. While such pat stereotypes are in some ways just that—and although I (and all of you) certainly know scads of hubristic, arrogant, unreasonable, disrespectful, and dishonest middle land residents—I believe there is a basic truth to this traditional characterization of our populace. More and more, the national Democratic Party is coming to realize that it's not so

If the Democrats can find someone with Obama's approach and temperament, and probably someone from the Midwest, to run for president in 2008, they'll have a fighting chance.

much ideology and policy that are the source of its problems, but rather rhetoric (not rhetoric as propaganda or manipulation, but rhetoric as simply a way of talking to people). That successful political rhetoric is right here in "the heartland."

Sure, we have our divisions in the Midwest. The rural/urban/suburban fault lines are evident here as well as elsewhere. We have plenty of reactionary "social conservative" and sputtering "flaming liberal" ideologues amongst us. But we are also the only region of the country with anything that resembles a mix of "red" and "blue" states, and those divisions between red and blue are not, overall, especially great. I'm not suggesting that the Midwest is simply moderate, though you could make that argument. Nor am I suggesting the Democrats need to soften their liberal edges, become more "centrist." That strategy met with utter failure in 2002 and 2004. Again, the strategy is to learn to talk to Midwesterners.

Let's look at the Midwest's political history. Yes, we have our conservative, even reactionary, even shameful chapters—Joe McCarthy at the head of the list. But we are

also the region that elects many admired and respected moderate Republicans (Richard Lugar, Chuck Hagel and Iowa's own Jim Leach come to mind). And we are also the region with some of the greatest progressive, liberal and even radical political personalities and movements ever in our national history: the Prairie Populists, Bob LaFollette, Paul Wellstone and so forth. Iowa is a state that continuously re-elects both Senators Chuck Grassley and Tom Harkin. Wisconsin is the state that, in the same breath, has continually re-elected Tommy Thompson (before he jumped ship for the cabinet) as its governor and Russ Feingold as one of its senators. In other words, if there is a place where people are truly "persuadable," it's the Midwest.

There are signs that the Democrats are beginning to figure this out. Tom Vilsack was high on the list of possible new DNC chairs. (Personally, I'd rather see the party core find its "voice" through Howard Dean—but both Dean's failed Iowa campaign and Vilsack's support of Kerry make me nervous about putting "losers" front and center in the party.)

Illinois' Barack Obama has everyone swooning. The magic of Obama is that, despite his clearly "liberal" record, he can talk to average conservative folks in rural southern Illinois, and they'll listen to him—and they'll like him—and they'll vote for him (and not just because he isn't Alan Keyes).

As I was flipping channels on election night, looking for good information and commentary amongst the avalanche of blather and dreck, I stumbled across the CNN pundits interviewing Obama, asking him, "How did you do it?" His answer?

Come to people as an honest person who wants to join with them to solve problems, not as a party politico or ideologue. (And, if you've seen Obama speak, a little fire and passion mixed in don't hurt, either). Do that, and they'll listen, and they can be convinced that you and they can work together. That gets votes in the Midwest.

I'm not necessarily jumping on the "Obama in '08" bandwagon. That's an appealing prospect in many ways, but premature. For now, I would like to put him out there at least as a model. We need someone who is sincere and principled, and someone who can talk about liberal principles and values as if they were simply reasonable and humane (which they are). If the Democrats can find someone with Obama's approach and temperament, and probably someone from the Midwest, to run for president in 2008, they'll have a fighting chance. In the Obama model, we will have someone who can take the "Mark Twain" tour—ply the Mississippi River, shore up the upper Midwest blue states, take back Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas, and then head up the Ohio to work on Kentucky, Indiana, maybe take back southern Ohio and on into West Virginia. Peel away enough of those red states and the electoral map not only becomes bluer, but a winning blue.

The key to that map, though, is the approach, the rhetoric—the best progressive values presented with conviction, respect, honesty, a little fire, but also a little modesty. That's where the Midwest can conjure political magic for the Democrats in the years ahead. **lv**

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Chestnuts roasting over an open fire...



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Few people would recognize the smell of roasting chestnuts, and there are precious few places left in the America where this savory treat is vended. Fortunately, Bing Crosby seared the delicacy into our collective consciousness more than 50 years ago, and street corner hawkers in New York will be wafting the magical fragrance down Broadway right

about now. Mostly, though, these will be the larger, European chestnut and not the traditional American variety.

Here's why: The American chestnut that Longfellow wrote about, which sheltered the village smithy and his "large and sinewy hands," has gone the way of said village smithy. American chestnut trees once comprised enormous forests along the entire East Coast, up the Appalachians as high as 3,000 feet and as far west as Arkansas. Trees were regularly reported to be 5 feet thick and over 100 feet tall. When they bloomed along the Blue Ridge, the mountains looked snowcapped in summer.

Then in 1904, some enterprising tree farmers on Long Island thought they might make a quick buck growing the faster-yielding Asian chestnut. These Chinese saplings brought an unwelcome stowaway in the form of *Endothia parasitica*, a fungus that eats the bark off the trees, killing the American variety. First

noticed in New York City about 1908, it obliterated the American chestnut by 1940.

A side note: The American chestnut was only one of 250,000 edible plant varieties to be lost in the 20th century. The US lost 93 percent of its crop species diversity during that time. Today, a mere 30 plant species feed 95 percent of the world's population. We are still losing a plant on an average of every six hours.

The good news is that progress is being made. The American Chestnut Foundation in Meadowview, Virg., (www.acf.org) has been working tirelessly to revive the "King

of the Forest" through a specialized type of breeding called "backcrossing." The goal, nearly achieved, is to produce a tree with the resistant genes of the Chinese chestnut, but with the appearance, in stature and in fruit, of the American original. For its efforts, the foundation won the 2002 Slow Food Award for Biodiversity (www.slowfoodfoundation.org).

the glories of the chestnut and of tree farming. Tom and Kathy sell not only chestnuts on their website but also a variety of fruit and nut bearing trees, from the Chinese chestnut to the miraculous pawpaw, which yields a luscious, tropical-tasting fruit, yet grows quite happily here in icy Iowa.

For your own little slice of Crosby's version of heaven, you can roast chestnuts yourself. Get a few pounds from Tom and Kathy, wash them in cold water and then make x-shaped cuts in the pointed end of each nut (this keeps them from exploding due to trapped steam).

American chestnut trees once comprised enormous forests along the entire East Coast, up the Appalachians as high as 3,000 feet and as far west as Arkansas

Here in Iowa meanwhile, Tom Wahl and Kathy Dice at Red Fern Farm in Wapello (www.redfernfarm.com) joined with other growers in their area to form the Southeast Iowa Nut Growers' Association (SING). These farmers are helping

people rediscover

A vague approximation of the traditional cooking process can be accomplished in your oven, but for the real deal you need a fire. A charcoal grill will do nicely, but make sure you use real wood charcoal, not pressed briquettes—and especially not the stuff with the starter fluid impregnated into it (blech!). Burn the coals down to a nice warm glow—no flames—and place the washed and cut nuts in one layer on the bottom of a grill basket. Cover, stir occasionally and remove after about 20 minutes, when they appear darker in color and if, when you remove a chestnut from the pan, its skin breaks easily, making a crackling sound. Let them rest for a few minutes under a cloth, then serve piping hot.

Here's hoping the season finds you surrounded by family, friends and fabulous food. **lv**





'Tis the season of giving...and receiving

10 ways to make some money *and* bring joy to the world

Rebecca Sheir

The annual holiday retail binge has arrived, and your piggy bank looks like it's been on the South Beach. You know you need to cook up some cash. Pronto. As visions of Visa bills dance in your head, you're tempted to say "Bah, Humbug" to the whole thing. But here in Iowa City, there is a bowlful of ways to raise some cash this holiday season. Here are 10 ways to rake in the chips while chipping in to the community.

Nude modeling

Baby, it's cold outside, but a few hours in your birthday suit can earn you some hot cash—while helping some up-and-coming artistes sketch their way to the MoMA. How can you do it? By nude modeling for a class at the UI School of Art and Art History for \$10 an hour.

Before you rebuff the idea of posing in the buff, know that the school is more in search of diversity than drop-dead derrieres. Iowa City resident Sara Knox, a nude model for over three years, says instructors seek models of all sizes and types.

"If they keep getting the same body type, how are the students going to learn?" she asks. "In my experience, it was really relaxed, a really easy job to do."

Knox enjoys the wildly different approaches the students take: "They all have their own interpretation of the same pose. Sometimes I would look like a pile of triangles or something." Once, Knox offered to buy a pupil's rendering. Flattered, the student

gave it to her for free—and Knox walked away with a new work of art and a new wad of cash.

University of Iowa School of Art and Art History: E100 Art Building, 120 N. Riverside, Iowa City, 335-1771, www.uiowa.edu/~art



Psychology experiments

If you'd rather be paid for your mind than your body, participating in a psycho-

logical research study might be the way to go. The UI's Department of Psychology frequently seeks volunteers—both students and non—to participate in a range of research experiments.

Each experiment typically pays around \$10 an hour. Areas of study vary, from personality to memory to attention span. While you may participate in more than one experiment, the department requires that you only do a particular study once. *Check out the bulletin boards in Seashore Hall for opportunities: Iowa Avenue between Linn and Gilbert streets.*

UIHC experiments

The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics also conduct research studies, and are always on the lookout for new subjects. By participating in a UIHC study, not only will you earn some funds, you'll also help medical professionals assess current treatments and develop new methods for boosting health.

All UIHC studies have guidelines for who may participate. Some research studies seek subjects with specific illnesses or conditions, while others seek subjects who are 100 percent healthy. *For a list of studies currently seeking participants, check out the UIHC Research Studies webpage: www.uihealthcare.com/infofor/volunteers/researchstudies.html.*

Plasma Donation

If you're healthy, non-needle-phobic and between the ages of 18 and 59, you might be eligible to donate blood plasma. Easily retrieved and replaced, plasma is used in a number of life-saving therapies, including the treatment of burn victims and hemophiliacs.

At BioLife Plasma Services, you can



donate plasma twice every seven days and may be compensated up to \$50 a week, or \$200 a month. BioLife's Julie Tarvin encourages everyone to try donating: "It's a really good give/receive relationship. Donors are receiving compensation for their effort, as well as the feeling that they're doing something good for other people."

BioLife Plasma Services: 408 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 351-7939, www.biolife-plasma.com

Tutoring

If you're interested in swapping your learning for loot, consider the UI Tutor Referral Service. You must be a registered student or staff member, with 56 or more hours of college credit and a minimum 3.0 GPA. After completing an application and submitting a transcript or grade report, you'll be matched with a student in need of extra aid in your area of expertise. As a tutor, you make your own hours and decide your own fees (they currently range from \$10-\$25 per hour). You'll also make some appreciative undergrads that much more prepared for their 10-page anthro paper or molecular biology exam.

UI Tutor Referral Service: Iowa Memorial Union, corner of Jefferson & Madison, Iowa City, www.imuis.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor.shtml.

Consigning your clothes

If your closet's full of disregarded duds, why not sell your cast-offs on con-



Savvy Boutique

signment? Iowa City boasts a bevy of consignment stores that will pay for your underworn outerwear.

Most clothing consignment operations pay two ways. Some give instant cash for certain items: i.e. articles in good condition and/or touting a name brand. An even bigger bang for your blouse comes from the 50/50 deal: you make half of the item's selling price once it's bought.

But before you schlep in the hand-me-downs, know that consignment stores won't buy just anything. Due to space limitations and aesthetic qualifications, consigners may very well turn away that 1983 Lacoste polyester tracksuit or those stonewashed Gitano jeans.

The Second Act: 538 Olympic Ct., Iowa City, 338-8454

Crowded Closet: 1213 Gilbert Ct., Iowa City, 337-5924

Kidworks: 111 Stevens Dr., Iowa City, 337-3921

Savvy Boutique: 320 E. Benton St., Iowa City, 354-2565

Consigning your stuff

If you've got surplus housewares aching for a new home, why not take them to a second-hand merchandiser?

Most used merchandisers operate on a consignment basis, offering you 50 percent of the selling price. Iowa City resident Heal counts Houseworks as her ducat depot of choice. "The place is amazingly organized, run by people in good spirits who have a knack for keeping useful things in stock," she says. "I take my non-useful things—redundant Pyrex, outgrown tablecloths—there, then use the cash in my account for the things I really need—a telephone [or] a meatballer."

Other items sought by second-hand stores include furniture, books, linens, utensils, pots, pans, pictures, and antiques.

Houseworks: 111 Stevens Dr., Iowa City, 338-435

Granny's Antique Mall: 1725 Boyrum St., Iowa City, 351-6328

Stuff Etc.: 845 Pepperwood Ln., Iowa City, 338-9909

Selling your books

Sir Francis Bacon mused that "some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." Others, assuming they've been col-



Murphy-Brookfield Books



lecting dust on the shelf, are to be regurgitated—or, more appetizingly, resold to one of Iowa City’s used bookstores.

Northside Book Market offers cash or store credit for hardbacks and paperbacks; they’ll even buy DVDs, videos and maps. Books should be in good condition, though co-owners Rok and Jan Williams have been known to snatch up slightly tattered tomes if they’re especially unusual. While Northside favorites include art and film books and foreign language dictionaries (Rok’s favorite find? A two-volume Swahili-to-Serbo-Croatian and Serbo-Croatian-to-Swahili dictionary set), they’ll dole out decent dollars for anything they think might sell.

Murphy-Brookfield Books offers cash and in-store credit and is on the lookout for good titles in fiction, poetry, history, philosophy, etc.

The Haunted Book Shop also offers in-store credit or cash (note: at the time of

this writing, they were offering in-store credit only). While the shop specializes in philosophy, a Haunted representative informed me that “it’s impossible to find any philosophy books in Iowa City because nobody wants to get rid of them. So, we’ll specialize in literary until somebody’s crazy enough to give us some philosophy.” So if you’re feeling a little nutty, and are ready to bid auf wiedersehen to your Wittgenstein, a visit to the Haunted Bookshop just might pay off.

Northside Book Market: 203 N. Linn St., Iowa City, 466-9330,

www.northsidebookmarket.com

Haunted Bookshop: 520 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 337-2996

Murphy-Brookfield Books: 219 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 338-3077

Selling your music

Let’s be honest: When was the last time you listened to all two trillion CDs in your collection? If it’s your tunes that’ve been collecting dust, why not sell them to a used music store? Record Collector offers instant cash—\$1 to \$8 per CD or LP—provided the condition is good and

they don’t already have too many copies in stock.

The store prides itself on its expansive selection of genres and artists. So whether you’re finally giving up that vinyl, or just getting rid of that Britney Spears impulse-buy, bring in your musical hits and misses, and give someone else a chance to hit Britney one more time.

Record Collector: 125 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 337-5029

Redeeming bottles and cans

While the morning after a big bash can bring on a headache, it can also bring in some bucks. Thanks to Iowa’s Beverage Containers Control Law, or “Bottle Bill,” Iowans redeem 1.4 billion empties each year, thereby reducing waste, cleaning up the environment and creating jobs for the collectors, handlers and processors of deposited containers.

You receive 5 cents for every bottle and can you bring in—carbonated and alcoholic beverages only (non-carbonated quenchers—bottled waters, sports drinks, teas and juices—didn’t exist when the law passed in 1978). Remember to remove caps, rinse out containers, follow individual retailers’ guidelines (e.g. quantity limits), and thank grocery store and redemption center managers for their participation—and for the pretty payback you receive in return.

New Pioneer Co-op: 22 S. Van Buren St., Iowa City, 338-9441, www.newpi.com

New Pioneer Co-op and Bakehouse, 1101 Second St., Coralville, 358-5513

John’s Grocery, 401 E. Market St., Iowa City, 337-2183

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1720 Waterfront Dr., Iowa City, 354-7601

1201 N. Dodge St., Iowa City, 354-9223

Lantern Park Plaza, Coralville, 351-5523

*Cub Foods: 855 Hwy. One West, Iowa City, 339-8809 **lv***



Record Collector



Holiday hijinks

Original Old Creamery Theatre production celebrates the season with irreverence

Rob Cline

I wouldn't have guessed that the biggest laugh-getter of The Old Creamery Theatre Company's *Holiday Hijinks, 2004* would be a fart joke. But then, I also wouldn't have guessed the show's plot would hinge on a hermaphrodite joke or that one of the true highlights would be a Cher impersonation.

The sequel to last year's *Holiday Hijinks, 1963* and again penned by OCTC producing/artistic director Thomas P. Johnson, *Holiday Hijinks, 2004* takes place in the small town of Woodvine, Iowa, where Lance Merckelson (acting artistic director Sean McCall) has prepared a holiday extravaganza highlighting the music that has been important to him throughout his life. He is joined on stage by his co-host and rival Jolene Smith-Iverson (associate artistic director Meg Merckens), and together they lead a cast made up of members of Woodvine's Calvin Coolidge High School class of 1964, its faculty, staff and students, and assorted others.

The show is only able to go on, we are told, because the Woodvine girls bowling team has failed to qualify for the state tournament. Instead of a trip to Des Moines, the team joins Lance (who McCall plays stereotypically gay complete with pronounced lisp and a conviction that no new quality music has been written since Barry Manilow's "Copacabana") and company in a musical revue that begins in earnest with an overlong recreation of a Perry Como holiday special featuring Lance as Como and Jolene as Dinah Shore.

Heather McGaughey's choreography, here and throughout the show, is standard show choir stuff performed with various levels of skill and enthusiasm by the cast. However, the bit did reveal the show's two standout signers—Molly Hammer (as school secretary Donna Kraft) and Ryan Gaffney (as "choir soloist") delivered a charming duet on "Let it Snow."

Hammer and Gaffney shine again in the second segment of the show, during which Lance portrays an oddly frenetic

Dick Clark hosting "American Bandstand." Damon Cole on piano and Gil Perez on drums handle the transition from '50s rock-'n'-roll hits back to holiday music (and indeed all of the show's music) with aplomb, though their sound is a bit thin for lack of a bass player.

Suddenly, the show is derailed as the bowling team learns that they have won

Holiday Hijinks

What: Original musical revue

Where: Old Creamery Theatre,
Price Creek Stage,
39 38th Ave., Amana,
800-352-6262

When: Through Dec. 19



a trip to the state tournament due to an irregularity in their last match: One of the opposing girls wasn't a girl! Lance is mortified as a good portion of his cast leaves for Des Moines.

Some of the funniest moments of *Holiday Hijinks, 2004* occur at this point as the company attempts an Ed Sullivan riff, with Lance as Sullivan. The humor here comes not from the impersonation, but from the crazy attempts of the remaining cast to hold things together, including an aborted Senor Wences bit and the offstage crashing of the plate spinners' china.

School custodian Artie Shaw (Marshall Nielsen) saves the segment with his rendition of "When I'm Sixty-four," performed in a Sgt. Pepper's-like costume—the only costume the beleaguered janitor will get right for the remainder of the performance. In the next segment, during which Lance and Jolene turn in tremendous Sonny and Cher imitations, Artie brings Act One to a screeching halt when he farts inside a cow costume he has rustled up to replace a missing horse outfit.

Act Two opens not with more singing and dancing (despite the fact that most of the show's quality singers and dancers are not on the bowling team), but with a melodrama titled "A Christmas for Little Nell." Marquette Senters (as Class of '64 member Bea McVicker) shines as she hilariously portrays two characters—who ultimately decide to marry, making the quick-change routine even funnier.

But Lance's dream of completing his show is revived as the bowlers return (they have somehow managed to delay the tournament so they can fulfill their singing and dancing obligations). The music fires up again and it appears that Artie has managed to find the missing Santa suit, allowing the cast to break into a "Y.M.C.A." parody during which they try gamely to spell SANTA in unison with their arms.

It will come as no surprise that that's not Artie in the Santa suit. What was a surprise was McCall's amazing performance at the instant Lance realizes that the "real" Santa has visited Calvin Coolidge High School. He pulls off the predictable and clichéd moment with a sincerity that almost certainly brought a lump to the throat of every audience member.

It's an amazing moment that goes far to explain the popularity and success of the *Holiday Hijinks* shows over the last two years. The plot may be thin and the performances may be of various quality, but the cast delivers a cynicism-free couple of hours that can bring a smile to the most jaded visitor to Woodvine. **lv**

The Total(ly) 1980s Nostalgia Quotient

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Given that VH1 has notified us that we're in the midst of a 1990s revival, the thought of meditating on the 1980s seems so 2003. Despite the recent I Love the '90s glut of shows—force-feeding us Nirvana, Everclear and Jill Sobule—2004 most certainly has been ground zero for the biggest 1980s pop culture detonation heard thus far.

Of course, the landmines had been previously planted, and there have already been minor explosions. One such discharge was the 2002 cult film *Donnie Darko*, which was set in 1988 and featured the best 1980s film soundtrack since *Pretty In Pink*, kicking off with Echo & the Bunnymen's "The Killing Moon."

To be as scientific as possible, we need an accurate measurement tool, a kind of Pop Culture Richter Scale, something I have dubbed the "Total(ly) 1980s Nostalgia Quotient." It's a carefully designed formula that quantifies the impact of the 1980s on the contemporary musical landscape, and it looks like this: $X = (C + R) \div I$. The value X, of course, is the overall score, the intensity of the 1980s music revival for whatever period we might be measuring—and it's also the name of one of the greatest punk bands of that era, whose double CD best-of was released by Rhino this year (more on that when we get to R).

C is the value assigned to the "C"omeback kids, the biggest of whom was Morrissey. The ex-Smithite's latest solo album, *I Am the Quarry*, easily stands as one of the best of his career. This year he was on the cover of a slew of magazines and he was even referenced in the recent zombie flick, *Shaun of the Dead*, among other major indicators of cultural relevance. *Quarry* is a rare comeback that completely lived up to the hype, unlike

The Cure's new self-titled album, which merely almost lived up to the hype. True, this goth-rock album wasn't all that bad, and it may very well have been their best album since 1989's *Disintegration*, but *The Cure* certainly wasn't as good as that Cure classic (and, for that matter, no album this band has released since 1989 is worth noting).

Even though it's a backhanded compliment, at least *The Cure* lives up to the hype better than the rather cruddy new Duran Duran album—featuring a fully reunited original lineup. For these reasons, rather than a full score of 10, C = 8.45. (The complicated formula I used to arrive at this number, as well as the way in which I operationalized the variables, can be accessed at www.imadethisshitup.com.)

R refers to this year's quantity and quality of 1980s "R"eissues, box sets and best-of collections (like the aforementioned X compilation). The most formi-

dable and impressive box set of the year was Rhino's four-CD set, *Left of the Dial: Dispatches From the '80s Underground*. A couple years ago, I complained in this column about Rhino's *Like, Omigod! The '80s Pop Culture Box (Totally)*, because it ignored the alternative side of the 1980s, painting a musical picture of that era that wasn't even half-accurate. This issue was resolved on *Left of the Dial* (named after a song by alternative-before-it-was-called-alternative icons The Replacements). Kicking off appropriately with R.E.M.'s first single, "Radio Free Europe," it weaves through broody, moody territory like The Cure's "A Forest" and into the still-awesome punk rock of "Holiday in Cambodia" by the Dead Kennedys, as well as detouring into "Tell Me When It's Over" by The Dream Syndicate, who themselves spearheaded a 1960s revivalist movement dubbed The Paisley Underground. It's like a mix tape downloaded from my teen-aged brain, tossing together



The Cure: pulling down the quotient

Mission of Burma, New Order, Black Flag, Dinosaur Jr., The Smiths, Ministry, The English Beat, Meat Puppets, Echo & the Bunnymen, P.I.L., O.M.D., and Billy Bragg into one big incoherent (but nonetheless sensible) whole. Given that Rhino quite obviously listened to and heeded the provincial rumblings of this B-Team Iowa City rock critic, I will assign R a value of 9.

I is for Influence, which can best be measured through a careful and systematic textual analysis of albums released by new bands cut from the 1980s cloth. These are groups whose members were born in the 1980s and who never really listened to

C is the value assigned to the "C"omeback Kids, the biggest of whom was Morrissey.

this music the first time around—unless they had very hip parents who lulled them to sleep by playing Psychedelic Furs LPs. While listening to the self-titled debut album by The Killers soon after hearing the neo-psychedelia of The Dream Syndicate, I had the startling realization that—for me, in the 1980s—the 1960s were as long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away as the 1980s are the distant past for bands such as Interpol, The Killers, The Faint or any number of these 1980s invaders.

I is the trickiest part of the formula, because rather than 10 representing the highest possible score, the most intense value is 1. This year, I = 2.3, which means that the Total(ly) 1980s Nostalgia Quotient, or X, equals 7.61, up significantly from last year. What does this number mean? I have no freakin' idea—that's why I chose to be a critic, not a social scientist. What I do know is what I hear, which is that the decade of the '80s is rising from its grave with all its bombast, pretensions and memories (or constructed memories, as the case may be) intact. **lv**

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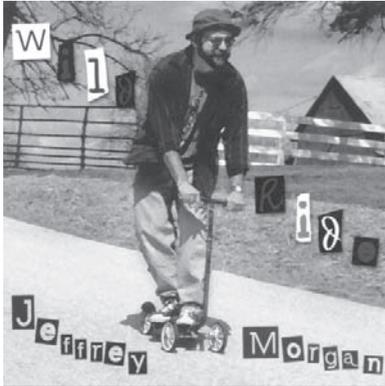
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Jeffrey Morgan

Wild Ride

On his new CD, local musician Jeffrey Morgan celebrates the human spirit. As indicated on two of the CD's best songs, Morgan knows life can be a "Long Hard Rocky Road" or a "Wild Ride." The singer/songwriter/guitarist puts out a pleasant

vibe singing and playing. He's having a good time and the fun rubs off on the listener.

Morgan takes risks by releasing such a personal disc in this age of professionalism. He doesn't dress up the material with slick production but keeps the arrangements and vocal harmonies clean and honest. He's joined by several local talents, including fiddler Al Murphy, pianist Mark Chorpening (who co-produced the disc with Morgan), drummer Jim Viner, and bassist Rick Cicolo.

Each tune is an original Morgan composition (two were co-written by John Lake), with the exception of John Hartford's beautiful instrumental "Presbyterian Guitar." Morgan begins the song as a duet with Murphy, and the gentle interplay of stringed instruments begets a true loveliness. But just when you think the tune is drawing to a close, Murphy adds his own lyrics. The words connect to the sweet-

ness of the melody but don't enhance or detract from the feeling of the song.

While the majority of songs are acoustic, Morgan and company do go electric on four of the 12. My favorite is "Lake Darling," which swings more than rocks to a steady brushed-drum tempo. Morgan gets so excited that he almost yodels at one point, only to break into a more conventional, '50s-type doo-wop vocalization. As the kids on "American Bandstand" would say, "It's got a beat; you can dance to it." Also of special note is the acoustic "What Did I Do Tomorrow." The silly, vamp-filled tune constantly builds to jazzy climaxes and tasty resolutions as the narrator wonders about the demands and hokums of life: "Who am I fooling with these things I am doing?" Morgan asks, but he knows. Singing and playing music is one of life's pleasures—as is listening to the result here.

Steve Horowitz



Jason Reeves

The Nervous Mind Of Love

People who write pop music based on the American folk music idiom have to surmount a significant barrier in order to make something original. Simple major and minor chords and mostly pentatonic melodies have to suffice as a harmonic palette. Musicians can go entire careers without transcending the form's limitations, and that's OK. Even if it's been done over and over before, it still feels good to listen to. Folk music is something people

can have a direct emotional relationship with; the heartstrings those ringing guitar chords pull never tire of the pulling.

Iowa City's Jason Reeves is a guy who takes things a step further. The songs on *The Nervous Mind Of Love* are the sort you think you've heard before, without seeming derivative. The closest parallel to Reeves' laid back, introspective ballads is the early work of Jackson Browne, an artist that Reeves, one of the MTV generation, says he's never really listened to. Reeves and Brown both make songs that wear their hearts on their sleeves and aren't afraid of bald statements of sentiment.

"Your Skin Instead" is a letter to an absent lover that seems giddily willing to spill a desire so personal and simple as to be almost embarrassing—"Your voice is pretty baby, but I'd rather have your pretty skin instead." But Reeves delivers the song in his warm baritone with a disarming, sleepy sincerity that wins you over. The lyric keeps to a palette of short words as spare as the song's single strummed guitar behind Reeves' voice.

"Save The World" encapsulates what's most right, or wrong, about Reeves' music. Only a true innocent can write lyrics like "Do you think we can stop the hate?"

and deliver them without irony. But the song is not without humor: "Do you think we can save the world this time?/Well, I think maybe we should try more often." At the same time, the relaxed, sure-footed performance is satisfying to the listener, and the poppy, ear-candy coating of the message sells it without being preachy.

The easy-going, day-dreamy mood of *The Nervous Mind Of Love* makes an asset out of Reeves' callow vision of romantic love. He writes as though he's never been done wrong by love or regretted botching a relationship. The object of his affections is either here, or absent. There isn't much darkness or ambivalence—either he's in a swoon of satisfaction or a swoon of longing.

In either case, the feeling is communicated with ringing open strings and a slurry, sweet voice that invites you into his daydream. Reeves sounds like he's playing and singing for himself; one doesn't so much hear his songs as overhear them. They're an end in themselves, not an ingratiating sales pitch. The real accomplishment here is one of transparency—it's easy to hear these songs to their heart, but they have a durability that bears repeated listening.

Kent Williams

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- 10) Dec. early- River City Rebels, 7 Shot Screammers
late- Chicago Skool of Beats
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- 13) Dec. Magnolia Electric Co, Winter Blanket
- 16) Dec. early- Fear Before The March of Flames
late- Bad Fathers
- 17) Dec. Call Me Lightning, Shadow Government
- 18) Dec. KITA BURNOUT, BURIED AT SEA, INDIAN
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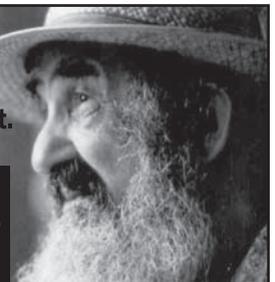
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- Sat. 12/11- Richard Walz Master Class
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BEN SCHMIDT, 7pm
- Thurs. 12/16- Potluck Dinner and Jam, 9pm
- Sat. 12/18- THE GILDED BATS

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Art/Exhibits

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center

55 12th Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

Iowa in Ghana: Dr. D. Michael Warren and the Bono of Takyiman, photographs of the Bono people of Ghana, through March 10.

AKAR

4 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 351-1227

Spatial Containment: Ceramics by Maren Kloppmann, Nov. 12-26 • 30 x 5, 30 artists—including Robert Archambeau, Dan Anderson, Sam Chung—contribute five pots each, through Dec. 10.

Bruce more

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-7375

Animal House, honoring the exotic and local animals that have called Bruce more home, through May.

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-7503

The Naked Truth: 2004 International Juried Wood Fire Exhibition, selection of teapots, bowls, vessels and other ceramic objects, through Jan. 9 • *From Surreal to Abstract: 20th Century European Prints*, through Feb. 13 • *Villa to Grave: Roman Art and Life*, 150 Roman objects—sculpture, frescoes, jewelry, furniture, coins and other decorative art objects—displayed in a recreated Roman architectural setting, through Aug. 25, 2005 • Opening of the Grant Wood Studio at 5 Turner Alley, Dec. 11. (See *Words* listing for more)

Chait Galleries Downtown

218 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 338-4442

Extraordinary Holiday Show, work by 50-plus artists including John Schirmer, Gene Anderson, Diane Naylor, Chris Burd and Jeff Jensen, through December.

CSPS

1103 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 364-1580

Chile's Ivan Navarro creates sculpture from florescent light tubes; France's Denis Roussel photographs skin and blood; Cedar Rapids' Tom Lee makes collages that evoke old poster-covered fences, through Jan. 30.

Faulconer Gallery

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell, 641-269-4660

William Kentridge Prints, 120 prints by this South African artist, through Dec. 12. (See *Words* listing for more)

The History Center

615 1st Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-1501

Home For The Holidays: My Memories, holiday memories from Cedar Rapids-area residents; stories, memories and artifacts, Dec. 3-Jan. 9 • *Disappearing Frontiers*, Bob Campagna's photography students document Iowa's disappearing frontiers, Dec. 9-January.

Hudson River Gallery

538 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 358-8488

Shannon Kennedy, paintings and drawings, through December.

Iowa State Bank & Trust

102 S. Clinton St., Iowa City, 337-8615

Works by Iowa City Branch of the National League of American Pen Women; poetry, watercolor and oil painting, paper and fiber, and photography by Joan Liffing-Zug Bourret, Patricia King, Mildred Lavin, Lois Muehl, Ruth Muir, Carole Ann Robey, Lila Borg Rohrer, Naomi Kark Schedl.

Lorenz Boot Shop

132 S. Clinton St., Iowa City, 339-1053

The Natural World, prints by Janet Hart Heinicke; *Twin Towers*, photographs and frames by Laura Hobson; mixed media works in foil, ink & digital imaging by Alexandria Cmaylo.

Mt. Mercy College

Janalyn Hanson White Gallery, Cedar Rapids, 363-1323

Qingming, sound and text-based installation by Twin Cities artist Abinadi Meza, tells the story of Zheng Qingming, a Chinese student who committed suicide over a debt of \$80, through Dec. 16.

Mythos

9 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 337-3576

Tibetan painting and sculpture and Chinese porcelain of the 17th and 18th centuries, through November. Reception Dec. 3, 6-8pm.

Old Brick

20 E. Market St., Iowa City

Silent Art Auction, fund-raiser for project "Our House," LGBTQIA community center, entertainment and refreshments, Dec. 2, 6-8pm.

Senior Center

28 S. Linn St., Iowa City

Glorious Colors, works by Judith Adams, Margaret Felling, Joe Giglierano, Nelson Gurll, Mabel Jones, Phyllis Lance, Helen Latta, Darlene Neel, Julie Peterson, Dorothy Rogers, Mary W. Wall, Wilma Wilms, Virginia Zisdovsky, Dec. 3-Jan. 16; opening reception Dec. 3, 4:30-6:30pm.

Ruby's Pearl

323 E. Market St., Iowa City, 248-0032

Stitching Her In: A Skirt Exhibition, cloth and collage by Susan Junis and Grace Sinclair, Dec. 11-31; reception Dec. 11, 6-8pm.

Siren Club

124 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, 248-2840

Gallery opening for Casey Kasperek, Dec. 9.

UI Hospitals and Clinics

Project Art of UIHC, Iowa City, 353-6417

Trúc Deegan, ink and watercolor paintings, through Dec. 31, Patient and Visitor Activities Center, Eighth

Floor, John Colloton Pavilion • Edward Herbeck, prints, through Dec. 31, Patient and Visitor Activities Center.

UI Museum of Art

150 North Riverside Dr., Iowa City, 335-1727

Faculty Exhibition 2004, through Dec. 11 • *The History of Iowa in the Art of Maps*, traces changing perceptions of the Midwest and Iowa through historic maps from the 16th to 20th centuries, through Jan. 30 • *Beaded Rhythms: Women's Adornments from Northern Cameroon*, through Dec. 11 • Jack Kerouac's 120-foot scroll manuscript of *On the Road*, Jan. 14-March 13.

Music

Bruce more

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-7375

Holiday Open House, with music by George Baldwin on the pipe organ, Janelle Lauer and Gerard Estella, Recorder Consort, Jefferson High School Madrigal Singers, Dec. 12 & 19, 4-7pm.

Campbell Steele Gallery

1064 Seventh Ave., Marion, 373-9211

Lynne Rothrock, Jan. 28-29, 8pm.

Clapp Recital Hall

UI campus, Iowa City, 335-1160

Volkan Orhon, double bass; Réne Lecuona, piano, Dec. 3, 8pm • Jazz Repertory Ensemble, Dec. 4, 8pm • Philharmonia and All-University String Orchestra, Dec. 5, 3pm • Center for New Music, Dec. 5, 8pm • University and Concert Band, Dec. 8, 8pm • Delbert Disselhorst, organ, Dec. 9, 8pm • Jeffrey Agrell, horn; David Gier, trombone; Alan Huckelberry, piano, Dec. 11, 8pm • UI Chamber Orchestra, Dec. 12, 3pm • Semi-Annual Last Chance Concert, UI Percussion Ensemble, Dec. 12, 8pm • Andrew Hardy, violin; Uriel Tsachor, piano, Jan. 23, 3pm • Electronic Music Studios, Jan. 25, 8pm • Margaret Soper Gutierrez, violin; Réne Lecuona, piano, Jan. 30, 3pm.

CSPS

1103 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 364-1580

8pm, except Sundays (7pm)

Tribute, holiday show, Dec. 2 • Guitarist Phil Heywood and singer/songwriter Dave Moore, Dec. 11 • Kris Delmhorst, Mark Erelli, Dec. 15 • Barbara Cohen, Cisco De Luna, Dec. 18 • Quetzal, Jan. 17 • The Holmes Brothers, Jan. 19 • Old Time Tidal Wave, concert featuring The Mammals, Uncle Earl and Foghorn Stringband, Jan. 25 • Rachael Davis, Jan. 27 • Tin Hat Quartet, Jan. 28 • Eric Bibb and Ruthie Foster, Jan. 29.

Englert Civic Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 688-2653

Amahl and the Night Visitors, by Gian Carlo Menotti, Martha-Ellen Tye Opera Theater, also *Ceremony of Carols*, by Benjamin Britten, performed by the Crescendo Children's Choir of Iowa City, Dec. 10-11, 8pm; Dec. 11, 2pm.

First Presbyterian Church

2701 Rochester Ave., Iowa City

Musick's Feast, Iowa City's professional early music ensemble, annual holiday program, Dec. 4, 8pm, 337-7917 for tickets.

Gabe's

330 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 354-4788

Early show: Gym Class Heroes, Halfway Home, Race the Sun; Late show: US Maple, Danger Adventure, Raccoo-oo-oon; Dec. 2 • The Dog and Everything, Dec. 3 • Early show: The Beautiful Mistake, Name Taken, Liar's Academy, Anadivine, Still Pictured; Late show: Saraphine, The Waiting Game, Catchstone, Emyrean; Dec. 4 • Early show: Nehemiah, King of Clubz, Death to Your King, Through the Harlot's Eyes, Torch The Morgue, Dec. 6 • The Junior Varsity, Houston Calls, Dec. 7 • Spouse, Envy Corp, Kathryn Musilek, Dec. 8 • Guilty By Association, Dec. 9 • Early show: River City Rebels, 7 Shot Screamers, The Hoax; Late show: Chicago Skool of Beats; Dec. 10 • Magnolia Electric Co., Winter Blanket, Dec. 13 • Early show: Fear Before the March of Flames, Fire When Ready; Late show: Bad Fathers; Dec. 16 • Call Me Lightning, Shadow Government, The Vine and The Archer, Grainbelt, Lazer Mountain, Dec. 17 • Kita, Burnout, Buried at Sea, Indian, Dec. 18 • Burnt Ends, Dec. 23 • Nolan, Dec. 29 • Elvis Tribute Benefit, Jan. 8 • Pelican, Malady, Envy, Jan. 21.

The Green Room

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Blues Jam Mondays, Funk and Jazz Jam Tuesdays

Phix, Dec. 2 • Public Property, Stark Machete, Dec. 3 • The Absurd, Guilty by Association, Dec. 4 • Blues Jam hosted by Craig Erickson, Dec. 6 • DJ Flower, Dec. 7 • Willie Waldman Project, Reclining Buddha, Dec. 8 • Cornmeal, Bent Wookie Breakdown, Dec. 10 • Big Wu, Dr. Z's, Dec. 11 • Blues Jam hosted by White Tornado, Dec. 13 • Bled the Multitude, Dec. 16 • The Ggltch, Home Made Headtrip, Dec. 17 • Hoopride, Dec. 18 • Blues Jam hosted by Billy Satterfield, Dec. 20 • NICKELBAGOFUNK, Dec. 23 • Nikki Lunden, Shame Train, Dec. 30 • Euforquestra, The Ggltch, Dec. 31 • Mr. Blotto, Jan. 22 • GB Leighton, Jan. 25.

A-LIST

Amahl and the Night Visitors Englert Civic Theatre • Dec. 10-11

The UI Division of Performing Arts inaugurates its performance series in the Englert Civic Theater with one of America's most popular operas when the Martha-Elle Tye Opera Theater presents Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Originally commissioned for television in 1951, the opera tells the story of Amahl, a handicapped child who one winter night is visited by three strange and imposing men—the Three Kings on their way to Jerusalem. "There are occasions when I watch and listen and sense that it is too sentimental for our distanced world of cell-phones and satellite disks..." says director Gary Race of the opera. "Yet, if there is still room for fables in our culture, *Amahl* is one worthy of retelling; for many things about our world have remained the same in the 2,000 or so years that have passed since the time of our story. There are still poor and starving people, and frustrated single mothers who lose patience with their children. And there are still those who will travel long distances in search of a truth. And, sentimental as it may seem, there are also those who in their own true innocence and faith can turn the world around with the simplest of gestures." Preceded by a performance of Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* by the Crescendo Children's Choir of Iowa City. Dec. 10-11, 8pm; Dec. 11, 2pm. 221 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 688-2653.



Grant Wood Studio opens Dec. 11 • 5 Turner Alley, CR



The Cedar Rapids Museum of Art opens the Grant Wood Studio and Visitor Center to the public on Saturday, Dec. 11. Wood lived and worked in the 5 Turner Alley Studio between 1924 and 1934, and it was in this studio that he painted one of the world's most famous works of art, American Gothic.

"The studio is a work of art in itself," says Terence Pitts, CRMA executive director. "Wood designed and built the interior. There are only a handful of historic artist's studios in America that bear such an intimate relationship with the artist who lived and worked there."

Wood's long-time patrons, John B. Turner and his son David Turner originally offered the carriage house loft to Wood in 1924. The Turners had underwritten trips for Wood to study art in Europe in 1920 and 1923-1924, and they owned a number of the resulting paintings. When they purchased the Douglas Mansion with the intention of converting it into a funeral home, they commissioned Wood to redesign the mansion's interior for its new function. The Turners also gave Wood permission to convert the unused upper floor of the rear carriage house into a studio and residence. The result was a quirky, one-of-a-kind space that art lovers finally have a chance to see firsthand.

The studio and visitor center—located at 810 Second Ave. SE—will be open Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and Sundays from 12 to 4pm, except major holidays. Intimate, guided tours of the actual studio where Wood worked are offered on the hour, with the last tour scheduled at 3pm each day.

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Hancher Auditorium

UI campus, 335-1160

"Cocoa and Carols," Old Gold Singers, Dec. 4, 2pm • Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile, Jan. 26, 8pm.

The History Center

615 1st Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-1501

Souvenir Sunday: Holiday Music Sing-Along, share your holiday music memories by singing, playing an instrument or just enjoying the music, Dec. 19, 2-4pm.

The Java House

211 E. Washington St., 341-0012

WSUI's "Iowa Talks Live from the Java House," Fridays, 10am

Dec. 3: Kathryn Musilek • Dec. 10: The jazz ensemble Spontaneous Combustion • Dec. 17: Singer Betsy Hickok and pianist Evan Mazunik • Dec. 31: Eddie Piccard Trio. (See *Music* listing for more)

Mahoney's

1602 E Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, 364-5754

Craig Erickson, Dec. 8, 9pm-1am.

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529

Open Mike Mondays, 8pm • Wednesdays, Burlington Street Bluegrass Band, 7pm • All music 9pm unless noted otherwise

Stuart Davis, Dec. 2 • Jeffrey Morgan CD-release party, Dec. 5, 7pm • Joe Price, Dec. 31, 9:30pm.

Mt. Mercy College

Cedar Rapids

Mt. Mercy College Concert Choir Winter Concert, Dec. 2, 7pm, Stello Performance Hall.

Paramount Theatre

123 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 363-1888

"Home for the Holidays," CR Symphony holiday pops concert, Dec. 18, 2:30 & 8pm; Dec. 19, 2:30 & 7:30pm, 366-8203 for tickets • "Ecstasy of Strings," CR Symphony masterworks concert, Jan. 22, 8pm, 366-8203 for tickets • Czech Boys Choir, Jan. 24, 7:30pm, 363-6254 for tickets • Metropolitan Orchestra Festival, Jan. 29, 7pm.

Riverside Theatre

213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 338-7672

Blue Christmas, jazz holiday concert featuring guitarist Don Blew, Dec. 4, 8pm.

Sanctuary

405 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 351-5692

Music at 9:30pm

Inception, jazzy horns sextet, Dec. 4 • Diplomats of Solid Sound, Dec. 10.

Senior Center

28 S. Linn St., Iowa City (unless noted otherwise)

AARP Holiday Celebration, music by Willowwind Choir, Dec. 6, 1:30pm • NHB Brass & Percussion Ensembles Holiday Concert, Dec. 7, 2:30pm • NHB Woodwind Ensemble Holiday Concert, Dec. 9, 2:30pm • New Horizons Orchestra Holiday Program, Dec. 10, 12pm • UI Heartbeats Choir, holiday selections, Dec. 13, 12:15pm • New Horizons Band, holiday performance, Dec. 14, 2:30pm • Voices of Experience Holiday Concert, Dec. 16, 2:30pm • Holiday Party for Johnson County Seniors, music by Top Brass, Dec. 23, 2:30pm.

Siren Club

124 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, 248-2840

Wednesdays, folk jam hosted by Dustin Blank, 9pm-1am

The Forum, live art, music and readings from Robert Frost, Dec. 9, 8pm-12am • Steve Grismore Trio, Dec. 10, 9pm-1am • Albert Cummings, Dec. 11, 9pm-1am • Evan Mazunik Trio featuring Betsy Hickock, Dec. 16, 8pm-12am • Lazy Boy and The Recliners, Dec. 17, 8pm-12am • Radoslav Lorkovic, Dec. 23, 8pm-12am • Lynne Rothrock, Dec. 24, 8-11pm • Dick Watson Trio, featuring Eve Adamson, Dec. 30, 8pm-12am • The Ernie Peniston Band, Dec. 31, 9pm-1am • Chris Mertz's The X-Tet, Jan. 12 • Ashanti, Jan. 15.

Stars Guitars

Town & Country Center, 3639 First Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 866-362-1881

Acoustic jam session every Friday night, 7-9pm.

UI Hospitals and Clinics

Project Art of UIHC, Iowa City, 353-6417

Colloton Atrium, noon (unless noted otherwise)

Dowling Catholic High School Choir, holiday concert, Dec. 2, followed by caroling at 1pm • Bahri Karacay, Turkish folk and pop music, Dec. 6 • UI Afro-Cuban Drum and Dance Ensemble, Dec. 10 • Clinton High School Choir, holiday concert, Dec. 13, followed by caroling at 1pm • Heartbeats, UIHC staff and volunteer choir holiday concert, Dec. 14 • Tipton High School Choir, holiday concert, Dec. 15 • Kol Shira, international contemporary and traditional Jewish vocal ensemble, Dec. 20, Solarium, Eighth Floor-Elevator F • Xavier High School Choir, holiday concert, Dec. 21.

UI Museum of Art

150 North Riverside Dr., Iowa City, 335-1727

Standard AIR, jazz ensemble, Dec. 3, 5pm, • "Know the Score," live radio program, "The Politics of American Music," singer/songwriter Dave Zollo and jazz pianist Dan Knight, Dec. 10, 5-7pm. (See *Words* listing for more)

Uptown Bill's small Mall

401 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 339-0401

Mud River Open Mic, Fridays, 8pm • Irish Slow Session, Celtic jam (for more info contact Tara Dutcher, tara@sc hoolperformingarts.com), Sundays, 2-4pm • All shows 7pm unless otherwise indicated

Brandon Ross, Dec. 2 • Ed Gray, Dec. 4 • The Unsung Forum (songwriter's workshop), Dec. 9 • Richard Walz (no open mic), Dec. 10, 7:30pm • Richard Walz Master Class, 10-4pm; Ben Schmidt; Dec. 11 • Potluck Dinner and Jam, Dec. 16, 5-9pm • The Gilded Bats, Dec. 18.

Voxman Music Bldg.

Harper Hall, UI campus

Iowa Horn Quartet, Dec. 12, 3pm • Arkady Shilkloper, horn, Jan. 21, 8pm.

Yacht Club

13 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 337-6464

Hip-Hop Night, Tuesdays; Jam Band Jam, Wednesdays, 10pm

House DJ Party, Dec. 3 • Dennis McMurrin & The Demolition Band, Dec. 4 • Mer, King Solomon's Grave, Scottie Long, Dec. 9 • Euforquestra, Buddha's Belly, Dec. 10 • Reggae Jam Session, Dec. 11 • Kick Ass Tarantulas, Ed Grey, Important People in Meetings, Dec. 12 • Dr. Z's Experiment, Dec. 17 • Jensen Connection, Dec. 18 • Funk Farm, Dec. 23

• Shame Train, Dec. 28 • Dennis McMurrin & The Demolition Band, Dec. 31 • Letterpress Opry, Patrick Brickell Band, Jan. 7 • Euforquestra, Jan. 21 • Second Anniversary Party, Jan. 22.

Auditions

Theatre Cedar Rapids

102 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-8592

Auditions for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Dec. 12-13, 7pm; pre-audition read-through, Dec. 6, 7pm.

Dance

Hancher Auditorium

UI campus, 335-1160

The Joffrey Ballet, *The Nutcracker*, Dec. 9-11, 7:30pm; Dec. 11-12, 2pm.

Space/Place Theatre

North Hall, UI campus, Iowa City

Graduate Concert, UI Dance Department, Dec. 2-4, 8pm • Dance Forum Concert, UI Dance Department, Dec. 18-19, 8pm.

UI Hospitals and Clinics

Project Art of UIHC, Iowa City, 353-6417

Colloton Atrium, noon (unless noted otherwise)
Youth Ballet Company from the UI Dance Forum, performing excerpts from *The Nutcracker*, Dec. 17.

Theater/Performance

Campbell Steele Gallery

1064 Seventh Ave., Marion, 373-9211

Liars Holographic Radio Theatre, music and original skits, with special guest Lynne Rothrock, Jan. 21, 8pm; Jan. 23, 7pm.

CSPS

1103 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 364-1580

Bindlestiff Family Cirkus, Jan. 12-14, 8pm.

Englert Civic Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 688-2653

Amahl and the Night Visitors, by Gian Carlo Menotti, Martha-Ellen Tye Opera Theater, also *Ceremony of Carols*, by Benjamin Britten, performed by the Crescendo Children's Choir of Iowa City, Dec. 10-11, 8pm; Dec. 11, 2pm.

Hancher Auditorium

UI campus, 335-1160

Sekou Sundiata, blessing the boats, Jan. 21-22, 8pm, Hancher Loft • 42ndStreet, Jan. 28-30, 7:30pm; Jan. 29-30, 2pm.

Old Creamery Theatre

Price Creek Stage, 39 38th Ave., Amana, 800-352-6262 (unless noted otherwise)

Price Creek Stage: Wed., Fri., Sat. 8pm; Thurs., Sat., Sun. 3pm

Holiday Hijinks, 2004, holiday variety show by Thomas P. Johnson, through Dec. 19.

Paramount Theatre

123 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 363-1888

Mark Twain tonight!, with Hal Holbrook, Dec. 3, 8pm.

Riverside Theatre

213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 338-7672

Small Miracles, reading of holiday memoirs by Ron Clark, Dec. 11, 8pm; Dec. 12, 2pm.

Theatre Cedar Rapids

102 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-8592

7:30pm Thurs.- Sat.; 2:30pm Sun.

Home for the Holidays: A TCR Christmas, Dec. 4-7 & 11-13.

UI Theatres

Theatre Bldg., UI campus, Iowa City, 335-2700

Hotline by Elaine May and *Home Free!* by Lanford Wilson, one acts directed by grad students, University Theatres Gallery production, Dec. 2-4, 8pm, Theatre B • *The Most Massive Women Wins* by Madeline George and *The Person I Once Was* by Cindy Lou Johnson, one acts directed by grad students, University Theatres Gallery production, Dec. 9-11, 8pm, Theatre B • *Beyond Breath*, Advanced Choreographic Design Concert featuring perspectives on mortality and integrating the visual arts, dance, music and theater, Dec. 9-11, 8pm, David Thayer Theatre.

Comedy

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529

Lightning in a Bottle, comedy improv, Tuesdays, 8pm.

US Cellular Center

370 First Avenue NE, Cedar Rapids, 363-1888

Ron White, "Drunk in Public," Dec. 2, 7:30pm.

Words

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-7503

"The International Scene on the Eve of Roman Expansion; Carthage and The First Punic War," DVD lecture series, Dec. 4, 1pm.

Falconer Gallery

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell, 641-269-4660

Faculty Panel Discussion, participants in South African Study Tour share observations and research, Dec. 7, 4:15pm.

The Green Room

509 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 354-4350

Poetry Slam, Dec. 15, 9pm.

The History Center

615 1st Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-1501

Downtown Holiday Skywalk Tour, Dec. 2, 4-5:30pm, begin and end at the History Center • College Open House, college students and professors invited to learn about the History Center, Dec. 2, 5-7pm • "Mark Hunter's Divine Architecture Tour," bus tour of the houses of faith in Cedar Rapids, including the Mother Mosque, Dec. 12, 1-4pm • History For Lunch: Disappearing Frontiers, photographer Bob Campagna and students discuss their photo exhibit, Dec. 14, 12-1pm.

IC Public Library

123 Linn St., Iowa City, 356-5200

"Happy Birthday, Mr. Weber! A Tribute to Irving B. Weber," thoughts and reminiscences by Lolly Eggers, Darold Albright, Thomas Dean and others, Dec. 2, 7-9pm, Meeting Rm. A.

Iowa Memorial Union

UI campus, Iowa City

Oladipo Kukoyi, family practice staff member, Finding God at Lunch series, Dec. 3, 12pm, River Rm. 1 • Ira Glass, host of the public radio's "This American Life," Dec. 5, 7:30pm, Main Lounge.

Java House

211 E. Washington St., 341-0012

WSUI's "Iowa Talks Live from the Java House," Fridays, 10am

Dec. 3: "Reality TV," featuring participants in the new reality TV dating show and UI communications

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researcher Mark Andrejevic • Dec. 10: "A Holiday Trip Down Memory Lane," with Riverside Theatre's Ron Clark • Dec. 17: "Festive Food, Drink and Melodies," with chef Kurt Friese, author of the upcoming book, *Slow Food in the Heartland: A Cook's Tour*, and wine expert Wally Plahutnik • Dec. 31: Eddie Piccard Trio. (See *Music* listing for more)

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City, 351-9529

Talk Art Cabaret, UI Workshop readings, Dec. 15, 10pm.

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, 337-2681 (unless noted otherwise)

All 8pm, broadcast live on WSUI (unless noted otherwise)

Max Allan Collins reads from *The Road to Purgatory*, Dec. 7 • Mary Swander and Tim Budd read from *Christmas on the Great Plains*, Dec. 16, 8pm.

Senior Center

28 S. Linn St., Iowa City

"Dress as Your Favorite Decade," 100 Year Postal Center to Senior Center Program, Dec. 3, 2:30pm •

"Change and Progress: A Century in Review, Part X. The 1990s," Loren Horton, Dec. 13, 2pm • Janie Yates Reading: The Holiday Season, Dec. 17, 2pm.

Shambaugh House

UI campus, Iowa City, 335-0128

"Energy-Efficient Buildings: The Key to Our Climate Future," Gil Masters, Stanford University, emeritus professor of civil and environmental engineering, Dec. 2, 4:30pm.

Siren Club

124 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, 248-2840

The Forum, live art, music and readings from Robert Frost, Dec. 9, 8pm-12am.

UI Museum of Art

150 North Riverside Dr., Iowa City, 335-1727

"Know the Score," live radio program, "The Politics of American Music," with Ken Cmiel, UI professor of history; Kristen Solli, graduate teaching assistant in American Studies at the UI; Tom Lutz, UI English professor, Dec. 10, 5-7pm. (See *Music* listing for more) • Gallery Talk with UI photography professor Peter Feldstein on his work in *Faculty Exhibition 2004*, Dec. 9, 7:30pm.

Women's Resource & Action Center

Iowa City, 335-1486

Feminist Fiction Reading Group, *Rape: A Love Story* by Joyce Carol Oates, Dec. 8, 8pm • Feminist Art Circle, resource sharing, field trips and workshops, Thursdays, 5:30pm.

Misc.

Boland-Duarte & Darley Counseling Services

20 S. Van Buren St., Iowa City, 466-1600

Open house to welcome associate April Dirks, LISW; live music, cocoa, treats, free chair massages, Dec. 3, 5-8pm.

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-7375

Holiday House Tours, through December, Tues.-Sat., 10am-3pm; Sun, 12-3pm; also Dec. 8, 15, 22, 4-7pm • "Santa, Snacks, and Stories," Santa visit, storytelling, holiday craft project, interactive theater performance, Dec. 5 and 7, 5:30-7:30pm, call for reservations • Holiday Open House, with music by George Baldwin on the pipe organ, Janelle Lauer and Gerard Estella, Recorder Consort, Jefferson High School Madrigal Singers, Dec. 12 & 19, 4-7pm.

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-7503

Roman Scavenger Hunt, kids earn a genuine Roman coin when they find the correct answers to questions in brochure, Dec. 18, 1pm.

CSPS

1103 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, 364-1580

Season kickoff and supper for all current, potential and new Legion Arts volunteers, Jan. 5, 6-8 pm (light supper served at 5:30pm).

Public Space One

6 1/2 S. Dubuque St, Iowa City

Stitch 'n' Bitch, knitters, Tuesdays, 4-6:30pm, emily-maloney@uiowa.edu for more info.

Ruby's Pearl

323 E. Market St., Iowa City, 248-0032

Midnight Madness Party, get your picture taken with Naughty Miss Santa and her crew of elves, fairies and reindeer, Dec. 18, 12pm-12am.

Senior Center

28 S. Linn St., Iowa City (unless noted otherwise)

AARP Holiday Celebration, music by Willowwind Choir, Dec. 6, 1:30pm • Holiday Party for Johnson County Seniors, music by Top Brass, Dec. 23, 2:30pm.

US Cellular Center

370 First Avenue NE, Cedar Rapids, 363-1888

Harlem Globetrotters, Dec. 26, 2pm.

Classes/Camps

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, 366-7503

Sandcasting workshop for adults, with Mt. Vernon artist Ruth Ipsan-Brown, Dec. 11, 10am-3pm, call for reservations.

Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center

220 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 356-5100

Freelance Writing Workshop, led by freelance writer Bill Asenjo, Ph.D, Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm, Dec. 1-22, 351-1528 for more info.

Monster Design Studio

716 Oakland Rd. NE, Cedar Rapids, 365-1844

Kids Art Classes, Saturdays, 11am-12pm.

School for the Performing Arts

209 N. Linn St., Iowa City, 341-0166

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Strange but True!

News Quirks



Compiled by Roland Sweet

Curses, Foiled Again

Rape suspect Ulrick White, 31, eluded California authorities for more than a year until his victim spotted him on the television reality show "Blind Date." The 35-year-old woman said she heard a female contestant refer to the suspect by his nickname and recognized his Jamaican accent. She videotaped the rest of his appearance and brought the tape to Ventura police, who arrested White.

Ultimate reality show

A British television channel announced that it is seeking a terminally ill volunteer to donate her or his body so it can be filmed as it decomposes. The show is tentatively titled "Dust to Dust." "It has to be completely above board," Kevin Lygo, director of publicly funded Channel 4, said. "There will be nothing salacious about it."

Odd ending

Allen Coleman, 42, died while crossing a street in Magna, Utah, after his artificial leg fell off and a car struck him when he crawled back to try to pick up the limb.

Cries for help

Officials tracking a distress signal traced it to a television set in Corvallis, Ore. The 20-inch color TV alerted an orbiting search-and-rescue satellite, which guided rescuers to the apartment of Chris van Rossman. They couldn't figure out what was sending the signal until van Rossman turned off the TV, and the signal stopped. They ordered van Rossman to keep his TV turned off or risk fines of up to \$10,000 a day for sending a false alarm.

Homeland insecurity

The Army National Guard won't meet its recruiting goal this year, Army Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, the Guard's top general, said. Pointing out that half the Guard's recruits are soldiers leaving active duty, Blum said they're aware that the Army is sending a growing number of Guard units to Afghanistan and Iraq, "and you don't want to take a chance that you're going to deploy that quickly again."

A National Guard jet fighter on a night-time training mission missed his target by 3.5 miles and strafed an elementary school in Little Egg Harbor, N.J. Authorities said 25 rounds of ammunition from the F-16 hit the building, puncturing the roof and knocking ceiling tiles into classrooms. "The key is, it was inadvertent," police Lt. John O'Brien said. "It was not directed at the school."

Riding the Peace Train

Yusuf Islam, whom the United States expelled in September for terrorist ties, was honored for his charity work and moral convictions at the opening of a meeting for Nobel Peace Prize laureates in Rome. Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev presented the award to the singer formerly known as Cat Stevens.

Funny money

Sheriff's deputies in Cayuga County, N.Y., arrested Throop town councilor and water superintendent William C. Tonzi, 43, after they said he tried to pay for gas with two counterfeit \$10 bills. A clerk refused to accept the bills because they looked suspicious, so Tonzi paid with a credit card and left the bogus bills behind. Investigators said that Tonzi used a personal computer to scan real \$10, \$20 and \$50 bills and print fake ones.

Police in Greensburg, Pa., charged Deborah Trautwine, 51, with passing a fake \$200 bill at a women's clothing store. The bill had a picture of President George W. Bush and the serial number "DUBYA4U2001." Store clerk Kathryn Miller not only accepted the bill, but also made change for the purchase of a \$99 item.

Employees at a Taco Bell restaurant in Fond du Lac, Wis., called police after a customer paid for his food with two suspicious-looking \$5 bills. Detectives determined that the bills were genuine but looked odd because one was from 1928 and the other from 1963.

Gone and forgotten

Two years after Jim Sulkers died in Winnipeg, Manitoba, police found his mummified corpse inside his condo. No one suspected his death because his bank's automatic bill paying handled his income and condo payments. Neighbors noticed his mailbox filled up several times, but the letter carrier regularly emptied it without telling his supervisors. A cousin, Kim Dyck, said some relatives had stopped by his apartment. "They knocked on his door, and he didn't answer," Dyck said. "You assume he isn't home. You certainly don't assume he's dead."

Presidential power at work

Alexander Lukashenko, the president of the former Soviet republic of Belarus, objected to looking at billboards showing French models while making his daily commute, so he banned them. "These Frenchwomen with their faces splashed with mud off the road must not monopolize billboards all over the place, including the presidential route to work," he declared.

When it rains, it pours

After a tornado damaged the home of Robert L. Medvee, 52, in Frederick, Md., the workers he hired to repair it noticed nearly two dozen boxes filled with child pornography. "We had to bring in a pickup truck to get it all out of there," state prosecutor Scott Rolle said after Medvee was jailed on 96 counts.

Seat of inspiration

German archaeologists announced they have discovered the toilet on which Martin Luther wrote the 95 Theses that launched the Protestant Revolution. They found the stone commode while excavating a garden at Luther's house in Wittenberg. Theologian and Luther expert Martin Treu told BBC News that there's no doubt the toilet was Luther's, explaining that Luther himself admitted suffering from chronic constipation and spent much of his time in contemplation on the toilet.

Old habits die hard

After Jared J. Bailey, 20, was charged with forgery in Bloomington, Ind., he tried to get out of jail by forging documents for his release. Investigators said that Bailey forged the signature of Monroe Circuit Judge Douglas R. Bridges on a court order lowering his bail from \$100,000 to \$500. He had a friend fax the document to the jail, but officials there were suspicious. Bailey's bond was raised to \$250,000.

Overlooking the Obvious

New Brunswick authorities, tracking thieves who stole a truck carrying nearly 50,000 cans of Moosehead beer, found the truck but not the beer. Pointing out that the beer was destined for Mexico, couldn't be shipped through the United States without proper documentation, and couldn't be sold anywhere in Canada, Moosehead spokesperson Joel Levesque insisted that the thieves "can't sell it" and are stuck with US\$57,000 worth of beer.

Compiled from the nation's press by Roland Sweet. Submit clippings, citing source and date, to POB 8130, Alexandria VA 22306.



② **Phix** (Phish tribute band)

③ **Public Property**
Stark Machete
(Sublime tribute band)

④ **THE ABSURD**
GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION

⑥ **Blues Jam w/Craig Erickson**

⑦ **DJ FLOWER**

⑧ **Willie Waldman Project**
(featuring The Painter, Craig Erickson & members of MOE.)
Reclining Buddha

⑩ **Cornmeal**
Bent Wookie Breakdown

⑪ **BIG WU + DR. Z'S**

⑬ **Blues Jam w/White Tornado**

⑮ **Poetry Slam**

⑯ **Bled the Multitude**

⑰ **The Ggitch**
Home Made Headtrip
(featuring members of Greener and Bohemian Soul Tribe)

⑱ **Hoopride**

⑳ **Blues Jam w/Billy Satterfield**

㉓ **NICKELBAGOFUNK**

㉗ **Blues Jam**

㉙ **Nikki Lunden**
Shame Train

㉚ **Euforquestra**
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ASK RUBY

The purpose of "ask Ruby" is to give honest and accurate information regarding sex and sexual relationships and to promote mutual and consensual sexual practices. We believe strongly that censorship is a method of patriarchal control used to shut fiery, feisty folks down. This column is intended as a blow to barriers that keep people from experiencing good communication around sex.

Let's schedule a 'meeting'

Dear Ruby,
What's a girl to do when her busy schedule interferes with her and her partner's fabulous sex life? The libido is still there, but there's that whole "I'm so tired" routine. What should I do?

Signed,
Juana Havemore

Dear Juana,

Believe it or not, most couples go through a decrease in action after the initial getting-to-know-you period. So first and foremost, know that your situation is normal. There is plenty of Hollywood and fairy tale propaganda that would have us believe that love is always intense and passionate. Oh, and that sex happens automatically after you turn out the lights and climb into bed. I think if you were able to chat with some long-term lusty couples, though, they would tell you otherwise.

When hotties get together, there is often a whirlwind of momentum to play together all day and all night. Remember the first few weeks of your romance? How often did you call in late to work? Did you spend time with any of your other friends? Did you call your mom? Walk the dog often enough? So upon returning to more normal and responsible life patterns, suddenly there's "no time" for the hours-long mattress poundings you became so fond of.

You say that your libido is still there, and that tells me that it's really just a matter of scheduling to better achieve your desires. Yep! I'm betting that hot time with your honey is at

least as important to you as having clean laundry or getting the cat vaccinated. It's time to have a real conversation about priorities. Set aside a chunk of time when you know you will both be awake and enthusiastic to come up with a schedule that gets you closer to the frequency of action you both would like. How unromantic, you say? What could be more exciting than finding out that the squeeze of your dreams really does want to have a naked picnic with you?

Maybe Sundays can be permanently reserved, all day, for genital maintenance procedures. Or every other Friday you can arrange a nooner in the back of your mini-van. Maybe a quarterly weekend alone in the wilderness suits you both best. Get talking and get hooked up!

Be sure to agree on acceptable reasons for canceling one of these dates. Would you think of postponing passion because you forgot to mail the cable bill on time? I don't think so.

It can be a real challenge to keep the fireworks going in a relationship. Just remember that quality time will happen if you create the space for it in your busy life.

Reliably,
Ruby

We do not claim to have all the answers, but we do have extended experience, both personal and professional. Questions should be mailed to Ruby's Pearl, 323 E. Market St., Iowa City, IA 52240, 319-248-0032 or emailed to rubyspearl@excite.com

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stars over iowa city

FORECAST FOR DECEMBER 2004 • BY DR. STAR

♈ ARIES - Aries is full of optimism, confidence and raw determination in December. What you might be lacking are patience and realism. The planets are asking that Aries look way past the usual solutions and beyond the usual resources. You must be willing to accept delay as well as advice and criticism. By nature, you are impatient with limitations and inner and outer restraints. You will soon enter a cycle in which you can more easily break down inner and outer barriers and make long sought changes to yourself and your environment.

♉ TAURUS - Events make decisive action inappropriate right now. You'd best bide your time. Meanwhile, the stars are bringing you a wonderful opportunity. In recent years, you have been able to make deep and positive changes to your public identity. Your outward personality is smoother, stronger and more adaptable. You've also been able to bring more agreeable people into your life. In the coming cycle, you can rid yourself of private fears, insecurities or guilt that are still holding you back, making it hard for you to capitalize further on recent gains.

♊ GEMINI - Your influence is growing. Your self-confidence is also growing, justifiably. Strongly motivated and increasingly empowered, you should seek to build something new. Recent planetary changes suggest that you should expand. Reach out to distant places and establish long-distance partnerships. Humanitarian and educational enterprises are strongly favored. A lengthy cycle is beginning during which the planets will strongly encourage and support such efforts. Luck will favor you and unexpected events will clear your way. Maintain a professional attitude, however. Self-indulgence or self-absorption will work against you now.

♋ CANCER - Your influence seems less than you would like, the penalty for a misstep, too great, and the reward for being right, too small, even though you usually are right. But you are about to gain more power and influence than you realize and more than you are used to. You are entering a lengthy cycle with numerous opportunities to develop greater sensitivity, poise and skill in power situations. This will lead to greater empowerment in all areas of your life. Defer to the needs of those in authority during this cycle.

♌ LEO - Your best tactic this month is to radiate the optimism and love that you genuinely feel beneath the fear or doubt skittering around on the surface. Take the long view as an important new cycle begins. Refuse to be bound by what is familiar and comfortable or inhibited by existing obstacles. Many of these will fall away, in time. Pathways will emerge where none are now apparent. You can count on robust and abiding support for efforts to expand your enterprise, mind and spirit.

♍ VIRGO - Optimism is running high, but uncertainty prevails. Rebellious associates, including certain family members, keep doing unpredictable and disruptive things—albeit with the best of intentions. This can make planning your life very difficult. The planets suggest a strategy for success. Reduce debt, conserve long-term assets and add to them. This is hard in today's economy, but the planets are offering very strong support. Unforeseen events will reward the decision to save and invest. Conversely, events could make you regret spending too freely. You have enough influence to implement reforms.

♎ LIBRA - Librans know in their heart of hearts that many big, difficult decisions must soon be made. You will have clear-cut options, but none of them will be simple or easy. Your innate sense of balance and diplomacy will be in extreme demand. You should concentrate closely on the needs of partners and key associates. Try to maintain a sense of selflessness. Be willing to set aside old habits of mind and preconceptions about yourself. Luck will stay by your side throughout this challenging time. Keep "comfort spending" in check.

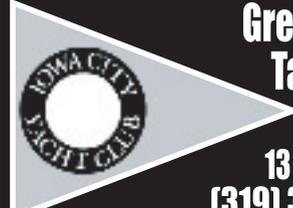
♏ SCORPIO - Scorpios are asking themselves a lot of really complicated questions nowadays. Don't expect quick answers. Complicated questions take time to answer. Instead, concentrate on achieving small but real results. Stop worrying about everything all the time. Do something, however modest, to clear up those doubts and issues. If you have a question about work or health, for example, go get an answer. This might seem like a distraction, or a "second-best" solution. But the planets promise real breakthroughs when you stop fretting and take action, especially small, incremental actions.

♐ SAGITTARIUS - Sagittarians naturally want to provide inspiration and sound leadership. These days, however, that is proving hard. It is especially rough when so many look to you for guidance. But things are nuttily complex and confusing, even for normally surefooted, clear-eyed, farsighted, straight shooting Sagittarians. In the coming cycle, if you "lighten up," the planets will, in turn, reward you with insight and clarity of mind. Recreation and diversion will bring good answers. The time for obsessing over problems is over, for now. Think of it as a paid vacation.

♑ CAPRICORN - Capricorns are born to wield power and they thrive under the stresses and strains of the job. They get down to brass tacks and act on the best available facts. But somebody stole the brass tacks, and reliable facts are becoming as rare as hens' teeth. The planets suggest that Capricorns go home and tend their gardens. Let the world turn on its own for awhile. During this cycle, the Capricorn who governs least governs best. Trying to maintain tight control now could set the boat to rocking very badly.

♒ AQUARIUS - Aquarians are being asked to listen to those they would normally consider pessimists and "doom and gloomers." (Others regard these people as pragmatists and realists.) Aquarians are normally the source of inspiration, but you tend to be too wrapped up in your own visions these days. You might also unwittingly inspire others to unwise actions. Your best bet would be to build up your local support network. Strengthen ties with neighbors and your near and dear ones. Set aside your more visionary ambitions until a foundation has been properly laid.

♓ PISCES - Strenuous, spirited discussions about very basic issues are in order for Pisces. Work hard with partners and associates to reach that tiny kernel of understanding that will let you preserve your dream and also stay within realistic bounds. The planets will reward you for trying to achieve your dreams while living within your budget. It would be unwise to take on more debt during the cycle, no matter how great the temptation or seemingly justified the expense. Visionary and dreamy as you might be, reality might catch up with you.



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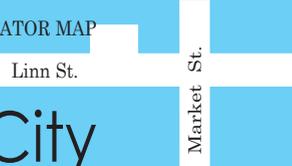


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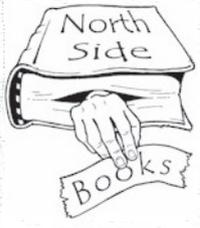
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