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Iowa City's News & Culture Magazine

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November '08

ALUMINUM GOLD

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INSIDE

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Gifts

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Imagined

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THIS MODERN WORLD


by TOM TOMORROW

ONCE AGAIN, IT'S TIME TO ASK...
ARE YOU A REAL AMERICAN?

ARE YOU AMONG THE **TWENTY PERCENT** OF AMERICANS WHO LIVE IN RURAL AREAS AND SMALL TOWNS?*

YOU JUST CAN'T **TRUST** THOSE DECADENT ELITISTS WHO LIVE IN OR AROUND **CITIES!**

NOT TO **MENTION** THE NORTHEAST, THE UPPER MIDWEST, THE WEST COAST, AND VARIOUS POCKETS OF THE **SOUTH!**



*ACCORDING TO 2000 U.S. CENSUS DATA.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE SUBPRIME MELTDOWN CAN BE BLAMED ON THE 1977 **COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT**, ALL EVIDENCE TO THE **CONTRARY?***

DETAILS, SCHEMESTAILS! ALL I KNOW IS, THIS LETS US PIN THE WHOLE MESS ON **DEMOCRATS AND BLACK PEOPLE!**

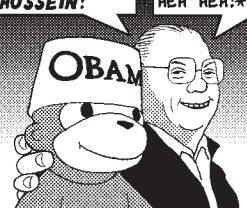
MY FAVORITE **SCAPEGOATS!**



*THE MAJORITY OF BAD SUBPRIME LOANS WERE ISSUED BY INSTITUTIONS NOT COVERED UNDER THE ACT.

DO YOU AGREE WITH RECENT MCCAIN RALLY ATTENDEES THAT SENATOR OBAMA IS A COMMUNIST, A TERRORIST, AND/OR A TRAITOR, BEST REPRESENTED BY SMALL **MONKEY DOLLS?**

THIS IS **LITTLE HUSSEIN!** HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH!*



*ACTUAL MCCAIN SUPPORTER, AS SEEN ON YOUTUBE.

AND--DO YOU OPPOSE A TAX INCREASE FOR UPPER INCOME AMERICANS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY SUPPORTING THE WAR IN IRAQ, WHICH IS COSTING US \$10 BILLION A **MONTH?**

OF COURSE! I'D LIKE TO BE RICH SOME DAY--AND I **CERTAINLY** WOULDN'T WANT MY HYPOTHETICAL SUCCESS TO BE PUNISHED WITH **HIGHER TAXES!**

OH, AND GOD BLESS THE TROOPS.



ARE YOU UTTERLY OBLIVIOUS TO THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN VOTER **REGISTRATION FRAUD** AND ACTUAL **VOTE FRAUD?**

IF SOMEONE SUBMITS A FALSE **REGISTRATION** IN THE NAME OF **MICKEY MOUSE--**

--OUR ENTIRE **DEMOCRACY** IS IMPERILED!




IN SOME UNSPECIFIED MANNER THAT I DON'T ENTIRELY UNDERSTAND.

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ALL THESE QUESTIONS--CONGRATULATIONS! YOU **MIGHT** BE PART OF THAT ELITE, EVER-DIMINISHING SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION KNOWN TO RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGUES AS "**REAL**" AMERICANS!

BUT **WAIT--**IF WE'RE PART OF AN "ELITE" GROUP--DOESN'T THAT MAKE US... **ELITISTS?**

IN WHICH CASE--WE MUST HATE AMERICA **TOO!**

I DENOUNCE US!



TM, TM, RR, W, O, 2008... www.thismodernworld.com

Visiting Ober

I visited the grave of Ernest Oberholtzer today last month. I was invited to read from my new book of essays *Under a Midland Sky* (ok, that's a plug) at the Unitarian Church in Davenport. This was a wonderful occasion to find the resting place of one of my heroes, especially given that Davenport's Unitarian Church was frequented by "Ober," as well.

Ober is one of the great environmental heroes of the 20th century, and he was born and raised right here in Iowa. Sound familiar? Regular readers of this column may recall a similar point I made about Aldo Leopold, who was born and raised downriver in Burlington. Add in the more statewide recognized "Ding" Darling, and you see that Iowa has a remarkable legacy of great native environmentalists.

I don't have the space to give an adequate account of Ober's biography. For that, I refer you to an excellent biography, Joe Paddock's *Keeper of the Wild*, which I enjoyed this summer on our annual family trip to northern Minnesota. But let me attempt a brief summary.

Ernest Oberholtzer took his first extended canoe trip (3,000 miles) through what is now known as the Boundary Waters in 1909 at age 25. Over the years, he explored the northern wilderness all the way to the subarctic of Hudson's Bay. He taught himself Ojibwe and became great friends with Native peoples, earning the name "Atisokan," or "Storyteller." He wrote and lectured much on the natural world of the north and its Natives. He bought Mallard Island in Rainy Lake and set out building a homestead there, to which he devoted the rest of his life and which still remains in trust with a foundation in his name (www.eober.org).

Ober became what we would now call an "activist" when the gorgeous last wilderness that he grew to love was threatened by one Edward Backus, a lumber baron who was scheming to build several massive dams along the boundary waters and flood millions of acres of pristine wilderness in order to create an energy empire. Ober became his nemesis and headed up an unlikely effort to defeat the powerful and influential industrial giant



Ernest Oberholtzer helped create the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Backus. And, over the course of several years in the 1920s and 1930s, he did.

The fortuitous fallout of these efforts was the establishment of the Quetico-Superior Council, for which Ober served as its first president, followed by his service as first chairman of the President's Quetico-Superior Committee created by FDR. Thanks to Ober and many other dedicated conservationists such as another of my great heroes Sigurd Olson, we now have the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Ober's legacy is not limited to the Boundary Waters, however. A pioneer in wilderness conservation, he was one of the eight founding members (along with Aldo Leopold) of The Wilderness Society. Our modern conception—and reality—of wilderness owes an enormous debt to Ernest Oberholtzer.

And how many Iowans—let alone Quad Citians—know that such a great American was born and raised in their midst? Not many. Oberholtzer maintained a relationship with Davenport throughout much of his life, so it's not like he was born here and left as a toddler. Yet as I wandered amongst the old gravesites of Oakdale Cemetery, near such august names as the Putnams and the Davenports themselves, I felt that not too many people have made pilgrimages to the Oberholtzer family plot.

Our modern conception—and reality—of wilderness owes an enormous debt to Ernest Oberholtzer.

That October day was quintessential mid-*autumn*. There was a chill in the air, and the persistent breeze sent oak leaves fluttering down on me as I spotted the statue of a woman (an earth goddess, speculates Paddock in his biography) that marks Ober's grandparents' monument. And there he is, amidst his family, here in this quiet spot in Iowa:

Ober
Ernest Carl Oberholtzer
Atisokan
His Indian name for Storyteller
Feb. 6, 1884-June 6, 1977

I stood serenely for a few moments, knowing Ober's remains were below, but his spirit was not. But I was honored to be there in his presence nevertheless, to celebrate his departed—yet living—spirit of love and

UR HERE CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 >>

To Our Readers

November marks *Little Village's* sixth month back from an unexpected hiatus, and we're happy to find we still have a welcome home in this media-saturated environment. In addition to celebrating the work born out of the passion of two of our most dedicated columnists, we wanted to take some space in this issue to welcome the new members of the *Little Village* team. Iowa City, we'd like to introduce you to Kent Williams, our new arts editor; Kelly Ostrem, our new editorial intern; and Cliff Thompson, online intern and web journalist extraordinaire. We're kinda going to take advantage of the fact that Kent knows everything about this town, and we're kinda going to take advantage of Kelly's freshness. Cliff will bring an enthusiasm to the work that will help us carry on through the harsh winter. But their primary job is to help us make sure we don't publish crappy content, and we encourage you to email them if you think something could have been done better.

For those of you wondering where our fearless leader, Alissa Van Winkle, has gone to, she's been temporarily plucked up by the university gods and will be rejoining our publishing efforts in the near future. We miss her, for sure, but she's got some personal goals to accomplish right now. And if you love someone, well, set them free, right?

The final team member to mention is Kelsey Fritz, who has been working to gather ads for the publication. Remember, if you appreciate an alternative voice in town (that's us) tell our advertisers next time you stop in. Unlike other publications in the area, *Little Village* does not have the financial support of a university or a major media corporation, and we just have to make do with a small staff. Kelsey has been reaching out to the local business community, and they're welcoming her back. So if you happen to meet her, please be nice! She's part of what's keeping this much-loved publication alive. *Little Village* has now been around as long as its predecessor *Icon* has, and we're hoping to keep it going.

— Melody Dworak & Andrew Sherburne

Inked Up

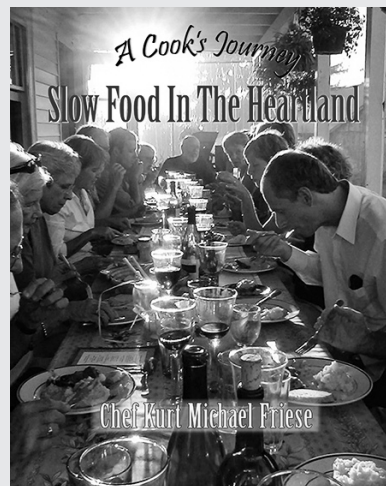
It's always a pleasure to revel in your children's success. Such is the joy here at Little Village that two of our regular writers have penned well-received books in the last two months. But, of course, while the feeling of pride is apt, to call them our children would be a gross disservice. They've been quite the opposite: guardians of our little alt magazine, helping to raise it from infancy. Their perfect bound tomes are the well-deserved culmination of their passion for our Midwestern communities and sensibilities. Bravo!

Kurt Frieese

A Cook's Journey: Slow Food in the Heartland

Ice Cube Press

Nearly a decade ago, Devotay chef Kurt Frieese founded Iowa's first Slow Food chapter. As readers of his *It's About the Food* column will know, the Slow Food movement has exploded in those ten short years. In his book, Frieese tills the rich soil of middle America for stories from the frontlines of our revolution against bad eating. Frieese spent two years traveling the Heartland in a search for those who preserved and promoted slow food ideals. In essays on local farmers, organic restaurateurs, sustainable brewers and fellow foodies, Frieese pairs story with practical recipes from his own kitchen. Since opening the doors to Iowa City's Devotay in 1996, Frieese has been a tireless promoter of a deliberate approach to food, from local growing to passionate preparation, now *A Cook's Journey* can do that job for him.

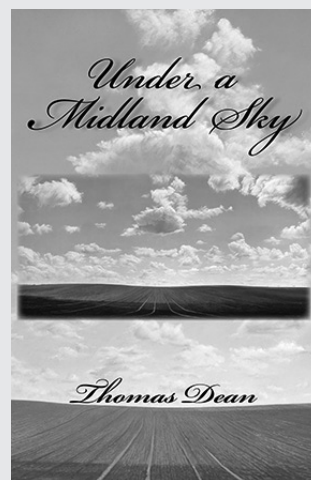


Thomas Dean

Under a Midland Sky

Ice Cube Press

In the life of Thomas Dean, the weather is an ever present companion. Writing his monthly column, U R Here, Dean often fuses his passions for meteorology, community and family. *Under a Midland Sky* is an expansion of those ideas. Here in the center of the country, our lives are set in front of harsh winters, swirling cyclones, crisp autumns and triple-digit summers. Dean examines his own personal story played out under these many skies revealing to the reader how place and environment shape who we are and ground us to a particular place. In a year when weather has defined Iowa and illuminated who we really are, Dean's reflections are all the more poignant, helping us understand our relationship with the place we call home.



lv

Three Days on One Chicken

(And Other Depression Folklore)

The economy is in shambles. Prices of everything are going up. K-Mart has brought back layaway plans. KFC is advertising that you can't make their seven-piece "meal deal" at home for as cheap as you can get it at their place. I beg to differ. As I recently told my children as they headed off to college, in these challenging economic times, it is prudent to fall back upon the wisdom of our elders.

A long time ago when I was a young man, I did an internship in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As any of you who have done any sort of internship know too well, there is not a lot of money in the internship game, least of all in the theater—my chosen profession of the moment. My wonderful mother, sensing that her baby boy might be starving in the desert, sent a few pages of sage advice on how to get by on practically nothing at all. She called it "Good Old Mom's Handy Survival Tips: Three Days on One Chicken and Other Depression Folklore," and she said if I were not completely satisfied, I may make them into paper airplanes. It became a family treasure.

Here, in condensed form and with my own comments thrown in, is what she taught me then.

Foods that are traditionally cheap, she said, were rice, potatoes, canned tomatoes, canned beans and pasta. Of the rice, she said to buy the biggest bag that looks clean and never buy anything in a box. Potatoes should be purchased 10 pounds at a time. She said, "Idahoese

As for the three days on one chicken thing, I'll give it to you word-for-word, with my comments added parenthetically.

Buy one whole frying chicken (preferably organic, from a local farmer) for every two servings desired, and do it when you have a couple of hours free. It is not necessary to start with a live chicken. Remove legs at the hip and refrigerate or freeze. Filet the breasts and refrigerate or freeze. Bang on the carcass(es) enough to make them fit in the biggest pot you have. Add a couple of onions, a stalk of celery and (fresh!) parsley. Add water to cover, and a little salt. Simmer, **DO NOT BOIL**, for 1 hour, skimming occasionally. Remove the bones from the soup and cool a few minutes. Remove usable meat, return the bones to the soup and refrigerate the meat. Simmer the bones for another hour, then strain the broth and throw away the junk. Taste the broth for salt, season appropriately and refrigerate at once.

One Day: Barbecue or fry the legs and thighs. Serve with Spanish rice and baked beans or coleslaw.

Another Day: Use filets for chicken Parmesan, Jennifer's Chicken, chicken nuggets, curry, and on and on. See Dinah Shore for details (that dates me, doesn't it?).

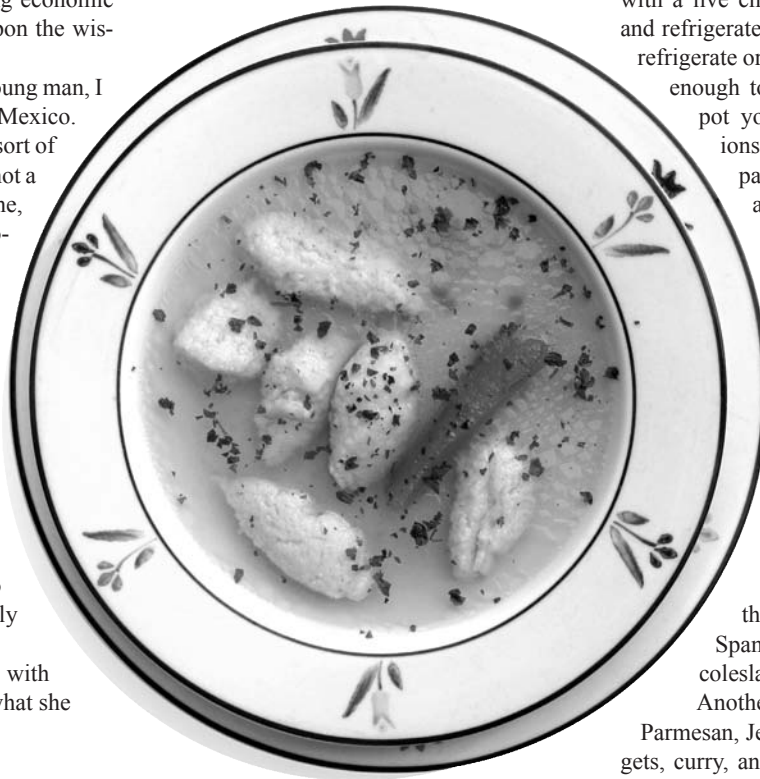
Yet another day: Use chicken bits and broth for chicken pie, chicken a la king, chicken 'n' biscuits, etc.

But before you use the broth: skim the fat carefully from the chilled broth and mix the fat with an equal amount of flour to use for thickening the gravy.

And yes, before you ask, there is a recipe. See the sidebar.

Three days. One chicken. **IV**

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. Comments may be directed to devotay@mchsi.com.



Jennifer's Chicken

This family favorite is very simple and very flavorful. It's been on my training table since I was a kid.

Dip the chicken filets in beaten egg, then in a mixture of breadcrumbs (your own, not the store-bought sawdust), parmesan (Parmigiano Reggiano—accept no substitutes) and (fresh!) parsley. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit on an ungreased pan for 20 minutes. Before serving, drizzle a mixture of melted butter and lemon juice over the filets.

are best for baking and reds are best for salad, but this is no time to be picky. Smell the bag before you buy it. The odor of a rotten potato is not subtle."

Mom thought it best to buy the smallest eggs; that the size difference does not justify the price disparity. I would certainly add that it is far better to get your eggs from a local farmer. The price is about the same and the eggs are much fresher and better tasting.

She went on to say that one should use coupons where possible, but only for things you were going to buy anyway. Additionally, it is important to realize that "quiche was not invented as a test of masculinity. It was invented to get rid of leftovers."

3 WISHES FOR OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

Illustrations by Kevin Cannon at www.kevincannon.org

Like the rest of the media elite, we here at Little Village are in the can for Obama. The reasons are myriad, but we'll spare you the details because you could find similar endorsements on the pages of most newspapers in America—an astounding 75 percent of them favor Obama as we go to press. Still, the press doesn't pick the winner (democracy, eh?) so we've prepared for either result. In the event that Mr. Obama does secure a victory, we've got some requests. Or, if the polls are turned upside down and Mr. McCain comes out on top, flip the page to hear what we would wish for him. Either way, if you're the one who's been hiding that magic genie lamp, November 5 would be a good time to use it, this country needs all the help it can get.

—Andrew Sherburne

3 WISHES FOR BARACK OBAMA

JUST DO IT

Modern presidential politics dictates that any contender lay out their policies and intentions on nearly every issue of the day. But, more often than not, those plans are unrealized. In 2008, all evidence points to a real possibility of united Democratic leadership in the oval office and Congress. If that happens, one can reasonably assume that the American public is ready to accept progressive ideas in areas like health care reform, tax structures, environmental policy and the war. Like He-Man before him, a President Obama will have the power. Let's hope he uses it wisely.



BIPARTISAN BUY-IN

On multiple occasions, the Obama team has hinted at a bipartisan cabinet. Here's hoping they follow through. It's little secret that an Obama selection will be welcomed outside of our borders. But here at home, the losing party will still count over 40 percent of the American public among its ranks. How to curry their favor at a pivotal point in our nation's history? Bring them into the fold. Obama's high-flying "one America" rhetoric has been denounced as fluff, but we believe America could come together if it had a leader willing to involve the other party.

KEEP THEM ENGAGED

Who? New voters. Well, all voters really, but especially the recent additions. Obama's opposition has reminded us often that oratory excellence can not substitute for action. We couldn't agree more. But, Obama's way with a crowd, his campaign's incredible ability to engage young people and the previously uninterested, and his message of, yes, hope have given the country a sense of ownership in his ascendancy. We've thrown our chips in with his hand and we're ready to do our part to play it through. America's good faith in its leaders has been squandered so many times before. Let's cross our fingers that things really do change this time around and participation in democracy doesn't end on November 4.

Let's face it, age is a factor. Another truth: Sarah Palin isn't ready for the big leagues. Her selection has been a drag on the ticket. And for good reason: She isn't knowledgeable on the issues of the day. If Sen. McCain is elected, it will be because Americans want him in the White House, not his running mate. As potentially our oldest first-term leader, already seven years past Social Security eligibility, good presidential health will play a major role in establishing confidence in our markets, in our domestic policy and in our foreign relations. We'd prefer a late 2008 retirement for Sen. McCain, but if not, let's hope its still a healthy one whenever it happens.

LONGEVITY

Nothing would validate a McCain presidency like success in the Middle East. Sen. McCain has staked much of his reputation on his belief that we can "win" in Iraq, but to this point, even defining victory has been out of his reach. Still, these are wishes and we're going big. Whatever winning it would surely mean the return of a majority of U.S. troops, a drastic reduction in expenditures and, presumably, a public relations boost in the eyes of the world at large. America needs to exit Iraq gracefully. If we can simultaneously claim a victory over "terror," all the better.

VICTORY IN IRAQ



Like the ivory-billed Woodpecker, the Maverick McCain has long been presumed extinct. But, if John McCain somehow overcomes his significant polling deficit, it will be because the moderate middle believes that somewhere inside McCain 2008 (the one that votes Bush 90 percent of the time) lies McCain 2000 (the one that votes McCain 100 percent of the time). Certainly, this country does not desire (or deserve) eight more years of radical conservatism. Here's wishing that the current McCain is just a Trojan Horse for that inner Maverick.

A RELAPSE OF MAVERICKNESS

JOHN MCCAIN

3 WISHES FOR



With *Aluminum Gold*, *Little Village* is launching a three-part series on what homelessness in Iowa City and Eastern Iowa looks like. We can't pledge to satisfy or break every stereotype, but we can pledge to give you stories you haven't heard before. We're beginning this series in October because it's already damn cold outside, and while the housing crisis hasn't been as dramatic in Iowa as it's been in California and Michigan, the extent of the economic disaster has yet to be seen. Times have never been more uncertain. Those who have found themselves homeless in Iowa might look and act different from us, but you never know what you might have in common with your neighbor, even if that neighbor doesn't have a roof to sleep under.

Bobby has a regular job—he washes dishes for a restaurant in Iowa City. He also has a 2001 Pontiac Grand Am, but is currently in the process of finding an engine that works. Bobby has another way to make money for an engine when he is not washing dishes. It doesn't involve taxes, long hours or even a boss, and most of the work is done outside. His workplace is located in the backyard of many renters' apartments. More precisely, it is located in the dumpsters.

Bobby, who is known around town as Bobby J, is one of the many people who scav-

“Some dudes are tripping. They come up to you and say, ‘what are you doing?’ Thinking they own the dumpsters, but they don’t.”

enge around the trash and dumpsters throughout Iowa City looking for soda and beer cans. These back-alley people refer to each other as “canners.” Most of them are homeless, or as one canner says “nomads,” and Iowa City is just a brief stop before moving on to better things—wherever that may be.

On the summer day I met Bobby in the alley between South Johnson and Dodge streets, he is an hour and a half into his usual rounds of scavenging through dumpsters. He sticks to his regular four alleys when canning to avoid confrontation with other canners.

“Some dudes are tripping. They come up to you and say, ‘what are you doing?’ Thinking

they own the dumpsters, but they don't, the dumpsters belong to the city,” said Bobby.

He recalls numerous instances when he has been confronted by other canners,

but for the most part he believes that the majority of canners respect each other. On good days, Bobby can make a substantial amount of money. When I met with him, he had already collected five trash bags worth of cans, three white 32-gallon bags and two large black heavy-duty bags.

“The white ones are worth \$5, and the black ones are worth \$10,” said Bobby. “That is how you know how much you made.” Bobby had made \$35 in an hour and a half. “Today is a good day for me because a bunch of students are moving out and throwing a bunch of stuff out. Some days are better than others. Some days you don't find anything,” said Bobby.

Bobby finds all kinds of things in the dumpsters. He has found everything from televisions and DVD players to clothes and furniture. But he says the most shocking thing he found was a quarter-ounce of marijuana inside a glass container outside Hotel Vetro, located in downtown Iowa City. “They must have forgot they had it and thrown it out,” said Bobby. “I gave it to my brother and he wouldn't stop hugging me.”

Down the road from South Johnson Street,

on Riverside, a canner who wants to be called the Missionary Man is busy depositing his cans at a Hy-Vee grocery store. The smell of old, stale beer and trash flood the nostrils in the small room crammed with people. The Missionary Man just got in from Michigan and his only financial income is from what he gets canning. He says they call him the Missionary Man because he is a missionary, traveling from town to town preaching the Word of God.

"I use whatever I get from canning on food, laundry and to travel," the Missionary Man said. He doesn't want to reveal his real name because he says that will only get in the way of his message: "Ask God for anything and He will give it to you."

For an example, he tells of a dry spell while canning and cans were hard to find.

"I asked God to help me out," said the Missionary Man. "I just wanted to find one can, and then a man came up to me and gave me a whole sack full of cans."

THE CITY

The official stance on the canners and the homeless in Iowa City is hard to get a clear answer to. According to a Housing and Homeless Needs assessment for Iowa City many homeless people come to Iowa City because of the city's reputation of social services, expectation of higher wages, the hospitals and the university in general. But as the assessment says, "many persons encounter the realities of life in a university town. Iowa City has the highest housing costs as a percentage of income of any community in the state; homeless persons have to compete with students for the limited amount of housing that is relatively affordable."

In addition to high housing costs, the Iowa City job market leaves something to be desired, where low-paying, no-benefit, and tem-



Moving swiftly from one large green trash bin to another, Al covered all of Krause Plaza in front of Kinnick Stadium. He hit four of the trash cans in a minute, pulling out various recyclables, dumping out any remaining liquids and putting them in the bag he was carrying.

He moved over to a large green dumpster leading into the stadium. This is his territory, and other canners respect it. Sitting next to the dumpster, a few large black plastic bags held the loot he had already collected.

"It's basically my job," he said. "I think it's nice that they let us do it."

Al is a canning regular in Iowa City. During the week he can be found downtown, but on a football Saturday he comes to the stadium to collect the aluminum and glass discards of inebriated and spirited Hawkeye tailgaters.

He's in good company too. Football brings more than just the regulars to the business. The influx of recyclables brings out the football-only canners.

One such canner, Kitty, sat in her canning territory on Melrose Avenue in a folding chair with an open black plastic bag at her feet. People dropped their cans in as they passed. This is Kitty's first time, and she's going to do it again.

"Why not?" She commented. "I just sit here and people drop them in."

She also guarded the bags for the canner who she was with, a man who comes out for every game. Kitty said he drives away with more than \$100 in cans each game.

Al is limited to what he can carry. Without a car, he walks with all his bags to where he deposits them. He makes \$50 to \$60 each game.

"I make enough to get me through the week," he said. "It's kind of a dirty job, but I can wash up."

And without any hesitation, he balanced his body on the edge of the dumpster digging for the aluminum gold as the fans in black and gold passed by, tossing their cans and bottles in on their way to the stadium.

- Kelly Ostrem

Checking Fares?

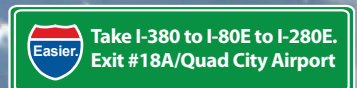
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Easier.



porary jobs are plentiful, but the competition for those jobs is high.

People with little to no income can find help in the area's social services if they have patience. "Waiting lists for many of the community's services can mean weeks of waiting for housing or medical assistance," the assessment continues. "The result is that many individuals and families in this group often arrive in Iowa City jobless, homeless, and often needing medical care."

The police refer to the homeless in the city as transients because most of them are always on the move. Happily, the department has never received any complaints of any wrongdoing from canner collecting cans.

One worker for an Iowa City maintenance company, who asked to remain nameless so as not to reflect his company's policy, says he doesn't mind when the canners scavenge through the dumpster. The only problem he has ever encountered with the canners is when they don't clean up after themselves. Some canners will dig through the dumpsters, pull a garbage bag, scavenge through it and then leave what they don't want on the street. The worker says he has more problems when transients try to sleep inside apartment buildings and he has to kick them out.

"We do from time to time get calls of service for transients trespassing," said Iowa City Lt. Doug Hart. "Most of these come in the winter when it is cold and they are looking for shelter in an apartment building with heat in the hallways."

FINDING WARMTH

In Iowa City, as in most northern cities, the biggest danger to the homeless is the cold winter weather.

Each night 29 homeless people can stay at Johnson County's only community shelter, Shelter House, located on 331 North Gilbert Street. Shelter House turns an average of 10 people away each night, and can not expand until a zoning lawsuit in a different neighborhood is settled.

Shelter House does not allow intoxicated individuals to stay the night, a rule that yields mixed results.

"Every night a homeless person will come in and complain that 'the hotel' will not let them stay," said Liquor Downtown employee Morgan McHugh.

"The hotel" is what many of the homeless call Shelter House. McHugh said a homeless man called Red faked a heart attack in order to



The canners at Hy-Vee come from all walks of life.

stay at the hospital because he was inebriated and Shelter House wouldn't let him stay. She says she gets to know many homeless people in the area.

"I see Red almost everyday I work. He is crazy and would fake a heart attack, but for the most part, harmless. Very few of them scare me," said McHugh.

But one scary encounter did occur one late

Shelter House turns an average of 10 people away each night.

night, when a young homeless man came in and began making suicidal threats. McHugh recalled the man saying, "My life is pointless," and "My life is only worth five bucks." McHugh expects things like this to happen every so often, she said, when working late-night hours at a liquor store.

Depression is common among the nation's homeless and in Iowa City the factors contributing to homelessness often follow national trends, including mental disabilities, substance abuse, domestic abuse and violence, job loss, and medical, financial or social predicaments that they can not recover from, according to the assessment.

While the solution to homelessness may lie in better access to mental health and housing

services, waiting for the cure isn't an option for many. In the meantime, a full bag of cans and a warm bed are welcome relief from the streets.

THE COMMUNITY

For the most part, canners have become an ordinary part of life for many Iowa City residents. Many of us may pass by them regularly without even noticing, but some residents get to know the canners scavenging through their trash.

"I know the names of the two guys who usually are around looking for cans," said Tom Chivers, a UI student. "I see them every couple of days and small talk. They're really nice people."

Chivers believes the canners give Iowa City a kind of big city feeling, that he never felt while living his childhood in a small western Iowa town.

Others have a more difficult time relating to the canners. Chiver's roommate, Jared Rodriguez, tells of the time when he opened the back door of his house leaving for work when a homeless man was ready to open the same door on the opposite side.

"It scared the shit out of me," said Rodriguez. "He said he was going to knock, but I know he was going to just come in."

Another UI Student, Dan Meenan, had a similar instance happen to him.

"It is cool whenever they stay at the dumpsters, but one time a homeless man walked into my house and took all the cans we had in our kitchen," said Meenan, a UI senior. Meenan

"I saw him looking through the dumpster one day, and I thought that I could help out; so from then on, I just threw all my cans in a garbage bag and give it to him."

says he confronted the canner and asked him what he was doing, but in the end let him keep the cans.

Crystal Rueck goes as far as sacking her cans up and giving them to a canner who often sleeps outside by her dumpster.

"I saw him looking through the dumpster one day, and I thought that I could help out; so from then on, I just threw all my cans in a garbage bag and give it to him," said Rueck. "That's what I would want people to do if I were him."

The emotions conjured up from people when they talk about the homeless ranges from sympathy to anger, but most realize that the homeless situation is a part of Iowa City that will probably never go away.

"It is sad to see sometimes, and I will help if I can, but there is really not a lot I can do," said Chivers.

Back at the Riverfront Hy-Vee, three University of Iowa students are busy depositing the cans that have been piling up in their basement all year long, when the Missionary Man pulls up on his worn out bicycle with four large black trash bags dangling from the side.

The students make room for the Missionary Man to count his cans in the cramped confines of the recycling center. As he begins emptying a days worth of work into the automated can counters, the three students tell him that he can have the rest of their cans because they are tired of doing it.

"See," he says, "all you have to have is faith, and good things will happen to you." **lv**

Dan Watson is a journalism and English student at The University of Iowa. Currently he's enjoying living in downtown Iowa City and is excited to enter the worst economic environment since the Great Depression after he graduates in May.



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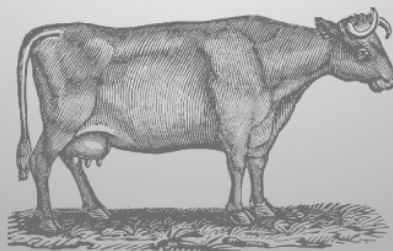
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The Gift of Yarn

Knitting and crocheting have undergone a startling social transformation in the last decade. No longer an outdated craft your grandmother taught you one rainy afternoon, it's now the new way to express your creative side.

My personal conversion probably had something to do with the fact that my long-time boyfriend's family switched to handmade Christmas gifts a couple years ago. And while, yes, it is nerve-racking and slightly competitive, there's nothing better than giving a beautiful handmade object and having the recipient know how much thought and effort you put into it. Now that I've found knitting, a hobby that directly translates into personalized, one-of-a-kind gifts, the pressure's off!

And the great thing about knitting is that it's never too late to start. (I was giving away knitted gifts my first Christmas as a knitter.) And once you've mastered dishcloths and scarves (or snakes as my boyfriend likes to call them, as in "How long's your snake now?"), you can move on to more advanced projects like blankets, shawls and sweaters. I'm somewhere in between these two levels myself and have a great big to-do list for this year's gifts. At the



printing of this article, we have approximately 50 shopping/crafting days until Christmas. Think about what you could accomplish in that time.

Eco-friendly Fibers

While most people probably don't associate knitting with being "green," it certainly appeals to the core values of the environmental movement. Buying a skein of yarn feels somehow innocent when compared to purchasing a machine-knitted scarf made in China. (I admit that's what the tag reads on the scarf I'm wearing right now, and I've been feeling guilty about it all day.)

Here are other worthwhile projects to consider:

The Preemie Project: The University of Iowa Children's Hospital accepts booties, bonnets and hat, blankets and bereavement items for its tiny patients. www.thepreemieproject.com

Warm Woolies: Stories like this one really tug at your heart strings. The organization started back in 2002 with two friends. One of them adopted two orphans from Russia. The other knitted some warm socks and sweaters to send to the orphanage on her behalf. The organization has steadily grown and now distributes over 7,000 pieces a year to children in Eastern Europe and Mongolia, as well as Native American reservations in the United States. www.warmwoolies.org

* Author's note:

everything in this article can be said for crocheting as well. Crocheting is by no means inferior to knitting. However, since I don't know how to crochet yet, this article is understandably biased toward my current yarn-based obsession.

Just like getting produce from the farm-to-market, you can also purchase local yarn. Brands such as Lamb Lane, Lone Tree Wools and Savannah Breeze are all sheered, dyed and/or spun here in Iowa. You can usually get these products at our local yarn stores, or you can contact the sellers directly through websites like Localharvest.org.

In fact, I had a chance to visit the Savannah Breeze Alpaca Farm outside Vinton, and I must say I found the whole experience completely charming. All of their yarns are kept their natural color and named after the alpacas. I bought two skeins of their lovely caramel Ana Lucia yarn and was able to watch her grazing in the corral just ten feet away! Alpaca's are just adorable.

Find Your Support Group

Whether you want to share your knitting addiction or need a guru to guide you through the knits and purls of your first project, the Iowa City area has you covered. The three local yarn stores—Knit Shoppe, Home Ec. Workshop and Crazy Girl Yarn Shop—all have resident experts ready to swoop in and come to your rescue or inspire you with fantastic patterns.

Find Your Cause

It seems like more and more organizations are cropping up worldwide as the internet expands the limits of charity knitting. A new knitting group in Iowa City called Knitting for Peace has plans to contribute to these global initiatives. Starting in November, members will meet at Home Ec. Workshop and learn the basics of knitting. As everyone gains confidence, the group's founder, Lauren, hopes to complete projects from the Knitting for Peace book, which includes projects such as teddy bears for children in Africa (The Mother Bear Project) and blankets for needy children in the United States (Project Linus). Knitters of all skill levels are welcome, and anyone interested in joining should check out the Home Ec. calendar for more information.

Mercy Iowa City: This local hospital also accepts hats for its newborns through the hospital's volunteer program and supplies free yarn and patterns. www.mercy.org

The Snuggles Project: Hugs for Homeless Animals snuggles provides security blankets for shelter animals that are often kept in cold metal cages. While it may sound strange, knitting for animals is a great way to learn how to knit. The yarn is generally cheaper, the patterns are simpler and animals won't judge your work. www.snugglesproject.com

Knitted Nests: Virginia Beach wildlife rehabilitators use knitted nests to shelter very young wildlife (mostly birds, rabbits and squirrels). www.vbspawildlife.com

Local Stores:**Crazy Girl Yarn Shop**

1150 5th Street, Suite 152, Coralville
319-341-YARN
www.crazygirlyarnshop.com

Home Ec. Workshop

207 N. Linn Street, Iowa City
319-337-4775
www.homeecworkshop.com

The Knitting Shoppe

2141 Muscatine Avenue, Iowa City
319-337-4920

Both Home Ec. Workshop and Crazy Girl offer classes that will walk you through how to make the perfect sweater or master the art of turning a sock heel.

And in the online realm, Ravelry.com is a growing online community of nearly 200,000 knitters. The site features pattern sharing, project blogs, picture uploading (to show off your work) and marketplace for buying yarn and knitting supplies. Knitty.com is also a great place to score free patterns.

A group of female co-workers actually taught me to knit. I've heard of several on-campus groups as well, like math majors who meet to knit at a local coffee house or a Friday afternoon group that meets in the Health Sciences Building. Crazy Girl Yarn Shop has a BYOB Knit-n-Wine night. Home Ec. Workshop has a Saturday breakfast for knitters and hosts an informal group of knitters, called the Knit Wits, every Sunday afternoon.

Wherever circle you end up in, knitting is a very rewarding social activity. It's a refreshing break from the competitive world to spend time with women of all ages (who actually like each other), working towards the same goals and treating one another with respect. With office politics these days, such an environment is certainly something to be treasured.

Charity Knitting

As has happened for generations, some of these knitting groups eventually start looking outward and find ways to contribute to society. That's what happened to the employees at Iowa City's Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center.

It all started when Maggie, the supervising RN, started teaching her co-workers, two phlebotomy technicians, how to knit in their down time at the center. Once they started getting the hang of it, one of them suggested that they offer their projects to a local charity.

"It's our way of giving back to the community," says Maggie. "With help from about 10 of our blood donors, we gave 44 hats, 3 scarves and one baby afghan to the Johnson County Crisis Center this fall."

Both experienced knitters and beginners can contribute to causes like this one. It's one of the few ways to volunteer from the comfort of your own home or favorite hangout. Long-time knitters can put their leftover yarn stash to good use. Plus, some stores offer discounts on yarn being used for charity projects, and many organizations can supply you with the yarn and patterns you need to participate. **lv**

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.

Eye Witness: Daniel Heyman's Portraits of Iraqi Torture Victims

November 1, 2008 - January 4, 2009
Hanson Family Humanities Gallery
Old Capitol Museum, University of Iowa



Daniel Heyman, *Did You Ever See This? Did This Happen to You?*, 2008, gouache on Nishinoushi paper.

Presented by the University of Iowa Museum of Art in collaboration with the Old Capitol Museum, the UI Center for Human Rights, the UI College of Law, and the UI School of Art and Art History. Organized by UIMA Chief Curator Kathleen A. Edwards.

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THE SIT-DOWN with

Laurel Snyder

"You have to write the book that wants to be written. And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then you write it for children."

—Madeleine L'Engle

Laurel Snyder earned her master of fine arts in poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 2000. She is the author of two recently released children's books—*Inside the Slidy Diner*, a picture book loosely based on the Hamburg Inn, and her debut novel *Up and Down the Scratchy Mountains*. Here, she shares her thoughts on writing, greasy spoons, and why Iowa City is magically delicious.

Little Village: Let's start with *Slidy Diner*. It's not your average picture book. Tell us about it.

Laurel Snyder: *Slidy Diner* is one of those books that may seem creepy to an adult, but it's not to children. A little girl named Edie takes a friend on a tour of this eerie hole in the wall, where the floors slant and tables tilt and sticky buns roll onto the floor—only to be swept up

"Iowa City [is] a community that feeds the soul. It truly is one of the country's best-kept secrets."

by proprietress Ethelmae, who smells like rotten grill grease, and served again to customers. But it's also a place of dark blue secrets, silver whispers and magic trapdoors. You wonder: are these things real or are they figments of Edie's imagination? The counter, the vibe, the crunchiness—I pictured the Hamburg when I wrote it. I worked at the Hamburg during my time at the Workshop, and, frankly, that place kept me sane. I think the macabre nature of *Slidy Diner* represents my emotional state at the time. I was lost and trying to figure things out. *Slidy Diner* actually started out as a prose

poem, but morphed into a picture book. I thought about how children inhabit different corners—they hide under tables and in closets and adults don't often go down there and see what that world looks like. I always wanted to be one of those kids like Meg Panther (Hamburg owner Dave Panther's daughter) who grew up behind the counter. I think some adults may be puzzled by the darkness of the book, but things that scare us don't often scare children and that's the beauty of children. I couldn't have asked for a better illustrator. Jaime Zollars really brings this book to life, just as I imagined it.

LV: And your novel?

LS: This is a story about two friends, Wynston and Lucy, on an adventure. They live in the Bewilderness and they are best friends. Wynston is a prince and Lucy is a milkmaid. Wynston's father doesn't think Lucy will make a suitable wife for his son, so he orders Wynston to spend less time with Lucy and more time finding a "real" princess. Lucy is hurt and seeks comfort in learning the truth about her long-lost mother. Her quest leads her and her friends to the Mountains, where she encounters quirky happenings. Overall, without giving too much away about the story, I think there are a couple lessons to take away from this book. One, it's not a good idea to keep secrets because the emotional weight of that can cause problems. Also, there are rules in life and you have to find a way to live within those rules. However, there's often wiggle room. In other words, rules are not made to be broken. But they can sometimes be bent.



Iowa Writers' Workshop product Laurel Snyder recently dropped two new children's books.

LV: When did you first decide to become a writer?

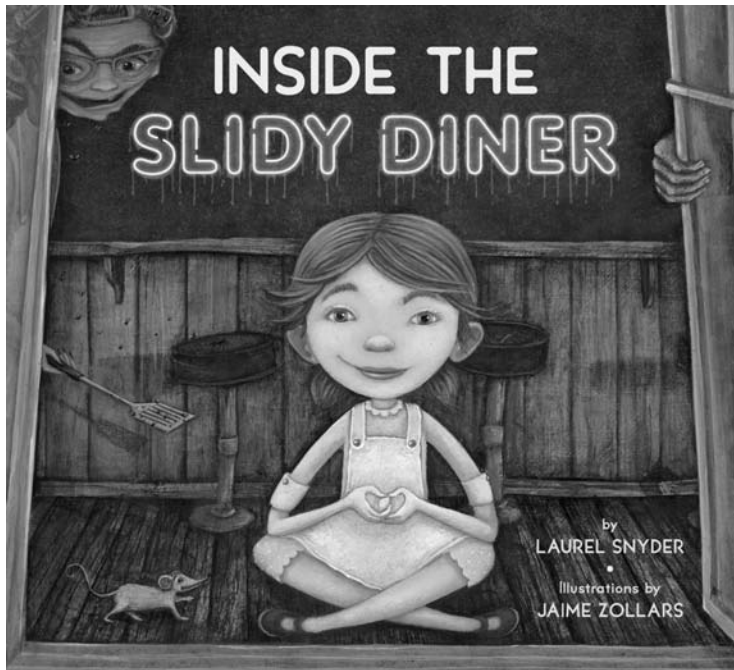
LS: In elementary school, my best friend Susan and I hatched a spectacular plan. We did all sorts of things together and one of the very best things was playing make-believe. Sometimes, we would jot down our poems and stories—stories about fairies and unicorns—then we'd bind them together like books. We decided we should sell these books and make loads of money. We would be rich and famous and buy a big mansion in Baltimore (where I grew up) and adopt all the orphans and stray cats and dogs in the entire city. So, that's where it all started for me. I started writing poetry more seriously in high school and eventually found my way to the Workshop. Susan's a doctor now. Neither one of us owns a mansion, but we both feel very lucky.

LV: What is it about the Hamburg that speaks to you?

LS: When I was a student here, the Hamburg functioned as a family for me. Back then, we

were a diverse family of misfits: the writers, the musicians, artists on the fringes. Older, younger, in school and out, we all had the

that feeds the soul. It truly is one of the country's best-kept secrets.



Partly inspired by the Hamburg Inn No. 2, *Inside the Slidy Diner* is a richly illustrated ode to kids' fascination with gross. Now available in hardcover.

Hamburg in common. We worked together, we partied together. We hung at the Mill, the Sanctuary, and Gabe's. I also spent a lot of time in the children's section of the library. I gained ambition and skill from the Workshop; at the Hamburg, I received comfort. It was a safe place to go where I found acceptance in being the slacker-girl who wanted to sit around, pretend to know more than she really did, read poetry, drink whiskey, and talk to smart people. I got exactly what I needed from both sides. It's funny, people everywhere know about the Hamburg. I've even spotted someone wearing one of those funky T-shirts in Italy. If my husband and I ever move back to Iowa City, which I'd love to do, it would be wonderful to take a morning shift and keep a foot in that world.

LV: What do you love about Iowa City?

LS: It's such a special oasis with its own little Galapagos habitat. It's a college town in the middle of a cornfield, several hours from the nearest city, yet brimming with culture. When I think about Iowa City, my heart feels full. I think about Dave Moore, the Foxhead, George's, Sandy Dyas, Pieta Brown. I think about UAY and all the good work going on there. All these facets come together to function in ways that make Iowa City a community

kids are "unplugged," they don't have cell phones or Google. They represent a time when parents let their children roam free. They find a wall in the middle of a cornfield and this wall can become any wall in the world, if they wish. Through this wall, they can visit pirates, Camelot, Coney Island. I also have another book in the works, *Penny Dreadful*, a little girl from a big city who ends up in a small town full of very strange characters. I love stories that take place in settings not quite like ours.

LV: What else should we know about you?

LS: Well, above all else, I'm a mother. I have two boys, Mose and Lewis. I feel lucky to work from home and write in my pajamas. The best thing I try to do for my children is teach them not to live a life that is motivated by fear. I love black licorice. **lv**

You can read more about Laurel Snyder and her work at www.laurelsnyder.com

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.

>> **UR HERE FROM PAGE 4**

dedication to a beautiful world of natural wonders.

As you read this, a vote will take place in a few days or will have recently passed. Johnson County residents are making their voices heard on whether or not to pass a referendum to ensure a legacy of natural wonders for our



Ernest Oberholtzer (right) with dog Skippy and Billy Maggie (left) holding cabbage.

local children into the future. As boys like Aldo Leopold and Ernest Oberholtzer grew into young men, they had the natural wonders of their Iowa home to inspire their spirits and minds, providing them a magnificent ground from which to accomplish great things on behalf of nature. Richard Louv in his recent book *Last Child in the Woods* urges us to save our children from what he calls "nature-deficit disorder." What would our world be like if Aldo and Ober had suffered from no connection with nature? Our world would be infinitely poorer in spirit and beauty.

I hope you do your part to ensure our children's—and ultimately our world's—natural heritage in the voting booth, if it's not too late. If we have failed, our efforts to pass along the integrity and beauty of nature must redouble. If we have succeeded, we should celebrate (but never rest). And as we move forward into creating a better world, we should raise the memories of two amazing Iowans—Aldo Leopold and Ernest Oberholtzer—into the consciousness of all our state's citizens. **lv**

Thomas Dean and his family love visiting the Minnesota North Woods. It goes without saying that he has never paddled a canoe for 3,000 miles

TURN OFF YOUR RADIO

Copyright infringement, billboard “alteration,” an evil secret society known as the Illuminati, country music legend Tammy Wynette, the incineration of £1,000,000 in cash, and—most recently—No Music Day. These odd, interconnected events were engineered by Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty, an anarchic British pop duo who used several pseudonyms, including their most well known moniker, the KLF. They were also pranksters and provocateurs.

In 1992, for instance, when the KLF were voted “Best British Group” at the Brit Awards, they bit the hand that fed it. Hard. During the awards ceremony, the duo performed an ear-bleeding rendition of “3 A.M. Eternal” with the grindcore metal group Extreme Noise Terror (an accurately descriptive band name, I might add). As they pummeled the audience with deafening decibels and distortion, Drummond fired on the audience with a machine gun filled with blanks. “The KLF have now left the music industry,” went the post-performance intercom announcement.

Not long after, they took the remaining loot they earned as pop stars (about £1,000,000) and burned it. It was the end of the KLF, but the beginning of several spin-off satires and commentaries, including Bill Drummond’s latest experiment, No Music Day. In the first decade of the new millennium, he produced a series of broadsides that used a simple-but-bold black, white and red design scheme—which he posted in public spaces and on the Internet.

All recorded music has run its course. It has been consumed, traded, downloaded, understood, heard before, sampled, learned,

revived, judged and found wanting. Dispense with all previous forms of music and music-making and start again. Year Zero now.

In many ways, this statement was the crystallized climax (or anti-climax) of Drummond’s “career” in the music industry. Drummond recalls that, “when Napster first hit the World Wide Web, I thought it was the best thing that had happened in the music business for the last 110 years.” With the advent of file-sharing networks, anyone with a computer and Internet connection could listen to virtually anything in the history of recorded music—with just one click of the mouse. He saw this as a fantastic turn of events, great for people who love music, great for music itself. But despite Drummond’s delight in seeing the century-old music business crumble due to changing technologies and the industry’s own unchecked greed, music’s newfound accessibility left him with an empty feeling.

“Recorded music was great, but it is over,” Drummond says. “Music has so much more to offer than something to block out reality of our bus ride to work or the pain of jogging in the park.”

He maintains that the promiscuous availability of music has fundamentally changed our relationship with music, especially because accessing the history of recorded music is as easy as turning on a tap. This has resulted

in a perpetual, monotonous background hum that has the effect of canceling out the experience of taking in music.

“After years of believing in the democratization of cheap mass produced art,” Drummond tells me, “I have come to—or at least since I got myself an iPod—the opinion

NOTICE

NO MUSIC DAY: 21st NOVEMBER

ON NO MUSIC DAY:
 NO HYMNS WILL BE SUNG.
 NO RECORDS WILL BE PLAYED ON THE RADIO.
 IPODS WILL BE LEFT AT HOME.
 ROCK BANDS WILL NOT ROCK.
 CONDUCTORS WILL NOT TAKE THE PODIUM.
 DECKS WILL NOT SPIN.
 THE NEEDLE WILL NOT DROP.
 THE PIANO LID WILL NOT BE LIFTED.
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 JINGLES WILL NOT JANGLE.
 MILKMEN WILL NOT WHISTLE.
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 RECORDING STUDIOS WILL NOT ROLL.
 MCS WILL NOT PASS THE MIC.
 BRASS BANDS PRACTICE WILL BE POSTPONED.
 THE STRINGS WILL NOT SERENADE.
 PLECTRUMS WILL NOT PLUCK.
 RECORD SHOPS WILL BE CLOSED ALL DAY.
 AND YOU WILL NOT TAKE PART IN ANY SORT OF MUSIC MAKING OR LISTENING WHATSOEVER.

NO MUSIC DAY EXISTS FOR VARIOUS REASONS. YOU MAY HAVE ONE

that it no longer works.”

Enter No Music Day, a holiday of sorts established in 2005 by Bill Drummond, which he refers to as “an aspiration, an idea, an impossible dream, a nightmare.” Drummond chose to observe it on November 21 because it immediately precedes St. Cecilia’s Day, the



Photo by Toby Barnes

Bill Drummond promoting his live choir The 17.

patron saint of music. In one of his posters, Drummond pronounced, in part:

ON NO MUSIC DAY:
 NO HYMNS WILL BE SUNG.
 NO RECORDS WILL BE PLAYED ON THE RADIO.
 IPODS WILL BE LEFT AT HOME.
 ROCK BANDS WILL NOT ROCK...
 MCS WILL NOT PASS THE MIC.
 BRASS BANDS PRACTICE WILL BE POSTPONED...
 RECORD SHOPS WILL BE CLOSED ALL DAY.
 AND YOU WILL NOT TAKE PART IN ANY SORT OF MUSIC MAKING OR LISTENING WHATSOEVER.
 NO MUSIC DAY EXISTS FOR VARIOUS REASONS, YOU MAY HAVE ONE

Such statements could have been overlooked as the raving lunacy of an ex-pop star, but it struck a chord, so to speak. In 2007, the BBC embraced the idea, and Radio Scotland completely avoided playing music for a full 24 hours that November 21. The regular music used in Good Morning Scotland, for instance, was replaced by other sounds, and BBC News reported that other programs that typically featured music were substituted with “discussions, interviews and a chance to contemplate a world without music.”

However, it’s not as if Drummond wishes recorded music never existed—or at least ceased to exist after Thomas Edison, the inventor of the phonograph, tested his new invention in 1877 by recording himself singing “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” For him, recorded music was a good thing, but its time as a living medium has passed.

“Some come to an abrupt ending like the silent film, irrelevant overnight with the coming

of the talkies,” Drummond says. “Others take decades to fade and die. Still others live on in evening class lessons, carried out by those in need of a hobby.”

In the history of music, sound recording isn’t really much more than a blip on the radar, a microscopic dot on a very, very long timeline.

“Recorded music was great, but it is over.”

Given that, it seems strange that recorded music has become so naturalized and hegemonic, especially when there are so many other ways to make and listen to songs, sounds, and noise. Because of the excessive ubiquity of sound recordings today, Bill Drummond feels that people will begin wanting something different out of music—hence his command to “dispense with all previous forms of music and music-making and begin again.”

It’s a radical gesture, though not at all shocking coming from a man who has spent most of his adult life contemplating the art and business of popular music.

“I believe that the creative and forward looking music makers of the 21st century will not want to make music that can be listened to wherever, whenever, while doing almost whatever,” Drummond concludes. “They will want to make music that is about time, place, occasion, and not something that you can download and skip over on your iPod.” **lv**

Kembrew McLeod lives, works, and plays in Iowa City. He is still waiting for his jetpack to arrive from the future.

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Vowell Language

Writer and social commentator Sarah Vowell, known for her contributions to public radio's "This American Life," has made good use of her droll sense of humor and distinctive voice in the past.

She's managed to take subjects as difficult as the Trail of Tears and presidential assassinations (the subject of her *New York Times* best-seller, *Assassination Vacation*) and make them somehow approachable, poignant, and relevant. Whether in print or over the airwaves, she adds spice to history with dashes of her personal experiences and wit.

Not so much in her new book, *The Wordy Shipmates*.

In this blending of history, memoir and social commentary, Vowell tackles another tough subject: Puritans.

Vowell seems ultra-aware of her subjects' lack of sexiness. She warns early on, "Readers who squirm at microscopic theological differences might be unsuited to read a book about 17th century Christians."

I don't understand this apologetic tone. This is not because I have a deep-rooted passion for Puritans. Nope. I went into this read knowing basically what any grade-school child knows about the Puritans, if not less (Thanksgiving! Salem witch trials!).

Rather, it's because there are parts of the book where I am convinced that Puritans are fascinating. In fact, for the first 50 pages or so of *The Wordy Shipmates*, I was riveted by Vowell's investigations into Puritan life, which range from serious questions about the Puritan legacy in America, to personal revelations (after 9/11, Vowell found comfort in the words of Puritan Governor John Winthrop), to the just plain silly (at one point, Vowell compares the 17th century Puritan ministers to pop stars).

But the introduction just seemed to go on... and on...and on. The book is short—just un-

Author Sarah Vowell recently visited Iowa City to promote her new book, *The Wordy Shipmates*.



der 250 pages—with no chapter divisions, creating a roving narrative that left me continually waiting for the climax.

There is one recurring theme in the book: Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor John Winthrop's sermon "A Model of

Christian Charity," which contains the "as a city on a hill" phrase, famously appropriated by President Ronald Reagan. Winthrop's teachings, Vowell explains, are America's real inheritance from the Puritans—not the sexual repression and stodginess that so many assume is their legacy.

The city-on-a-hill mindset has led to some scary actions throughout American history, and Vowell's at her best when exploring them. For example: "As I write this, the United States of America is still a city on a hill; and it's still shining—because we never turn off the lights in our torture prisons. That's how we carry out the sleep deprivation."

But such moments of insight and dry humor just make the book's overall failure to hang together more frustrating. Vowell too often wan-

ders away from the heart of her argument. At one point, she digs extensively into the Pequot Indian War. I think the goal of this passage was to give an example of the "city on a hill" philosophy gone wrong, but it reads more like a 20-page non sequitur—when at this point, can you believe that I really just wanted to hear more about Puritan spiritual squabbling?

Can you believe that I really just wanted to hear more about Puritan spiritual squabbling?



Maybe, I thought, it's Vowell's actual voice that I'm missing when reading her book. So I went to her "Live From Prairie Lights" reading on Oct. 24 hoping to make a connection. This special edition of the storied program, which

has been a staple of public radio in Iowa for more than 15 years, was broadcast from the Englert Theatre. Unusually, it was a ticketed event, made more unusual only the purchase of the book could get you two tickets.

Vowell certainly saw a sales boost, because the Englert was packed—nearly 500 people filled the lower level and overflowed into the balcony. The audience's excitement was palpable: As Vowell strode purposefully out onto the stage, their extended applause neared the point of discomfort.

I'm willing to bet that many of those 500 people left this reading feeling just as disappointed as I did.

I'd love to be able to tell you that I was disappointed because the book still didn't hit home, even when delivered in Vowell's sardonic nasal soprano. But I can't. Because Vowell literally read seven paragraphs from her book the entire evening.

Vowell has a tendency to meander in her answers, which can be funny—or it can be boring and leave no time for actual reading. Even Vowell recognized she was not quite hitting the mark as she responded to long-time "Live

from Prairie Lights" host Julie Englander's first question, which asked her to sum up the entire book—characters, situation, how she got interested in the subject. Everything. "In the book—oh, yeah, the book, where I have time to think about I'm saying—it's fascinating," Vowell said.

**At the reading as
in the book,
the good moments
were all too rare.**



Meandering answers also require astute follow-up questions, something Englander did not seem able to produce. She jumped from topic to topic with stilted or no transitions. Vowell remarked: "On the radio show I work on, to make transitions when there are none, we play music."

Englander almost seemed star-struck, flubbing her words and creating awkward silences—the worst of which occurred when she asked Vowell to read a passage neither of them could find—and even once saying, "Sarah Vowell, you are wonderful." I cringed in sympathetic embarrassment.

Don't get me wrong. There's no doubt that Vowell can be funny, and she certainly got some laughs that night, such as when she claimed the Massachusetts Bay Pilgrims to be her Pilgrims, or when she told an audience member that his question was "a very Grant Wood kind of way to ask about sex."

But overall, at the reading as in the book, the good moments were all too rare. And we should expect more from a talent as esteemed as Vowell and a radio program as storied as "Live from Prairie Lights." **IV**

Maggie Anderson is an Iowa native who has lived and worked in Iowa City for the past five years. She is currently the Marketing and Media Manager for The University of Iowa Museum of Art.



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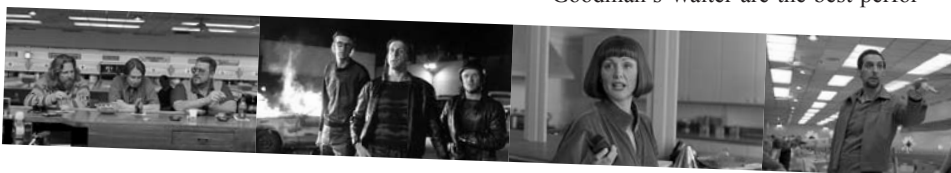
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In the 10 years since the release of *The Big Lebowski*, a few things happened. Cell phones overtook our public spaces. The internet colonized our private time. George W. Bush won once in the popular vote and twice in the electoral college. On a single morning, terrorists brought down the twin towers, destroyed part of the Pentagon, and killed thousands of innocent people. We fought—and continue to fight—two wars, one of which on grounds that proved false. Our country openly acknowledged participating in torture. The levees in New Orleans broke. Our economy collapsed. Free-marketers socialized a large segment of it. So, has the Dude abided?

The Dude, of course, refers to the great antihero of the 1990s: as he himself is reminded after having his head stuffed into the toilet by one of Jackie Treehorn's thugs, "You're name's Lebowski, Lebowski." Or, as he says to the other, bigger Lebowski, "His Dudeness, Duder, or El Duderino, if, you know, you're not into the whole brevity thing." We first see him on screen strolling through a supermarket to write a 69-cent check for half-and-half in order to make his signature White Russian. He smokes pot. He likes CCR. He bowls. He doesn't pay his rent. But who really is the Dude?

Nietzsche would recognize him as "the last man," the spiritual end-point of democracy: a man lacking significant values, incapable of creating them, and yet vaguely satisfied with his tranquilized existence. All that remains of his withered aesthetic sense is his conviction that a peed-on rug "really tied the room to-



gether." His sense of honor has faded since his days of membership in the Seattle Seven and authorship of "the original Port Huron Statement—not the compromised second draft." His motivation in life, beyond bowling and pot, is largely borrowed from Walter Sobchek, a kind of parody of Nietzsche's Übermensch: "Say what you want about the tenets of National Socialism, Dude: at least it was an ethos," he declares in disgust about a band of roving nihilists.

Critics have often grumbled that the movies of the Coen brothers are nihilistic. That

complaint is kind of right, provided we realize it is an ethical—and not an aesthetic—judgment. In the Coen brothers' recently released movie, *Burn After Reading*, the nihilism often feels cramping and, ultimately, sadistic. (As a side note, Oliver Stone has just released *W.*, which hews closely to the facts of our current president's life; and yet the movie itself seems exactly the kind of paranoid attempt at mythmaking as *Nixon*. Reality, once again, has

Nietzsche would recognize him as "the last man" the spiritual end-point of democracy.

defeated the fabulist. Thus, I have deduced a theorem: *The Big Lebowski* + [*W.* x 8] = *Burn After Reading*.) But to dismiss *Lebowski* as nihilistic and unethical is to be weirdly insensitive to its immense panache and visual lushness and all-round sense of fun—in short, those qualities that have obsessed people like me for the past 10 years.

The story of *Lebowski* isn't worth going into; it rambles, Raymond-Chandler-like, in and around L.A., and involves a cast of semi-allegorical characters: a fraudulent business man, a performance artist, a pornographer, a Vietnam vet, and so on. But these representative men and women are brought to life by performances that are, without exception, exceptional. Jeff Bridges' Dude and John

Goodman's Walter are the best perfor-

mances of their careers; and Steve Buscemi, Julianne Moore, John Turturro, and Philip Seymour Hoffman so light up their characters you can't help smiling every time they appear. The bravura cinematography of the Coen brothers never lets up. The soundtrack reinforces the odd joy of the movie from the opening credits, as Bob Dylan's "Man in Me" washes over wonderful shots of the bellies, feet, and falling pins of the Dude's bowling alley, to Townes Van Zandt's version of "Dead Flowers," which presides over a similar, though more somber, scene of the bowling alley at the story's end.

"I know a few people just like the Dude," you're moved to say after seeing the film. In fact, pretty much everyone you know under the age of John McCain contains some quantity of the Dude. If the past 10 years have demonstrated that we need to find spiritual resources far beyond anything the Dude can teach us, they have also given us some reason to be nostalgic for the days when we basked in the "end of history" and life was no more serious than a bowling game—"strikes and gutters, ups and downs." The Dude may be a thing of the past, but *Lebowski* abides. I don't know about you, but I take comfort in that. **lv**

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.

The 5 Most-quoted Lebowski Lines

Walter: This isn't nam Smokey, this is bowling, there are rules. You mark that frame an 8, and you're entering a world of pain.

Jesus: Let me tell you something, pendejo. You pull any your crazy sh*t with us, you flash a piece out on the lanes, I'll take it away from you and stick it up your ass and pull the f*cking trigger till it goes "click".

The Dude: Jesus.

Jesus: You said it, man. Nobody f*cks with the Jesus.

Walter: You want a toe? I can get you a toe, believe me. There are ways, Dude. You don't wanna know about it, believe me. Hell, I can get you a toe by 3 o'clock this afternoon... with nail polish. These f*cking amateurs...

The Big Lebowski: Now if you don't mind...

The Dude: No, I do mind. The dudes minds. This will not stand, you know. This aggression won't stand, man.

The Dude: Hey, hey careful man, there's a beverage here!

"I know a few people just like the Dude," you're moved to say after seeing the film.



The Dude

Abides

Still

Mannix Attack

For Iowa native Karlee Mannix, doodles turned into an art degree and high school choir turned into a family-affair band.

Karlee, an Iowa alum, enjoys her eclectic life. When she is not working as a photographer's assistant at The Portrait Shop in Coralville, she is singing in Iowa City bars with her husband and guitarist, Jeff Mannix; sister-in-law and bassist, Sarah Mannix; and drummer, Alfred "Mannix" Edgar with their appropriately titled band, Mannix!

Their music is a blend of all their influences. Karlee said her husband's influences include the New York Dolls and hard rock bands, while hers are harder to nail down. They range, she said, from John Lennon and The Beatles to the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. According to the band's MySpace page, they sound like "being struck

in the face with a double-sided mann-ax," which must mean it's hard rockin', go-out-with-your-friends-and-dance music. Karlee says The Strokes and Blondie also influenced their sound. In fact, that and her bright blonde hair made the opportunity to perform dressed as Blondie for The Mill's Halloween show a natural move.

Their shows draw a good crowd, she said. They favor The Mill for the employees and the Mannix! fans that come to see them play. When they're not on stage, they hang low at home with friends and family—some closer than others. Karlee's youngest brother lives in Iowa City and her other brother in Chicago, but her mother lives in Florida.

"My mom and I are very close. It's been hard," she said. "She's been here a couple times and she's coming back in Thanksgiving.

She's moving back to Iowa permanently in July because she misses it too much."

As for her moving plans, Karlee and the band are happy where they are. Once debating moving to Minneapolis, the decision was quickly nixed when they realized how comfortable they are in Iowa City.

"I've been here for, like, eight years. I love this town," she said. "I have friends in Minneapolis and they don't always know a lot of people in a big city, and I would hate that feeling because I love all the people out here."

Karlee lives with her husband, the rest of the band, and another friend in what has been dubbed the Mannix Mansion, a 1900s home where they use their dining room to practice.

"We don't have a garage so we had to use the dining room," Karlee joked. "We don't

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need a dining room. We all eat at the couch.”

Though married life usually calls for privacy, Karlee said her populated home actually works out well, and its age and size reminds her of her Eastern Iowan childhood home in Clinton, Iowa.

“It’s really comforting to be there,” she said. Home life is a snap—Karlee calls herself the “clean freak” and Jeff is the master chef—but she pitches in, too, with cupcakes and other



desserts that she loves to bake and share.

The couple recently celebrated their four-year anniversary. They met in 2001 through a mutual friend when she was a UI freshman.

“As a visual artist, she’s always had an eye for detail and her work was almost exclusively realist, but I think she has really found her own style,” said Jeff. “As a musician, there isn’t another singer I would rather have in my band. She has a great stage presence and a very natural feel for what works and what doesn’t as a vocalist.”

Karlee said her a capella choir experience from high school has helped her voice training and breathing.

“I know when we practice I can’t sit on my ass. You can’t sit and sing, it’ll sound like crap,” she said. “I’ve been singing since...I don’t even know. My mom said when I was a little girl I would brush my hair in the mirror and sing ‘Lucky Star’ by Madonna into my brush as a microphone.”

Her band’s album *Just Havin’ a Night* will be complete by December—full-length with 10 original songs, which they plan to sell at their live shows and in local music stores.

“We’ve been working really hard on it, practically a year. We had to go to Minneapolis twice. Arlan [friend and record producer] came to Iowa City once and recorded our vocals in our old apartment if you can believe that,” she said. “It sounds really good, and they’re taking really good care of it. We’re really excited. We’re going to have it mastered in Chicago.

It’ll hopefully be ready by December 6.”

Mannix Art

Karlee’s first love is art, and a piece entitled “Dream a Little Dream,” will be shown in the upcoming Small Works Show at the Chait Galleries Downtown in Iowa City starting November 7. She describes most of her art as “very girly,” with lots of pink and purples, but recently has become obsessed with leafless trees. She combines both aesthetics in the selected work, creating the effect of a sad painting with a bright outlook.

“I did the painting specifically for the show,” Karlee said, sipping a berry smoothie in Iowa City’s Java House. “I haven’t done a painting for a while and it was a good way to motivate me into that because I used to paint a lot but it was usually for class, so it was a good kick to do a new painting.”

Before her work went public in the art gallery, Karlee’s concentration throughout much of her University of Iowa art career were cats.

“When I was in school, I had this one class and it was all oils—and the teacher let us pick any subject we wanted so I picked my cats,” Karlee recalled. “Before I went ahead and did it, the teacher was like ‘Cats? Cats are hard to paint, I don’t think that’s a good idea,’ and I’m like ‘I like cats, I draw them all the time, I study them and I know them very well.’ I blew her mind when I painted these cats, it was dead on. I got an A-plus.”

As a child, Karlee said her mother was shocked by the young talent she had on her hands.

“I was two or three and my brother was four or five, and my mom gave us paper and pencils to keep us occupied and said ‘Draw something.’ Scott’s was a bunch of scribbles, and I had drawn a house, a window. But it wasn’t just a house, it was looking out the window the way our cat would with the trees, yard and cars in the street. She was shocked, it was really good I guess, and she said ‘I have a little artist.’” **lv**

Erin Tiesman is a graduate student at the University of Iowa School of Journalism & Mass Communication. Her interests in writing include women’s issues, religion and community.

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Nethervoid

Sirens of the Blistering Light

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There is a song on a Nethervoid demo tape called “Torch the Temple,” and if there is an image that better describes this Iowa City black metal band’s sound, I certainly can’t think of it. And now, the group’s full-length debut, *Sirens of the Blistering Light*, they have escalated their sound to something closer to storming the Vatican.

The title track kick-starts the album like teaming masses assembling at the gates, lighting torches, and brandishing weapons. The unrelenting, cacophonous drums pound through the archways and drive every note and scream. But under the demonic incantations of vocalist Berith is the guiding force of Lord Visigoth’s baritone guitar.

The guitar work gives each song its vicious upward momentum. Berith never really alters his pitch, the drums and bass rumble with ceaseless doom and gloom, but the fiery speed and precision of Visigoth’s guitar work give each song its own dimension. The almost orchestral swells that open “Worm of World’s End,” the rapid fire picking and violent stabs on “Of This Sacred Circle,” and the arpeggiated crawl at the end of “Six Towering Pillars” are all enigmatic of his abilities and versatility.

Its also due largely to Visigoth’s work that Nethervoid dodges caricature. Both black and death metal (yes, there’s a difference), like any other genre, rely on a certain set of

generic clichés: double bass drum, occult lyrics, screaming/rasping rather than singing. This quartet embraces those conventions, but the versatile, dexterous guitar gives these songs the width and breadth needed to sustain any album of any genre. Without Lord Visigoth leading the charge, changing direction, and wreaking his own havoc, *Sirens of the Blistering Light* is an admirable exercise by a group of talented musicians. With him, it stands as an enjoyable, diverse, faceted listen

John Schlotfelt is a University of Iowa graduate and staff writer for missionfreak.com



Brighton MA

Amateur Lovers

Loose Tooth Records

www.brightonma.net

Brighton MA is a Chicago Band with some ties to Iowa City. They have my sympathies — Chicago is a rough town musically, full of clubs and bands playing mean zero sum games. Safe to say anyone mediocre or timid gets tossed in Lake Michigan tout suite. To last long enough to release two albums in an achievement, and Brighton MA did it with good songwriting and an ear for a solid arrangements. Matt Kerstein has a slightly scratchy tenor that can at times recall Dylan, Bowie, Beck, Ray Davies, or Paul Westerberg. Yet he sounds mostly like himself; any resemblance to vocalists past is one of gesture and impulse, and the primary aesthetic choice is to support the mood of the song.

The title track “Amateur Lovers” has an

indelible melody supported by a stately, chugging arrangement that recalls, in the best possible way one of Ray Davies ballad. The song builds intensity, only to fade down to quiet chorus of multiple voices. It’s a brilliantly simple and effective, and instantly memorable. “Old Parked Car” starts out as a dark, earnest, folksy song, but acquires subtle adornments of horns and slide guitar. Kerstein sings “I’m going to continue my one man against the decay of the universe,” which is grandiose, lonely and belies the earnestness of the surrounding music. With so many bands struggling to be heard in the world — hell, more than enough of them just in the Chicago metropolitan area — adding his voice to the mix is a quixotic, daft gesture. And yet, the music of Brighton MA has the good taste, modesty, and grandness to deserve to drown out the merely loud and ambitious.



Musée Mecanique

Hold This Ghost

Frog Stand Records

myspace.com/museemecanique

Musée Mecanique is one of those bands who puts way more into their songs — both the writing and performance — than the short-attention-span musical culture of the US requires. Delicate quiet vocals that trace out long melodic lines, couched in brushed drums and string arrangements. I’m reminded of Paul Simon before he got so full of himself, but the two contemporary musical productions “Hold The Ghost” reminds me most of is Charlotte Gainsbourgs work with the French band Air, and Blonde Redhead’s trippier tracks. But a song like “Fits and Starts” is more convention-



ally structured, almost (but not quite) the sort of thing you'd expect from a Nashville song writer.

"Sleeping In Our Clothes" immediately pushes things back into the lush, studied weirdness, the singer's voice floating sweetly above sustained harmonium chords. The mellotron flutes and glockenspiel of "Nothing Glorious" have the psychedelic lushness of ruffled-shirt 60's bands like The Left Banke. The gentle lilt of "Hold The Ghost" can almost be too much for one sitting though; my wife's capsule review was "they need to vary the tempo more." I think she may have a point — as perfectly crafted and evocative as each song is, they can run together if you listen to them all in one go.

Be that as it may, if one of these songs comes up on iPod by itself, it's always a treat, and some distance from most of the contemporary music you're likely to hear.

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

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www.thegalleriesdowntown.com

In Pursuit of Shape and Surface, through Dec. 5
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1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Art 365, through Nov. 23

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www.englert.org

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1451 Coral Ridge Ave., Coralville

www.theicm.org

Art Adventure with Paperback Rhino Improv Group, Nov. 1, 3-5pm • Celebrate Election Day!, mock election, Nov. 4, 10am-5pm • Wildlife Sticker Scene Art Adventure, Nov. 6, 3-5pm • Celebrate Play! Gala, Nov. 7, 6-9pm, Coralville Marriott Hotel & Convention Center, 300 E. 9th St., Coralville • Celebrate Young Readers, Nov. 8, 2-3pm • Celebrate Veterans Day!, veterans and their families receive free admission, Nov. 11, 10am-5pm • Write Like an Egyptian Art Adventure Day, Nov. 13, 3-5pm • Troop ICM: Printmaking, Nov. 15 & 22, 9-11am • Pick a Picture, Write a Book, Nov. 15, 2-3pm • Happy Birthday to US!, games and activities all day, Nov. 16, 10am-5pm • Birthday Cupcake Art Adventure, Nov. 16, 1-3pm • Shrinky Dinks Art Adventure, Nov. 20, 3-5pm • Celebrate World Hello Day!, Nov. 21, 8am-5pm • Queen Reading Bee, Nov. 22, 2-3pm • Family Free Night, Nov. 28, 5-8pm

National Czech & Slovak Museum

www.ncsml.org

Lindale Mall, 4444 First Avenue NE, Cedar Rapids

Master Folk Artist Marj Nejd Personalizes Ornaments, Nov. 22, 28 & 29, 10am-3pm

Science Station

Lower level, Lindale Mall, 4444 First Avenue NE, Cedar Rapids

Sharp Teeth and Claws in the Dinosaur Age, Nov. 2, 2-3pm • Draw the Dinosaur, Nov. 8, 2-3pm • Veggiesauruses Large and Small, Nov. 9, 2-3pm • Under the Feet of T-Rex, Nov. 16, 2-3pm

UI Museum of Art

Temporary location: Old Capitol Museum, Pentacrest, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/uima

Eye Witness: Daniel Heyman's Portraits of Iraqi Torture Victims, Nov. 1-Jan 4, 2009, Gallery Talk Dec. 4

MUSIC

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Vance Gilbert in concert, Nov. 9, 7pm • The Determining Factor, Edgeworks Dance Theatre, Nov. 14, 8pm • Michael Fracasso, Nov. 19, 8pm • CD release concert and reception featuring Janelle Lauer, Nov. 21 & 22, 8pm • Spencer Day, jazz, Nov. 29, 8pm

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

Atmosphere, Nov. 5, 8pm • An Irish Homecoming, Nov. 6 & 7, 7:30pm • Johnson County Landmark Jazz, Nov. 9, 8pm • Loudon Wainwright, III, Nov. 14, 8pm • Fall Concert: Iowa City Community String Orchestra, Nov. 16, 3pm • Generations of Jazz, Nov. 17, 6:30pm • Lorie Line Holiday Extravaganza, Nov. 22, 7:30pm • Orchestra Iowa: Music al Fresco, Nov. 23, 2:00pm • Jazz to the World, Nov. 29, 7:30pm

Grinnell College

Bucksbaum Center for the Arts, 1108 Park St., Grinnell

Grinnell Symphony Orchestra, conductor Simone Fontanelli, Nov. 8, 7:30pm, Sebring-Lewis Hall still/LIFE, artist Tracy Hicks on climate change, through May 2009

The Industry

211 Iowa Ave., Iowa City

www.myspace.com/theindustryic

All shows at 8pm

Woodbox Gang (misfits covers bluegrass style) w/ The Parish Festival, Nov. 1 • Holding Mercury, Ely Falls, Gilbe, Nov. 6 • 3 In Counting w/ Tuttle, Nov. 7 • Tripping Billies, Dave Matthews tribute band, Nov. 8 • Pigeon John w/Kanser, Nov. 12 • Pomeroy, Nov. 14 • Pale Young Gentlemen w/Pictures of Then, Beati Paloi • The Afterdarks, rockabilly, Nov. 21 • The Station w/The Hue, Nov. 22

The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

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
Tuesday Night Social Club, Tuesdays
The HappyChromosomes w/Pacific Proving Ground, Nov. 1, 6pm • After Hours w/Brokedown Stranger, Unknown Component, Nov. 2 • Election Day Party w/Miracles of God, Horse Feathers, Datagun, Nov. 4 • The Blend, Nov. 6 • Uniphonics, Nov. 7 • Shame Train w/Daisy Cutters, Nov. 8 • These United States, XYZ Affair, Wolves in the Attic, Nov. 9, 8pm • The Blasters, Nov. 10, 8pm • Chrash (CD Release Party), The Poison Control Center, The Western Front, Nov. 11 • Burlington St. Bluegrass Band, Nov. 12, 7pm • Talk Art Caberet, Writers' Workshop readings,

the determining factor Edgeworks

CSPS | November 14-15, 8pm

This one's worth driving half an hour for. Cedar Rapids's CSPS is why big city transplants love Eastern Iowa—it brings the hottest art and performances from hipper-than-us places to an intimate space where one can see the sweat off a musician's nose. The latest arrival is award-winning, D.C.-based dance troupe Edgeworks.

CSPS describes Edgeworks Founder Helanius Wilkins' creation "a kinetic, multi-media examination of the issues surrounding gender, sexuality and spirituality." They're combining dance with spoken word, video and music to highlight how LGBT perspectives relate to the heterosexual majority. Spirituality isn't often a category that gets thrown into the mix with sexuality and gender, and that's something *the determining factor* seeks to rectify.

"From faith leaders and politicians being 'outed,' to the absence of discussions of sex, gender and sexuality in faith communities, to the astonishing suicide rates of LGBT youth, Wilkins said 'our nation is in a crisis,'"

You don't have to be a closeted priest or the parent of a suicide victim to get something from this show but you do have to go to it.

Simon Joyner with Ed Gray, Twelve Canons, and Coyote Blood The Mill | November 22, 9pm

If we can take advantage of our power to tell you what to do on a Saturday night, then go to this show. It's like, when poets make music? It's the fucking awesomest. Simon Joyner deserves mention without referencing his influence on Bright Eyes and the Saddle Creek music scene, but he'd be the first to point out that that apophysis we just used could have been more clever. Joyner has been recording cerebrum-blowing lyrics since 1992, and thank god he's still living his art. The best part of it all is that he is still only draws those audience members with a refined aural palate, so that the crowd isn't filled with douchebags spilling their drinks on you then threatening to kick your ass. He's one of those people whom a Google search will never bring up enough information on. He's a known unknown, and seeing him for \$7 is a steal.

Ed Gray, Twelve Canons and Coyote Blood are the are the local lyrical heroes that make Iowa City music snobs proud. So listen to *Little Village*, and go to their show, dammit.

Nov. 12, 10pm • Beggarmen, Nov. 13, 8pm • Dick Prall w/She Swings She Sways, Nov. 15 • Eugene Chadbourne, Nov. 16 • University of Iowa Jazz Performances, Nov. 18 • Monroe Crossing, Nov. 20, 7pm • Joe & Vicki Price, Nov. 21, 8pm • Simon Joyner w/Ed Gray, Coyote Blood, Nov. 22 • Brenden James w/TBA, Nov. 23, 8pm • Dead Larry and Insectoid, Nov. 25 • Burlington St. Bluegrass Band, Nov. 26, 7pm • Talk Art Caberet, Writers' Workshop readings, Nov. 26, 10pm • Wylde Nept, Nov. 29

National Czech & Slovak Museum www.ncsml.org

Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, 615 1st Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids

Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, UI Campus, Iowa City
www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap

UI School of Music Piano Faculty concert, Nov. 2, 1:30pm • Hannah Holman, cello, and Rene Lecuona, piano; Nov. 6, 8pm • Iowa Brass Quintet, Nov. 13, 8pm • Viola and Friends, Nov. 20, 8pm

The Picador

330 E. Washington St., Iowa City
www.thepicador.com

Shows are 19+ with doors at 9pm unless noted
Mint Wad Willy w/ Band From Town, Dead Larry, Nov. 1 • DD Sparks, w/ Eric Himan, Nov. 6 • VitalLight w/ TBA, Nov. 7 • Everytime I Die w/ The Bronx, Stick to Your Guns, Nov. 8, 6pm, all ages • Sunburned Hand of the Man w/ Evan Miller, Nov. 10 • O'Death w/ Drakker Sauna, Nov. 11 • Black Broom w/ Ephraim Zehn, Nov. 14, 5pm, all ages • Health w/ TBA, Nov. 14, 9:30pm • The Rosebuds w/ Megafauna, Deathships, Nov. 15 • Heartless Bastards w/ The End of the World, White Lie Syndicate, Nov. 16, 7pm, all ages • Alesana w/ Greeky Estates, Jamie's Elsewhere, Motionless in White, Nov. 19, 6pm, all ages • Job for a Cowboy w/ Hate Eternal, All Shall Perish, Animosity, Nov. 22, 6pm, all ages • Boris w/ The Tanks, Lwa, Nov. 24, 7pm, all ages • Barcelona w/ Low vs. Diamond, d'Bari, Nov. 26, 6pm, all ages • Dropping Daylight w/ TBA, Nov. 29, 6pm, all ages • Wanksgiving w/ TBA, Nov. 29, 9:30pm • The Classic Crime w/ A Change of Pace, Jet Lag Gemini, Tyler Read, Nov. 30, 6pm, all ages

Public Space One

115 E. Washington St., Iowa City
www.myspace.com/publicspaceone
NCM, Nov. 12, 8pm

Red Cedar Chamber Music www.redcedar.org

Community Connections: Nov. 5, 7pm

Lisbon Public Library, 101 E. Main St., Lisbon; Nov. 7, 7pm, Keystone Place, 6126 Rockwell Dr. NE, Cedar Rapids; Nov. 8, Noon, Hiawatha Public Library, 150 West Willman, Hiawatha; Nov. 8, 3pm, Garnett Place, 202 35th Street Dr. SE, Cedar Rapids

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside
www.riversidecasinoandresort.com
Grand Funk Railroad, Nov. 22, 8pm

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
www.iowacityyachtclub.org

Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted
Mondays Blues Jam, Tuesdays Dance Party, Wednesdays The Jam

Dennis McMurrin & The Demolition Band, Nov. 1 • Nevermind, Nirvana tribute band, Nov. 8 • Backdrop w/ Inept, Made Available, Nov. 14, 5pm • Dead Larry w/ Insectoid, Darma Bums, Nov. 20 • The Mayflies w/ Harmonic Order, Nov. 21 • Dave Zollo, Nov. 28 • Samba Nosso w/ The Jumbies, Nov. 29

University of Iowa

Clapp Recital Hall/Harper Hall/Hancher Auditorium relocated events
www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa

Check Websites for locations

Electronic Music Studios, Lawrence Fritts, director; Nov. 1, 3pm • Camerata Singers, David Puderbaugh, conductor; Nov. 1, 8pm • Iowa Percussion, Dan Moore, director; Nov. 2, 3pm • University of Iowa Symphony Band, Richard Mark Heidel, conductor; Nov. 5, 8pm • An Irish Homecoming, Nov. 6 & 7, 7:30pm • Pamela Ruitter-Feenstra, organ, Nov. 9, 3pm • Johnson County Landmark Jazz, Nov. 9, 8pm • Uriel Tsachor, piano, Andrew Hardy, violin, and Uri Vardi, cello; Nov. 10, 8pm • Takács Quartet, Muzsikás, Márta Sebestyén; Nov. 12, 7:30pm • Brad Mehldau Trio, Nov. 13, 7:30pm • Kenneth Tse, saxophone, Nov. 14, 8pm • UI Chamber Orchestra, William LaRue Jones and David Nelson, conductors, with the Maia String Quartet; Nov. 16, 8pm • Composers Workshop, Nov. 16, 8pm • Band Extravaganza: Symphony Band, Richard Mark Heidel, conductor; Johnson County Landmark, John Rapson, director; Hawkeye Marching Band, Kevin Kastens, director; Nov. 19, 7:30pm • Jazz Repertory Ensemble, Brent Sandy, director; Nov. 20, 8pm

PERFORMANCE

Art Culture Experiment (ACE)

Old Brick, 26 Market St., Iowa City
Inclusive Ballroom, Tuesdays through Dec. 16, 7-8:30pm • Actors Dance Lab, Tuesdays through Dec. 16, 8:30-9:45pm

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

The Determining Factor, Edgeworks Dance Theatre, Nov. 14, 8pm

Dreamwell Theatre

Unitarian Universalist Society, 10 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City

www.dreamwell.com

Learn's Daughters; Nov. 14, 15, 21 & 22; 7:30pm

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

An Irish Homecoming, Nov. 6 & 7, 7:30pm • Alley Caberet; Nov. 13, 15, 20 & 21; Midnight

Flanagan Theater

Grinnell College, Grinnell

www.grinnell.edu/academic/theatre/events

Testing the Echo; Nov. 20-22, 8pm; Nov. 23, 2pm

Old Creamery Theater

39 38th Ave., Main Stage, Amana

www.oldcreamery.com

Check website for showtimes

Who's Wives Are They Anyway?, through Nov. 16 • Nutcrackers, Nov. 21 - Dec. 20

Penguin's Comedy Club

Clarion Hotel, 525 33rd Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids

Shows start at 8pm

Theo Von w/ James Ervin Berry, Nov. 1 • Jimmy Pardo w/ Mark Morfrey, Nov. 7-8 • Andy Kindler w/ Justin McLure, Nov. 14-15 • Dylan Madnelsohn, w/ Eric Nigg, Nov. 20-21 • Open Mic, Nov. 27 • Mike Mercury w/ Richie Holiday, Nov. 28-29

Riverside Theatre

213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City

www.riversidetheatre.org

Check website for showtimes

Coffee and Hope, through Nov. 9 • Megan Gogerty Loves You Very Much, Nov. 21-30

Summit Restaurant Comedy Night

10 S. Clinton St, Iowa City

www.thesummitrestaurantandbar.com

Shows start at 9:30pm

Marvin Todd & Nicholas Anthony, Nov. 5 • Scott Long & Todd Link, Nov. 12 • Lori Callahan & Stephanie McHugh, Nov. 19 • The Sandman, Nov. 26

Theatre Cedar Rapids

Grant Wood House, 800 Second Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids

www.theatrecrec.org

Rocky Horror Picture Show, Nov. 1, 7:30pm & 10:30pm • The Sound of Music, Nov. 28 - Dec. 14, Thursdays - Saturdays, 7:30pm; Sundays, 2:30pm

University of Iowa Swing Dance Club

www.uiowa.edu/~uiswing

Weekly Swing Night, every Wednesday 7-10pm, The Industry, 211 Iowa Ave., Iowa City

University of Iowa Theater & Dance

www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa

Check Website for locations

Dance Gala 2008: Special Issue, UI Dance Department; Nov. 1, 6, 7 & 8; 8pm • Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov, University Theatre, Nov. 7 & 8, 13-15, 8pm; Nov. 9, 2pm • Afro-Cuban Drum and Dance Ensemble; Nov. 15, 8pm; Nov. 16, 3pm

U.S. Cellular Center

370 First Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids

www.uscellularcenter.com

Stay Tuned, community concert, Nov. 7, 7:30pm • Warriors 4 Warriors, all military MMA, Nov. 8, 7pm • Girls' High School State Volleyball Tournament, Nov. 12-15 • Disney Live! presents Winnie the Pooh, Nov. 16, 1:30pm • Nine Inch Nails, Nov. 20, 7:30pm • C.R. Rollergirls vs. Big Mouth Mickies, Nov. 22, 7pm • Arts & Craft show, Nov. 28-29, 9am

WORDS

Barnes & Noble

Coral Ridge Mall, 1451 Coral Ridge Ave., Coralville

All Storytimes begin at 10am unless noted

Mucumber McGee and The Lunch Lady's Liver storytime, Nov. 11 • Scrabble Night, Nov. 12, 6:30pm • Grumpy Cat! storytime, Nov. 14 • Blue Ribbon Country Cookbook booksigning, Nov. 15, 11am • Wonder Pets! storytime, Nov. 16 • Coffee and Crime Book Group: The Ghost by Robert Harris, Nov. 18, 7pm • Leaf Man storytime, Nov. 21 • Thanksgiving! storytime, Nov. 25

Iowa City Public Library

123 S. Linn St., Iowa City

www.icpl.org

Images of America, Nov. 7, Noon • Kristallnacht commemoration, Nov. 9, 2:30pm

National Czech & Slovak Museum

www.ncsml.org

Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, 615 1st Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids

Shock and Aftershock: Conversations about 1968 "Dying for Democracy: Lessons from Czechoslovakia, China, and Burma" by Dr. Rex Honey, Sat. Nov. 1, 2pm

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

www.prairielightbooks.com

All "Live from Prairie Lights" readings at 7pm unless noted

Grant Wood House booksigning, Nov. 1, Noon-2pm • Writing University MFA reading: Writers' Workshop, Nonfiction Writing Program, Playwrights

Workshop, Translation Workshop; Nov. 2, 5pm • Marilynne Robinson, fiction, Nov. 3, Englert Theater • Jonathan Ames, fiction, Nov. 5 • Katy Lederer and Kazim Ali, poetry, Nov. 6 • Drake Hokanson, nonfiction, Nov. 7 • Brian Falkner, fiction, Nov. 8, 1pm • Ian Coontz, fiction, Nov. 12 • Amy Bloom, fiction, Nov. 13 • Kurt Friese, nonfiction, Nov. 14 • Ethan Canin, fiction, Nov. 17 • Robyn Schiff, poetry, Nov. 18

University of Iowa Museum of Art Old Capitol Museum, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/uima

Know the Score LIVE!, Nov. 7, 5-7pm • Word Painter, David Torrey Peters with Jo Ann Beard, Nov. 14, 7:30pm

University of Iowa

www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa

Check Website for locations

Lecture on his works by artist Zak Smith, Nov. 6, 8pm • Scott Spencer, fiction reading, Nov. 7, 8pm • Michael Palmer, fiction reading, Nov. 12, 8pm

CINEMA

Bijou Theater

Iowa Memorial Union, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.bijoutheater.org

Check Website for showtimes

Let the Right One In, Oct. 31-Nov. 2 • Tell No One, Nov. 7-12 • Christmas on Mars, Nov. 13 • Trouble the Water, Nov. 14-20

Becker Communications Building

UI Campus, Iowa City

Cinematheque, International Writing Program, Nov. 9, 8pm, Room 101

MISC

Amana Colonies

4310 220th Trail, Amana

www.amanacolony.org

Thirsty Homebrew Classic, Nov. 1, Millstream Brewing Co., call 319-362-6672 for details • Fall Fibre & Clay Show and Sale; Nov. 1, 10am-5pm; Nov. 2, 10am-4pm; Amana Arts Guild Center, High Amana • Tannenbaum Forest, Nov. 28 - Dec. 21

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids

www.brucemore.org

Welcome Home to Brucemore for the Holidays, Nov. 28 - Dec. 21, Tuesdays-Saturdays 10am-3pm, Sundays Noon-3pm • Santa, Snacks, and Stories, Nov. 30, 5:30-7:30pm

Iowa City Senior Center

28 S. Linn St., Iowa City

Fall Health Fair, Nov. 1, 10:30am-1:30pm

Curses, Foiled Again

A robber approached a 36-year-old man in Warren, Mich., and demanded money. After getting \$50, the robber tried to flee, but the victim tackled him, put him in a chokehold and demanded his money back. Police Detective Michael Torey said the robber was so scared that he gave the victim his \$50 plus another \$30.

Ready for Love

A man in a wheelchair entered a 7-Eleven store in Dallas, Texas, carrying a knife and a baseball bat. He rolled himself to the cash register and beat it with the bat until it opened. Instead of taking the cash, however, police said he made off with 10 boxes of condoms and an energy drink.

Wardrobe Malfunction

A cross-dressing robber snatched a 74-year-old woman's purse in St. Lucie West, Fla., but before hopping into a getaway car, reportedly occupied by two other men in drag, one of his fake breasts popped out of his tube top. Police recovered the faux breast—a water-filled condom in a white gym sock. “We’re processing the condom for latent prints,” police Officer Robert Vega told *Treasure Coast Newspapers*.

Perils of Marital Discord

After Victor Papagno Jr., 40, was charged with domestic violence, his wife called the Naval Research Laboratory, where he worked, to come get his work stuff from their home in Calvert County, Md. Having no record of any equipment signed out to Papagno, Navy officials arrived to find 19,709 pieces of computer equipment worth up to \$1.6 million that had been stolen from the lab over a 10-year period. Washington's *Examiner* newspaper reported Papagno had accumulated so much hardware that some of the boxes had to be stored at neighbors' homes. Papagno pleaded guilty to stealing the property. Three days after his arrest for domestic violence, Andrea Papagno dropped that charge.

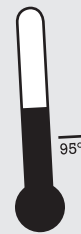
True Confessions

An Australian pastor who inspired hundreds of thousands of people with his fight against terminal cancer admitted he faked his illness to hide a 16-year porn addiction. “It consumes my mind,” Michael Guglielmucci admitted in a TV interview. His deception was so real that his wife quit work to care for him. He also forced himself to vomit regularly at night and even lost his hair to fool his family and the public about the extent of his illness.

Extreme Side Effects

An Australian court ordered an 80-year-old man who demanded sex with his wife at least three times a day after he began taking Viagra to pay her \$232,000 in compensation. Judge Stephen Walmsley of the New South Wales Court of Appeals found that Svetozar Varmedja subjected his 53-year-old wife to more than 18 months of physical and sexual abuse, which included 60 threats to kill her if she failed to meet his sexual demands. “He was a gentleman and a good man, but then he started taking the tablets,” the wife told the *Sunday Telegraph*. “Those tablets changed him, and he started to treat me like a slave.” At one point, she said, he cut off her hair, stating, “This is your punishment for not completely satisfying me, and this is what I will always do.”

Cold Butts or Hot Nuts



Men whose vehicles have heated seats could hurt their prospects for fatherhood, according to a German study of sperm production. *Agence France-Presse* reported that researchers fitted sensors to the scrotums of 30 healthy men, who then sat on a heated car seat for 90 minutes. After an hour, their average scrotal temperature had risen 3.5 to 4 degrees F above the optimum temperature for sperm production. By comparison, men who sat on unheated car seats reached an average scrotal temperature within optimum limits.

Second-Amendment Follies

- Shortly after Cory Davis, 56, finished using newspaper and kindling to stoke a fire the cast-iron stove at her home in Sekiu, Wash., she was hit in the leg by part of a 22-gauge shotgun shell that had been accidentally placed in the stove. Believing the shell had fallen into some newspaper next to the stove when she spilled a case of ammunition a month earlier, Davis told the *Peninsula Daily News*, “There’s always that one problem stray.”
- Dallas Wayne Poore, 34, told sheriff’s deputies he had been using a 12-gauge shotgun to chase a stray cat around his house in Greene County, S.C., when he accidentally pulled the trigger, shooting himself in the foot.

Language of Love

Britons have been flocking to learn Polish so they can communicate with a wave of Polish immigrants, many of whom they have become romantically involved with. Cardiff University’s center for lifelong learning, for example, started a beginning Polish class three years ago to coincide with the arrival of an estimated one million Polish citizens since 2004, the largest wave of immigration in British history. Since then, the school has started a second class, despite the difficulty of learning the language. “There were lots and lots and lots of men with Polish girlfriends,” observed student Emma Raczka, whose Polish grandfather settled in Wales during World War II.

Bad Deal If It’s Light Beer

A 39-year-old German man was sentenced to three years in prison for forcing his 32-year-old partner to have sex with their 60-year-old neighbor in exchange for beer. The court in Fulda concluded that the neighbor handed over a crate of beer after each encounter with the woman over the course of several weeks.

Size Matters

Three South African men were shot dead and two others critically wounded in a Durban tavern following an argument over genital size. The South African Press Association reported the argument apparently began when a patron of Indian descent pointed out while standing next to a white patron at the tavern’s urinals that his penis was bigger than the white man’s. “The white man left the urinal and told his friends about what had happened, and this is when the argument started,” a police official said, explaining that after vulgarities were exchanged, five Indian men left, returned with weapons and opened fire.

Attracting Attention

Dennis Cullen, 23, and a female companion were arrested having sex in their car in Hellertown, Pa, while in a handicapped parking space outside the police station. *The Allentown Morning Call* reported the couple told officers they had been drinking at a university function and were unaware where they had parked.

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

When does life begin?

At a forum last August at his megachurch in California, preacher Rick Warren asked presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama when human life begins. McCain replied, "At conception," a response that went over well with the pro-life audience. Obama said, "Answering that question with specificity is above my pay grade," which many thought was evasive or flip and which I think sounded lame, even though my own views are closer to Obama's than McCain's. No doubt Obama punted because he thought he'd get into even more trouble if he answered frankly, but you, Cecil, are under no such constraints. So tell us: When does human life begin?

—Frank Caplice, Chicago

Little problem, Frank. That wasn't what Rick Warren asked. The thrust of his question—he phrased it slightly differently for each candidate—was, "At what point is a baby entitled to human rights?" But a lot of people think once they've answered your question, they've answered Warren's. So here's my take on the subject, which shows why I'll never be running for public office:

1. Human life begins at conception.
2. Big deal.

Let's review the leading theories on when human life starts, many drawn from *Roe v. Wade*:

At birth. The belief of the Stoics, *Roe* tells us, and some religions today.

At conception. This idea harks back at least to the Pythagoreans but didn't become the standard view among abortion opponents till the late 19th century. An important turning point, for Roman Catholics anyway, was a pair of declarations by Pope Pius IX: (1) in 1854 he said Catholics were obliged to believe that Mary, mother of Jesus, had been free of sin since conception; and (2) in 1869 he decreed abortion was punishable by excommunication. Before this the Catholic church had waffled on when human life began (more on this below), but once conception had been established as a watershed, opinion hardened.

At the 40th day (for males) or 80th day (for

females) after conception. This odd notion was formulated by Aristotle and embraced by Thomas Aquinas, and generally speaking was Catholic belief, though not dogma, till the time of Pius IX. The idea is that while basic existence begins at conception, the fetus isn't animated—or in Catholic terminology, ensouled—until several weeks out, at which point it becomes human. The matter was debated for centuries, although without much practical impact on church policy; abortion was always prohibited for the same reason birth control was prohibited—it interfered with a natural process. But prior to ensoulment abortion wasn't homicide.

At quickening. That is, at the point at which fetal movement can be detected, usually around the 16th week of pregnancy. Abortion before quickening, *Roe* observes, wasn't

without merit, they suffer from the defect of seeming to separate life from human life, the matter to which we now turn.

Few would dispute that animal life in the ordinary sense starts at conception. An inseminated frog egg develops into an adult in the normal course; an unfertilized one doesn't. No biologist distinguishes not-yet-frog embryos from froggy ones; they're all frogs from the start. And so it is with us. Notwithstanding the many critical stages in fetal development, human life by any reasonable definition starts at conception.

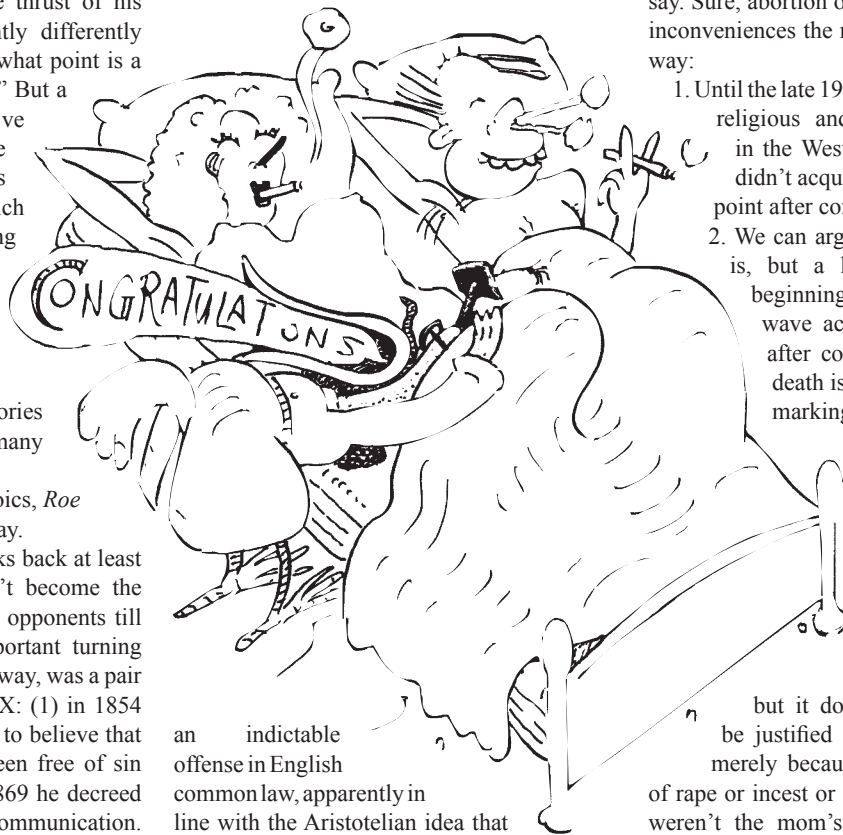
However, to be blunt, so what? We may stipulate that human life begins at conception, and that the purposeful ending of a human life constitutes homicide. It doesn't necessarily follow that abortion is always wrong. We take innocent lives when it suits us—in a "just war," say. Sure, abortion often ends a life because it inconveniences the mother. But look at it this way:

1. Until the late 19th century, the mainstream religious and philosophical tradition in the West was that a human fetus didn't acquire personhood until some point after conception but before birth.
2. We can argue about when that point is, but a logical milestone is the beginning of measurable brain-wave activity, roughly 25 weeks after conception. After all, brain death is now commonly accepted marking life's end.

3. We may then say that, personhood having been acquired, the child is entitled to our protection. One accepts that abortion in such cases may be necessary when the mother's life is in peril,

but it doesn't seem to me it can be justified (as some would have it) merely because the child is a product of rape or incest or is defective. These things weren't the mom's fault, and may impose some hardship on her, but they weren't the kid's fault either, and he's one of us.

—CECIL ADAMS




an indictable offense in English common law, apparently in line with the Aristotelian idea that the fetus didn't become a person till sometime between conception and birth.


At implantation of the embryo in the uterine wall, the commencement of brain activity, etc. These are modern attempts to fix the beginning of human life at some point in fetal development following conception. While not


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.


ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR NOVEMBER 2008


For Everyone—It's almost time to get on board. Ever so slowly, the chaos is subsiding and new possibilities are coming within reach. It will soon be time to actually do something. Between now and then, though, people have to get their minds around the situation and talk each other into cooperating on the right course to take. The astrological causes of the most recent crisis are gone and will not soon return, so it is safe to look ahead. The key is to focus on the future and agree on a plan. At times like this, when there is so much commotion and you are just beginning to develop a strategy, it is important to remember that the devil is in the details.


 **Aries**—Don't be a superhero. You and others must remember two things. You are not responsible for everything that is happening. You cannot fix it single-handedly. As intensely as you feel it, as much as it weighs on you, as tuned in as you are, it's easy to forget that you are only one human being and your power and responsibilities are limited. The best thing to do is quietly and calmly rearrange your life and affairs as well as you can to accommodate the necessities. Above all, be realistic.


 **Taurus**—Speak truth to power. You are often the driving force behind events. This month, you must be the one to urge restraint on all concerned, especially those in power. You know very well that people are tired unto death of the past and almost frantic for something new. But you also know that everyone, including those in charge, could easily charge off in the wrong direction. Use reason to develop a more sensible, realistic version of the vision that is inspiring everyone. Use your powers of persuasion to sell it.

 **Gemini**—Persuade people to grow up. You are being pressured in your personal and professional life. Part of it is that the people you must turn into an effective working team have numerous bitter, irresolvable conflicts. Part of the pressure is from overly optimistic higher ups, at home and at work. They think you are just the one to bring harmony to this free-for-all. The bottom line is that you must play peacemaker, for the sake of everyone. Besides, you have to do it if you want that promotion.


 **Cancer**—Balancing act. The focus this month is on maintaining relations with just about everyone you need to keep your life on track, personally, socially and professionally. Your best bet is probably to keep juggling. There's flexibility and enough to keep everyone and everything going, for now, but there won't be much left over. Something big must happen eventually if you want to achieve stable, secure, working relationships again. In the end, the solution probably won't come from arguing. It might take a commitment from everyone to forgive, forget and heal.


 **Leo**—Reach for the stars. Like some other Sun signs, Leo must work to keep family, friendships and work relationships whole. But you must work by convincing people to give up some of their most cherished—and outdated—illusions. Encourage people to reach into their imaginations and give life to new ideas, and to ideals they might think are unrealistic. Then convince them to share these visions. The joy they will inspire is a necessary part of the solution we all seek. Maintain confidence, and don't let power struggles sew discord.


 **Virgo**—Just say the word. The struggles you have endured in recent years have endowed you with a new ability and the right to use it. In a way that will amaze you and startle others, you are able to heal, energize and motivate others with your words. This skill will come in especially handy this month as so many people important in your life seek support and a new direction. Others might supply inspiration, common sense or balance, but Virgo can make it all come together in the real world.


 **Libra**—Create a sanctuary. You are viewing the direction and the rate of change around you with deepening concern. There is no end in sight. The pace of change will not slow and you'll have little choice but to deal with it. However, soon you will find yourself with new tools and greater power over events. Finances will improve. The changes will be easier to control. Erratic, uncooperative and demanding people will become easier to manage. Meanwhile, create a place where you can periodically retreat from the turmoil and restore yourself.


Scorpio

 Guide the changes. For now, just hold on to the reins. Keep things moving forward and steer as steady a course as you can through this turmoil. It's true that things are a bit much, but it would be worse if things stopped moving or if they took a wrong turn. You will very soon have to stop throwing money at problems. The money is tightening up and, anyway, it just encourages those responsible for the mess in the first place. When you can, stop bailing the boat and patch the hole.

 **Sagittarius**—Lend your support. You might feel upstaged—in the middle of things, but playing second fiddle. However, you have a crucial role to play. Your ability to inspire, support and encourage is desperately needed. You are uniquely able to make the right choice seem appealing and to negotiate the necessary compromises. Maybe other people are thinking and feeling the same kinds of things, but only you can put it into the right words and invest it with just the right feeling. Help others find the courage to do the right thing.

 **Capricorn**—Forward movement. By month's end things will be ready to start moving. Both the motivation and the resources will be there. Gears that only used to grind will begin to mesh. But maybe best of all, you won't be blind-sided so often by sudden, erratic changes, or by loose cannons, those who assert their independence in the worst ways at the worst possible moment. But like a locomotive pulling (or pushing) a long train out of the station, it would be best to move slowly at first. Let momentum build.

 **Aquarius**—Feeling your oats. You will experience two potent, irresistible and seemingly contradictory forces at the same time. On the one hand, you will feel the bit between your teeth. When you push, things will move. On the other hand, you will feel the need to hold back, to move more cautiously and patiently. Instead of ignoring the wiser, cooler heads, you will find yourself wanting to consult them—and be guided by them. If you do insist on charging ahead on your own, you will find yourself pulled up short.

 **Pisces**—Come down to earth. You need to start being absolutely realistic as well as visionary. You've been free to pursue your dreams unfettered by practical concerns in recent years. Starting about now, though, just as the gears are really starting to mesh, you will have to start proving that your plans make cold, hard sense. You could even get to like certain hard-nosed, realistic types who you might have resented in the past. Anyway, if you don't start listening to them, you might actually get your wings clipped.

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Loving daughter
turned meth addict

BRYAN SMITH

Patricia's neglected son
who was taken away

IAN SMITH

Estranged brother

JOE SMITH

Father who was robbed
by his daughter



methresources.gov

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Office of National Drug Control Policy