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September '08

Celebrating the Iowa Women's Music Festival

Righteous ROCKIN' BABIES

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the Leaf Lady

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to Run

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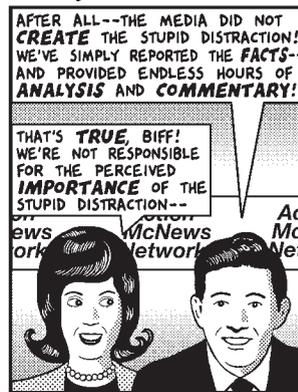
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Tom Tomorrow © 2008... www.thismodernworld.com

Climate Control

Thomas Dean outlines the year ahead (meteorologically speaking). Weather gods are you listening?

Wow. We don't want to go through that again. Starting with the heavy snowfalls of November 2007—which then went on and on and on—through the devastating tornadoes of this past spring and on to the historic Flood of 2008, we've had more than our share of weather-related disasters here in Iowa this past year. Let me look into my crystal ball and see if I can find gentler winds and calmer waters for the coming year.

It's late September. The evening of the University of Iowa Homecoming parade is comfortably warm, with just a nip in the air. The day has been in the low 70s, but as the Hawkeye marching band blares by, we wonder if the low 50s we feel right now just might dip into the upper 40s. We've had a bit of rain this month, close to four inches, but nothing that would cause the Iowa River to overflow its banks.

Halloween rolls around. It was about 60 degrees today, but the kids are putting on jackets underneath their costumes because it's supposed to get down to 41 tonight. First frost has already happened during the second week of this October. The leaves hit their peak color about a week or ten days ago. There's a slight drizzle throughout this Halloween day, but we've had less than three inches of rain all month, and only about five rainy days.

It's Thanksgiving 2008. Today's high of 42 was just about Halloween's low. Tonight's low of 28 ensures that the furnace will be on. We've shivered over the nether-side of freezing about 20 nights already this month. Iowa City saw its first measurable snow two days ago, but we'll have to wait until next week to see our first full inch of the year.

We wake up to a cold but bearable Christmas morning in the teens, and we'll not quite make 30 before the holiday festivities are done. There's an inch or two of fresh snow on the ground, bringing our total up to six for the month, but December has only seen one straight week of snow cover at any point. Thankfully, we haven't seen any blizzards yet.

It's 2009, and the depths of January are upon us. It's the 26th, we've reached 29 degrees, and we woke up to a chilling 10. January has piled up seven inches of snow, and we've had eight

days of below-zero weather. We're all looking forward to spring.

When spring arrives on March 20, we crack our first 50-degree day of the year. We're glad the four or five inches of March snow are behind us, but we've got a couple of more "surprise" inches to look forward to in April before we close the books on about 28 inches total for the season. The roads departments did not run out of sand and salt this year, thank heaven! And, finally, around April 24, a week or two after Easter, we see the last of the freezing mark until next fall.



The forecast isn't calling for ice. As if the forecast has a say.

It's Memorial Day! The temperature is a perfect, balmy 67, and last night was a comfortable 55. It's the "unofficial" first day of summer, but we'll take the temperateness and ease into the hot season. We've seen plenty of spring showers, but May's four inches won't quite match the four and a half we'll see in June. Regardless, the Army Corps of Engineers has not had to panic at the Coralville Dam, and City Park only saw a little extra dampness on its banks. No sandbagging this year!

The summer's been great—okay, it's rained about a quarter of the time, and we've racked up a bit over a foot of rain from June through August. But the farmers have loved it, and so have our backyard gardens. We've had about 35 tornadoes across the state, but luckily no fatalities. And we've had our share of heat—15 days since June when the mercury pushed over 90 degrees. But for the most part we've floated along in the mid-80s. Perfect Rez weather.

So what do you think? You like my prognostications? Why, yes!, you say. Tom, what you're describing is exactly what our weather should be, and it's the Iowa weather we know

and love most years. Well, if that's what you're saying, you're partially right. It is indeed exactly what our weather "should" be—because all of the numbers and descriptors I've used are our average statistics. But "average" never happens long-term. So therefore what I've described will, I can guarantee you, not happen next year—and it has never happened, not once, ever. My little weather narrative is not the Iowa weather you've known and loved most years, but a fantasy wrought of means and historical patterns. What I've described is actually climate, not weather. And we never

My little weather narrative is not the Iowa weather you've known and loved most years, but a fantasy wrought of means and historical patterns.

experience an entire year of climate.

So maybe this coming year we'll have almost no snow. Or maybe another 60 inches (please no!). Maybe next spring will be cold and clammy, or hot and dry. Who knows? But one thing's for sure. We will have plenty of "weird" weather—as happens every single year (and with climate change, it is happening with more frequency.)

Don't throw out or pack away the snow shovels, the umbrellas, the sunscreen, the sidewalk sand, the Arctic-level parkas, the swimsuits, the number of your insurance company for when the hailstorm hits your roof—we'll need it all. Or maybe none of it. We'll just have to wait and see—as we do every single year of our lives here in Iowa. **lv**

*Thomas Dean this month is shamelessly plugging the impending October publication of his first book of essays, *Under a Midland Sky*, from Ice Cube Press. The book focuses on our lives in place from the lens of atmospheric phenomena. As this month's column amply illustrates, he is a weather geek.*

THE SIT-DOWN with

Betsy Hickok

Photo by Tom Langdon

If you see a lady with a ladder circling your favorite tree this fall, she just might be Betsy Hickok. Musician, writer, and “leaf artist” extraordinaire, Betsy discusses a creative hobby that brings her close to nature.

Little Village: Tell me about your art, what you do.

Betsy Hickok: Each fall, I go out looking for the most gorgeous leaves I can find in a variety of colors and shapes. I collect and press them, then create designs using the leaves against various types of paper—and I often use acrylic paints in the backgrounds, too. This process enhances the natural colors of the leaves, which, when you really start to pay attention, are incredible. Finally, I frame them.

LV: Why leaves? What’s the appeal of this medium and how did you get started?

BH: First of all, I grew up in Vermont, the foliage capitol of the world. However, making art out of leaves first came about after I moved to Iowa 20 years ago. I don’t recall the first time I picked up a leaf and thought about turning it into art—but through the years I have become progressively more aware of and interested in the design element of leaves. They are so beautiful, especially in the fall. Sometimes the leaves are so vivid that you can’t believe the colors are natural. My early pieces involved spray-painting leaves and arranging them in frames as gifts. About four years ago, I made some extras after I met my partner Hans, who is truly a gifted painter. I liked helping him with art shows and learned about the process of possibly exhibiting my creations. One year, I brought along a few of my pieces and was amazed when people bought them! The process just blossomed from there. I began to use larger frames and combine colors and textures to really showcase the leaves.

LV: What does the process involve?

BH: To me, what I do is more craft than art. I mostly work with three frame sizes: 5 x 7,



10x26, and 14x40. Each fall, I venture out to collect a variety of leaf shapes and colors from the most extraordinary trees I can find. I have learned through trial and error which leaves keep their color best after they are dried and manipulated. I have even figured out which



trees around Iowa City and Coralville produce the most colorful leaves, and I go back to some of the same trees each year. What makes my process a little nutty is that I rarely pick up leaves that have already fallen. Those leaves have already started losing their color, and, as I like to think of it, their “juice”—their life and brilliance. I actually carry around a small stepladder in my car—along with lots of sealable plastic bags—all through October and November. I stop beneath trees that look interesting, set up my ladder, and then hand-pick the most perfect leaves I can reach—finding ones that are whole and without blemishes. I

also have to think about the scale of the leaves, and getting multiple sizes, because I often mix different leaf types on a single piece of artwork. I’m sure many people have seen me out in their driveways, picking their leaves. Eventually I’ll become known as the “leaf lady” of Iowa City. If people see me, they usually say, “Great, go ahead and take them; fewer leaves that I have to rake up.” Once I left my stepladder in the middle of a sidewalk. Of course, this being Iowa City, I returned a day later and it was in the exact same spot.

The most time-consuming job is pressing the leaves. It can take me an entire evening to lay out three to four gallon-sized plastic bags of leaves between layers of blotting paper and paper towels. I’ll usually press maybe ten to 20 layers between two large pieces of foam core board and then place a heavy object on top. During “high leaf season,” you might see layers of these boards pressed under the weight of my living room chairs. After two weeks, I remove the leaves layer by layer, careful not to break them, and place them in sealed bags by leaf type and color.

I then go into “production” mode with the pieces. I’ll cut the background paper, squares of matte board, and other handmade papers to layer in interesting ways—with an eye toward

Sometimes when I sell a piece, I’ll say, “This is a really special leaf. I’ve only found a very few with this particular coloration.” They must think I’m a bit crazy!

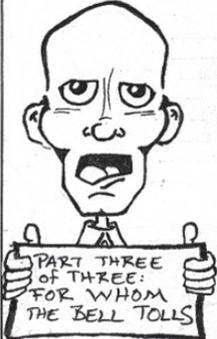
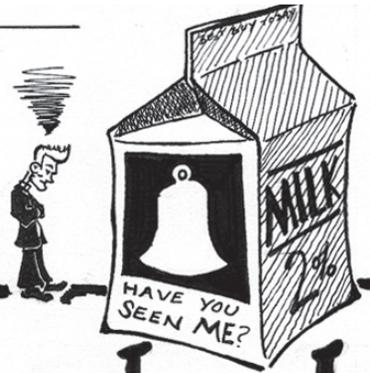
making the colors of the leaves really sing. That’s when I know a piece is right. It’s not unlike creating a setting for jewels—with the leaves being the “jewels” that are the last item to be mounted. Sometimes I use metallic paint on the paper as well. Once I have my materials assembled, the fun part begins. I really do think carefully about how I layer my papers and leaves to create the perfect combination. Every piece is really, truly unique. I often remember exactly where I found a particular leaf. Sometimes when I sell a piece, I’ll say,

“This is a really special leaf. I’ve only found a very few with this particular coloration.” They must think I’m a bit crazy!

To finish up, I glue leaves onto the squares, spray them with a clear and shiny acrylic to bring up the color and preserve the leaves (if kept out of direct sunlight, they can hold their color for years), then I glue the leaf squares onto the background and frame the piece.

SIT-DOWN CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 >>

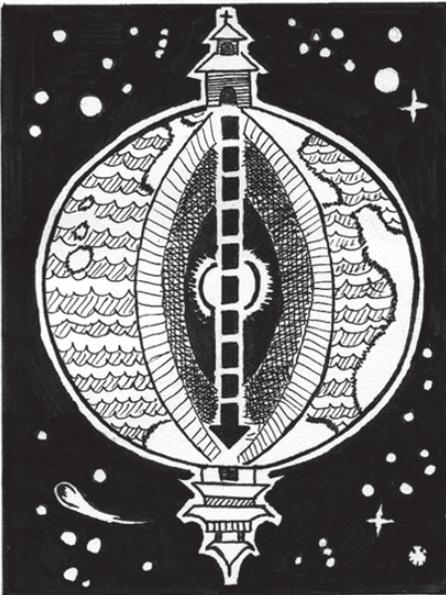
OK, A QUICK RECAP: AFTER BEING FIRED FROM HIS POST AS IOWA CITY'S FIRST PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER, MICHAEL HUMMER MOVED TO KEOKUK TO START A SPIRITUALISTIC TEMPLE. THEN, TO SPITE HIS FORMER CONGREGATION (WHO STILL OWED HIM \$650 IN BACK PAY) HUMMER RETURNED TO IOWA CITY IN THE LATE SUMMER OF 1848 TO STEAL THE BELL FROM HIS OLD CHURCH TO INSTALL IN HIS NEW ONE. A CROWD HALTED THE THEFT AND HIT THE BELL IN THE WATERS OF THE IOWA RIVER — BUT WHEN THEY RETURNED, THE BELL HAD DISAPPEARED!



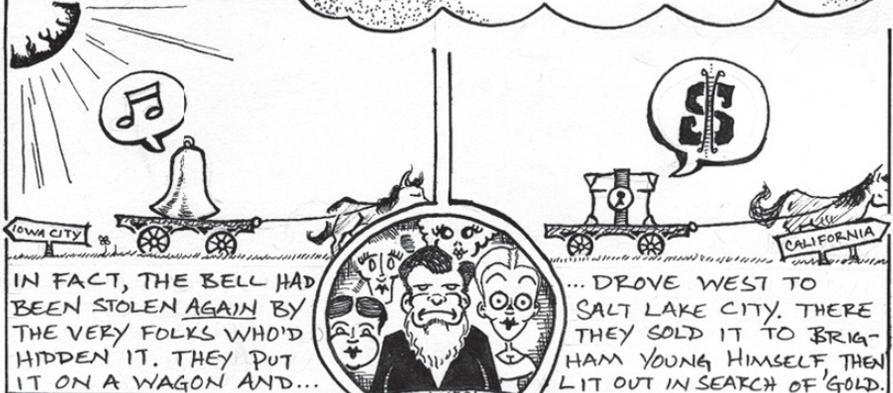
IA. Confidential

SO WHERE WAS THE BELL? MOST ASSUMED IT HAD "WASHED DOWN RIVER, OR...

BACK IN KEOKUK, THE REVEREND HUMMER MET WITH A CLAIRVOYANT NAMED MARY MARGRAVE WHO PROMISED TO USE HER POWERS TO FIND THE BELL. HER VISIONS LED HUMMER TO SEARCH IN A DOZEN DIFFERENT WELLS AROUND THE COUNTY, AND EVEN THE BASEMENT OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING, BUT NO BELL!



"...SUNK STRAIGHT TO CHINA!" BUT THESE EXPLANATIONS DID NOT SATISFY HUMMER.



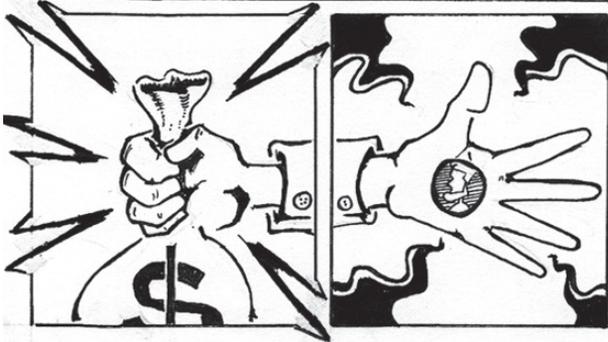
IN FACT, THE BELL HAD BEEN STOLEN AGAIN BY THE VERY FOLKS WHO'D HIDDEN IT. THEY PUT IT ON A WAGON AND...

...DROVE WEST TO SALT LAKE CITY. THERE THEY SOLD IT TO BRIGHAM YOUNG HIMSELF, THEN LIT OUT IN SEARCH OF 'GOLD'.



BACK IN IOWA CITY, HUMMER SUED HIS FORMER CHURCH AND WON, SORT OF: THE COURT AWARDED HIM \$550 IN BACK PAY, BUT CHARGED HIM FOR THE BELL, LEAVING HUMMER WITH ONLY PENNIES LEFT.

FINALLY, IN 1855, BRIGHAM YOUNG CAUGHT WIND THAT THE BELL BELONGED TO A CHURCH IN IOWA CITY, SO HE WROTE TO THE NEW PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER TO LEARN MORE. REVEREND HUMMER HEARD THIS NEWS AND IMMEDIATELY WROTE TO SALT LAKE CITY EXPLAINING HE WAS THE LEGAL OWNER OF THE BELL. YOUNG REPLIED HE WOULD GLADLY RETURN THE BELL, PROVIDED HUMMER REIMBURSE THE \$600 YOUNG HAD PAID FOR THE BELL, PLUS SHIPPING. FACED WITH PAYING FOR THE SAME BELL FOR A THIRD TIME, HUMMER LET THE MATTER DROP, AND THE BELL DISAPPEARED FOR GOOD! END



The Real Food Supercenter

This is the time of year that we flatlanders pine for during the snows of January, when it's a full 100 degrees colder than it is right now, and all the humidity is frozen to our windshields. September in Iowa is what makes things grow so well here—the hot, sticky dog days that bring us the sweet corn, hot peppers, and the very freshest tomatoes.

We are indeed fortunate here that we can shop at farmers markets every day of the week as long as we pay attention to the schedules and know the locations. They range from just a couple of awnings in a parking lot to massive affairs with cooking demos and live music.

As of 2004, Iowa had more farmers markets per capita than any other state. This is a great thing not only because it provides fresher food with a smaller carbon footprint, nor even just because it keeps more than \$20 million in the state's economy every year, but because at a farmers market, people relate. They socialize. They connect.

Watch people for a little while in the typical WalMart "super center." They push their massive carts down halogen-lit aisles as if they are wearing blinders, totally unaware of

At a farmers market, people relate. They socialize. They connect.

the other people near them. Then they gather at the checkout lines looking like a cross between deer in the headlights and lambs to the slaughter.

Compare this to people at the farmers market, where they walk with their bags and baskets around brightly colored stands of fresh food, always waving and saying hello to those they know, comparing items with complete strangers and asking insightful questions of the producers. There is laughter, witty banter, and genuine human interaction. It is another way that real food brings us together, while mass-produced edible foodlike substances further divide and isolate us.

People seem to trust the food in my restaurant more because they feel they know me—and that comes primarily from my being at

Iowa Sweet Corn Salsa

- 2 tomatoes, one red, one yellow, roughly baseball sized, diced
- 1 cup fresh local sweet corn (cut from 2-3 cobs)
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded & diced
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded & diced
- 1 red onion, peeled and julienned
- 2 serrano pepper, seeded & minced (or jalapeno, or whatever turns you on)
- 1/3 cup cilantro, chopped
- Juice from 2 limes

Simply mix all the ingredients 1 hour to 1 day before serving. Makes about 6 servings.

the market every chance I get. I trust the food more because I know the farmers making it. We all feel better as part of a community and as participants in each other's lives.

It seems silly to need to point these things out, but this is where our industrialized food system has brought us; out of the fields and the gardens and the kitchens and the dining rooms, and into the drive-thru lanes and checkout aisles. So a little reminder of the sustenance that comes from human interaction is needed now and then.

So I went to the market the other day and got all the ingredients I needed for an awesome salsa. Well, almost all—I'm still waiting for the Iowa limes (go global warming!). Then I went back to the restaurant and prepared it in about 10 minutes, whereupon I served it to our guests—some of whom were at the market with me—over a piece of grilled sablefish. Smiles abounded over all the tables. **lv**

It's About the Food is a monthly feature of Little Village. Chef Kurt Michael Friese is co-owner, with his wife Kim, of the Iowa City restaurant Devotay and serves on the Slow Food USA Board of Directors, as well as being editor-in-chief of the local food magazine Edible Iowa River Valley. His forthcoming book, A Cook's Journey: Slow Food in the Heartland has just been released. He lives in rural Johnson County. Questions and comments may be directed to devotay@mchsi.com.



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Feminists burning their bras in protest, women such as Janis Joplin, Joni Mitchell, and Linda Ronstadt on stage, and the Equal Rights Amendment finally up for ratification—this was the 1960s and 1970s, an era of women's liberation, and, one could easily assume, a heyday for women's music.

Wrong.

From 1960 to 1969, 71 women and 221 men made the Top 20, giving men a 76 percent to 24 percent edge, according to James L. Dickerson, author of *Go, Girl, Go! The Women's Revolution in Music* (2005). Similarly, from 1970 to 1979, 62 women and 208 men made the Top 20, giving men 77 percent of the total. Oh, and the Equal Rights Amendment never did pass.

Even the successful women artists of the protest-generation faced trials. Janis Joplin was victimized by many of the men around her. Linda Ronstadt's fame is often mounted by male groups in the country/rock genre, such as The Eagles, with whom she often collaborated. And one thing unites nearly all of the women musicians of this era: They sang. They didn't play.

The first women's music festival was found-

ed on the campus of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1974 in response to these issues in women's music. Since then, women's music festivals have sprung up across the country and include such success stories as Lilith Fair, the all-female festival

"As a young musician, all I saw was women singing in the bands, not women playing in them."

-Festival founder Laurie Haag

organized by Sarah McLaughlin that ran from 1997-1999. Lilith Fair garnered a \$16 million gross in 1997, making it the top-grossing of any touring festival for that year.

Iowa's own Women's Music Festival (IWMF) will celebrate its 15th anniversary this year on Saturday, September 20. The event, which will be held at Upper City Park in Iowa City, has a very direct connection to the first women's music festival held in Champaign—IWMF founder Laurie Haag was an undergrad at the university in 1974 and actually met and played music with the festival's founder, Kristin Lems.

Haag said that the original festival was

created partially in response to another festival in Champaign, the Red Herring Folk Festival. Famous for jumpstarting the career of Dan Fogelberg in the early '70s, Red Herring had never featured women performers. When Lems approached them about this discrepancy, the festival's organizers said they hadn't found any women good enough. Lems' response? You're wrong, and we'll prove it.

"This was a proactive way to address a shortcoming in the festival scene, which was great, because my experience as a woman playing up until then had been that I was

the only woman playing," Haag said.

"It was clear that if we were going to have a real opportunity, we were going to have to create it ourselves."

When Haag started working at The University of Iowa Women's Resource and Action Center in the early '90s, she knew she wanted to create a similar opportunity for women in Iowa. More than 30 enthusiastic people showed up at the first organizational meeting for the group in 1992, a clear signal of interest.

MUSIC

What: Iowa Women's Music Festival

When: 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday, September 20

Where: Upper City Park,
Iowa City

Cost: Free

For more information
and the full festival
schedule, visit
www.prairievoices.net.

“Most bars were not friendly to women at that time,” Haag said, adding that while women could have played the Open Mic nights, they often felt like they weren’t encouraged to do so; the lack of female musician role models left women feeling like they didn’t fit in.

“As a young musician, all I saw was women singing in the bands, not women playing in them,” said Haag, a drummer who also plays bass and guitar. “The more you can picture yourself in the spot of playing, the more likely you will be to try yourself.”

After 15 years, Haag and others say the women’s music scene in Iowa City and nationally has improved. Dickerson argues that 1996 was the breakthrough year for women’s music: 14 of 23 solo artists in Top 20 this year were women, a 61 to 39 percent margin over males. Leading female artists this year included Tori Amos, Toni Braxton, Mariah Carey, Alanis Morissette, Leann Rimes, and Shania Twain.

But even with today’s more female-friendly environment, Haag and Lisa Schreihart, another of the festival’s organizers, believe there is still a need to create a specific space for women to come together and share their stories.

In honor of the 15-year anniversary of the festival, this year’s lineup focuses especially on foundational women’s music performers, including festival-headliner Ferron, a Canadian folk singer/songwriter whose music influenced later musicians such as Ani DiFranco and the Indigo Girls. Also on the bill are Patrice Pike from Texas, Zoë Lewis, originally from England, Ubaka

There is still a need to create a specific space for women to come together and share their stories.



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ROGER SHIMOMURA, SCHOLAR’S CONVOCATION

Above: Roger Shimomura, Oriental Masterpiece #1, from the Oriental Masterpiece series, 1971, acrylic on canvas. Courtesy Lonny Kaneko.

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Hill of New York, and Iowa-based performers Diva Kai and BeJae Fleming, among others. In addition, Kim-Char Meredith, a Chicago artist originally from Hawaii, will transition between acts as the guest emcee.

“There’s a lot of great talent out there, and we just try to showcase it all,” said Schreihart. “We change it up and touch it up every year, and people aren’t ever sure what to expect. I’ve already heard a lot of people say that this

year’s lineup is probably the best we’ve ever had.”

From Zoë Lewis’s world-beat-influenced tunes to bluesy grooves from BeJae Fleming, each of the artists in the lineup is distinct, yet they all share the festival’s goal.

“This is a place for women and everyone to go and hear women’s voices and experiences,” Haag said. “It’s a place where women’s stories are told. It’s a place where women can hear

someone they can relate to.” **lv**

Maggie Anderson has lived and worked in Iowa City for the past five years and is currently the Marketing and Media Manager for the University of Iowa Museum of Art. She started a garden with a friend this year and frequently wonders: Why does a tomato plant grow fruit so large that the stem cannot support it?

ARTIST PROFILES



Kim-Char MEREDITH

Kim-Char Meredith used to make Christian music. Then she came out—and got kicked out.

“It was devastating to me at the time,” the Hawaiian native said. “But I said, ‘You know what? I love music, and I’m going to play music.’”

So even though her heart was still in Christian music, Meredith, who now lives in Chicago with her partner, turned to pop/rock and became quite successful. She received several awards and opened for Melissa Etheridge in Honolulu.

“Everything happens for a reason,” she said. “This just allowed me to go in a different direction and strum my guitar hard for a while.”

Now Meredith has returned to faith-based music.

“There are a lot of people of faith who have just been burned,” she said. But our faith in the divine is still strong, and I still love doing music that celebrates that.”

Meredith, who will be the guest emcee for the Iowa Women’s Music Festival in September, said her introduction to Iowa a number of years ago was very encouraging.

“This woman showed up with 25 other women,” she said. “It was this amazing support for women’s music in Iowa.”

The women was Lisa Schreihart, one of the organizers of the IWMF, and this show in Ames marked the beginning of a professional relationship that has brought Meredith to IWMF this year.

“What I appreciate about independent women’s music and the festivals that kind of support,” Meredith said. “We’re not being pushed into a cookie cutter model or role. You can be true to your own voice and appreciate your own voice... it’s not so much about how much we can package and market this product but how can we support and nurture the creativity of these women.”



Zoë LEWIS

Zoë Lewis wants to cure your hiccups.

“Life is often full of hiccups. There are many ways to cure them, but I find a spoonful of song always helps. Please enjoy this dose.”

This prescription, from the inside jacket of Lewis’s new album, *A Cure for the Hiccups*, exemplifies the attitude of the Provincetown, Mass.-based artist.

“If you can turn a few people’s evenings or days around, it’s all worth it,” Lewis said. “I feel like that’s my mission in life.”

Lewis, originally from England, has lived,

traveled, and made music all over the world, from Guatemala to Thailand.

“Sometimes people say my music is like a map,” Lewis said. “I don’t take photographs while I’m traveling, I just try to write it down. My music is very visual.”

For Lewis, traveling is a way to open her eyes—and discover new stories.

“I love to go far away from your comfortable box, because then you see everything anew, like a child,” she says. “It’s like you’re standing on your head being amazed every single moment.”

Lewis is remembered in Iowa for her 2003 performance at the Iowa Women’s Music Festival, which received a standing ovation; she will return this year to play the September fest.



BeJae **FLEMING**

A North Carolina-native, BeJae Fleming had been writing and performing bluegrass and blues music professionally in the South since 1977. But in 1993, her partner was finishing her Ph.D., and Iowa State University made the best job offer—so they moved.

"I didn't especially want to move to Iowa," Fleming said. "I had played here as a touring musician one time and didn't really connect."

Despite her initial reluctance, Fleming said she now can't imagine her musical life without the influence of Iowans.

"Being an Iowa musician and being influenced by Iowa musicians changed me dramatically for the good," she said.

Fleming cites Iowa performers such as Burlington-native Bo Ramsey and Gayla Drake Paul, of Cedar Rapids, as influences in her shift toward groove and tone from blues and bluegrass. In addition, Dave Zollo's record label, Trailer Records, puts out her records.

Fleming has played the Iowa Women's Music Festival a few times. To her, festivals like this are one way women can help restore balance to the music industry that is too-often dominated by men.

"It's wonderful that they continue to make a situation that focuses on women musicians," she said. "It is a way for us to do music in a way that we want to do music."

greetings from

IOWA

Women's Music Festival

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Ferron
Zoe Lewis · Ubaka Hill
BeJae Fleming Band · Deidre McCalla
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UNLEASH THE HOUNDS!

Some people love dogs, some not so much. Some people fear dogs, some simply don't understand dog behavior well enough to enjoy interacting with them. And some people—good people, mind you—get just plain icky over their canine life companions. But many Iowa Citians own and enjoy their dogs, and Iowa City, with its strict enforcement of leash laws, is sometimes not so hospitable. The Thornberry Dog Park, which has been open since 2006, has been a real boon to dogs and their owners, because it gives dogs something they're otherwise discouraged from doing—interacting with other dogs and strange humans, and most of all, running loose.

I myself came to dog ownership late, and not as a conscious decision. My wife has brought home two dogs and presented them to me as a fait accompli. Later my son adopted a basset/beagle, and due to overseas internships, he's become my dog as well. Always a know-it-all, I have avoided reading books on dog care or watching dog shows on cable television. So whatever information I present here is stuff I've observed, untainted by actual science.

Last year I began making regular outings to the dog park, mostly to give the eldest of our pack, an Australian Shephard named Marge, a chance for some sustained exercise. Going on 14 years old, Marge had settled into a sort of throw-rug lifestyle, and it seemed like her joints were seizing up. A mile or two every few days, I thought, might help keep her limber as much as those famous doggie goofballs, Rimadyl. Our other dogs, Emma The Psycho

American Eskimo Dog, and the aforementioned basset/beagle, Bear, were prime candidates for the 'wear them out' kind of constitutional excursion.

The 14 acres of the park comprise mostly three fenced-in fields of trimmed grass, with a few benches and shelters for bipeds. The site is attractive and peaceful, hemmed in



Photos by Kent Williams

PLAY IS "UNSTRUCTURED" IN THE SENSE THAT THE HUMANS AREN'T IN CHARGE.



by woods and a golf course, and bordered by the riverside bicycle and pedestrian paths. The Iowa River is visible through a few gaps in the trees, and beyond it, the Highway 6/First Avenue intersection. At dusk you can just see the big red mortar-and-pestle of Walgreens.

It's a pretty blank spot on its own, like the back nine of a golf park. What makes it an interesting place to visit is the dogs. Big dogs—there's a mastiff who visits regularly, who looks like it could take on a small car and win the battle. There are also small puppies and teacup lap dogs, though they tend to stay in the field reserved for small dogs. There's also an area called "Emma's Run," which is meant for exercising and training of dogs without the distraction of the roiling scrum of the main field. Owners of dogs that don't play well with others are also encouraged to use that area.

But the largest, central area is the main attraction. That's the place where the most dogs and people hang out. There's a fair amount of ball throwing and retrieving, and staid walks around the roughly oval path, but the real fun is the unstructured interaction between the dogs.

I say "unstructured" in the sense that the humans aren't in charge. Canine social interaction is actually highly structured. Dogs are pack animals who will establish a dominance hierarchy if kept in groups. They're also fiercely territorial, as any mail carrier will tell you. Since the dog park is neutral territory, and dogs are not together long enough to form dominance relationships, a fascinating group dynamic takes over. There's a formal greeting, with the famous ritual butt and genital sniffing. Just as important, according to my observation, is the direct nose to nose sniffing and contact. A dog's nose is its most sophisticated and sensitive sense organ, and I can only speculate what information dogs gather with it in these initial meetings: mood, state of

health, fertility, recent meals, and most important, identity. Emma The Psycho American Eskimo instantly picked out a neighbor's white Samoyed named Joey out of a group of similar dogs, and challenged Joey most vociferously, growling, barking and snapping at his feet. Emma, who weighs about 16 pounds, is convinced she runs things on our block, and the Samoyed is scared to death of her after a few encounters. I have to think that Emma ID'ed Joey by smell, and in much less time than it would take me to recognize the dog by sight.

There's remarkably little conflict, though, in the normal course of events. Dogs that don't want to play make their feelings known with growls and bared teeth, but things rarely escalate to a fight. Dogs that do wish to play soon find like-minded pals. Dog play is a lighter version of the dominance battles that go on in a feral pack. There's the challenge, where a dog will rush up to the edge of another's personal space, front legs planted straight, with

head-on eye contact. If a dog doesn't want to play, it will break gaze and walk away. If they do, though, it's on! The main objective seems to be to get up over the other dog's neck, and either mount the other for a quick hump, or knock the other down on its back. Since both dogs are trying to accomplish the same thing simultaneously, whilst avoiding being themselves subdued, it turns into a doggy form of Capoeira, with lunges, feints, and occasional mad zigzag chases. One or the other dog will eventually flop on its back baring its neck in submission, but it's a momentary thing—they'll jump up and be at it again in a flash. Sometimes I've witnessed mutual simultaneous surrender, with both dogs on their backs, head to head, still snapping and mouthing each others' snouts.

Just as interesting is to observe the humans who brought the dogs. Dogs



Photo by Jeff Banaszek

WHAT'S SHAKIN'?

As if unleashed canines on land weren't enjoyable enough, the Dog Paddle ups the entertainment value with the addition of water, diving boards and dozens of tennis balls. The 6th annual event takes place the Tuesday and Wednesday after Labor Day, September 2nd and 3rd at the City Park pool. The event is \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door. All proceeds go to JC DogPAC, which uses to money to finish and improve the Thornberry Off-leash Dog Park and establish other off-leash parks.

will tolerate being leashed but can't be said to enjoy it; the human at the other end of the leash have a similar grudging acceptance of the relationship. Some dogs need leashing, but in Iowa City you can be fined for having a dog off leash, no matter how well behaved. Freeing the dog of the leash at the park frees the owner as well, and it seems universal that everyone's blood pressure goes down at the park. The dogs finally have what they need to stay happy and sane—interaction with other dogs, exercise, and the chance to sniff a few hundred different spots on the ground for animal traces. And a happy dog a happy dog owner makes. Just as the dogs have their greeting rituals, the humans have theirs. What I've experienced is a curiously chatty anonymity—no one has volunteered their name or made any sort of formal greeting, but everyone seems to like to talk—almost exclusively about dogs. I love

my dogs, but I've spoken to people who seem to have deeper emotional relationships with their pets than they do with other people. And that's not a criticism, either. Whatever gets you throughout the night is okay by me, and people have been getting through the night with the help of dogs pretty much since they first got frontal lobes and stopped living in trees.

It seems to me that dogs domesticated humans as much as humans domesticated dogs—it is perhaps the most profound interspecific symbiosis we have, with cats and horses a distant second. One hundred thousand years ago when having dogs gave early humans a survival edge (and vice versa), I have to think that almost from the start,

the mutual emotional bond was formed as well. You can talk about the subtleties of human-on-human love, but the fact remains—when you come home,

no one will ever greet you with as much whole-hearted love and joy as a dog.

If you have a dog and want to visit the Thornberry Dog Park, you're supposed to pay \$25 a year for a tag (either at the Robert Lee Recreation Center on Gilbert & Burlington, or the Animal Care and Adoption Center, temporarily housed at the Johnson County Fairgrounds). Though if you just want to visit, there don't seem to be any steely-eyed Dog Park police there to check your tags. But it is a unique corner of Iowa City, a great place for an easy walk and observation of behavior, both human and canine. So for the price of a sack of IAMS dog food, you can become part of the Dog/Human festival that happens every day at the park. **IV**

Kent Williams is an optimist who loves life, sport, and hates lies.

>> SIT-DOWN FROM PAGE 5

LV: What about nature inspires you?

BH: This is my way of connecting with nature. I love the idea of permanently capturing these vivid colors of the most gorgeous time of the year. I love the incredible process that trees follow to turn out their leaves and that the colors these leaves “turn” in the fall are their actual colors—but you only see the brilliant hues once the chlorophyll leaves them. I like the idea that leaves show their “true colors”—and are at their most beautiful—just when they are getting ready to let go.

I love that the trees know when it is time to “shut down,” to turn within themselves and stop sending energy and food all the way out to the leaves. Like the rest of us, they know when it's time to hunker down for winter, to center and preserve their energy. And then I love that they throw these leaves out all over again in the spring. Trees are steady—for me, they are a metaphor for something you can count on, a metaphor for constancy and strength.

What has been most exciting for me, though, is the discovery that others feel the same connection with nature and the same affinity for leaves. It's so nice to see others connect with my work and want to take it home with them. People like the idea of bringing nature inside. And some people are just leaf fanatics like me.

LV: How can people see/buy your art?

BH: In Iowa City, you can find my work during the holiday season at The University of Iowa Thieves' Market, the first weekend of December at the Iowa Memorial Union and at the Eastside Artists Holiday Show on the second weekend of December. I'll also attend the Beaux Arts show in Davenport, September 6 and 7 and the Galena Country Fair, October 11 and 12. If you're interested in arranging a time to see my work, e-mail me at betsy-hickok@uiowa.edu.

LV: What's your day job?

BH: I'm a senior editor and writer at the UI Foundation, where I have worked for eight years. In this role, I get to put my passion for writing to good use helping to raise funds for the university. **IV**

Kathryn Howe is a professional writer and editor. She lives on a quiet circle on the eastside of Iowa City with her husband and two small children. Things she would need on a desert island: a good book, a nice glass of wine, and maki rolls. It's a good life, even if her husband doesn't appreciate Neil Diamond.



In the LEED

You may have caught a special on “green” building on Iowa Public Television or The Home and Garden Channel. Perhaps you’ve driven by a construction site and seen signs proclaiming it a LEED project. But these days people are throwing the word “green” around like the words “low fat” or “heart healthy.” So, what does the distinction really mean when it comes to the building community?

Well, the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) has come up with some pretty clear criteria. This non-profit organization is committed to expanding sustainable building practices. To help realize this mission, it developed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ in 2000.

According to the USGBC’s website the system “encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood

and accepted tools and performance criteria.”

Specifically, the LEED program examines both new construction and existing buildings (inside and out) in the following categories: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and innovation and design processes. Registered projects are awarded points for the extent of sustainable features they include and earn the designated levels of Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

LEED standards aren’t building codes. Following them and registering for LEED certification is completely voluntary. However, factors such as environmental altruism, decreased energy costs and positive public relations (bragging rights) are inspiring many commercial builders to walk the green path.

Although certifications like this tend to gain traction more quickly on the nation’s more populated coasts, the LEED phenomenon is starting to spread to Iowa as well, and currently there are 90 registered projects in the state.

“The number of building projects seeking LEED certification has increased dramatically in the last couple of years,” says Keith Steurer, Professional Engineer and LEED Accredited Professional at the firm of Shive-Hattery, Inc.

“In fact, the City of Iowa City, The University of Iowa and several state school districts now study the long-term cost benefits

of applying sustainable design with most new projects.”

He should know. This year *Corridor Business Journal* subscribers voted his firm the Best Engineering Firm in the Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Corridor for the second year in a row. Among other green projects in the state, Shive-Hattery recently designed plans for Iowa City’s extensive East Side Recycling Center project with Steurer as the LEED design manager and structural engineer.

The number of building projects seeking LEED certification has increased dramatically in the last couple of years.

The City of Iowa City is fully embracing the concept of sustainability seriously in this ambitious project. Intended to be both a working recycling center and an environmental education center, it will demonstrate several sustainable features, such as small-scale wind power generation, green roofs and green walls, geothermal heating and cooling, pervious paving,

rapidly renewable woods and high-recycled-content building materials.

"We're really excited about the project. If everything goes as planned, the education center will be the first building in the state of Iowa to achieve LEED Platinum-level certification," boasts City Architect Kumi Morris.

As with all new innovations, green building promises to create new jobs across thenation.

The city is also building two new firehouses (one at Melrose and Emerald, and the other at Scott Boulevard and Dubuque Road) with sustainable features. The plans, designed by the architecture firm of Rohrbach Associates PC, are targeting Silver LEED certification.

You can expect this sustainability trend to continue as saving money becomes a motivating factor along with saving the environment. As the demand for green building materials increases, the cost of such products will naturally decrease, making sustainable alternatives feasible for a wider range of commercial and civic properties.

More and more engineers and architects are becoming LEED accredited professionals to meet their clients' needs. And, as with all new innovations, green building promises to create new jobs across the nation.

According to a 2006 report published by The California Climate Change Center at UC Berkeley, it's estimated that by 2010

California's building energy efficiency standards will create 8,000 new jobs in the state, with a net economic benefit of \$4 billion. And since the rest of the country eventually catches up to California's environmental example, this could have a lasting impact on the U.S. economy.

Not one to rest on its laurels, the organization that helped spur on this green building movement has big plans for the future. In 2009, the USGBC is raising the bar for LEED certification. The new version of the rating system will emphasize key environmental and human health impacts, revamp the online reporting function and award bonus certification points to projects that incorporate regional environmental priorities specific to their building locale.

While some houses have obtained LEED status as well, residential buildings that meet LEED standards are more conceptual than practical. Owners that have the financial means and believe in the environmental principles have taken the plunge, but LEED-level homes just aren't economically feasible yet.

Want to be a part of this green movement anyway? Don't despair! From Energy-Star appliances to adequate insulation, there are dozens of ways you can follow the spirit, if not the regulations, of the United States Green Building Council. Call your energy company today, or check out next month's issue of *Little Village* for energy saving ideas you can implement in your very own home. **IV**

Sara Pralle is a Midwest farmer's daughter from a beautiful spot in the-middle-of-nowhere Kansas. She now lives in Iowa City and works as a full-time writer for The Whetstone Group, Inc., a growth planning marketing firm in Marion. Her interests include the KC Chiefs, yoga and knitting.

Resource Hogs

In the United States alone, buildings account for:

70%	of electricity consumption,
39%	of energy use,
39%	of all carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions,
40%	of raw materials use,
30%	of waste output (136 million tons annually)
12%	of potable water consumption.

Taking the LEED

Projects earn points in six categories:

Sustainable sites	–	14	points
Water efficiency	–	5	points
Energy and atmosphere	–	17	points
Materials and resources	–	13	points
Indoor air quality	–	15	points
Innovation	–	5	points
Total Possible	=	69	points

Going Green

In addition to the City of Iowa City's three green projects there are a number of other local buildings seeking LEED certification, including:

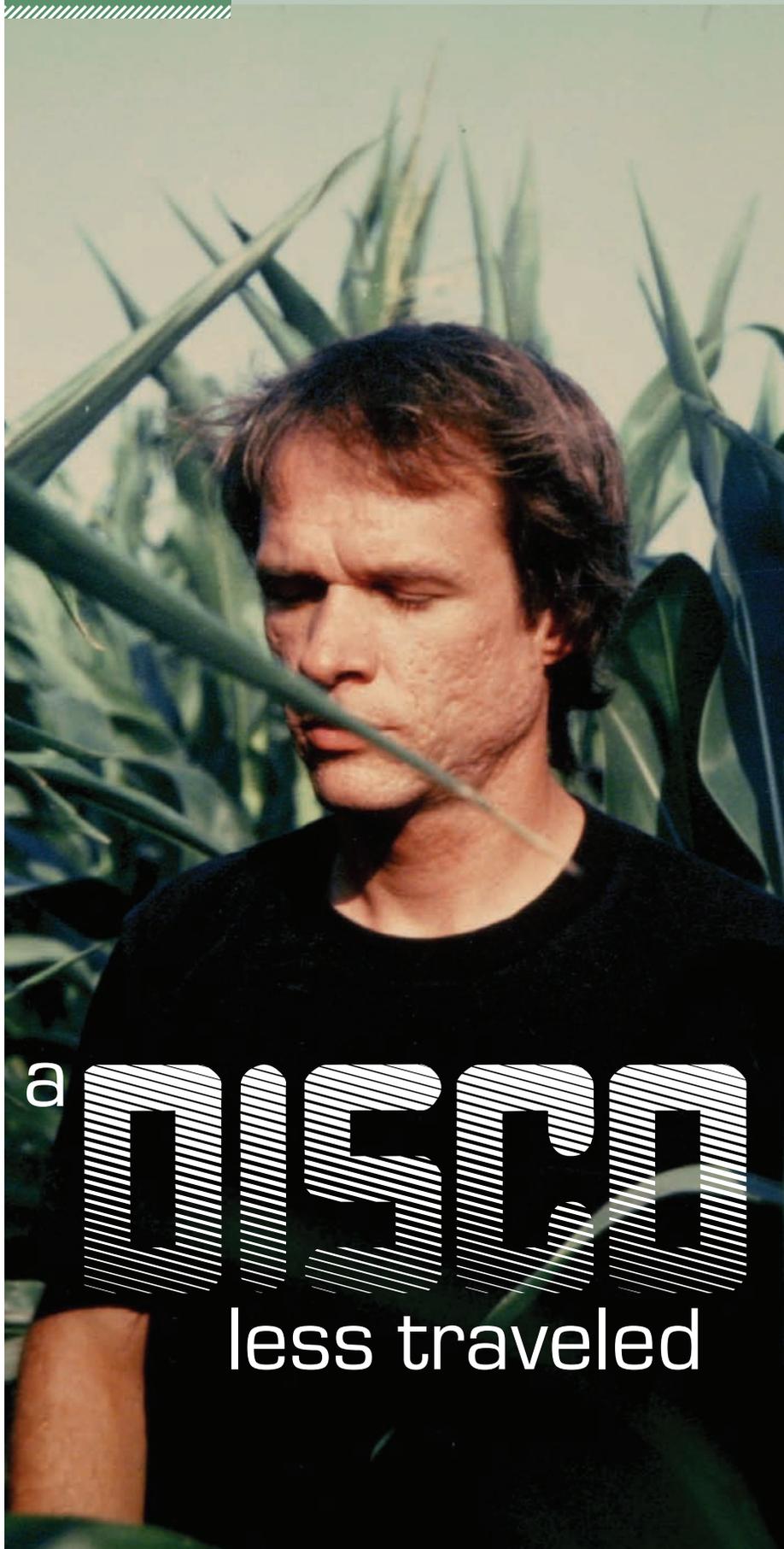
✱ The Alpha Chi Omega Sorority House was recently completed and replaces the facility that was destroyed by a tornado in April 2006. Architect—Neumann Monson Architects

✱ The ACT Primary Data Center is completed and awaiting LEED certification. Architect—Neumann Monson Architects

✱ The University of Iowa's College of Public Health

Academic Building is scheduled to be the first LEED-certified academic building on campus at its completion in late 2010. Architects—two-firm team of Payette and Rohrbach Associates PC

✱ The University Hygienic Laboratory on the University of Iowa Oakdale Campus is scheduled for completion in fall 2009. Architect—OPN Architects



a

DINOSAUR

less traveled

Arthur Russell was straight outta Oskaloosa, an Iowa native, born and bred. He died of AIDS in 1992, leaving behind a sprawling and obscure body of music that hops through genres—sometimes imploding them, and other times inventing new styles along the way. After escaping the Hawkeye state to join a San Francisco Buddhist commune in the early 1970s, he met and became friends with poet Allen Ginsberg, for whom Russell would provide musical accompaniment during readings. It was the first of many collaborations he did with a wide range of notable artists, including minimalist pioneers Philip Glass and Rhys Chatham, professional eccentric David Byrne, disco legend Nicky Siano, and others.

After studying North Indian music during his tenure on the West Coast, he moved to New York to attend the prestigious Manhattan School of Music. While there, Russell became the musical director of the legendary venue The Kitchen, which provided him and several other “serious music” types with a home for their aural experiments. Russell also co-founded the seminal 1980s hip-hop/dance label Sleeping Bag Records, which was home to old school rappers T La Rock, Nice & Smooth, EPMD, and Mantronix. In short, it was an unlikely career. If you were to draw a vin diagram that mapped the intersections of 1970s disco, the Manhattan art music scene, and pop music, Russell would be standing right there in the center, alone.

The instrumentals Russell crafted during this period are works of pure beauty, consisting of semi-improvised melodic figures that loop and repeat, slowly developing and building on the previous theme. The songs employed brass, wind, and string instruments layered atop a bass, drum, guitar, and keyboard setup. Pretty, melancholy, and as light as tissue, those songs were performed by a motley crew of musicians from very different backgrounds. Russell’s players included Rhys Chatham, whose 1970s guitar drones directly influenced Sonic Youth, as well as Ernie Brooks and Jerry Harrison of Jonathan Richman’s Modern Lovers. (Harrison later played with David Byrne in the Talking Heads, whose “Psycho Killer” featured Russell’s cello playing in an early incarnation.)

Arthur Russell not only soaked up the disco scene that thrived in Manhattan throughout the 1970s, he participated in it, likely raising the eyebrows of his experimental music peers. In 1979, he took his first dip in dance music waters by writing and producing the 12-inch single “Kiss Me Again,” under the name Dinosaur, which was followed in 1980 by Loose Joints’ “Is It All Over My Face.” The latter song is

If you were to draw a Venn diagram that mapped the intersections of 1970s disco, the Manhattan art music scene, and pop music, Russell would be standing right there in the center, alone.

a great example of the kind of mutant disco Russell specialized in, and its influence can be heard in the New York and Chicago house music of the 1980s. Weird sound effects, frenetic percussion breaks, rollicking piano fills, and dub-influenced vocals that go in and out of the mix in an almost random fashion—this is not your middle-of-the-road disco.

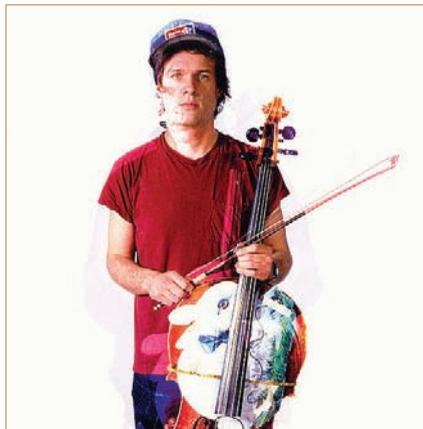
If he had continued on the straight and narrow path of conventionally unconventional avant-garde-ism—instead of engaging with disco, electronica, noise, and odd little pop songs—Russell surely would have become a towering modern music composer like Glass, Steve Reich, or Terry Riley. He instead took the road less travelled, and Russell died a largely unknown, enigmatic figure. The *Village Voice's* obituary read, in part, “His recent performances had been so infrequent due to illness, his songs were so personal, that it seems as though he simply vanished into his music.” It wasn’t until relatively recently that this Iowan’s work has been reissued on CD, including the posthumous collection *First Thought Best Thought*, which collects those aforementioned instrumentals.

Adding to this slow boiling revival, filmmaker Matt Wolf recently directed a documentary about Russell, *Wild Combination*, which debuted last year at the Berlin Film Festival. Matt Wolf tells me, “I took cues from the icons in Arthur’s music (water, corn, childhood experience, and play) and the visual looks of some archival material of Arthur performing (abstracted close-ups in silhouettes, shot in grainy VHS footage)” to create a film that is as much “a visual experience as a sound experience.” And it is. Not only does the docu-

mentary serve as an empathetic and impressionistic introduction to Russell’s music, *Wild Combination* also delivers a compelling human story. In fact, some of the film’s nicest moments feature his parents interviewed in their Oskaloosa home. While they are still bewildered by their son’s odd musical and lifestyle choices, they come off as very loving, supportive, and open-minded about that which they don’t fully understand. It’s very sweet.

Despite being a part of so many über-hip music scenes, Russell didn’t hide his corny Iowa roots. Wolf says, “He also wanted to fashion himself as a ‘farm boy’ and would frequently wear farming hats while performing.” For instance, on the cover of the album *Calling Out of Context*, Russell is wearing a hat that says “Master Mix,” which Wolf notes is a reference not only to the brand of feed mix for animals, but also to DJ-ing. You could say that Russell pioneered trucker hat fashion years before Ashton Kutcher was even born, though this was not the only Iowan influence that worked its way into his music.

“I think the expansive, wide open planes of Iowa really informed Arthur’s music,” Wolf says. That expansive feeling is at play in *World of Echo*, his album-length masterpiece. It was released in 1986, though this *sui generis* record sounds light years apart from the con-



Calling Out of Context album cover

temporary avant-garde, dance, and pop scenes he inhabited. It defies categorization, not only because there are very few albums entirely composed with multilayered cello and vocals, but also because it’s unlike anything else recorded before, or since—something that could also be said more generally of Arthur Russell, the man, and his music. **lv**

Kembrew McLeod lives and teaches in Iowa City, and is currently taking it to the next level.

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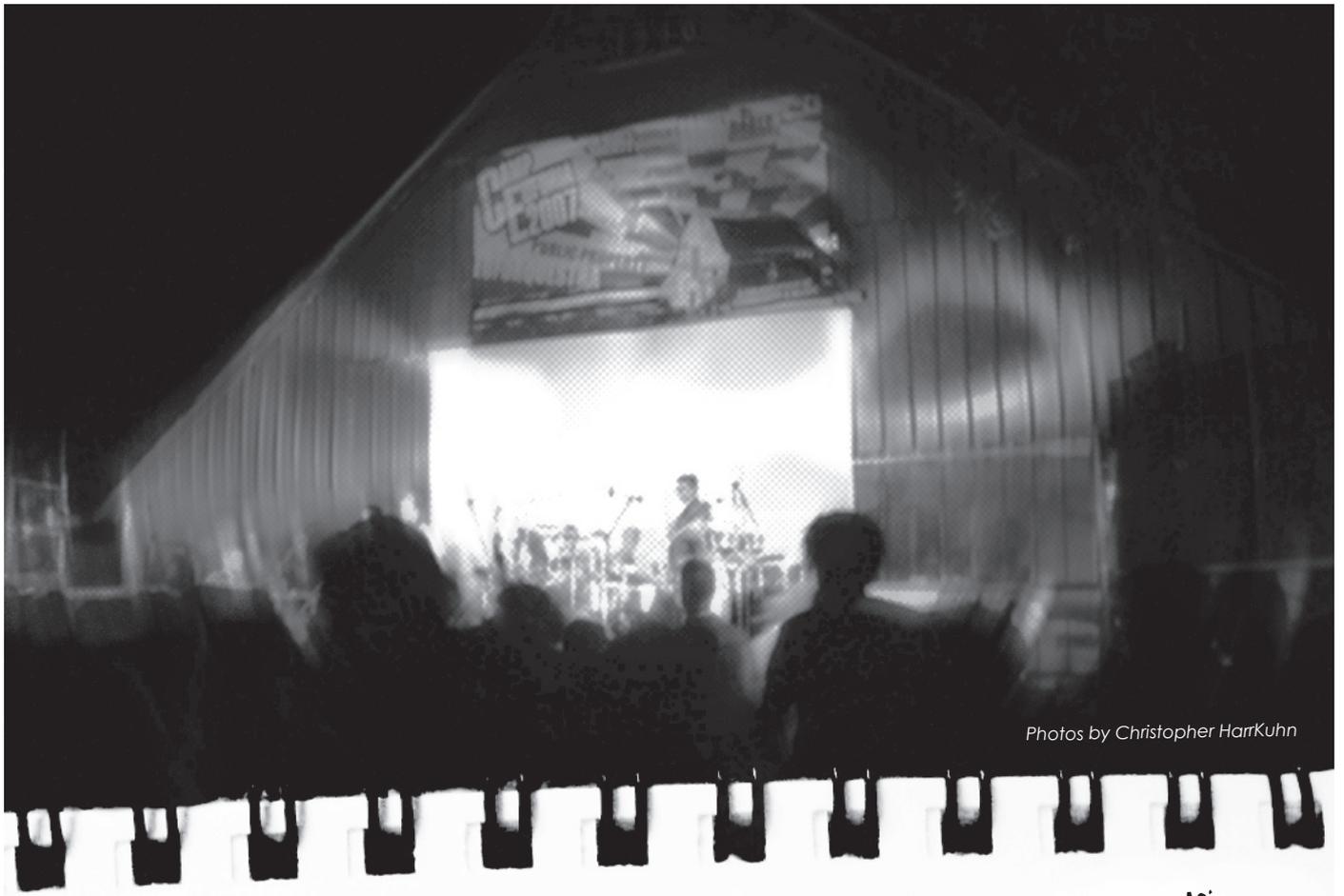
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Photos by Christopher HarrKuhn

Finding Wonderland

Taking a trip to Camp Euforia, Part one of two

I looked around at all the signs in Iowa City. Camp Euforia in Lone Tree stuck out I was the editor there 3 years ago.

I went into John's to get a piece of Havarti dill and saw the sign that said whiskey tasting tomorrow. I asked them what time. They said in an hour. I scrambled around trying to find a gorgeous young college chick to taste free Templeton Rye.

I was hearing the song "White Rabbit" all over town that baseline was in my bones--it might as well have been coming from the sky. I talked to the chick who does advertising/sales for Templeton Rye, asked here if she had heard the white rabbit lately.

She said no....I said it must be me and proceeded to tell her about the White Rabbit store that was opening in early August.

It all started when I tried to get Wicked Liz and the Belly Swirls to play "White Rabbit." I saw them play it at Stickman's in Davenport when they were a new band.

Dave and I had recently been having the 5:00 p.m. sake days at the Thai Bistro mmm raspberry. I joked about having a sake festival bigger than Ragbrai in Muscatine. At 5:00 there is nobody else there but the Asian waiters.

Anyway the plan was to get Wicked Liz to play "White Rabbit" and have the band all met up at Dave's for a nightcap. They wouldn't play it and really didn't want to have anything to do with us.

I had visions of the Hunter S. Thompson scene from Leaving Las Vegas sorry Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. A guy is on orange sunshine naked in the bathtub and he wants to throw a toaster in to the feed your head part of the song. The vision of the white rabbit never left. It followed me to Iowa City.

After the whiskey test at John's it was time to head for the fest. A nice young girl asked me if I had a moment for the environment. Those environment people were everywhere. She told me about the dirty water in Iowa. She wanted a donation. All I could do was give her my email address.

I asked her about the fest she said it was \$40 at the gate. Two thousand people on some farm somewhere. She said some people were volunteering to pay their way. I figured I would get to Lone Tree and ask questions.

So I set out to make a sign, looked in a dumpster found some blueprints for tunnels. I had always heard there were tunnels under Iowa City. The prints were from an Iowa State engineering study, interesting--tried to save them but they're history.

I showed the environment girl the blueprints of tunnels. She said they probably weren't any good because they were from Iowa State and they were probably a research project. I tried to make a psychedelic Lone Tree sign on the back side of one of the tunnel blueprints

When I hit the road from Muscatine it was raining and I had no socks. I walked around Iowa City all day trying to get someone to buy me a drink and tore my feet all up. I contracted cellulitis and a guy I met on the road convinced me to go see the doc as I was walking around in serious pain.

I went to the hospital and the doc looked at my foot. He gave me the hard-time pep talk. A female nurse put some stuff on my leg and checked me out for blood clots. Her hand gently touched my testicles. It was like being in a massage parlor. If only I could have willed her to go further. I didn't have anything to tip her with.

Anyway I asked a girl in an alley as I was headed to the fest if Epsom salt would be any good for my infection. She said yes. But the environment girl said I would have to soak it for a long time and antibiotics would do just as well. Turned out she had a chemistry minor.

I went to advertise at the head shop. The guy there said he knew some of the people at the Yacht Club and maybe he could sell his wares there. I also talked to a kid downtown who was playing guitar and told him about the fest.

When I hit the road from Muscatine it was raining and I had no socks.

Since I couldn't find a \$1.09 for Epsom salt, I was on my way to the road that intersected with Highway 6 by the local treatment center called MECCA.

So I sat but the side of the road with my poor attempt at a sign. I started to think that there wasn't enough traffic on this road to catch a ride. I asked some construction workers if they knew anyone who was going to Lone Tree. I checked out a couple other nearby businesses and it didn't look like there was anybody home.

I talked to a couple guys, one speaking German, one working on a lawnmower. The guy who spoke German said, "Hey you were the guy out there with the sign I couldn't read."

The lawnmower guy said I needed to work on my sign. I colored it in with a magic marker it still wasn't good

enough. He said he would get me a big piece of cardboard to make a real sign.

The guy that spoke German left. The guy I later knew to be called Worm, it was his shop. I described the place I was going to and he said you're going to Camp Euforia. Your sign should say Camp Euforia.

He said we could ride bicycles over to the VFW and see if anyone is going that way. He asked me if I drank beer and I said yes. He said I'll buy you your first pitcher you can leave at any time. The combination on my bike lock is 911 because we ain't having fun unless they call 911.

Somebody was plugging the jukebox with bad tunes, but they had Grateful Dead, Rolling Stones, Santana and I think even Bob Marley. We talked briefly about Ken Kesey and he said he might like to go to the fest and hear Public

Property, there was talk of the need for plenty of tobacco, a possible ride or a tandem bicycle. I got hammered and tried ineptly to bum a cigarette at the bar. Worm left and someone got me high. When he came back he was messing with a toolbox.

I had grand delusions that they would be expecting me, the former editor from Lone Tree. Finally, I said to Worm I got to go, they're waiting for us. He let me borrow his Fuji. I hadn't been on a bike since Ragbrai in high school. It was a hard ride. It was dark and the sky looked

ominous. My leg was throbbing. I tried to keep a steady pace but had to keep stopping. I had my thumb out to every prospective car.

Finally I got to the intersection where you turn to go to Hills. A car stopped I told them I was planning to go to Lone Tree to find out about Camp Euforia. They said don't go all the way into Lone Tree, it's only three miles up the road off to the right. They asked me if my bike was broke. I said no. They said they couldn't give me a ride because they weren't going that way.

Three miles, I started to relax. Then I saw the lights off in the distance. There was a gravel road I walked the rest of the way and rested my bike on a tree. I walked up to two guys who had staff shirts on and explained to them that I used to work for the *Lone Tree Reporter* and I was going to do a story about the fest this summer and the white rabbit. They escorted me to the admissions tent.

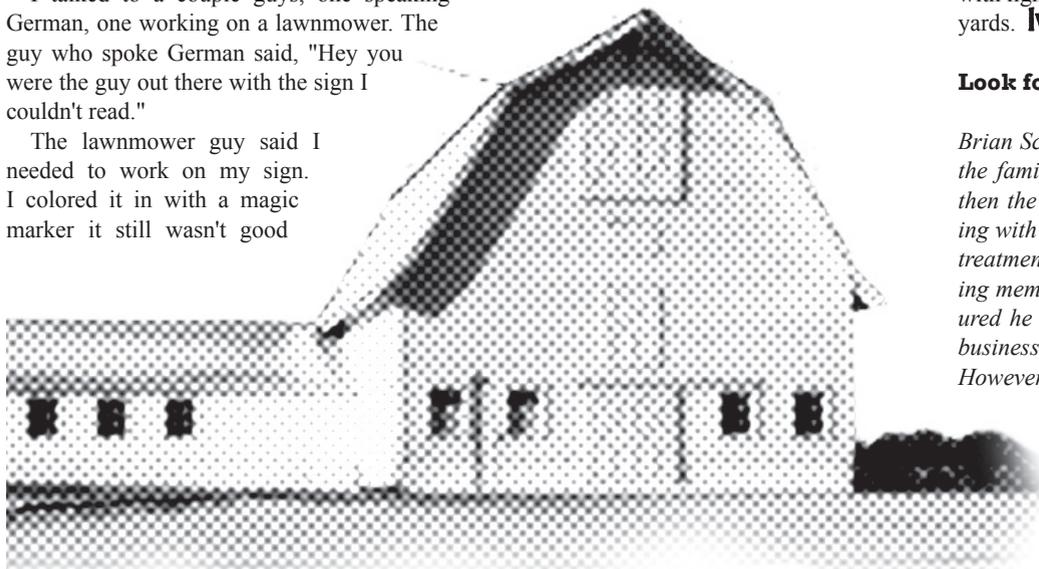
Again I tried to explain myself. I didn't have an I.D. at this time, I had lost it in a bar. They took my social security card and my food stamp card and said if you want to go to work in the morning taking out trash and parking cars you can stay. They said I didn't have to do anything that night but I had to report at 10 o'clock in the morning.

I listened to the bands and walked around trying to get someone to buy me a drink. It just wasn't happening finally I gave up. I went to crash over by some campsite near the cornfield. Those guys had some mushrooms that day and they were like who is that sleeping over there. They gave me a pull of something strong. It was cold and fixing to rain so I went in search of a blanket.

Someone gave me this cool blanket with red roses all over it and I crashed like a dead man on the porch. It was a pretty decent storm with lightning and thunder and the whole nine yards. **IV**

Look for Part II in the October issue.

Brian Schmarje was raised on generations of the family business, first the button business then the tool business. He began experimenting with psychedelic drugs after his first drug treatment experience. Having been a founding member of the Bad Art Movement, he figured he could always fall back on the family business if he didn't become a famous artist. However, things didn't work out that way.



VERTIGO IN ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MASTERPIECE



50 YEARS OF
obsession with
'VERTIGO'

Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* is celebrating this fall its 50th anniversary as an object of obsession for movie lovers. This year also marks the less-auspicious 15th anniversary of when I became obsessed with it in the commons room of a college dorm. Though I squirmed right off the filthy couch at the final scene, when a nun bubbles up out of the darkness, as if from the unconscious itself, to say "I heard voices" and provoke a suicide, it wasn't my initial, generally enthusiastic response to the movie that proved it such an objection of obsession. It was the fact that numerous scenes kept haunting me; I couldn't—and still can't—help thinking of its swirling images and swirling story.

Set in San Francisco, *Vertigo* is about Scotty (Jimmy Stewart) who falls in love with the mysterious woman he's been hired to investigate, Madeleine (Kim Novak), who seems to be haunted by the suicidal ghost of Carlotta Valdes. Even though Scotty and Madeleine end up falling love, she does, as if by fate, commit suicide, and Scotty, because of his fear of heights, is unable to save her. Well, actually, she doesn't commit suicide—it's all part of the diabolical plan of Elster, the man who hired Scotty. Hitchcock, to many early critics' consternation, reveals half-way through the movie that Madeleine is just playing a part: she's not a mysterious, haunted woman; she's Judy from Salina, Kansas, who's been hired by Elster to impersonate his wife and fake her suicide, so that he can get away with killing his real wife, who happens to be rich.

But Scotty has been duped, and he believes that he's responsible for the death of the woman he was madly in love with. After emerging from a prolonged mental breakdown, he sees walking down the street a plain but lovely woman who looks a lot like Madeleine. Of course, we all know she is Madeleine—that is, Judy. She eventually lets Scotty court her, because she too is in love with him. Here begins the Orphic descent into the underworld. Scotty tries to dress Judy up to look like Madeleine, to recreate the things they did together—in a word, to bring the dead back to life. But you

can't look back, and the movie ends with an immortal loss.

Vertigo, in some ways, has that strange 1950s look—theatrical, melodramatic, Technicolor. But Hitchcock is way ahead of us. In more than any other of his movies, he gives us the outlandish fantasy that our psyches crave—like the passionate kiss while the waves break against the shore—and diagnoses it as a fantasy. What are most movies, after all, but the diabolical plot of a director to make a pretty



Madeleine's apparent suicide, Hitchcock reveals that this character we feel for and identify with is ultimately cold, obsessed, selfish, isolate, deeply damaged. Some of the most memory-searing scenes in *Vertigo* are simply of Jimmy Stewart's eyes flashing with an alchemy of malice and horror. There's a good lesson about us Americans here: Underneath our smiles is something much darker than the depths of your average Continental existentialist.



Pascal says, "Had Cleopatra's nose been a little smaller, history would have been different."

Just like Scotty, we have a kind of acrophobia—we have trouble looking into the depths. We don't want to look underneath the roles we find ourselves playing, and our movies rarely compel us to. On the contrary, they usually reinforce the fictions that hold our worlds together. The final shot in *Vertigo* is a kind of finale to our great Hollywood myth. After



girl from Salinas into a femme fatale to obsess a hapless public and make a lot of money? After he's discovered the truth, Scotty says bitterly to Judy, as if to Kim Novak herself, "Did he train you? Did he rehearse you? Did he tell you what to say?"

In most horror movies, there is a monstrous character (for instance, Norman Bates in *Psycho*) whose job is to freak us out. In *Vertigo*, the truly monstrous character turns out to be the person we most identify with: We're the monster. Here is where the casting of Jimmy Stewart as Scotty is brilliant, for Stewart more than any other actor embodies the American Everyman, the character we can all relate to. He is the average above-average guy who doesn't buy into nonsense and has a pure wish for happiness and justice. His temperament on film is fully exploited in movies like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. In *Vertigo*, he begins as a good detective who's been traumatized by his inability to help a fellow cop from spiraling to death from atop a roof. He then falls in love with a troubled woman, whose life he wants to save.

Up to this point our heart goes out to the good-hearted, troubled guy. But after

What, ultimately, is desire? The easy answer—that

we want what we believe will bring us happiness—is terribly wrong. Whom does Scotty really love? The woman he first falls in love with is a fantasy staged for his deception. Does he really love Judy? Yes and no. Is Judy really Judy—or is she the character that she played for Scotty, the character in whose role she discovered her own true love? Our identities hover weirdly between the boring lump we are and the roles we imagine ourselves into. If this is so, love really is impossible!

In any case, there is a third crucial character, Midge (Barbara Bel Geddes), a graphic designer and friend to Scotty. She is cute, sassy, talented, caring *and* attracted to him. She is obviously the smart choice for Scotty's love—so, obviously, he doesn't fall for her. In a heartbreaking scene, Midge paints her own face into the famous portrait of the mysterious Carlotta. Her cuteness and domesticity give the portrait a comic air, but Scotty can only say, "That's not funny." It sure isn't. What's the big difference between the faces of Kim Novak and Barbara Bel Geddes? Not much, just the difference between passion and friendship, beauty and cuteness, life and death. As

What, ultimately, is desire?

Judy's suicide, Scotty peers down into the abyss into which she has jumped. He has just lost the fantasy support system of his mind, but he has simultaneously gained the ability to look deep. He has been cured of his vertigo.

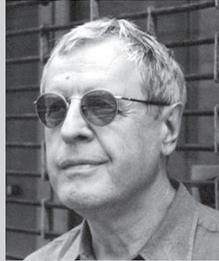
Almost every shot in *Vertigo* is fully alive. By "alive," I mean that every part contains the DNA of the whole. And I haven't even begun to talk about Bernard Hermann's unforgettable score, where there is a repeated two-note motif that denotes—well, I could go on and on about this movie, but, as Hitchcock used to say, "Someone once told me that every minute a murder occurs, so I don't want to waste your time, I know you want to go back to work." **IV**

Scott Samuelson teaches philosophy at Kirkwood Community College. He is also sometimes a moderator on KCRG's "Ethical Perspectives on the News" and sometimes a cook at Simone's Plain and Simple, the French restaurant in the middle of nowhere.

Book Bits

Delicious morsels from some of Paul's current favorites

Oh, Literature! Oh, words and sentences! I am presenting bits of works you may or may not know but ones that stopped me in my tracks when I first came across them. Some are opening paragraphs. Some are not. Each book, new or old, is worth reading more than once. If you haven't read Howard Norman, Stella Gibbons, Anne Michaels, Laird Hunt, Julie Hecht, find their work and use it for your pleasure. They are all in print and available. **IV**



"One of those postwar memories: a baby carriage pushed by a humpbacked old woman, her son sitting in it, both legs amputated.

"She was haggling with the greengrocer when the carriage got away from her. The street was steep so it rolled downhill with the cripple waving his crutch, his mother screaming for help, and everybody else laughing as if they were in the movies. Buster Keaton or somebody like that about to go over a cliff. . .

"One laughed because one knew it would end well. One was surprised when it didn't."

The Monster Loves his Labyrinth: Notebooks by Charles Simic

"A little later, as she sat peacefully sewing, Adam came in from the yard. He wore as a protection from the rain, a hat which had lost—I who knows what dim hintermath of time—the usual attributes of shape, colour, and size, and those more subtle race-memory associations which identify hats as hats, and now resembled some obscure natural growth, some moss or sponge or fungus, which had attached itself to a host."

Cold Comfort Farm by Stella Gibbons

"My name is Fabian Vas. I live in Witless Bay, Newfoundland. You would not have heard of me. Obscurity is not necessarily failure, though; I am a bird artist, and have more or less made a living at it. Yet I murdered the lighthouse keeper Botho August, and that is an equal part how I think."



The Bird Artist by Howard Norman

"It was the second month of living without a soul and I was getting used to the feeling. The obliteration of the self had begun two years before—probably it had begun many years before—but now I was at the brink of being seriously over forty-nine and it was coming to fruition."



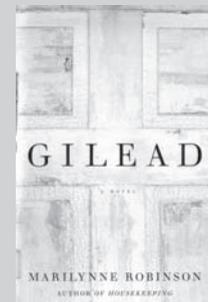
The Unprofessionals by Julie Hecht

"All children become sad in the late afternoon, for they begin to comprehend the passage of time. The light starts to change. Soon they will have to head home, and to behave, and to pretend."

The Theory of Clouds by Stephane Audeguy

"Guernsey, Guernesey, Garnsai, Sarnia: so they say. Well, I don't know, I'm sure. The older I get and the more I learn, the more I know I don't know nothing, me. I'm the oldest on the island, I think. Liza Queripel from Pleinmont says she's older; but I reckon she's putting it on. When she was a young woman, she used to have a birthday once every two or three years, but for years now she have been having two or three a year. To tell you the truth, I don't know how old I am. My mother put it down on the front page of the big Bible; but she put down the day and the month, and forgot to put down the year. I suppose I could find out if I went to the Greffe; but I'm not going to bother about that now."

The Book of Ebenezer Le Page by G. B. Edwards



"You are standing up on the seat of your swing and sailing higher than you really ought to, with that bold, planted stance of a sailor on a billowy sea. The ropes are long and you are light and the ropes bow like cobwebs,

laggardly, indolent. Your shirt is red—it is your favorite shirt—and you fly into the sunlight and pause there brilliantly for a second and then fall back into the shadows again."

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson

"I did not witness the most important events of my life. My deepest story must be told by a blind man, a prisoner of sound. From behind a wall, From underground. From the corner of a small house on a small island that juts like a bone from the skin of sea."

Fugitive Pieces by Anne Michaels

Paul Ingram is a short man who lives in Iowa City. He has an overbite caused by his mother's fear of orthodontia. She has since died, leaving him with no chance to confront her about the effect this has had on his life. Most people see him as an introspective low-testosterone male, who has been known to make them laugh. All the rest is books.

Up and Coming

Labor Day weekend: the end of white shoes, sure, but also the first school-day off—and the start of National Potato Month (seriously). Oh yeah, right here and now, the great month of September, National Be Kind to Editors and Writers Month. September, National ADHD Awareness month, and—wait—what was I talking about again? Just kidding. Celebrate National Pleasure Your Mate month with these shows, all of which I can headily recommend, none of which I can guarantee will be pleasing to you or your mate.

When it comes to (alt) country, no one does it better than local institution Sam Knutson and Shame Train. They have a great new record on their hands with *Splendor*, and this month you have no less than three opportunities to hear tracks from it. On the 9th, Knutson plays solo in support of Cameron McGill, and on the 12th he'll get the band together for a show at Public Space ONE. And I mean a band. Like you would expect

in this genre, Shame Train is a group of guys who can really play, so expect nice sounds in this intimate space. Self-described "apocalypse blues" man Lute Tucker opens that show. Lute stomps his feet, plays the hell out of his guitar, and has been known to sing anti-Bush polemics. Knutson goes back to his home turf, the Mill, on the 20th for a show with Scott Cochran and Flannel.

Another great band in the roots tradition is Canada's Rock Plaza Central, who mix traditional country instrumentation and songcraft with a Neutral Milk Hotel-vibe. The combination led many people to swoon over 2006's *Are We Not Horses?*. And while this band is overdue for a follow-up, the songs still sounded fresh in July when I caught them in Des Moines. The band comes to the Mill on the 17th with Wye Oak, who had to cancel the last show here due to the flood. We'll all finally get a chance to hear tracks from a great new album, *If Children*. Local musician, impresario, and Mill waiter Andre Perry's folk band Lonelyhearts will open the show.

If it's brand new music that tickles you, the Mill on the 26th is the place to be, with two

of the most blogged about (tee hee!) bands of the last few months coming into town on a co-headline bill. Baltimore's Ponytail is a furious, percussive, rock-and-roll machine fronted by a woman who screams in a way that you have to compare to Yoko. The album, *Ice Cream Spiritual*, does an admirable job of capturing the live show, but really, this is one you have to see to believe. Brooklyn's High Places' are also percussive, but in a much smaller way.



Ponytail plays *The Mill* on the 26th

Photo by Will Deitz

The band's songs are delicate and hazy, and if the long-awaited debut (which comes out this month) is anything like the singles and compilation appearances, then I'm anticipating one of the year's best records. Shawn Reed, who co-promotes this show with Mission Creek, will play as opening act Wet Hair. An accomplished artist as well as musician (he was formerly in Raccoo-ooo-oon), Shawn runs the tape label Night People and hosts a wealth of experimental music shows. In fact, he'll hold one on the 9th with two Portland bands, Eat Skull and Little Claw. For more details, email him directly at norders@gmail.com.

In brief, of note: These Are Powers, the 6th at the Picador; Pwrfl Pwr, 10th at Public Space ONE; Centro-matic and The Broken West, 11th at the Picador; Lipstick Homicide, 19th at Public Space ONE; Dressy Bessy, 19th at the Picador; Horse the Band w/So Many Dynamos, 27th at the Picador. **lv**

Craig Eley is a music writer, promoter and American studies grad student, usually in that order. Got news on the music scene? Write to him at craig@missionfreak.com.

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Wed. Sep 3 --
The Nadas

Fri. Sep 5 --
Lucky Boys Confusion
Minus Six Love Me Electric

Sat. Sep 6 --
These Are Powers Petit Mal Glass Trees

Wed. Sep 10 -- **ALL AGES 7PM**
Backyard Tire Fire
Ha Ha Tonka The White Tornado

Thurs. Sep 11 --
Langhorne Slim
Centromatic The Broken West Lonely Heart

Fri. Sep 12 --
Neil Hamburger Pleaseasaur

Sat. Sep 13 -- **Zombie March**

Tues. Sep 16 --
Raashan Ahmad (of The Crown City Rockers)
Coolzey Bru Lei

Wed. Sep 17 -- **ALL AGES 6PM**
Danger Is My Middle Name
Four Word Cause

Sat. Sep 20 --
Dexter Rombweber Duo

Sun. Sep 21 -- **ALL AGES 7PM**
Dressy Bessy The Coast Heligoats

Wed. Sep 24 --
Cataldo Moon Plus Stars

Thurs. Sep 25 --
Unknown Component
Mint Mad Willy Beati Paoli Brian Troester

Fri. Sep 26 --
William Elliott Whitmore

Sat. Sep 27 -- **ALL AGES 5:30PM**
Horse The Band
Heavy Heavy Low Low So Many Dynamos

Thurs. Oct 2 --
Sunset Rubdown Datagun

Thurs. Oct 9 --
Silver Jews The Mattoid

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Unknown Component

In Direct Communication
www.unknowncomponent.com



online at www.LittleVillageMag.com

Keith Lynch is a local singer-songwriter that has never done things the usual way, starting with his chosen stage name Unknown Component, which suggests an electronica act, or a band at least, but it's just Keith, his guitars, and his elderly computer. I've been a fan since reviewing his first CD and helped him mix and master a couple of his previous CDs, so I won't pretend any journalistic objectivity here. But even before I worked with Keith, I admired both his songwriting and the stubbornness with which he attacks his art. He isn't part of the Picador-centric local rock scene, or the townie folk musicians. Maybe fewer weekends on the scene damaging his hearing and his liver have fueled his relentless production—*In Direct Communication* is at least the fifth album he's made in the past three years.

This CD seems heavier on synth sounds than his recent work, which gives it a curious '80s throwback flavor, reminiscent of early New Order perhaps. But New Order's songs seem feckless and dazed, and Keith sounds weary, hoarse, but completely sober, like each song is what washes up from a night of fraught insomnia. When he sings "someone is tearing me down/somewhere a light has gone out" again strolling minor chord triplets you might

wonder if he needs his meds checked, but at the same time you know he's getting a lot of pleasure out of transmuting this miserableness into songs. In "Identifying Interpretation" he sings "Cut down, picked up, and kicked out, cornered in this sound it's bound to get better eventually," and it sounds almost optimistic but the chorus, "there's nothing that I'd rather do than live a life of being true, a conversation with a mirror in a tomb," dashes all hope. And yet it's sung to a sweetly melancholy melody, and it's impossible to be depressed by a line as clever as "time isn't ours—it's extinguishing the stars"

Unknown Component plays this operatic Goth doom off against music whose hummable melodicism is anything but gloomy. Sure, he likes his minor chords. But his songs are chock full of chord changes that surprises the ear first time but sounds inevitable by the second chorus. Elliot Smith mined this conflict between the sublime and the bleak to great effect, right up until ... well you know. Be consoled that in real life Keith is a level-headed, regular guy who is just doing his best to write good songs. Anyone who can make guitars chug like this while tossing off clever couplets about the heat death of the universe is my kind of people.



Mint Wad Willy

A History of Guns and Liars
www.mintwadwilly.com

Mint Wad Willy's debut album *A History of Guns and Liars* definitely has a Southern Rock vibe to it. The dominant instrumental sound is artfully sloppy, distorted slide guitar. When I first listened to it, I'd think at the beginning of each song "Oh no here comes the Black Crowes!" (The only thing worse than a dirty hippie is a dirty hippie who drawls.)

Luckily this is only a momentary impression. Iowa City has a strong, long-standing roots rock aesthetic that discriminates between good excess and bad excess, and MWW walks that tightrope with grace. They might remind you of any number of Southern Rock icons, but they remind me more of The Band, who were northerners in love with indigenous folk music of the American South. Mint Wad Willy tries to find their way to the deep muddy central channel of American folk music, not content to paddle around in the shallows.

I'm not such a fan of the mellower side of MWW, for example "Takin It Slow." As Woody Allen said, "if I get too mellow I ripen and then rot." But starting with "50501" and "Oh My God," these guys seem to find their mojo. The former brings The Band and mid-period Dylan to mind, the latter veers off into a spooky, messed up kind of country Gothic cabaret music. "Who's laughing now we're all dying?" indeed!

Just as a matter of personal taste I should hate Mint Wad Willy, with their echoes of the Allman Brothers and (shudder) Lynyrd Skynyrd, but I'm kinda crazy about this CD. Maybe it's because it's noisier, ruder and meaner than anything those deep-fried dinosaurs do. Maybe it's because they seem to be following their own crooked muse fearlessly. Either way, it's a strong piece of work.



The Coast

Expatriate

www.thecoastmusic.com

We normally don't run reviews of out of town bands, but this is an interesting and attractive CD, and it happens that they'll be playing at the Picador September 21st. The Coast is four guys arrayed in the standard drums and wires rawk quartet. They're Canadian, which is probably neither here or there musically, though anecdotally I'd say chances are they are more polite and better groomed than the average American band. And judging from this CD, they believe in classic pop song structure and major/minor pop harmony.

Stylistically they alternate between a shoe-gazey wall-of-sound with buried vocals style and a more earnest radio-friendly pop song. "No Secret Why" for example is really a country song, but the guitars are fuzzy and there's no twanging accent. Ian Fosbery has a reedy tenor voice that seems to quaver with emotion, though after a couple of listens the lyric seems to leave little impression on me.

Lucky for us the lyrics aren't the main thing here anyway. These are guys who are seriously in love with their guitars. They manage to decorate their songs with nearly every tasty guitar tone from the last 40 years in turn. What seems to turn them on—besides the generic impulse to rock that even Canadians aren't immune to—is to create three dimensional architectures of guitar sound within the pop form. Lyrical blandness aside, these guys are worth checking out.

Kent Williams is an optimist who loves life, sport, and hates lies.

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ART / EXHIBITS

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

www.blackiowa.org

Learning Safari: S is for Swahili, Sept. 5, 10:30-11:15am, Hiawatha Public Library, must register by Sept. 3, call 319-551-9037 • Journey to Freedom: Experience the Underground Railroad in Iowa, Sept. 12-20, Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center • Laying Claim to Our Spirit: African American Women's Leadership Conference, Sept. 18-19, Cedar Rapids Marriott

AKAR

257 E. Iowa Ave, Iowa City, 351-1227

New ceramics by Sequoia Miller, Sam Taylor, Bruce Gholson and Samantha Henneke, through Sept. 19 • New ceramics by Joy Brown, Karen Karnes and Christa Assad, Sept. 26 through Oct. 15

Amana Heritage Museum

4310 220th Trail, Amana, 319-622-3567

www.amanaheritage.org

Blacksmithing and Printing Demonstrations, Homestead Blacksmith Shop, Saturdays, 11am-4pm
The Community of True Inspiration: Pacifism and Patriotism, through Dec. 2008 • Abend (Evening) Art Galerie Tour, Sept. 5, 4-8pm • Harvest Dinner & Silent Auction, 40th anniversary celebration, Sept. 6, 5:30pm, Homestead Church Museum • Barn Tour, Sept. 21, 1:00pm • Craft demonstrations and hands on activities, Saturdays through Sept. 27, Amana Heritage Sites • Passport to History, GPS Adventure, Saturdays through Sept. 27

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

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

Grant Wood Studio and Visitor Center, Guided tours Saturdays & Sundays, hourly 12-4pm

River of Words® IOWA Environmental Poetry and Art Exhibit, Opening Reception, Sept. 7, 1:30-2:30pm, North Carnegie Library; Exhibition through Sept. 21 • Hands-On Floral Demonstration, Sept. 21, 1-3pm • The Year of the River: Flood Photography from The Gazette, through February 22, 2009 • All-Stars: American Sporting Prints from the Collection of Reba and Dave Williams, through Oct. 12 • The ESPY Collection, through Oct. 12

The Chait Galleries Downtown

218 E Washington St., Iowa City, 319-338, 4442

www.thegalleriesdowntown.com

Sara Slee Brown, digital imaging and prints, through Sept. 12

Faulconer Gallery

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell, 641-269-4660, www.grinnell.edu/fulconergallery

Boschian Imagery Five Centuries Later and a Few

Time Zones to the East, prints, ongoing, John Chrystal Center Gallery • A Survey of the Work of Roger Shimomura, 1969-2004, through Oct. 26; Gallery Talk: Pop Art, Comics and the Yellow Peril, Sept. 5, 12:30-12:50pm • A Constructed Balance: Photographs by Emily Grimes, through Nov. 2, gallery talk Oct. 1, 4:15pm, Burling Library

Iowa Artisans Gallery

207 E. Washington, Iowa City, 351-8686

www.iowa-artisans-gallery.com

Spontaneous Dance: the Raku sculpture and pottery of Barbara Harnack and Michael Lancaster, Aug. 29-Sept. 28

The Iowa Children's Museum

1451 Coral Ridge Ave., Coralville, 625-6255

School House Rocks--The Exhibit, ongoing • Scrapbookin' Art Adventure, Sept. 4, 3-5pm • Move It! Dig It! Do It! Sept. 7, 11am-5pm, Johnson County Fairgrounds • Mask-a-RAID Art Adventure, Sept. 11, 3-5pm • Fishbowl Art Adventure, Sept. 13, 1-3pm • Macaroni Madness Art Adventure, Sept. 18, 3-5pm • Free Admission Day, Sept. 21, 11am-6pm • Color Wheel Creations Art Adventure, Sept. 25, 3-5pm • Family Free Night & Noisemaker Art Adventure, Sept. 26, 5-8pm • Smithsonian Museum Day, Sept. 27, 10am-8pm

Johnson County Historical Society

860 Quarry Rd., Coralville, 351-5738

Toys I Never Played With: Early 20th Century African-American Toys, Games, and Books, through Oct. 4

Legion Arts / CSPS

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids, 364-1580

www.legionarts.org

Closed due to flood damages

National Czech & Slovak Museum

at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, 410 3rd Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, www.ncsml.org

BrewNost, international beer tasting, Sept. 26, 6-9:30pm, tickets at John's Grocery

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, UI Campus, 335-0548

www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

A Community of Writers: Creative Writing at the University of Iowa, through Oct. 12 • The World Comes to Iowa: Portraits of the International Writing Program, through Oct. 12

Science Station

427 1st St SE, Cedar Rapids, 363-4629

www.sciencestation.org

Closed due to flood damages

UI Museum of Art

150 N. Riverside Drive, Iowa City, 335-1727

www.uiowa.edu/uima/

Closed due to flood damages

MUSIC

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, 319-362-7375, www.brucemore.org

Cedar Rapids Symphony, Sept. 20, 7:30pm

Clapp Recital Hall

UI Campus, Iowa City, 335-1160

Closed due to flood damages

Englert Theatre

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

www.englert.org

Railroad Earth, Sept. 17, 8:00pm • Dar Williams, Sept. 23, 8:00pm • The Robert Cray Band, Sept. 24, 8:00pm • Shane And Shane, Sept. 26, 8:00pm

Farmers Market Music

Coralville Community Aquatic Center parking lot, Coralville, 248-1750

www.coralville.org

Alan and Aleta Murphy, Sept. 8, 5pm • Central Standard Time, Sept. 15, 5pm • This Machine, Sept. 22, 5pm

Friday Night Concert Series

Downtown Iowa City, Pedestrian Mall

www.summerofthearts.org

Public Property, Sept. 5, 6:30-9:30pm

Grinnell College

Herrick Chapel, 7th Ave. and Park St., Grinnell, 641-269-3101

Sonny Fortune, Jazz, Sept. 4, 8pm

Harper Hall

Voxman Music Building, UI Campus, 335-1603

Closed due to flood damages

The Industry

211 Iowa Ave, Iowa City

Insectoid, Mint Wad Willy, Sept 12 • Public Property, Sept 13

Iowa Friends of Old-Time Music

Johnson County Fairgrounds

38th annual Fiddlers Picnic, stage show featuring bluegrass, celtic, country, and folk musicians, vintage musical instrument dealer showcase, parking lot jam sessions; Sept. 21, 12-6pm

Iowa Women's Music Festival

Upper City Park, Park St., Iowa City

Patrice Pike, Ferron, Zoë Lewis, Ubaka Hill, BeJae Fleming Band, Deidre McCalla, Diva Kai, Rachel Garlin, and special guest emcee Kim-Char Meredith, Sept. 20, 11am-6pm • Erica Wheeler with Kate Hickman & Kelly Carrell, Sept. 16, 7-10pm, The Mill Restaurant • The Soulful Landscape: Finding Our Stories of Place and Belonging, Sept. 17, 6:30-9pm, Prairiewoods Franciscan Center, 120 E. Boyson Rd., Hiawatha • Drumsong Orchestra,

A-LIST



Climbing PoeTree Hurricane Season: The Hidden Messages in Water

Saturday, September 27, 7pm
**Wesley Center, 120 N. Dubuque
St., Iowa City**
www.hurricaneseasonontour.com

What more can be said about water after the summer we've just had here in Eastern Iowa? That we're all composed of it, that we all depend on it, and that we all now know the devastating destruction it can cause.

In honor of the third anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, self-prescribed "soul-sister co-conspiracy of arts activists" Alixa and Naima, AKA Climbing PoeTree are touring the U.S. to share the unheard stories of silenced communities. "Through a tapestry of spoken-word poetry, video projection, dance, shadow art and a sound collage of personal testimonies, Hurricane Season connects the issues that surfaced in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to the 'unnatural disasters' disenfranchised communities are experiencing nationwide and worldwide on a daily basis," according to a media release.

Alixa and Naima's work fuses both passion and compassion with beauty and imagination to connect with audience members about issues some find easy to ignore. The duo's activist ethics permeate each step of their tour, from traveling on a bus fueled by biodiesel (recycled vegetable oil) to performing on a set built from bamboo, which is a high-yield renewable resource. But climate change and environmental injustice are only two of the issues Climbing PoeTree takes on. Policing, prisons and gentrification continue the list, and these artists have lots to say about each one.

After each performance, Climbing PoeTree will be communing with audience members about the life-giving and destructive water within their own lives and communities.

So if you drink your eight glasses a day and still find yourself thirsty, check out Alixa and Naima's Hurricane Season and perhaps you might find what you're looking for.

workshop, Sept. 19, 7pm, location TBA

Java House

211 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 335-5730

Shows at noon unless otherwise noted.

Brian Joens, Sept. 5 • The Diplomats of Solid Sound, Sept. 12 • Ill Chemistry, Sept. 26

The Mill

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

www.icmill.com

Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted

Sunday Night Pub Quiz, Sundays, 9pm-Midnight
Open Mic with J. Knight, Mondays, 8pm, call 338-6713 to sign up

Songwriters in Residence, Sept. 3 & 17, 7-10pm • Dave Zollo and the Body Electric, Sept. 5 • Stuart Davis, Sept. 6, 8pm • Truckstop Honeymoon, Sept. 7 • Cameron McGill with Sam Knutson, Sept. 9 • Burlington St. Bluegrass Band, Sept. 10 & 24, 7-10pm • Miles Neilson Band with Matthew Grimm, Sept. 11 • B.F. Burt and The Instigators, Sept. 12 • Damon Dotson Band, Sept. 13 • Girlyman, Sept. 14, 8pm • Erica Wheeler with Kate Hickman and Kelly Carrell, Iowa Women's Music Festival Kickoff, Sept. 16, 7pm • Shame Train with Scott Cochran and Flannel, Sept. 20 • The University Of Iowa Jazz Performances, Sept. 23 • Weekend Warriors, Sept. 28, 6pm

The Picador

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

www.thepicador.com

Shows are 19+ with doors at 9pm unless otherwise noted

The Nadas, Sept. 3 • Lucky Boys Confusion with Minus Six, Love Me Electric, Sept. 5 • These Are Powers with Petit Mal, Glass Trees, Sept. 6 • Darker My Love, Sept. 8 • Backyard Tire Fire with Ha Ha Tonka, The White Tornado, Sept. 10 • Langhorne Slim with Centromatic, The Broken West, Lonely Heart, Sept. 11 • Neil Hamburger with Pleaseeasaur, Sept. 12 • Zombie March, Sept. 13 • Raashan Ahmad (of The Crown City Rockers) with Coolzey, Bru Lei, Sept. 16 • Danger Is My Middle Name with Four Word Cause, Sept. 17 • Dexter Rombweber Duo, Sept. 20 • DRESSY Bessy with The Coast, Heligoats, Sept. 21 • Cataldo with Moon Plus Stars, Sept. 24 • Unknown Component with Mint Wad Willy, Beati Paoli, Brian Troester, Sept. 25 • William Elliot Whitmore with David Zollo, Clakity Sax, Sept. 26 • Horse The Band with Heavy Heavy Low Low, So Many Dynamos, Sept. 27

Public Space One

115 E. Washington St., Iowa City

Shows at 8pm

The Broken Spokes with Juffage, Sept. 6 • Pwrfl Power, Sam Locke-Ward, and Grampall Jookabox, Sept. 10 • Shame Train with Lute Tucker (of Illinois John Fever), Sept. 12 • Lipstick Homicide with Mannix, Venom Electric and Audrey Robinson, Sept. 19 • Unknown Component CD Release Show, Sept. 20

Red Cedar Chamber Music

P.O. Box 154, Marion, 319-377-8028,

Call for locations

"Klezmer to Classical-Music by Jewish Composers" Rural Outreach Concert, Sept. 3-7 • Music for Seniors, Sept. 4, 1:30pm-2:30pm • Music for Three, Sept. 8, 7pm-8pm

Redstone Room

129 Main St., Davenport, 563-326-1333

www.redstoneroom.com

The Bill Lupkin Blues Band, Sept. 5, 8:30pm • Punch Brothers featuring Chris Thile, Sept. 7, 7pm • Anthony Gomes, Sept. 12, 8:30pm • String Cheese Incident, Virtual Concert, Sept. 13, 9pm • Guy Forsyth, Sept. 15, 7:30pm • Bleed The Sky with Through Terror, Destro and Gigan, Sept. 18, 8:30pm • David Lindley, Sept. 19, 9pm • Family Groove Company and Seeker, Sept. 27, 9pm

SCOPE Productions

Pentacrest lawn, Iowa City

Chuck Berry & Rooney, UI Homecoming show, Sept. 26, following parade

Uptown Bill's Small Mall

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

www.uptownbills.org

Open Mic, Fridays, 8pm; Sign-up, 7:30pm

Yacht Club

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

Mondays Blues Jam, Tuesdays Dance Party, Wednesdays The Jam, Thursdays Battle of the Bands

Jah Roots CD Release Party with 77 Jefferson, Sept. 5, 9pm • Euforquestra, The Jumbies, Sept. 6, 9:30pm • Mike Dillon's Go-Go Jungle, Sept. 10, 9pm • Hunab, The Cellar Door, Strange Arrangement, Sept. 12, 9pm • Diplomats of Solid Sound, JC Brooks & The Uptown Sound, Sept. 20, 9pm • Chicago Afrobeat Project, Sept. 27, 9pm

THEATRE / PERFORMANCE / DANCE / COMEDY

Art Culture Experiment (ACE)

Old Brick, 26 Market St., Iowa City, 621-8530

Inclusive Ballroom, Tuesdays through Dec. 16, 7-8:30pm • Actors Dance Lab, Tuesdays through Dec. 16, 8:30-9:45pm

Englert Theatre

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

The King & I (Iowa City Community Theatre), Sept. 12 & 13, 7:30pm, Sept. 13 & 14, 1:30pm

Old Creamery Theater

39 38th Ave., Main Stage, Amana, 319-622-6194
I Can't Give You Anything But Songs, Sept. 5 & 6, 7:30pm, Ox Yoke Inn, 4420 220th Trail, Amana • Leaving Iowa, through Oct. 1

Riverside Theatre

213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City, 338-7672
Stones in His Pocket, Sept. 5 through Sept. 28

Summit Restaurant

10 S. Clinton St, Iowa City, 354-7473
Comedy Night, Wednesdays at 9pm
Dave Eng and El Arnston, Sept. 3 • Bruce Goodman and Jeremy Nunes, Sept. 10 • TBA and Josh Alton, Sept. 17 • Stephen Hirst and Nathan Andersen, Sept. 24

Theatre Cedar Rapids

Flood relocation: McKinley Middle School, 620 10th St. SE, Cedar Rapids
Gypsy, September 5 & 6, 7:30 pm, Sept. 7, 2:30pm • The Children's Hour, Sept. 26 & 27, 7:30pm, Sept. 28, 2:30pm

University of Iowa Swing Dance Club

Robert A Lee Community Rec Center, Iowa City
Welcome Dance, Music by Mutiny in the Parlor, Sept. 5, 7pm lessons, 8pm dance • Fall classes begin Sept. 8, Field House Rm 515

U.S. Cellular Center

370 First Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids
World Famous Lipizzaner Stallions, Sept. 13, 7:30pm, Sept. 14, 2:00pm • Disney On Ice presents: Disneyland Adventure, Sept. 25 & 26, 7:00pm, Sept. 27, 11:00am, 3:00pm & 7:00pm, Sept. 28, 12:00pm

FILM/VIDEO

Bijou Theater

Van Allen Hall, Lecture Rm 2, 335-3258
www.bijoutheater.org
Run Fatboy Run, Sept. 5-7 • Encounters at the End of the World, Sept. 12-14 • Gonzo: The Life & Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, Sept. 19-21 • The Animation Show, Sept. 26-28

Bucksbaum Center for the Arts

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell, 641-269-4660, www.grinnell.edu/fulconergallery
Cats of Mirikitani, film, Sept. 12-14, 8pm

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City, 688-2653
www.englert.org
Riff Raff Theater Presents Die Hard, Sept. 19, 8:00pm

Public Access Television of Iowa City

206 Lafayette Street, Iowa City, 338-7035
www.patv.tv
Bicyclists of Iowa City, volunteers wanted for live studio shoot, Sept. 8, 6:45-8:15pm • Guidelines, PATV's free introductory workshop, Sept. 14, 10am-12pm • Open Channel: Be on live TV! Sept. 27, 5-6pm

Park it at the Movies

Outdoors, Coralville Creekside Ballpark, Coralville, 248-1750
Movies begin at dark
The Final Season, Sept. 19

WORDS

Bucksbaum Center for the Arts

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell, 641-269-4660, www.grinnell.edu/fulconergallery
The Peril of Marginalization, panel, Sept. 10, 4:15pm • Translating Loyalty: Working with Minoru Kiyota on the Account of his World War II Internment, lecture, Sept. 24, 4:15pm • Grounding Our Faith in a Pluralist World- with a little help from NagArjuna, lecture, Sept. 24, 8pm

Iowa City Public Library

123 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 356-5200
www.icpl.org
International Writing Program Panel, Fridays, 12pm • Memories of a Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Survivor Sept. 10, 7-9 pm

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City, 337-2681
www.prairielightsbooks.com
International Writing Program/Writers' Workshop Reading, Sundays, 5pm
All "Live from Prairie Lights" readings at 7pm unless otherwise noted
Daniel Leviten, Sept. 3 • Frances de Pontes Peebles, Sept. 4 • Bart Yates, Sept. 8 • Suzan Adam, Sept. 10 • Josh Barkan, Sept. 11 • Franklin Reeve, poetry reading, Sept. 12 • Thomas Frank, Sept. 14, 2pm • Marissa Handler, Sept. 15 • William Kent Krueger, Sept. 16 • Sana Krasikov, Sept. 17 • Robert Mitchell, Sept. 19 • Cate Marvin and Rick Barot, Sept. 23 • Salvatore Scibona, Sept. 25 • Curtis Sittenfeld, Sept. 29 • David Leavitt, Sept. 30

MISC

Amana Colonies

4310 220th Trail, Amana, 319-622-3567
www.amanaheritage.org
Lily Lake Bike Tour, Fridays starting Sept. 5, 2pm, Amana Colonies Visitor Center • Harvest Dinner & Silent Auction, 40th anniversary celebration, Sept.

6, 5:30pm, Homestead Church Museum • Beer Festival, Sept. 14, 1-6pm, Millstream Brewing Co. • 2nd Annual Beer Potluck Dinner, Sept. 16, 1:30pm, Millstream Brewing Co. • Barn Tour, Sept. 21, 1:00pm • Passport to History, GPS Adventure, Saturdays through Sept. 27 • Oktoberfest, Oct. 3-5

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, 362-7375
Interactive gardening workshop, Brucemore Formal Garden, Sept. 10, 6pm

Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival

Veterans Memorial Stadium, Rockford Rd. SW, Cedar Rapids, 319-365-8313
Festival Schedule, Sept. 1, 8am-9pm • Balloon Glow, Sept. 5, 7-10pm, Brucemore

Coralville Farmers Market

1513 7th St., Coralville
Monday and Thursday, 5-8pm

Downtown Iowa City Farmers Market

Chauncey Swan Ramp. Across from City Hall, 410 E. Washington St., Iowa City
Wednesdays 5:30-7:30pm; and Saturdays 7:30-11:30am, through Oct. 29

Iowa City Senior Center

28 S. Linn St., Iowa City, 356-5220
Chair Yoga for people with MS (all welcome), Wednesdays 10:40-11:30am
Memory Training classe, begin Sept. 3 • Zumba, a fusion of Latin and International music and dance, classes begin Sept. 10

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

Exit 254 of I-80, West Branch
Celebrate Prairie Heritage Day, historic crafts, games, prairie walks and other activities from 19th century, Sept. 1, begins at 10am "Laura Ingalls Wilder Remembered," performance, 1:30pm & 3pm • National Public Lands Day, restoring native tallgrass prairie, Sept. 27, 8:30am-12pm

Public Meeting

Iowa City Public Library, Room A
Fifth and final meeting, Johnson County Conservation Board's presentation of \$20 million land preservation proposal, Sept. 2, 7-9pm

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside, 648-1234
www.riversidecasinoandresort.com
Extreme Challenge 106, mixed martial arts, Sept. 19, 7:30pm

University of Iowa Center on Aging

Atrium, Medical Education and Research Facility, Iowa City, 384-4221
OLLI at Iowa Presents: A Celebration of Lifelong Learning, Sept. 3, 3-5pm

Operation Zombie Freedom?

I'm reading World War Z by Max Brooks, a fictional account of the world's response to a zombie outbreak. In the book the U.S. military fails miserably in its first real battle against the undead but later changes tactics and ultimately triumphs, as does the rest of the world. I have always wondered how the U.S. military would realistically fight the undead. I hope you can answer.

—agibson

You're absolutely right, A.—this is a situation that calls for realism. Were we realistic about Iraq? No. You see what happened. If I have anything to say about it, we won't make that mistake twice.

We need to understand the zombie threat before we can formulate a practical plan for combating it. A review of zombie movies tells us they have the following common characteristics: they're generally slow, stupid, and unaffected by bodily damage, they don't have working circulatory or respiratory tracts, they're not fazed by heat or cold, they can't drown, and their thought processes are degraded to the point that shock and awe don't have an appreciable psychological effect. This leaves you with basically three options: immobilize them and leave them to rot, decapitate them or destroy their brains (they apparently do still have central nervous systems, demonstrating that even a modicum of intelligence can be a fatal flaw), or obliterate them entirely.

In *The Zombie Survival Guide* (2003), which remains the definitive and possibly only treatment of the subject, Max Brooks recommends for hand-to-hand combat something that can efficiently slice zombies into bits, a two-handed Japanese katana (samurai sword) being ideal. (Also receiving high praise are the compact yet deadly WWI trench spike and the much larger and deadlier ancient Shaolin monk's spade.) Brooks says forget about chain saws—no matter how cool they are, they just aren't reliable enough and require fuel, which may run out at a critical juncture. Firearms are a good choice if used properly—you need to aim for the head, rather than waste ammunition on the body. Even a zombie cut in half with automatic weapon fire can still crawl toward you. An old-style combat rifle such as

the M1 Garand is perhaps your best bet. The semiautomatic action conserves bullets, and the heavy stock (useful as a bludgeon) and detachable bayonet give you options when the ammo is gone.

The living dead have no fear of fire, which makes it a great weapon. Zombies engulfed in flames will not only not put themselves out, they'll continue to wander around, possibly

(and very Hollywood) tactics such as high explosives, incendiaries, and massed gunfire. The army and marines would likely do the heavy lifting, with air force and navy fighters providing close air support. As long as the military can protect the troops from infection and isn't handcuffed by liberal politicians who really want the zombies to win, we should be able to handle things. Strategy and using the stupidity of zombies against them is key, as exemplified in Brooks's recounting of what he tells us was the largest zombie outbreak in history—121 AD in Scotland. (Also the home of the Picts, who fought naked while painted blue. Combat in ancient Scotland was definitely a trip.) Using funneling trenches, flaming pitch, and swords, a Roman force of 480 men was able to dispatch 9,000 zombies with only 150 casualties.

If faced with zombies controlled by a sorcerer or other evil power (as in the classic 1932 film *White Zombie*), you might save yourself some trouble by having Special Forces teams take out the head guy, though this approach is hardly foolproof—again, witness Iraq. The main thing is, don't underestimate zombies. So

often in trying times one thinks, these brain-dead losers can't possibly continue. Yet somehow they do.

SPEAKING OF ZOMBIES

My assistant Little Ed Zotti has a book coming out September 2 entitled *The Barn House: Confessions of an Urban Rehabber*. It has nothing to do with the Straight Dope, so don't blame me.

—CECIL ADAMS

Comments, questions? Take it up with Cecil on the Straight Dope Message Board, straightdope.com, or write him at the Chicago Reader, 11 E. Illinois, Chicago 60611. Cecil's most recent compendium of knowledge, Triumph of the Straight Dope, is available at bookstores everywhere.



setting other zombies alight. Electricity will paralyze zombies but usually not kill them outright unless it also sets them on fire and so isn't advisable as a first line of defense. You might think that nuclear weapons would be a good possibility if a city were 100 percent infected, but the downside is that any surviving zombies will be not only shambling horrors but radioactive too.

So what would our military do? Even though the standard-issue M-16 is inferior to the Garand, we have lots of troops and bullets, assuming they're not all tied up indefinitely in the Middle East. Since zombies can't breed except by spreading their infection, containment and quarantine would be necessary to protect uninfected urban areas—typically the sort of job assigned to FEMA, which we may want to rethink. After that, the military could surround and wipe out the zombies using time-honored

Curses, Foiled Again

A man disguised as a woman walked into a restaurant in Metairie, La., ordered two doughnuts and handed the clerk a \$5 bill. According to the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, when the clerk opened the register, the man pulled a handgun. The employee reacted by screaming for someone to call 911. The startled robber not only fled without taking any money, but also left behind his \$5 and the doughnuts.

Luxury Sky Boxes

The Air Force is spending \$16.2 million of counterterrorism funding to build 10 "comfort capsules" for aircraft that transport senior officers and civilian leaders. Documents obtained by the *Washington Post* specify that each of the two-room capsules is to be "aesthetically pleasing and furnished to reflect the rank of the senior leaders using the capsule," with beds, a couch, a table, 37-inch flat-screen monitor with stereo speakers and a full-length mirror. The project has been slowed by congressional objections to diverting terrorism funds for VIP luxury in wartime, but also by Air Force generals demanding that the color of the leather for seats and seatbelts be switched from brown to blue and that seat pockets be added—changes an internal Air Force memo estimated cost \$68,240.

Slightest Provocation

- After bicyclists Daryll Dade, 36, and Jeremy Oberley, 25, teamed up for a race and finished second, they celebrated at a karaoke bar in Telluride, Colo. When Oberley sang "Thunder Rolls" by Garth Brooks, the crowd response was less than enthusiastic, Dade told the *Daily Planet* newspaper, adding that he suggested to Oberley, "You should've done 'Friends in Low Places.'" Oberley responded by stabbing Dade in the throat. At his arraignment in San Miguel County court, Oberley insisted the stabbing "was strictly an accidental situation."
- Authorities in Lawrence County, Ala., said that while Grady "Skip" Wilburn Dollar, 64, and Mickey Joe Hill, 37, were drinking together, Dollar gave Hill \$10 and told him to go to the store for more beer. When Hill brought back four cans of low-cost Natural Light, sheriff's Sgt. Mark Richard said Dollar got mad that Hill didn't get more for his money and stabbed him in the abdomen with a butcher knife.

Dwindling Equity



Human life in the United States has lost nearly \$1 million in value in the past five years, according to Environmental Protection Agency calculations. *The Associated Press*, which reported the devaluation in the EPA's "value of a statistical life" from \$7.8 million per person to \$6.9 million, explained that the lower value has implications for proposed rules that weigh the costs versus the lifesaving benefits because rules that cost more to enforce than the value of the lives the rules are projected to save are less likely to be adopted.

Crime Fighters of the Week

- New Zealand police alerted residents of central Christchurch to be on the lookout for a 16-year-old burglary suspect by issuing a wanted poster bearing a photograph of 58-year-old British actor Robbie Coltrane, who portrays the giant Hagrid in the Harry Potter movies. Police Sgt. Phil Dean explained police couldn't use a photo of the actual suspect because New Zealand law forbids distributing photos of juvenile offenders. Beneath the actor's image, the poster's headline warns, "Active burglar in this neighbourhood." Smaller type explains, "Robbie Coltrane is not the burglar, but imagine him aged 16 with lank, greasy hair and you have the picture."
- Mayor Dennis Donohue of Salinas, Calif., responded to increasing violence in his city by calling for a week of community fasting. Declaring that fasting worked for Gandhi and Cesar Chavez, Donohue handed out 1,000 "Fasting for Peace" buttons in the city of 150,000, where more than 15 people died in gang-related homicides in the past six months. Donohue defined fasting as giving up some, but not necessarily all food, pointing out he limits himself to lunch. The chief of police told the *Los Angeles Times* he has cut back on his food consumption in support of the fast but wasn't more specific.

Religion in Daily Life

- A 15-month-old boy whose remains were found inside a suitcase in Philadelphia was starved to death by members of a religious group that included his mother, because he refused to say "amen" after meals, according to court documents charging the mother, Ria Ramkissoon, 21, and three other members of 1 Mind Ministries.
- Charlotte Thompson said she was stopped at a light in Indianapolis when a bullet from a street fight struck her 10-year-old great-granddaughter in the stomach. The bullet didn't hit anyone else because a Bible on the backseat slowed it. "Came through the door, hit her, then it went into the Bible,"

Thompson told NBC News. "The word of God slowed the bullet so that it didn't kill anybody." A watermelon that Thompson was holding in her lap then stopped the bullet. "Right in the watermelon," Thompson said. "Didn't come out of the watermelon. The word of God and the Lord's power saved. He sent the bullet into the watermelon."

- Saudi Arabia's religious police outlawed selling dogs and cats as pets or walking them anywhere in Riyadh. Othman al-Othman, head of the 5,000-strong Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, told *al-Hayat* daily that enforcing the religious ban was necessary because more men were using pets in public "to make passes on women and disturb families."

Irony Illustrated

Investigators blamed a condominium fire in Mahwah, N.J., on a smoke detector. Police Lt. Bruce Kuipers said the smoke detector in the second-story room short-circuited and fell from the ceiling, igniting a pile of clothes below.

Suspicious Behavior

A police officer who stopped a van seen driving in the woods in Port St. Lucie, Fla., said driver Timothy J. Placko, 24, was looking at women's sonograms that had been downloaded and printed from the Internet. *The Palm Beach Post* reported Placko told the officer he wanted to drive into the woods so he could call his girlfriend, but when asked the woman's name, he said, "OK, I wasn't trying to call anyone. I was just driving around." Police searched the van and found a pocketknife on Placko and four more knives and a machete near the driver's seat. They also found a film canister with 18 teeth, which Placko said were human.

Compiled from the nation's press by Roland Sweet. Submit items, citing date and source, to P.O. Box 8130, Alexandria VA 22306.

ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR SEPTEMBER 2008

For Everyone—A point of no return; a new beginning. The past has now officially passed. There's no going back. The incremental change of recent times has finally added up to a major turning point. Stubborn, insurmountable obstacles will force a profound change in our lifestyle and life direction. However, just as we are all probably obsessing about how hard it all is, a pathway will open up before us. One stepping stone at a time, we will find a new way forward. We will be pressured to take each new step and not to turn back. But we will also be rewarded and excited by the gradual realization of a vast new potential. We may gripe about having to leave a lot of things behind, but we will also love the new way of life that is emerging.

 **Aries**—Set boundaries. There are too many people that expect too much of you, now. They are threatening to overwhelm your private life. Their claim is real and you must make some concessions. But it still adds up to too much. Events in September will help you set boundaries that everyone can understand and accept. Both idealism and practical financial planning will help you find a solution. Things will get easier as September progresses. Many people are in line for the resources you seek, but your needs will be met.

 **Taurus**—There's a big course correction just ahead. The future that is quickly emerging is different than the one you had expected. You won't have to sacrifice your financial goals or your most cherished dreams. You might have to scramble a little to keep everything on schedule, and maybe along a different track. But things look worse than they are. You have more power than you realize. Your influence is subtle but considerable. You will need to shape events, but that won't be hard because people will seek your guidance.

 **Gemini**—You saw all this coming. The delays are about over. You can't avoid or put off the changes anymore. You can't control them, either. Neither can others. The effects are noticeable in your personal and social life as those close to you make necessary adjustments. Be grateful that you had the last few months to prepare and to negotiate a better deal. There is a new, exciting air of mystery and anticipation about the future, though. These changes will help those in charge with finances. That will eventually benefit you.

 **Cancer**—No going back. You've probably watched events build from a distance, half hoping that nothing would ever really happen or things would go back to normal. Powerful people have been making big decisions and developing policies in private. This month, they will be made public. The effects will quickly become apparent in your life. You will be shielded from the worst of it. Lasting and important new alliances are now developing in your life. Recent events have put you beyond the reach of opponents. Things will work out well financially.

 **Leo**—Let others inspire you. You are beginning to realize that you have an important role to play in shaping future events. But the landscape has changed dramatically. Circumstances might slow or even block progress along certain familiar avenues. There are barriers, but there are also many new opportunities. Take your cue from partners no matter how unrealistic they seem. With their needs as your guide, use your considerable ingenuity and force of personality to forge a new pathway that everyone can use. Your professional situation will continue to improve.

 **Virgo**—A firm hand is needed. Many want to continue down the same road. You'll have to tell them that road is closed. You know from personal experience that things absolutely must change, starting immediately. If they want to keep the money coming in, they have to keep up with rapidly changing times, and so must those in your immediate circle. Your task will get easier as others get used to the new order of things. Despite all the turbulence, initial results will be encouraging. That should help you convince the doubters.

 **Libra**—All roads pass through Libra. Things are changeful and confusing and everyone is out looking for answers. It isn't that you have all the answers or that you have a lot of power over the situation. It is just that your influence with everyone is running high. Coincidentally, just about all of your personal energies are devoted to understanding and solving the problems everyone else is having right now. Dealing with the situation can be fun and inspiring and a little mysterious. Working from home can be relaxing and profitable.

 **Scorpio**—Follow your innermost voice. Your own most familiar and reliable instincts will provide ample inspiration and guidance in these confusing times. However, to succeed completely, you will have to listen to voices from deeper within you, voices that you often ignore or even reject. If you do, you will gain surprisingly accurate insight into events and what everybody else is really thinking about them. Your ties to the community will grow deeper and stronger. They will provide substantial and lasting benefits to you and to the community you live in.

 **Sagittarius**—A bend in the road. Those in charge won't allow some things anymore; those at home are making demands; changing times are forcing your hand. However, the future is now looking more promising and the road ahead is actually looking clearer than before. Despite the occasional disruption, the stars suggest a more relaxing ride ahead for Sagittarius. Concentrate on establishing a satisfying and sustainable new lifestyle. Work to consolidate your finances and keep them stable. It's a good time to lay the groundwork for a project to pursue further in coming months.

 **Capricorn**—Power of the purse. Ready cash is tough to come by. It's hard to get the green light for projects. However, Capricorn knows that things have started to move forward. You hold the key. You are uniquely well positioned to pull scarce resources together, coordinate efforts and point people down the right road. You have an almost magical ability to create something where others see only obstacles. You need to schedule extra time for rest and relaxation. Being both the driving force and guiding hand can wear a person out.

 **Aquarius**—Countdown. You've been taking your time about making a choice, trying things out. However, the planets have laid down a marker. The time for firm decisions is on the horizon. You should begin working in earnest on the difficult financial choices you've been putting off. In the months ahead, the price of delay will become increasingly clear and events will take attractive but unrealistic choices off the table. A new cycle of growth and prosperity is coming, but it won't arrive until after you've made a few tough financial decisions.

 **Pisces**—A new balance. For many years, you've been overly assertive and overly independent to defend yourself against pushy, controlling people. You've also ignored the wishes of people you should take more seriously. You've dwelt in your own little universe. This resulted in too much freedom and an uncertain path through life. You will soon be surrounded by powerful but caring people. And you won't find it so easy to ignore the wishes of those older and wiser than yourself. The result will be a gentle, long overdue and very beneficial reality check.

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