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December '08



AN **EMPTY PLATE** the vegetarian's holiday famine

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Volume 8 | Issue 75 | December 2008

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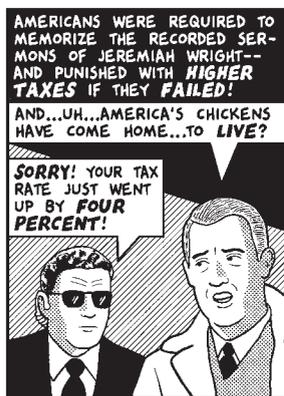
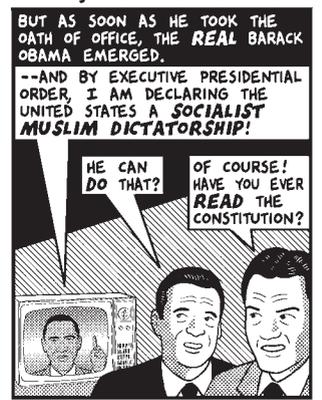
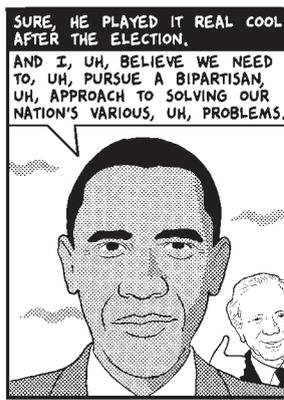
PHOTOS | Boh Photo, Elizabeth Cummings, Jon Fife, Tom Glorfield, Julie Schuchard

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Advertising and Calendar deadline is the 19th of every month. Contact Little Village for an ad rate card.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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Barack the Table

I have read a seemingly unending stream of open letters to the President-Elect, each doling out copious amounts of advice and admonition for the new administration. While I realize that President-Elect Obama has a lot on his plate, I hope he'll consider the metaphor a bit more literally. Many of the issues we face can be tied to food.

Take energy for example. Depending on the resource you consult, food production takes anywhere from a sixth to a quarter of the energy we use in the country. Most of that goes toward meat production. Here in Iowa, a vast majority of what we grow is used not to feed people, but to feed livestock. The rest is not food either, but fuel (and an inefficient form of it at that), following a concept that brilliant author Raj Patel calls "the preposterous notion that we should grow food in order to set it on fire."

Then there is the small matter of the oil we eat. Michael Pollan's research led to the conclusion that a happy meal from a McDonald's drive-thru consumes two-and-a-half gallons of oil from start to finish. Remember, billions and billions served. Nourishing our families is more important than fueling our cars, and the two processes should not be conducted in identical manners.

I so admire the President-Elect's call to sacrifice, especially since his predecessor asked it of none but our soldiers and their families (not the rest of us). Also, his plans to repair our standing in the world after President Bush squandered its goodwill are to be commended.

Because energy and health are near the top of his agenda, and we live in a world where a billion people are starving and a billion more are, perversely, overweight and undernourished, we can set about making an impact with simple ways. Some have recommended, as a



Photo courtesy of Boh Photo

small step, asking people to consider going without meat one day a week.

It's not that hard. Cereal for breakfast, a big salad for lunch and a pasta

Michael Pollan's research led to the conclusion that a happy meal from a McDonald's drive-thru consumes 2¹/₂ gallons of oil from start to finish.

or rice dish for supper. Nothing you might not have on any ordinary day. In return you save money, your health and the environment. Meanwhile 14 percent of the energy used on meat production can be used to help feed the world, or better yet to help teach the world to feed itself. No real hardship for you or me—big benefit for others.

Now of course there would be cries of people saying, "I don't want the government telling me what to eat." Well, very sorry to break the news to you, but they already do, and none of it is good for you. America's agricultural

policy (all we have in lieu of a cohesive food policy), is designed around a quantity-trumps-quality, get-big-or-get-out mentality that forces all of us, especially on the lower economic rungs (big surprise), to eat pounds of empty calories, which in turn has led directly to America's epidemics of diabetes, obesity, heart disease and stroke.

Speaking of health care, why not have some? For decades, our system has gone farther and farther down the road of treating, rather than preventing, disease. It's almost as if no one had ever said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This is very simple economics here: you lower health care costs by having fewer sick people. You have fewer sick people by preventing that which is preventable, which according to most doctors is roughly two-thirds of all the heart disease, diabetes and cancer we currently suffer from. And it all goes back to what we eat. **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.

Here then, thanks to the tireless efforts of the Roots of Change Fund and Slow Food USA, is a simple 12-point plan to guide our new food policy. You can sign onto it at www.FoodDeclaration.org

The Declaration for Healthy Food and Agriculture:

We, the undersigned, believe that a healthy food system is necessary to meet the urgent challenges of our time. Behind us stands a half-century of industrial food production, underwritten by cheap fossil fuels, abundant land and water resources, and a drive to maximize the global harvest of cheap calories. Ahead lie rising energy and food costs, a changing climate, declining water supplies, a growing population, and the paradox of widespread hunger and obesity.

These realities call for a radically different approach to food and agriculture. We believe that the food system must be reorganized on a foundation of health: for our communities, for people, for animals and for the natural world. The quality of food, and not just its quantity, ought to guide our agriculture. The ways we grow, distribute, and prepare food should celebrate our various cultures and our shared humanity, providing not only sustenance, but justice, beauty and pleasure.

Governments have a duty to protect people from malnutrition, unsafe food, and exploitation, and to protect the land and water on which we depend from degradation. Individuals, producers, and organizations have a duty to create regional systems that can provide healthy food for their communities. We all have a duty to respect and honor the laborers of the land without whom we could not survive. The changes we call for here have begun, but the time has come to accelerate the transformation of our food and agriculture and make its benefits available to all.

We believe that the following 12 principles should frame food and agriculture policy, to ensure that it will contribute to the health and wealth of the nation and the world. A healthy food and agriculture policy:

1. Forms the foundation of secure and prosperous societies, healthy communities and healthy people.
2. Provides access to affordable, nutritious food to everyone.
3. Prevents the exploitation of farmers, workers and natural resources; the domination of genomes and markets; and the cruel treatment of animals, by any nation, corporation or individual.
4. Upholds the dignity, safety and quality of life for all who work to feed us.
5. Commits resources to teach children the skills and knowledge essential to food production, preparation, nutrition and enjoyment.
6. Protects the finite resources of productive soils, fresh water and biological diversity.
7. Strives to remove fossil fuel from every link in the food chain and replace it with renewable resources and energy.
8. Originates from a biological rather than an industrial framework.
9. Fosters diversity in all its relevant forms: diversity of domestic and wild species; diversity of foods, flavors and traditions; diversity of ownership.
10. Requires a national dialog concerning technologies used in production, and allows regions to adopt their own respective guidelines on such matters.
11. Enforces transparency so that citizens know how their food is produced, where it comes from and what it contains.
12. Promotes economic structures and supports programs to nurture the development of just and sustainable regional farm and food networks.

Our pursuit of healthy food and agriculture unites us as people and as communities, across geographic boundaries, and social and economic lines. We pledge our votes, our purchases, our creativity, and our energies to this urgent cause.

The Home Stretch

Amidst the family, friends and festivities that the holidays bring, an unwelcome aspect of the season always seems to creep up. In a season that is supposed to bring good tidings to you and your kin, why does it also bring stress?

You need to relax. You can choose from countless methods of relaxation out there, from massage to happy hour, but yoga is the whole package. It can help calm things down, even if you think you're about to lose your mind. After all, yoga literally means "union," as in the union of mind and body, so your mind can't run too far away. When your to-do list is looking intimidating this December, try yoga to add a little more relaxation in your life. It invigorates the body, focuses the mind and leaves you feeling alive, yet mellow.

The physical practice of yoga is a good way "to become freer and more at ease with ourselves so we can live in greater harmony in the world," according to Nancy Footner. Footner is an Iyengar yoga teacher at Friendship Yoga, located on Gilbert Court in Iowa City.

Iyengar is a style of yoga characterized by slower movements and strong attention to the form of poses. Other styles are more powerful and faster, such as Asthanga. But there are some types of yoga that focus on flowing between poses, chanting in certain poses, Western fitness culture, or even yoga done in



Photo courtesy of Jon Fife

rooms more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

"There are so many styles out there," Marcie Evans said. "Everyone can find a style for them."

Evans is a Yoga Alliance certified yoga teacher, and owns Serenity Yoga & Pilates Studio on the east side of Iowa City. She feels that anyone starting a yoga practice should really focus on finding the right style of yoga for them, and then finding the right certified, qualified instructor.

Evans highly recommends working with an instructor as you begin your yoga practice. If you can't afford to spring for a private session with an instructor, attend an introductory class (or maybe ask Santa for a nice gift).

Having a teacher instruct you through the poses can help prevent injury and show you

Take 5

Got five minutes? Whether you are at the office, making dinner, or whatever, take a break for a little stress-free me-time. Marcie Evans, owner of the Serenity Yoga & Pilates Studio, gives a quick guide for de-stressing off the yoga mat.

3-Part Breathing

Sit on the edge of a chair with your back straight and hands on your knees avoiding tension in the shoulders. Try a smooth, controlled three-part breath: first breathe into your stomach, then middle chest and upper chest. Exhale in the opposite order (upper chest, middle chest, stomach). Keep it going for a minute or two.

Stretch and Breath

Moving with your breath, try a simple side-bend. While inhaling, raise your right arm up toward the ceiling. On the exhale, try to lift your ribcage away from the pelvis into get a gentle side stretch. Release your arm and repeat on the left side. Note: your abdominal muscles should be engaged and the spine shouldn't be bending much at all! Repeat, alternating sides, for five breaths on each side.

Seated Poses

Try a little seated cat and cow pose. Place your hands on your knees again, face forward and move slowly with your breath. While inhaling move into a seated cow pose: open your chest (move your shoulders back and your chest out), and gaze up toward the ceiling without putting pressure on your neck. Move into a seated cat pose on the exhale: tuck your tailbone under your body, bring your navel to your spine, round your back and gaze gently toward the floor. Repeat for five to 10 breaths.

how to properly get in and out of poses so you get the maximum benefit. An instructor can also prepare you for your own personal practice if you don't dig the classroom scene.

Footner is also a big advocate of instructor's guidance. As a teacher of Iyengar, she is very focused on the individual needs of her students and helping them get the most out of their practice.

"We start by disciplining the body, but what we're really after is disciplining the mind," she said. The physical practice of yoga challenges the body and gets rid of those schedules and to-do lists that drive stress. "Your mind becomes clear of all of that chatter, so you can face the challenges with a little more equanimity."

"We start by disciplining the body, but what we're really after is disciplining the mind."

But yes, the holidays often leave time at a premium and stress still high. Need a quick fix? Try what the yogis call pranayama, or breath control. Focusing on your breathing is an important component of yoga that fights stress by shutting off that fight or flight stress response in the body and turns on the more relaxed part of your nervous system, according to Evans. This simple transition can lower blood pressure and heart rate and release muscle tension. Breathing is one of the reasons why yoga is so good at relieving stress.

"Yoga gives you something to focus on," Marcie Evans said. She noted that yoga is especially good for more active individuals. "They need to focus on breathing. They need to focus on a pose to get into that relaxed state. It gives them something to get to that point where they can relax."

Try and take a little time for yourself this holiday season and fight that nagging stress with a little yoga. Or if you just can't squeeze it in at all, you can always save it for one of those pesky New Year's resolutions. **lv**

Kelly Ostrem is deathly afraid of dinosaurs. She saw one once and spent the next week in a closet with a flashlight and a machete. Unfortunately, she's now deathly afraid of small spaces.



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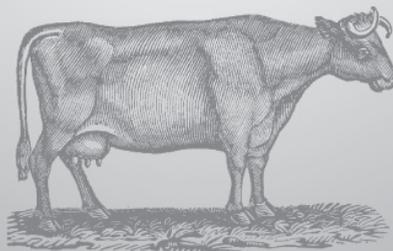
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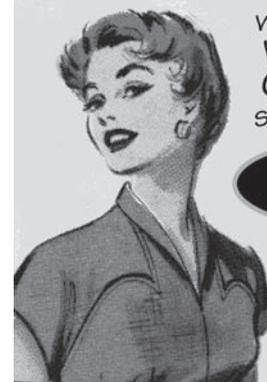
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Hog Haven

As local officials responded to the threat of floods in southeastern Iowa with repeated appeals for help with sandbagging, I jumped at the chance—to bury my head in the sand, or a sandbag, whatever could be spared.

The last time I volunteered during a disaster, the results themselves were disastrous.

I'd been part of a mission to the post-Katrina South, aimed at saving pets that hurricane evacuees were forced to abandon, sometimes at gunpoint. Though everyone involved in our operation was a card-carrying animal advocate, in hindsight, group dynamics were doomed from the start, and in the end, egos (and libidos) got in the way of ensuring the animals we had “rescued” were truly safe. Not long after those of us in the field returned home with a misguided sense of “Mission Accomplished,” most of the animals who endured both hurricane and lengthy transport were euthanized, lost or placed in questionable homes—and no one responsible for the mess seemed to give a damn.

It was then that I began to question people's motivation to help others. I recalled the words of a professor, uttered many years prior. They rang out in an introductory philosophy class, and at the time, I viewed the proclamation as nothing more than an attempt to wake up a bunch of wayward freshmen and set off the



semester with a bang. Now, I believed it.

“There is no such thing as an altruistic act!” So, in mid-June, as Iowa flooded, I hesitated to fill a sandbag—let alone try to save a life. Perhaps to justify my distrust of people, I adopted the mindset I have spent most of my life trying to rid in others: *Nothing I do will make a difference.*

I was numb like this for days when “Help Was Never on the Way,” an article written by fellow UI alum Leana Stormont, surfaced in my mind. It describes the tragic deaths of thousands of lab animals at Louisiana State University—all because no emergency plan was in place when Hurricane Katrina struck. I thought of the tens of thousands of animals confined in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) across Iowa, and I wondered

what help, if any, was on the way for them.

Here in Iowa City, the tendency to identify ourselves with the Slow Food Movement or a “locavore” handle is no doubt admirable—but can mistakenly lead some to believe the myriad problems the factory-farm model poses no longer exist. This is far from the case, as Iowa is the top pork and egg producer of the nation, and such standing is not brought to you by sustainable (let alone humane) ag practices. A romanticized notion of farming

is not the reality throughout this state.

Housed on a two-block virtual island, allegedly impervious to 100- and 500-year flood plains, I began to scan the news from home, finding no mention of stranded food animals. I thought this odd—at least from the standpoint of economic loss—and mentioned it to a friend. “You haven’t heard, then,” he said, and proceeded to describe the plight of the Oakville, Iowa, pigs.

One-and-a-half hours southeast of Iowa City, in a town of only a few hundred people, thousands of pigs had been living out of public view in CAFOs. The flooding of the Mississippi and Iowa rivers brought their existence into full view, however, as the ones who managed to escape confinement and rising waters had taken refuge on the town's

Only those pigs deemed “ready for slaughter” had been retrieved. The others were abandoned.

20-mile-long levee. Concerned that the animals' hooves might tear sandbags and put the town at greater risk, local law enforcement responded to this surprise move with a strategy of their own—bearing firearms.

Ironically, up to this point, the pigs hadn't known much better. Day after day, such animals in confinement inhale noxious fumes that even workers wearing special breathing equipment can withstand for only a few hours. With so many animals housed in a given space, the pigs are unable to move much, if at all. Worst off is the sow, kept in a two-foot-wide crate the duration of her four-month pregnancy. Only during the brief period of giving birth to, nursing and weaning her piglets, is she afforded a little more room in a farrowing stall. Afterward, her babies are taken away, she is re-impregnated by artificial insemination, and the cycle repeats—over and over and over again—until she is "spent" and sent to slaughter. There, where the sheer number of animals to be processed promotes haste among plant workers, inexact stunning occurs, leaving many pigs conscious when hung onto

In mid-June, as Iowa flooded, I hesitated to fill a sandbag—let alone try to save a life.

hooks and dunked into scalding water to burn off impurities.

In Oakville, only those pigs deemed "ready for slaughter" had been retrieved. The others were abandoned, written off as a loss. Some owners opened confinements, allowing such animals to fend for themselves; others didn't bother. Whatever the case, the hundreds of

pigs not en route to the slaughterhouse were on their way to what appeared to be another certain death.

I contacted Farm Sanctuary, a group that tasks itself with farm-animal protection. (This national nonprofit partnered with the Humane Society of the United States to co-sponsor a California ballot initiative that recently passed, effectively banning the use of structures most restrictive of animals' movement by 2015.) Farm Sanctuary knew about Oakville. Busy organizing a rescue coalition made up of a handful of animal-protection groups, they hoped to save as many pigs as possible.

In late June, after gaining legal access to the

pigs (a feat in and of itself), the rescuers spent two weeks of incredibly long days scouting for live pigs, rounding them up, administering emergency treatments and transporting them to safety at Farm Sanctuary's New York shelter. Along the way, coalition members saw both horrific and wondrous sights, revealing to them the terrible situation the pigs had endured, as well as the amazing survival skills the pigs possessed.

It could be argued, however, that not until the daunting rescue of 68 pigs had officially ended did the real work begin. Though the coalition knew the animals were in a safe place at Farm Sanctuary, the pigs would require some convincing.

Pigs are known by animal experts to be extremely social and quite smart. In nature, they root in the dirt and wallow in the mud. When relegated to the unnatural existence that is inside a CAFO—isolation from family, and boredom and discomfort from living on concrete and behind bars—they exhibit neurotic behavior. Examples include "sham chewing" (chewing nothing) and chewing endlessly on

HOG HAVEN CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 >>



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Tofu: The Other Holiday Meat

While traveling West on my way to can salmon in Alaska, I stopped in Tacoma, Washington, to stay the night with my aunt and uncle. My cousin had just graduated high school and the graduation party spread was available for post-driving snacks. I excitedly munched the baby carrots and dipped the cut cauliflower and broccoli florets in the dairy-based dip. “Mmmmm,” I said. “This feels just like Christmas dinner!”

Now, naturally the presence of distant-by-land relatives lent something to my feelings of holiday nostalgia. But the perplexed look in my uncle's furrowed brow begged me to explain further.

“Well, you know, since I don't eat meat and all,” began my attempt, “I basically eat raw vegetables and dinner rolls at Christmas.”

That seemed to solve the initial confusion, and I have to say that I myself was surprised that these non-traditional foods reminded me of holiday meals. But it's a fact: My Christmas dinners back home in Omaha were comprised of cut veggies, mashed potatoes sans gravy, some potato chips and, if I'm lucky, potato dumplings with untainted ribbons of sauerkraut.

For all the vegetarian-haters reading this, please let me clear the air. I do not hate nor judge my fellow humans who choose to be omnivores. My status as a vegetarian started in April 1998 when I had a crush on a boy whose ideas I admired, and one of those ideas happened to include not eating meat. I fell for the meat-production-is-bad-for-humans rationale and the I-love-animals logic. Meat is also more expensive and harder on the planet. Plus, my friends are doing it! I figured I was making my junior year history teacher proud; the basis of my newfound vegetarianism had all three essential impetuses when studying human culture: political, economic, and social.

Ten years later, I'm learning just what kind of social impact my vegetarianism has had on my life. Avoiding meat was easy. I thought it was nasty to begin with. Biting into what I imagined were a chicken's tendons made me want to vomit as a kid, and my mom always used so much ground beef in spaghetti sauce that there was more meat than marinara. The



boy, the migrant workers and the environment were more like public excuses for my behavior rather than ethical reasons. Before I officially became a vegetarian, my favorite meal was a bread sandwich. (Replace the two slices of bologna with two slices of bread and forget the condiments.)

I didn't have to fight temptation because I was never tempted. I did bond with others who didn't eat meat, getting and giving advice about adapting to the lifestyle, learning vegetarians aren't alone

in this world. Socially and culturally, vegetarianism has led me to a community whose members are typically white, post-punk neo-hippie leftists who dream of traveling abroad and worship other cultures for their otherness. My vegetarianism gave me that community, but it also took one away.

The Dumpling Incident

The little Catholic parish on 22nd and “U” streets that I belonged to while growing up has staked its claim to Internet fame in South

Omaha's Wikipedia entry. (It feels as if my childhood there has now been validated.) The parish is third on the list of Catholic churches that the entry uses as evidence of the area's cultural diversity, the Czech diaspora being the ethnic group it served.

The cultural diversity of South Omaha—and the once-autonomous town's very existence—

Did Donna Reed ever consider vegetarianism growing up in Denison, Iowa?

owes everything to meat-packing and the industry that now dominates U.S. agriculture. The

Omaha stockyards are within walking distance from the house I grew up in. Established in the 1880s, they closed the year I left for college, 1999, and their stench permeated the air I breathed.

“I smell death in the air,” I would say.

Did Donna Reed ever consider vegetarianism growing up in Denison, Iowa? Did any immigrants rounded up in the Postville or Marshalltown raids swear meat off in resentment? Doubtful. It takes a special impetus to make the vegetarian lifestyle worth sustain-

ing—if your people are doing it, then you're doing it.

Family documents tell how my great-great grandfather was born in Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, immigrated to the United States when he was nine years old, and worked in the packing house

some time after he graduated Eighth Grade. My aunts and uncles have hosted Czech exchange students, my cousin is moving to the Czech Republic in January, and

all the granddaughters between the ages of five and 22 sang a Czech hymn at my grandfather's funeral this past October.

Four generations in my family attended the grade school run by the parish. My grandma and grandpa had 10 kids, all of whom went there, and half of them stayed in South Omaha, had three to seven kids of their own, and sent most of us to the school, too. I was the second of the fourth generation to graduate from Eighth Grade there. The parish was the cornerstone of my Czech existence.

Each spring we gathered as a family to bake kolaches for our parish's Czech festival, and each Christmas we'd gather to bake Czech braided bread, houska (picture challah with red and green cherries drifting on a zigzag glaze). Holiday meals also featured a traditional Czech dish, one that made my taste buds whorl around: dumplings and kraut.

One year, not too long after I moved to Iowa City for school, I found myself back in Omaha for Christmas dinner, moving in the line from youngest to oldest of the 40-some grandkids and looking anxiously over the rows of baking dishes and patient desserts, always looking forward to the carb-erific comfort of dumplings swimming in sauerkraut.

According to my grandma's recipe, potato dumplings are made with mashed or instant potatoes, a "large handful of farina," some extra flour, and an egg to keep it all together. The ingredients are blended and rolled into a long strip, which is then cut into one-inch pieces. Boil those pieces for about 10 minutes and then let them stew in a slow cooker so they soak in the sauerkraut's vitamin bath. The dumplings' skins come out shiny, juicy and chewy, and they were the food I looked forward to most at every big family gathering.

I used to go back for seconds of just dumplings, and I once ate 20 dumplings in one night. (I tried to tell myself they were smaller portions than usual.) When I sat down to take my first bite of that Christmas dinner—the first bite, of course, was a bite of a dumpling—my excitement instantly turned to unintended

mastication as I spat the dumpling out. This year, they were basted in turkey juice.

To any omnivore I'm sure that sounds delightful—to me, it was traumatic. I can't remember if the tears flowed right away or if I ran into the other room first. I generally have a policy of not crying in public, and I know I shut down and couldn't answer the few aunts and uncles who asked "What's wrong?"

I don't think I said a thing to anyone the rest of the time I was there, or if I did, I doubt it amounted to more than muffled grunts and downtrodden affirmations signaling I was still present. It was sudden shock and instant depression. I didn't belong to the family anymore. My ethnic existence was now in question.

Not Complete Without the Meat

Innovation in cooking and food preparation is a blessed thing. Cooking becomes less burdensome and more fun, new ingredients add a splash to the palate, and monotonous dishes experience resurrection. I imagine the act of adding cooked animal flesh or byproduct to a communal dish was originally thought of as a new kick, and a celebration of affluence and ability. Why live like turnip-eating peasants when tonight we can have our kill in each bit of our meal?

Well, I happen to like turnips, but I somehow doubt I would have had much of them if I ate meat. I firmly believe that cooking vegetables without the meat yields more complex flavors—superior flavor, even. Meat and its stewing juices treat vegetables like immigrants to the dish, assimilating them until they have little identity of their own. Meat treats vegetables like the enemy, dividing and conquering them so that they cannot create the flavor bonds necessary to succeed in combat.

Turkey juice cannot simply be brushed aside. Turkey juice must be taken seriously. I am accustomed to bacon in the green beans, sausage in the wild rice, and gelatin in the marshmallow fluff. These are all expected disappointments. It's kind of like asking Santa for a pony and getting a toy horse instead.

"But at least you can pretend to ride it!" I imagine a hopeful parent telling the disappointed child. At holiday meals catering only to omnivores, at least vegetarians can *pretend* to be happy.

I'm learning just what kind of social impact my vegetarianism has had on my life.



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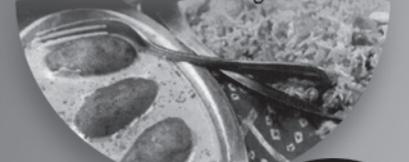
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NO TURKEY CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 >>

BOOK SMART

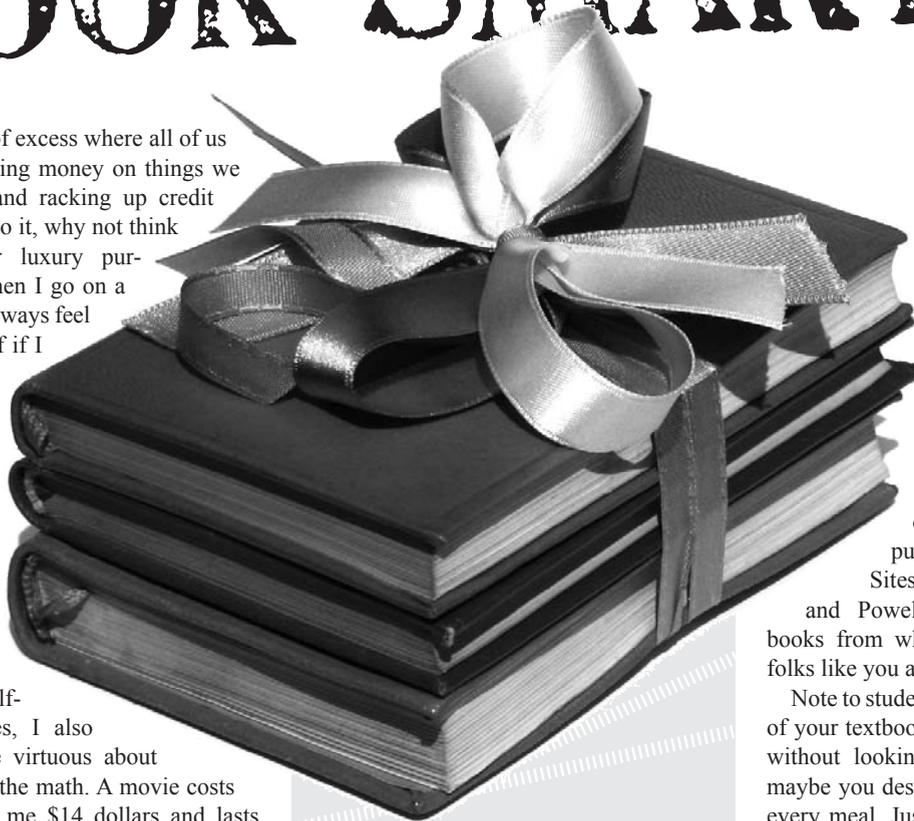
In this world of excess where all of us end up spending money on things we don't need, and racking up credit card debt to do it, why not think twice about your luxury purchases? I know when I go on a shopping spree, I always feel better about myself if I come to my senses surrounded by stacks of books instead of a circle of clothes and shoes (there's really no room left in my closet).

In addition to feeling less guilty because my purchases had some self-improving qualities, I also get to feel a little virtuous about saving money. Do the math. A movie costs my boyfriend and me \$14 dollars and lasts less than two hours. A new paperback book costs about the same, and can provide a good 12 hours or more of entertainment, for each of us. AND if I can find a good used copy, I can double the value.

So, whether you're trying to while away the cold winter months here in Iowa (please no record ice or snow this year) or are looking for just the right Christmas gifts for friends and family, consider all of your book buying options.

USED BOOK STORES

You'll have to indulge me for a moment, but I really don't think any shopping experience quite matches the feeling I get from browsing aimlessly through a used book store, especially one with floor to ceiling shelves and unexpected nooks and crannies. Make the building a turn of the century house, like Iowa City's Haunted Bookshop and I'm a goner. I know I'm an English major and a writer, but I'm pretty sure others can relate.



Local used books stores you can explore include:

The Haunted Bookshop

520 E. Washington St.
Features 25,000 used, rare, out of print and antiquarian titles and two resident cats. Look for their section of \$1 hardcovers and \$.50 paperbacks. They donate all the proceeds from these books to Iowa City's Local Foods Connection, which helps needy families obtain fresh food from local farmers.

Murphy-Brookfield Books

219 N. Gilbert St.
Specializes in scholarly used books in the Liberal Arts.

Northside Book Market

203 N. Linn St.
Includes a music shop, Real Records. Ask how you can help them contribute to the local homeless shelter.

The Book Shop

608 S. Dubuque St.
Boast more than 350,000 titles, free want-list maintenance and book-finding service.

ONLINE SHOPPING

Of course, maybe you'll want to forgo this unique atmosphere and shop in the comfort of your own home. Don't worry; you're not the only one. According to a recent Nielsen report, over 875 million consumers have shopped online (up 40 percent in two years) and books are one of the most popular online purchases.

Sites like Half.com, Amazon.com and Powells.com feature quality used books from wholesale dealers and ordinary folks like you and me.

Note to students: If you're blindly buying all of your textbooks at the University bookstore without looking for cheaper copies online, maybe you deserve to eat Ramen noodles for every meal. Just look up the ISBNs to make sure you're getting the right edition. These sites are also a great way to get some return on your investment at the end of the semester.

ONLINE SWAPPING

No matter how much of a bibliophile you are, we all have that shelf of books that just didn't do us right. That we hold no emotional tie to because they didn't touch us the way our favorite books can. That we bought as pure escapist fiction and have no intention of rereading.

Might I suggest a little site called Paperbackswap.com? This is my favorite personal find of the year. It's literally a resource readers can use to swap hardcover and paperback books with each other. You simply sign in, post at least 10 books you're willing to swap and you're all set.

As the homepage explains, "Every time you mail a book to another member, you can request one for yourself from over 2.5 million." There are no fees involved, and the only related expense is the postage you pay when someone requests a book on your list. The site has sophisticated searching and wish list capabilities and is always adding more user-

friendly options to the mix, such as the ability to purchase preprinted postage for any books you send.

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NO MATTER HOW MUCH OF A BIBLIOPHILE YOU ARE, WE ALL HAVE THAT SHELF OF BOOKS THAT JUST DIDN'T DO US RIGHT.

charges. Every time you mail a book to another member, you can request one for yourself from over 2.5 million.

According to the club's summer press release, "over two million books have been swapped successfully through the U.S. mail with an average of over 35,000 book swaps each week." Given the site upgrades and recent good press (I heard about it on NPR), I'm sure these numbers are climbing. They've also included the sister sites SwapaCD.com and SwapaDVD.com for those looking to change up their electronic library.

SPEAKING OF ELECTRONIC LIBRARIES...

While it certainly tarnishes some of the romance of reading, Amazon's Kindle, the newest electronic reader, is a nifty gadget for frequent travelers. No longer do you have to lug two books around in your carry-on (the one you're in the middle of and a back up in case you finish the first).

Your flight delayed indefinitely? No problem. Simply take out your Kindle, purchase and download a book or popular U.S. newspaper instantly with your wireless connection (just like an iPod), and start reading. In the beginning, the Kindle library was a little sparse, but they're adding new books every day and now have more than 190,000 titles.

Like most new media players, the Kindle itself is a bit of an investment (currently selling for \$359 on Amazon.com). However, my friend who's on the road nearly 100 days a year for work swears by hers. It's lighter and thinner than a paperback and has a high-resolution screen that she insists is easier on the eyes than real paper.

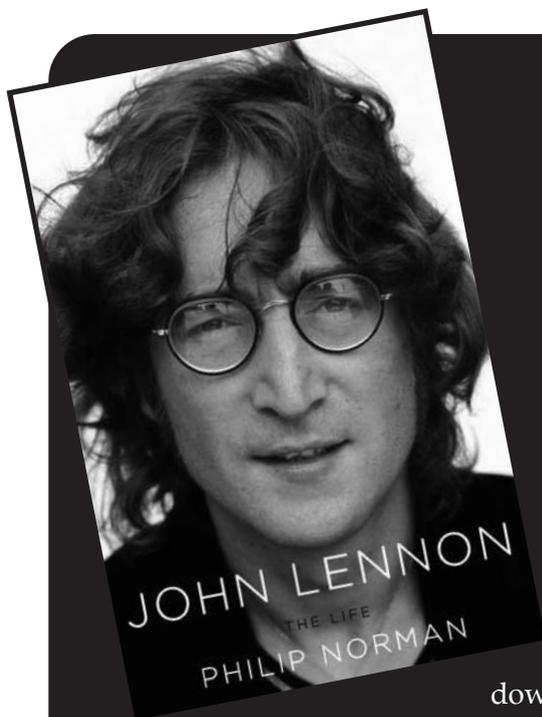
Economy of scale is the real appeal of this device. With space for over 200 titles at a time, the Kindle could reduce most of my personal library to a memory card! And just think how many trees would have been spared if I'd acquired all of my books electronically to begin with. Maybe it doesn't have the satisfying weight, smell or kinesthetic pleasure of turning pages in a nicely bound hardcover, but I'll admit it does eliminate clutter. This may be the wave of the future, but I think I'll stay stuck in the past on this score.

AREA PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Now if you're looking for yourself and don't have a compulsive need to underline text or make notes in the margin, public libraries are a convenient way to find free reading material. Area libraries also have a wide variety of audiobooks for those long trips home to see family over the holidays.

What's more, many libraries have downloadable audiobooks that will play on most laptops and some MP3 players. (Some library

RE-BOOK CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 >>



“ Reading this book brings the John Lennon I knew vividly back to life. ”

- Bill Harry, art school classmate of John Lennon and founder of *Mersey Bent*

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God Bless this Porch

On October 14, 2008, seven men slept on a porch huddled under blankets in Iowa City in the cold and rain. Father Ken has lived in the parish house for 12 years, and the porch had doubled as a shelter for the homeless even before he started at the parish.

The porch, located between St. Mary's Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church on Jefferson street, is a seasonal safe haven for homeless men.

"This summer is the most we've seen. There were probably 10 to 12 people out there," said Father Jeff, who has lived in the parish house for four years now.

The men who sleep on the porch fit no common mold. (Only men are allowed out of respect for Catholicism's anti-fornication beliefs.) One man spends his summers in Iowa City but winters in Acapulco. One man was a painter by trade and from Tennessee, but he couldn't find work in his area. He was still paying the bills on his house back home. He pitched a tent out back.

Some of the porch sleepers came to Iowa City to help flood recovery efforts and couldn't afford housing. Then there was also the occasional troublemaker.

Father Jeff said that they really aren't sure what to do with the porch but they recognize the need for it.

"It's a matter of how much can we help and



Photo by Andrew Sherburne

"It's pretty hard to say you can't stay here and then preach the gospel in the morning."

what's the right way," he said. "It's pretty hard to say you can't stay here and then preach the gospel in the morning."

Some men who slept there moved out of the Shelter House because they are drinkers. The Shelter House in Iowa City does not provide a bed for intoxicated people.

"We try to accommodate people until there is conflict," Father Jeff said.

If the police are called, then everybody has to leave the porch for a while. It doesn't happen very often but when it does, it's

usually at 2 a.m. and nobody is sure who is at fault. One year they had some drunk try to beat up an air conditioner. There was nobody on the porch for a month.

The fathers don't really police the porch, but occasionally someone will point out a particular person who is causing trouble and they address it. They do ask that no one smoke on the porch, but the burn holes tell the story.

The fathers put up a new sign that reads "No smoking. Please remove items from porch when you leave or they will be taken to the dumpster."

"We are afraid that someday the house will burn down," Father Jeff said.

The open porch provides some protection from the elements, but this time of year guys will sometimes ask for a warm blanket. Father Jeff occasionally goes shopping for bargains on blankets.

St. Mary's, who owns the parish house where the porch is located, is one of the largest contributors to the services for the homeless in Iowa City. Five percent of the church's collection plate goes to the Peace and Justice Commission, which supports local, national and global concerns including the homeless overflow fund. St. Mary's provides support for the Shelter House, the Salvation Army and Johnson County's Crisis Center.

Father Jeff has had an opportunity to get to know some of the guys who have stayed at the porch.

"Usually, you'll see them for a month or two and then they'll disappear for a while," he said. "Sometimes they come back."

Sometimes the regulars get tired of dealing with the troublemakers that are passing through.

In the summer, people slept all over the place, in the driveway, on the grass by the driveway and in the stairwell by the church. Guys used to keep their blankets in the stairwell. The fathers pitched in and bought a container to keep the blankets dry. They placed the container out back. It kept the rain out, but it didn't prevent things from getting stolen.

They closed the stairwell off because they had a problem of people defecating there.

Not Enough Beds

Last year, the Shelter House Overflow Program provided warm beds for 163 men, women, and children for a total of 1,143 nights of shelter.

St. Mary's is one of 15 area churches that work with Shelter House to provide extra beds to handle the unmet demand at the metro's only shelter. Each week a different church will take in the overflow crowd, with another church providing additional support.

The porch at St. Mary's is an informal arrangement outside of the Overflow Program.

In 2008, Shelter House was approved to move forward with plans to build a larger facility, clearing one hurdle in the non-profit's quest to increase capacity to shelter those in need.

While the organization hopes to begin groundbreaking in the spring, the biggest challenge—fundraising—still remains. Of the \$4 million budget, only \$1.6 million has been raised so far.

Some were pretty particular about what spot they slept in and would wake a guy up in the middle of the night because he was sleeping in his spot. Some come to the porch late at night reeking of alcohol. And some would stay up with beer, smoking cigarettes and talking loudly, making it harder for others to sleep.

One story is when a particular man, who had done some time in prison for minor offenses, claimed to have been around since the porch began and to have a special rapport with the fathers. While he was trying to be helpful with cigarettes, he tried to force beer on people who were not in a drinking mood. He stole a bicycle, claiming it was his and was involved in an accident with it. One night, he broke into a drug dealer's house and was expecting to be arrested.

One regular said the guy was a nuisance and really hadn't been coming there that long. A

couple other regulars left to find another place to sleep because they couldn't deal with the chaotic atmosphere that had come since he arrived. He faded away without any real incident, but some of the regulars didn't come back.

Most of the guys know the social services provided in Iowa City so the fathers don't have to do too many referrals for help.

People come here because they assume it's a safe place. Father Jeff said he is more likely to get asked for money down on the Ped Mall than at the porch. People just need a place to go.

"I don't know all that goes on but it has a way of working out," Father Jeff said. **lv**

The men who sleep on the porch fit no common mold.

Brian Schmarje was raised on generations of the family business, first the button business then the tool business. Having been a founding member of the Bad Art Movement, he figured he could always fall back on the family business if he didn't become a famous artist. However, things didn't work out that way.



SKIRT PRESENTS WHAT A LOAD OF CRAFT 5

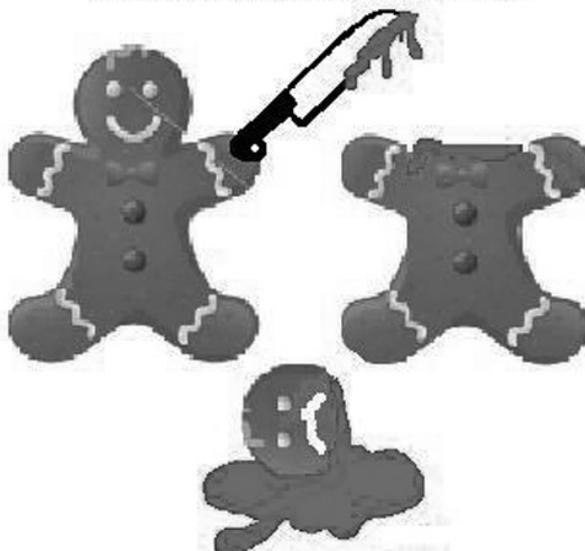


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12 Days

...to drown out holiday muzak with twisted X-mas rock.

Organized religion is responsible for more bloodshed than any institution in human history, but Christmas music is its biggest sin. I hate those songs—and the hegemony they hold over the airwaves, public spaces and every nook and cranny of our subconscious in the weeks leading up to Jesus’s birthday. Nevertheless, I make an exception for a unique subgenre, one that pours salt on the sickly sweet sentiments of this puke-provoking musical tradition. The following songs fall into two categories: (1)

*I'm waiting a Christmas Eve,
I wanna get a spaceship!*

re-recordings of Christmas songs that (intentionally or unintentionally) assassinate the original and (2) newly composed songs that offer a demented vision of the holiday spirit.

So, on the **first Day** of Christmas, my true love gave to me... Edward “Kookie” Byrnes’s “Yulesville.” Ah, beatnik kitsch, mixed with Christmas cheer! A former part-time parking lot attendant at the then-swinging nightspot Dino’s, Mr. Kookie is front and center on this 1959 puzzler. His version of “T’was the Night Before Christmas” features a jazzy walking bass line, vibes, a saxophone and spoken word hipster clichés straight out of the infamous “beatnik” episode of *Dragnet*: “T’was the night before Christmas, and all through the pad/ not a hip cat was swingin’ and that’s nowhere, Dad.”

first mash-ups. The group—best known for the Hawaii Five-O theme song—essentially placed the vocal melody of this Christmas song (played on the guitar) atop the instrumental body of “Wooly Bully,” by Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs. It’s one of the many genius tracks from the Ventures’ 1965 Christmas Album.

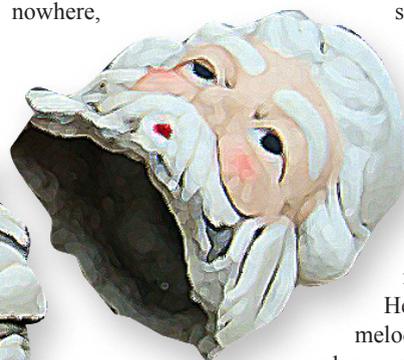
Day Three: “Space Christmas” by the all-female Japanese trio Shonen Knife is another demented classic. In this case, the 1992 song is not a cover, but an original—and I mean “original” in every sense of the word. Sample lyric: “I’m waiting for Santa Claus, he’ll come on a bison sleigh/I’m waiting a Christmas Eve, I wanna get a spaceship!”

Day Four: This interpretation of “Feliz Navidad” by El Vez—the self-declared Mexican Elvis known for his subversive “translations” of popular songs—throws all authorial intentions out the window. Like the above-mentioned performance by the Ventures, it is also a mash-up, released in 1994. Here, El Vez sings the vocal melody of “Feliz Navidad” over a carbon copy instrumental reproduction of “Unlimited Supply,” by P.I.L. (Johnny Rotten’s old group). It’s the aural equivalent of tripping on mistletoe berries.

Day 5

The Ventures’ truly swinging version of “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” is the all-time best surf instrumental take on a holiday classic (an admittedly small sub-subgenre). It is also one of the

Day five: There is no better term to describe Jana Thomspon’s “Merry Christmas from Lisa Marie” than sui generis. Recorded soon after Elvis Presley died in 1977, this song (which had zero involvement from the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll’s daughter) begins, “Dear Santa, this is Lisa Marie/ It’s been such a long,



long time now since you received a wish from me”—and it devolves from there. Every time I hear it, something inside me dies.

Day Six: If James Brown hadn't passed away on Christmas day, I probably would have chosen a different Yuletide classic by the Soul Brother #1, like "Santa Claus, Go Straight to the Ghetto." However, his prophetic "Christmas in Heaven," released in 1966, is the obvious choice. May the hardest working man in show business rest in peace.

Day Seven:

What conjures up images of "White Christmas" other than...Hawaii! This Polynesian confection, sung by Haunani Kahalewai ("Hawaii's First Lady of Song") defies logic. The only thing that could produce a white Christmas in that state is volcano ash—or Caucasian invaders from the mainland looking to steal more land from the natives. (El Vez's take on this song, re-titled "Brown Christmas," is a nice twist the this song's submerged racial politics.)

Day Eight: The Billy May Orchestra's take on "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" is probably the best mambo-inspired Christmas ditty I've ever heard (yes, another tiny sub-subgenre). Filled with horn blasts, slinky rhythms, and nonsensical shouts—"Kris Kringle?!!!" and "maaaassshh," among others—this 1958 song has to be the most bizarre version of "Rudolph" in the universe.

Day Nine: Sticking with the Latin music vibe, we have Esquivel's deconstruction of "Here Comes Santa Claus." This track incorporates all the key sonic trademarks of the man who popularized the early-1960s Space Aged Bachelor Pad Music aesthetic—sonic ZOOMS, WOWS, ZZZZZZZS, and all. Psychedelia making out with easy listening in the back of a lunar landing vehicle.

Day Ten: "Happy Birthday Jesus (A Child's Prayer)" makes me fall out of my chair every time. This totally sincere spoken word recording is a classic within the What-In-The-Hell-Were-They-Thinking? genre. In the song, a little girl talks to Christ: "Happy Birthday, Jesus, Momma said that you was near, and that you had a birthday this time every year... She explained how they hurt you, those evil naughty men/but she said you let them do

it, for girls like me would sin." Perhaps this song should be re-titled, "Happy Birthday Jesus (Do You Want a Pile of Crap?)"

Day Eleven: "Silent Night" is among the most peaceful of all holiday songs, but this is not the case with the version found on the Jingle Cats' Meow Christmas, a hit novelty album from the 1994 season. Employing digital sampling technology to

capture a variety of differently pitched meows, it sounds like the mad scientist behind this project tortured his feline friends. When one particular cat hits the high note on "Silent Night," it sounds like a corkscrew went up its butt. All my cat-

loving friends have been traumatized by this composition (not me...I hate cats as much as Christmas music).

Day Twelve: I found the following song at the local arbiter of taste—the Hy-Vee grocery store. This final song was featured on Woody Phillips's 1996 CD, titled A Toolbox Christmas, where each track features a different power tool as a lead instrument. His version of "Auld Lang Syne" is supported by a musical saw (along with a power saw, sander, drill, and metal cutter). Imagine if Throbbing Gristle, the gloomy pioneers of industrial music, had composed the soundtrack to a holiday episode of Home Improvement.

To sum up, on the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: A mind melting power saw and drill-laden Musique Concrète montage; tortured felines spewing dissonant melodies; an overwrought message to Jesus narrated by a kid; trippy bachelor pad holiday cheer; a wacked-out merry mambo; a song about snow from the Pacific Islands; James Brown serenading us from heaven; a morbid Lisa Marie Presley impersonation; post-punk Hispanic Elvisploitation; demented Japanese guitar pop about Santa and his bison-driven vehicle; a jingle-jangly surf instrumental; and a Beatnik in a pair tree! **lv**

Kembrew McLeod will be spending the holiday season rocking out.



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>> HOG HAVEN FROM PAGE 9

the metal that confines them. For the Oakville pigs, this stress was only compounded when the flood hit.

Of the scenes rescuers had witnessed during the flood, one of the most heartbreaking was that of a sow who paced back and forth in a spot where all her newborn lay dead. Her mourning continued in New York. Just as humans neither abandon coping mechanisms



when they are taken out of harm's way nor stop the grieving process soon after the death of loved ones, the pigs did not halt their displays of neurosis or grief when they arrived at the shelter. Fear was also a factor. Having made only a negative association with the human form, the pigs would run away and hide at the sight of approaching healthcare staff. This made it difficult to provide the starving, dehydrated animals with adequate food and water, let alone to administer medications to treat severe sunburns and respiratory ailments.

Still more challenging was ensuring the survival of the piglets born toward the end of July. Babies born into freedom rather than a wretched existence was a thrilling spectacle—but their fragile condition required round-the-clock observation, exhausting the small staff

that had been spread thin to begin with.

A call went out for volunteers with vet tech training, large-animal care experience, and the flexibility to work full time for two months. Without a job and with nothing to lose, I lamented not having the professional background they sought but touted a completely open schedule—music to a nonprofit's ears.

Soon, I found myself in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. There, on an idyllic farm—one that resembles the fantasy marketing firms perpetuate on meat packages, milk containers, and egg cartons, in our children's minds, and even in our own—I met my fellow native Iowans and their progeny and began caring for them, in earnest.

Getting to know the rescuers and the rescued forced me to question my skepticism about helping in times of need. Coalition members, faced with many obstacles, tackled problems and completed every stage of the rescue process. The pigs, never

having known humans as nurturers, began to seek out our companionship, much as would man's best friend—all in a mere month.

Both parties are shining examples of the qualities necessary to make the most of life—follow-through and unbroken spirit. I shall keep them in mind whenever I am called on to help in the future. **IV**

Elizabeth Cummings has a background in mind-numbingly dull corporate writing and editing. For seven weeks this summer, she volunteered at Farm Sanctuary's New York shelter, giving food, water, medication and belly rubs to Iowa flood survivors whose species we all live among but for no good reason never get to know.

>> RE-BOOK FROM PAGE 13

software is NOT currently compatible with any Apple devices.) Most audiobooks have a limited shelf life and “expire” when your typical check-out period ends. However, some can be burned to CD for your convenience.

To get a new audiobook without even leaving the house, all you have to do is visit a library's website (www.icpl.org and www.crlibrary.org for two examples), download the free software and type in the number on your

SO WHEN THAT FIRST BLIZZARD HITS, I CAN CURL UP ON THE COUCH WITH A GOOD BOOK AND MY FAVORITE BLANKET OR THREE.

library card. While audiobooks don't provide the ultimate book lover's experience, they certainly serve a purpose, just like any other form of storytelling.

And storytelling is one way I hope to combat this year's cold Iowa winter. As I write this, we've yet to get a heavy snow and I haven't even had to scrape ice off my windshield. I guess this calm before the storm has me fearing for the worst. For the last couple months, I've been collecting a stack of to-be-read books at little to no cost. So when that first blizzard hits, I can curl up on the couch with a good book and my favorite blanket or three. Whether you're planning on doing the same or looking for some thoughtful Christmas gifts, I wish you luck! **IV**

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

As this piece goes to print, so the Oakville survivors go to permanent safe havens across the country. Thirty-nine of them already call other shelters and private acreages their new homes in New York, Connecticut, West Virginia, Oregon and Virginia. A few pigs will remain at Farm Sanctuary, but even when the last of those that will live elsewhere is placed, this project will not come to an end.

The final stage is one in which your participation is encouraged: recouping the cost of the many expenses that were made to do

right by these animals for the first time in their lives. Any level of contribution is appreciated! To donate, go to www.farmsanctuary.org or call 607-583-2225, extension 221.

Thanks to the generosity of a cherished few current and former Iowans and other Midwesterners, nearly \$2,000 has been generated through two fundraisers set into motion in October—Farm Sanctuary's annual “Walk for Farm Animals” event, and the Red Avocado's gracious benefit dinner for Farm Sanctuary and the Iowa pigs.

More details of the most ambitious rescue the organization has undertaken in its 22-year existence can be viewed on Farm Sanctuary's official Midwest Flood Pig Rescue Blog, floodrescue2008.blogspot.com. This narrative—complete with photos, slide shows and video footage—covers highlights from five months of a roller coaster ride of a rescue, rehabilitation, and placement effort. Of special note are the stories of Nikki, Mango, Faith and Doctor, though of course every individual animal's survival is something to behold.

>> **NO TURKEY FROM PAGE 11**

Food Is Love

Last Thanksgiving was the first holiday where I experienced being full. My boyfriend and I went down to celebrate with his family in Fort Madison, Iowa (his first Thanksgiving as a vegetarian—I had to warn him about the sausage in the rice). Over 40 members of his extended clan came to feast—potluck style—at his uncle's marina along the Mississippi. We brought some dishes, too: a broccoli casserole with melted gruyere, and a tofurky with the accompanying roasted veggies, basted with herbed olive oil.

While waiting for all parties to arrive, at long last I was feeling an excitement unknown since the Dumpling Incident—the holiday meal would again sate my soul. By all means am I a utilitarian vegetarian when it comes to a large group. I ask no special favors and never have, but last year I took my appetite into my

own, oven-mitt-wearing hands.

It helped to have someone I cared about share my excitement, however; otherwise I'm not sure I would have gone through the effort. For some reason, fasting on Thanksgiving seems less socially isolating than having an entire tofurky to one's lonesome.

Potlucks serve as a conduit for communal experiences; one shares a story through sharing the dish they made. "This recipe came from aunt Lucy," or "My mom made this for us every year before she passed away," one might hear, and the food's history will be documented in one's memory. That recipe ensures the family line a place of love and honor in the community. They won't be forgotten; they'll continue to exist when they're gone.

When it comes to my hometown, I am gone for more than 360 days of the year. The unintentional fasting on Thanksgiving and Christmas now seem like a big part of why going back always felt dreadful. For 10 years, I

thought the distance I experienced at holiday meals came from having nothing to say. But last year with our tofurky and broccoli casserole, I had plenty to say: *oooooooooh, this food is sooo good!!*

Being stuffed after the plentiful vegetarian harvest had its drawbacks. However, I can't say I prefer previous experiences either. Never again will I be satisfied with a baby-carrots-and-potato-chip Christmas. I think this year, my boyfriend and I will be packing the dog, the cat, the presents, and the turnips and the tempeh.

"I learned how to make this tempeh chorizo after having it at a restaurant and wanting it everyday..." I'll say. "It goes really well with this vegan gravy my friend made for me once..." **lv**

Melody Dworak once saw a cow lying in a pool of blood across the street from where she grew up. It broke loose on its way to the slaughterhouse and was shot by a cop after it flipped over a neighbor's dog. She noted it was five times bigger than she was before she walked up the street for her Catholic grade-school's spring concert.

Turkey juice cannot simply be brushed aside. Turkey juice must be taken seriously.





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A Half-Jigger of Solace

How many children does Lady Macbeth have? That's the kind of ridiculous question a certain strain of literature teacher will torture students with. The answer, obviously, is: Shakespeare would have told us, had it been important. Nevertheless, there are a few characters who so transcend their storylines that they really do acquire lives of their own and one of them is James Bond. I think it's reasonable to ask a question like: How many martinis does 007 have on an off day?

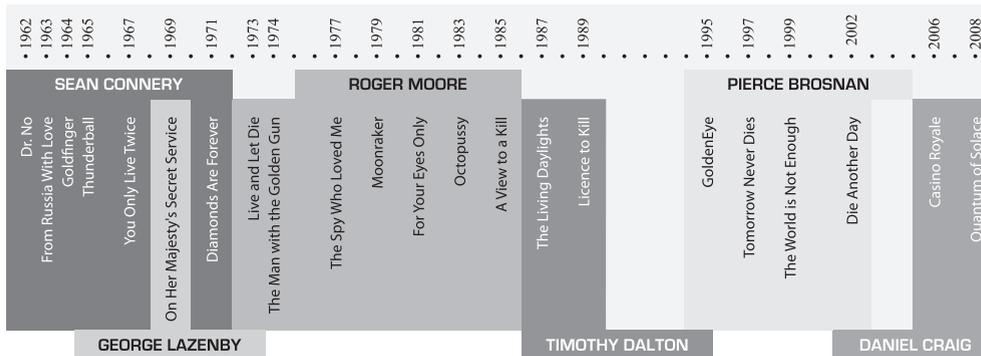
The answer is six, according to *Quantum of Solace*, which is at least faithful to Ian Fleming in its recipe for 007's preferred martini (three

an age when BP advertises itself as "Beyond Petroleum.")

The critics have, on the whole, been down on *Quantum of Solace*. (Admittedly, the title, taken from one of Fleming's short stories, is awful. I guess the name of the secret organization is Quantum; still, why not *A Half-Jigger of Solace*?) The general complaint about *Quantum of Solace* is that it doesn't have an iota of wit or a modicum of sex, which are the gin and vodka of most Bond films. He never says, "Bond, James Bond," or "shaken not stirred"; the most thrilling of all action-movie music doesn't play until the credits; the beauties don't have names like Pussy Galore or

importantly, the movie maintains a crucial element of the Bond myth: he is ruthless on the surface but a good-guy underneath. Bond is possessed by the desire to avenge the death of Vesper, but the movie ends with his refraining from killing the man who corrupted his beloved. He is chastised throughout by MI6 for killing too many people, even though, like a good old cowboy, he never kills anyone who isn't a bad guy and hasn't attacked him first. The movie is keen to point out that while the big wigs chastise Bond, they simultaneously are excusing their complicity with evil organizations: "If we don't do business with bad guys, there would be no one to do business with."

In short, though the movie isn't top-notch entertainment (and beyond *Dr. No* and *Casino Royale*, how many are?), it's competent and even interesting in a mild way. The director is Marc Forster, who made *Monster's Ball* and *The Kite Runner* and one of the writers is Paul Haggis, the writer who adapted *Million Dollar Baby* and directed *Crash*. Finally, I'm one of those who



measures of Gordon's, one of vodka, and a half measure of Kina Lillet—much preferable to tasteless vodka bruised with dry vermouth). He manfully drinks those cocktails to dull his grief for Vesper, the woman he lost at the end of *Casino Royale*.

Quantum opens with a scene that carries on the action of *Casino*: Bond is speeding through the Italian countryside with Mr. White, who is part of a secret evil organization, in the trunk of his Aston Martin. But White promptly escapes from his interrogation with the help of a mole in MI6. The movie is intent on showing how compromised our post-Cold-War world is. There is no pure good; all organizations and regimes in the movie contain good and wicked elements. The real bad guy has the significant name of Greene, who is in bed with both the British and the American government. Greene runs an environmental agency that is sneakily creating a drought in order to sell water for an exorbitant sum. He's a fitting bad guy for

Plenty O'Toole; and, worst of all, there are no gadgets.

I love Pussy Galore and ejector seats as much as the next critic. Still, I enjoyed *Quantum* quite thoroughly. True, it's not as good as Daniel Craig's debut in *Casino Royale*, which shocked and mesmerized us with the story of Bond before he was Bond. When asked in that movie if he preferred his martini shaken or stirred, he growled, "Does it look like I give a damn?" There's nothing as finely etched as that in *Quantum*. So, what makes it an enjoyable addition to the most popular movie series ever? For that matter, what makes it a Bond flick?

Well, it's shot in some beautiful locations and has two lovely women who are also competent actresses. Though some of the action scenes are a bit confusing to watch, there's a nice sequence that takes place as Tosca is being performed on an Austrian shore, and also a thrilling, old-fashioned airplane fight. More



thinks it's indisputable that Daniel Craig is the best Bond since Sean Connery, for those two alone have possessed that martini-alchemy of suavity and cruelty that sends shivers through men and women, though usually for different reasons. **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.

Breaking in the New Year

I want to have a commemorative plate destruction party. I was thinking about some Christmastime introduction to this column, and all I could think about was some single woman carefully setting up commemorative plates around her living room, in their little stands, and getting the lighting just right, and it was making me insane with rage. First of all, I don't even know if Christmas is peak commemorative plate season. But you know, this is the time of year for getting drunk and picking fights with innocent people, like your younger cousins. So just put coal in your stocking now, hike up your tree skirt, and listen to live music this holiday season.

The Mill's new free concert series, the Tuesday Night Social Club, has already established itself as a gift that keeps on giving, and December is no exception. A kind of live-music counterpart to the Dance Parties at the Picador and The Yacht Club, the Mill does a nice job presenting local and national talent at no cost to you. This month's offerings lean toward the local side, with a major emphasis on guitars. Densely layered, mathy and precise, destroyed and sloppy, left-handed: however you like your guitar, you can find it here this month. Garage-rockers The Black Slacks and local rock almost-legends Petit Mal start things off on the December 2. On the 9th it's Dimas Lemus, whose shoegazing fuzz-rock and female vocals remind me of the band Drugstore with more oomph. They're playing with Golden Megaload, which is two of the three former Puritanicals, known for tight guitar-rock and occasional shirtlessness. On December 16, local hard-rockers with a sensitive side Birth Rites will play with one of Ed Borstein's bands, The Brown Note. Amazingly, Olivia Rose Muzzy, the KRUI disc jockey who is also on this bill, will play some not-electric string instruments (double bass!) through a loop pedal. Exciting not only for being not a guitarist, but for filling the massive chamber pop void left by the departure of Skursula.

The last Tuesday Night Social Club of 2008 marks the return of The Blacks, a San Francisco/New York rock and roll three-piece who nearly stole the show from Cursive when they

opened for them here in April. You dig minimal sounds? One of their three members plays tambourine, leaving only guitar and drums to lay the foundation for a surprisingly massive and dirty sound. Lead vocalist and guitarist Louisa Black channels Karen O via Lydia Lunch, and can belt out covers by everyone from Romeo Void to Amy Winehouse. JDK Blacker, said tambourinist, will spit on you, steal your beer, and then pour it on you, so be warned. Following this Tuesday night show, they will also be playing New Year's Eve at the Picador. One of these two sets—if you can't make both—is an absolute must-see this month.

One of the best, and nicest, bands in the Iowa City rock scene is Mannix!, who are rocking a CD release show on December 12 at the Mill. They are playing with Caw Caw!, who are on the local label Slanty Shanty, and The Slats. The Slats are from Minneapolis and are just plain awesome: big riffs, zany lyrics, super-tight arrangements with just the right amount of slop.

If all of this rock isn't your cup of tea, two quieter shows will feature some incredible songwriting talents. On December 5, Denison Witmer will play the cozy basements of Public Space ONE along with local singer and artist Caleb Engstrom. Also on this bill are Jeremy Messersmith from Minneapolis, and Jeff Hanson, who is on the Kill Rock Stars record label, which is known for having great songwriters. You might remember a dude named Elliott Smith.

And, finally, speaking of big names, you don't need me to tell you one thing about the wonderful and talented Pieta Brown. She was supposed to play at the Mill some time back, but was called away for duty as the opening act for Ani DiFranco's tour. Pieta will be celebrating the release of her latest CD, and with Haley Bonar also on the bill I can imagine these tickets going fast.

See you in the New Year! **lv**

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



Photo courtesy of Julie Schuchard

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Soilent Green Misery Index The Horde Weekend Nachos

Wed. Dec 3 --
Split Lip Rayfield The Gilded Bats

Thurs. Dec 4 --
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Fri. Dec 5 -- **ALL AGES 6PM**
The Forecast
Seabird Pacific Proving Ground

Fri. Dec 5 --
Daylight Savings Account
Insectoid Make Believe Bombs

Tues. Dec 9 -- **ALL AGES 6PM**
Quietdrive
Treaty of Paris White Tie Affair Rookie of the Year

Thurs. Dec 11 -- **ALL AGES 6PM**
Turisas Powerglove Ageless

Fri. Dec 12 -- **ALL AGES 6PM**
High Five
From Citizen to Soldier Upon Deaths Arrival By These Hands

Sat. Dec 13 -- **ALL AGES 12PM**
What a Load of Craft 5
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Wed. Dec 17 -- **ALL AGES 6PM**
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The Tanks

Keep Breaking Down

Scenester Credentials

myspace.com/thetanks

When *Keep Breaking Down* opener, “Command Divide” begins in earnest, after a groan of wheezy feedback, it feels like the two years since the Tanks’ debut, Summon Creature was but a day. Lead singer Kevin Koppes bellows over a thick, sludgy mess concocted by bass player Adam Luksetich and skins man Steve Bennet, before erupting into the stop-start thrash-mess we’ve come to expect from the trio.

The changes from the debut CD are small on the trio’s sophomore release. There are no major revisions in approach, but the delivery is steeped in confidence. For starters, the production is worlds better. The drums hit harder, the cymbals crash louder, the bass chugs along with more force, all without drowning out the vocals. Sumptuous compared to the flat and tinny sound of Summon Creature. The Tanks have also honed their already sinuous compositions.

Album stand-out “I Sense Injuries” opens with Luksetich’s ringing bass floating hauntingly over death-march drums before Koppes launches into a litany of disfigurements and traumas as it all gets kicked up to 11. With Koppes’s howls reaching out of the speaker and band grabbing you by the collar, leaving you battered and broken, the opening might be deemed an excessive flourish. However, its eeriness rings throughout the song, leaving “I Sense Injuries” teetering between a full-blown aggro freak-out and desperate unease. *Keep Breaking Down* is full of small touches like the opening bass line of “I Sense Injuries,” and

The Tanks earn all of these embellishments.

The nods to studio wizardry (the ghostly echoes closing off “I Sense Injuries,” the scrapes and hisses at the head of “Just Mannequins”) all contribute to the inescapable mood of the record. So even when the album-capping track “Kirby Loves Dudes” disintegrates into squeals and machine-gun-stutters, it’s more the denouement to the almost constant rising action preceding it, rather than pre-tentious wankery.

Gigs

The Tanks are currently finishing up their “No Sex. No Drugs. No Problem. Tour”

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



She Swings

She Sways

Wasted Love Songs

Authentic Records

www.sheswingsshesways.com

A common sophomoric “insight” into music is that we only have 12 notes, and that this imposes some upper limit on the possibility of musical expression. It’s not like it’s hard to demolish this idea with combinatorial mathematics, but both the argument and refutation are beside the point when you consider music made by real musicians. The particular case of She Swings She Sways is one where a group constrains themselves to simple instrumentation, simple melodies and simple lyrics. In terms of musical choices and instrumentation, they use nothing that wasn’t available 200 years ago. Well there’s a bit of electric guitar,

but I’ve no doubt they’d be every bit as charming without them. And while we’re on the subject of originality, what’s the deal with all these songs about love? There’s no subject so thoroughly chewed over in the course of human history, except perhaps the weather, and who writes songs about the weather?

Well these guys do—in “Highway” they sing “... the rain it was a constant, but the bed was deep and warm.” But even so the weather exists only in relation to what may be love, or lust, or just the awkward collision between a man and a woman. All the lyrical images on this CD—the aliens and nuclear explosions in “Flown The Coop,” “Highways” geographical specifics, only exist to fix the frame around the messy business of love. And for all the heart-on-sleeve earnest of the narrators here, the connection to the beloved is missed as often as it’s made, and when it’s made, it’s mostly fleeting. I think the point is that love isn’t simple, even as one sings of it in simply constructed songs of three or four strummed chords. I boil it down to “love isn’t simple,” but She Swings She Sways spins it out at greater length, with subtlety and humor. “I have murdered your sweet trust - now I’m burning in my lust, even so, even so—you are mine.” The ambiguity, danger, madness or perhaps deep abiding love contained in that sentence cuts deep, in words of one or two syllables.

As to what this music sounds like...well it’s simple, without being trite. The spare arrangements allow the voices and instruments to each stand out clearly. The predominant style is modern folk pop, with nods to country music, but without commercial country music’s bathos. Guitars, voice and understated dominate, but touches of lap steel, mandolin, and trumpet enlarge the palette, always in support of the song. For an album that is the group’s answer and challenge to Magnetic Fields “69 Love Songs,” it manages to be audacious in its artistic ambition while keeping to a perhaps peculiarly Iowan modesty. *Wasted Love Songs* is brilliantly easy on the ears, but once the emotional payload is delivered, it’s anything but an easy listen. And “wasted?” Not hardly.

Gigs

She Swings She Sways on Java Blend with Ben Kieffer of Iowa Public Radio

December 19, Free

Java House, Downtown Iowa City

The Vinyl Countdown

Catching up on the Scenester Credentials vinyl catalog



Shores of the Tundra

Heart of the Beckoning

12-inch

Shores of the Tundra's 12-inch is an impressive artifact before you even drop the needle. It's a single-sided release, with the epic "Heart of the Beckoning" cut so that it plays from the label to the edge, with a stylized daisy pattern silk-screened onto the back. While they lay some claim to the Doom Metal genre, this long-form piece is too meditative, stately and elegiac to fit simply into any one genre. Raw oscillator drones drift in and out, rubbing against spare piano melodies, only to be interrupted by thrashing guitars and screamed vocals. Even the passages driven by metal's trademark jackhammer kick drums are celebratory rather than doomy. Subtle noises and reverberated distortion bubble along in the background, and even the crackle and pop of the vinyl feels like it's integral to the music. Originally recorded in several distinct pieces and then stitched together on the computer, the band has learned to play it start-to-finish live, in a version that extends to a solid half-hour. This record is not for everyone, but I completely dig it. And when the ending fades out into subtle bass tones, it ends on a lock groove—one I listened to for 10 minutes the first time through. This record



Black Market Fetus/ In Defense

Split 7-inch

is a trip, and it's also a very limited edition, so snap it up—if you hate it, wait six months and it will be going for \$50 on eBay.

Murder of Crows and Cop Eater are hardcore bands out of Madison, Wisconsin. In my rock genre ignorance, I don't know what "Hardcore" means in this context—Murder of Crows, on the surface, sounds a lot like a cross between Melvins and Metallica, and can thrash out sludge and speed metal riffs with the best of them. Cop Eater is frantic musical mayhem; they deliver short, savage songs with sandpapered, incoherent vocals. The first song "Whiskey Mommah" seems to start out with the lyric "I'm Eating Obama!" but I know that can't be right. At any rate if this sort of music is your thing, I would guess that this 7-inch is crucial. For anyone after a sweet melody or delicate finger-style guitar, it should come with a warning label.

Black Market Fetus plays in a similar style to Cop Eater, but they're less chaotic in their thrashing, though it's a subtle distinction. If there's any sense in using the phrase "subtle distinction" when discussing this sort of music. Listening to these records back-to-back, would it actually be possible to say "I love



Cop Eater/Murder of Crows

Split 7-inch

Black Market Fetus, but Cop Eater really gets on my tits?" For me, I feel out of my depth trying to draw distinctions between bands that both sound like getting beat up by riot cops while tripping, and I mean that in the best way possible. In Defense continues in a similar vein but they sound like they grew up listening to the Ramones and the Clash along with Megadeth and Metallica. And that gives an old school punk fan like me something more definite to hang on to; consequently the In Defense side is my favorite amongst the four bands represented here on 7-inch splits.

What these records represent is something much more than just music to consume. They're unique artifacts, they're snapshots of an aggressively anti-commercial scene, they're a modern expression of a tradition of needles wiggling in grooves that goes back to Edison reciting "Mary had a little lamb." Even if you hate their music, your world is a better place for them being around.

Kent Williams is an optimist who loves life, sport, and hates lies. He is Little Village's arts editor.

FREEDOM THROUGH THE PRESS

Palestinian women speak out with their art

“There are hands that give love and affection while there are hands that steal the soul and take away life. What is so startling to us is that one hand is capable of both.”

—Hani Zo’roub, artist,
born in Rafah, Gaza in 1976

“The role of art is not just an aesthetic one. It should also be responsible for shedding light on societal issues that are circulated in the shadows by the public.”

—Shadi Hreim, artist,
born in Salfit in 1977

There is a woman. There are many women.
Who is this woman?
Can we understand this woman?

She hunches in the spot-lit corner of a room—defeated, but dignified.

She bends her head, haloed and golden, like a Byzantine icon. Like Mary. She is contemplative.

She punches the air with an oversized fist, her abstracted body heavy against the fiery red and orange backdrop. She is in pain. She is angry.

Fear. Rage. Shame. Sadness. More clearly than any textbook diagnosis, the 15 prints in the exhibition “No’:

Palestinian Artists Confront Violence Against Women” expose the myriad and conflicting emotions felt by abused women.

The show will be on display December 4-5 in the Board Room on the second floor of the University Capitol Centre (Old Capital Mall). It was curated by University of Iowa international studies major Julia Baily, a 33-year-old who spent the better part of the past two years in Palestine working with Open Workshop for Culture and Arts (OWCA), an organization that aims to incorporate art in the day-to-day life of Palestinians.

Together with the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counseling, a Palestinian group that works to change old laws for the benefit



of women, OWCA invited artists to confront the problem of gendered violence through a 2005 workshop in Ramallah, Palestine. For her senior project, Bailey brought a selection of these works to Iowa City. She has also arranged programming, including a video discussion with some of the artists, for the first weekend in December. The discussion coincides with other events celebrating the 60th anniversary of the United Nation’s adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Drawing on the historical tradition of prints as a protest medium, their sense of outrage and personal experience with victims of gendered violence, the Palestinian artists whose work is included in this exhibition have created a powerful group of prints that has toured Palestine extensively and sparked dialogue about an issue that is too often covered up.

Violence against women is a problem that spans continents, cultures and the passage of time. It’s not a pleasant or easy problem to discuss. Even more difficult to talk about is the specific type of violence that these Palestinian artists were responding to: “honor killings.” A

“This art offers to us a truth that is stronger and more vivid than knowledge gained through books and newsprint.”

complicated cultural tradition that is often mistaken to be a solely Muslim practice, an honor killing occurs when a female is killed by a member of her own a family.

The motivation for this crime is a perceived dishonor brought upon the family by the actions of the daughter. Many offenses are tied to issues of assimilation into Western culture.

The daughter may have become pregnant outside of marriage, rejected an arranged marriage, or fallen in love with the wrong man. Whatever the cause, honor killings are performed in many cultures and countries around the world, including Palestine. The punishment for these egregious murders is typically just a few weeks or months in prison, if anything.

“Domestic violence, or gendered violence, happens throughout the entire world,” Bailey said. “It’s something that happens here in Iowa, it happens in Iowa City, and it happens in Palestine. Honor killings are just one form of this violence.”

To even attempt to understand honor killings, one must try to understand a societal structure far removed from daily Western life. In this patriarchal, familial system, “the woman’s function in society was to preserve honor

and tradition,” Bailey said.

One way to try to understand is to think of the role women have traditionally played in war.

“Unfortunately, women have always been and still are used in war,” Bailey said. “One side will rape the women of the other side when they attack the villages. And when this happens, they are specifically attacking the honor of those they are fighting. The women’s body represents the honor of the society.”

The Palestinian artists were very aware of the strong power of tradition and its connection to honor killings. Artist, writer and OWCA co-founder Mazen Sa’adeh is quoted in the exhibition label text: “We were very brave to talk about the issue. The society here respects tradition, and so they feel that they must respect honor killing. This enforces the shame that is placed on the family of the girl who falls in love or becomes pregnant outside of the family system. It is a sickness of the society. A sickness that I believe will be cured.”

While the Palestinian artists didn’t create these prints with Iowans or even Americans as the intended viewing audience, Bailey said

ART CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >>

ART MAKES A STATEMENT IN IOWA CITY

Art Exhibit: **“No”: Palestinian Artists Confront Violence Against Women**

When: Dec. 4-5

Where: Board Room, second floor, University Capitol Centre (Old Capitol Mall)

Admission: Free

* Introduction to the exhibit by curator Julia Bailey, Dec. 4, 6:30pm. Live music by Marisa Handler, a Jewish American woman in the UI Writers Workshop, to follow. Handler will also speak about her activism in Israel and read from her book, *Loyal to the Sky*, the winner of a 2008 Nautilus Gold Award for world-changing books.

* Videoconference with several of the artists in the show, Dec. 5, noon.

* Round-table discussion, Dec. 5, 2-3:30pm, Participants include: UI Geography Professor Rex Honey, whose studies in political geography focus on how people use space and place to gain control over their lives; a representative from the UI Center for Human Rights; Angela Gadzik of Iowa Women Initiating Social Change; and Kenda Stewart, a UI Ph.D. candidate in sociocultural anthropology who has worked with the Mossawa Center, an advocacy center for Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel, and done research on the cultural political implications of women’s soccer in Israel.

Colloquium: **The Challenge of Universal Rights: Realizing Dignity and Justice for All**

When: Dec. 5-7

Where: Various locations. For full schedule visit international.uiowa.edu/centers/human-rights

Admission: Free

It’s been 60 years since the United Nations recognized that the “inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” by adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Art Exhibition: **Eye Witness: Daniel Heyman’s Portraits of Iraqi Torture Victims**

When: Through Jan. 4

Where: Hanson Family Humanities Gallery, Old Capitol Museum, University of Iowa Pentacrest

Admission: Free

More Information: visit www.uiowa.edu/uima

Drawing on his first-hand experiences, Hpainter and printmaker Daniel Heyman created portraits of more than 25 released prisoners of all ages, occupations and backgrounds. A selection of these works is on view through January 4, the first show from the UI Museum of Art (UIMA) since the flood.

* Artist’s talk, Dec. 4, 4pm, Old Capitol Museum Senate Chamber.

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.

For information on programming surrounding the exhibition, visit www.uiowa.edu/uima/exhibitions.

Old Capitol Museum
1 Clinton Street, Iowa City
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ART/EXHIBITS

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

www.blackiowa.org

Check website for locations

Learning Safari: Happy Kwanzaa!, Dec. 5, 10:30am
 • Learning Safari: Kwick Kwanzaa Krafts, part 1, Dec. 10, 10:30am • Learning Safari: Kwick Kwanzaa Krafts, part 2, Dec. 11, 10:30am

AKAR

257 E. Iowa Ave. Iowa City

www.akardesign.com

Legacy: Bunny McBride, potters selected by Bunny McBride, through Dec. 5

Amana Heritage Museum

4310 220th Trail, Amana

www.amanaheritage.org

The Community of True Inspiration: Pacifism and Patriotism, through Dec. 2008 • Glimpse of Amana's Christmas Past, Dec. 5-7, check website for event details

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

www.crma.org

Grant Wood Studio and Visitor Center, Guided tours of Grant Wood's home and studio, Saturdays & Sundays, hourly 12-4pm

Mary GrandPré: Harry Potter and Beyond, through February 1, 2009 • The Year of the River: Flood Photography from The Gazette, through Feb. 22, 2009 • Storytime at the CRMA, Dec. 5 & 19, • Harry Potter Day at the CRMA, Dec. 13, 11am-3pm

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Real Help for the Creative Professional, a forum and reception for artists and nonprofit workers, featuring Adam Natale of Fractured Atlas, Dec. 1, 5:30pm

The Chait Galleries Downtown

218 E Washington St., Iowa City

www.thegalleriesdowntown.com

In Pursuit of Shape and Surface, through Dec. 5 • Small Works Show, Nov. 7-Jan. 9, 2009

Falconer Gallery/Bucksbaum Center for the Arts

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell

www.grinnell.edu/falconergallery

All exhibits through Dec. 14 unless noted

still/LIFE, artist Tracy Hicks on climate change, through May 2009 • Body/Image, contemporary figurative art • Ukucwebezela: To Shine, contemporary Zulu ceramics • Linocuts by artists in the Egazini Outreach Project

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

110 Parkside Drive, West Branch

www.nps.gov/heho

Celebrate "A Christmas Past," Dec. 5-7, email Adam_Prato@nps.gov for details

Iowa Artisans Gallery

207 E. Washington, Iowa City

www.iowa-artisans-gallery.com

Handmade for the Holidays, annual festival of blown glass and other ornaments, through Dec. 31

The Iowa Children's Museum

1451 Coral Ridge Ave., Coralville

www.theicm.org

American Gothic Art Adventure, Dec. 4, 3-5pm • Troop ICM: Weather Watch, Dec. 6 & 13, 9-11am • Tile Painting Art Adventure, Dec. 7, 1-3pm • Santa's Workshop, Dec. 8 & 15, 5-8pm • Shrinky Dink Ornaments Art Adventure, Dec. 11, 3-5pm • Move That Body Art Adventure, Dec. 13, 1-3pm • Clean Air for Everyone, Dec. 14, 11am-2pm • Handmade Wrapping Paper Art Adventure, Dec. 18, 3-5pm • Noon Year's Eve celebration, Dec. 31, 10am-4pm

National Czech & Slovak Museum

www.ncsml.org

Lindale Mall, Sat. Oct. 11, 10am, 4444 First Avenue NE, Cedar Rapids

Saint Nicholas Day celebration, Dec. 6, activities begin at 10am • Holiday Cookie Walk, Dec. 13, 9:30am

Science Station

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

Be the Dinosaur, exhibit, through Dec. 31

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, 4pm

UI School of Art & Art History

Studio Arts Building, 1375 Highway 1 West, Iowa City

Lori Raife, ceramics, Dec. 1-4, Graduate Gallery • Megan Klazura and Ambar de Kok-Mercado, printmaking, Dec. 1-11, BFA Gallery • Open House, Dec. 5, 4-7pm • Won Jae Lee, design, Dec. 8-11, Graduate Gallery • Cristina Iorga, printmaking, Dec. 15-18, Graduate Gallery •

MUSIC

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Adrian Legg, British guitarist, Dec. 17, 8pm • Tribute, Dec. 3-6, 8pm

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.englert.org

Festival of Carols, Dec. 18, 7pm • Holiday Concert: ICC Band & New Horizons, Dec. 21, 3:30pm

The Industry

211 Iowa Ave., Iowa City

www.myspace.com/theindustryic

All shows at 8pm

Afrotomotive w/Flow, Dec. 4 • DJ Funk, Dec. 6 • Raashan Ahmad of Crown City Rockers, Dec. 10 • Spiruual Rez w/The Jumbies, Dec. 11 • Minus Six w/Painkiller Hotel, Dec. 12 • Minus Six w/River and the Tributaries, Dec. 13 • Public Property w/Euforquestra and The Uniphonics, Dec. 31

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
 Petit Mal w/The Black Slacks, Dec. 2 • Talk Art Caberet, Writers' Workshop, Dec. 3, 10pm • Hamell on Trial, Dec. 4 • Miles Nielson w/Miracles of God and Broken Spokes, Dec. 5 • Scott Cochran and Flannel, Dec. 6 • Dimas Lemus w/Wolves in the Attic and Scheusch, Dec. 9 • Burlington St. Bluegrass Band, Dec. 10, 7pm • Maia Quartet, Dec. 11 • Mannix! w/Humanos, The Slats, Caw Caw, Dec. 12 • GB Leighton, Dec. 13, 8pm • Birth Rites w/The Brown Note, Olivia Rose Muzzy, Dec. 16 • Pieta Brown w/Haley Bonar, Dec. 18, 8pm • The Beaker Bros., Dec. 19 • Illinois John Fever, Dec. 20 • Bob Dorr and The Blue Band, Dec. 26, 8pm • The Blacks w/Datagun, Dec. 30 • Dave Zollo and The Body Electric, Dec. 31

The Picador

330 E. Washington St., Iowa City

www.thepicador.com

Shows are 19+ with doors at 9pm unless noted; 6pm shows are all ages

The Black Dahlia Murder w/Soilent Green, Misery Index, The Horde and Weekend Nachos, Dec. 1, 6pm • Split Lip Rayfield w/The Gilded Bats, Dec. 3 • Heligoats w/TBA, Dec. 4 • The Forecast w/Seabird and Pacific Proving Ground, Dec. 5, 6pm • Daylight Savings Account w/Insectoid and Make Believe Bombs, Dec. 5, 10pm doors • Quietdrive w/Treaty of Paris, White Tie Affair and Rookie of the Year, Dec. 9, 6pm • Turisas w/Power Glove and Ageless, Dec. 11, 6pm • High Five w/From Citizen to Soldier, Upon Deaths Arrival and By These Hands, Dec. 12, 6pm • What a Load of Craft 5, craftacular fair plus Record Swap, Dec. 14, noon, all ages • Go Crash Audio w/Floral Terrace and One for the Team, Dec. 17, 6pm • Salt the Wound w/The Demonstration, By These Hands, Dividing The Masses and From Citizen to Soldier, Dec. 18, 6pm



Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

Free | December 6-21

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids
www.crma.org

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, &
Saturdays 10am-4pm, Thursday 10am-
8pm, Sundays noon-4pm

Eastern Iowa has been rebuilding after the Flood of 2008 for more than five months now, and we all need to celebrate and support the improvements that are continually being made. The Cedar Rapids Museum of Art is offering two weeks of free admission—sponsored by Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative and Central Iowa Power Cooperative (CIPCO)—for the viewing of its post-flood exhibitions.

During this period, the museum will continue to present “Mary GrandPré: Harry Potter and Beyond,” featuring GrandPré’s immediately recognizable style made famous through her Potter work and “The Year of the River: Flood Photography from The Gazette,” where the images of *Gazette* photographers take on greater significance removed from the confines of a sheet of newsprint.

If you still want to support the recovery process but can’t do so by showing your support in person, consider donating to the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art Flood Relief Fund by visiting the Flood Recovery Update page on the CRMA website (under the About section). Iowa City can’t leave Cedar Rapids in its cultural dust. A museum of art is a museum of art no matter where it is.

Public Space One

115 E. Washington St., Iowa City
www.myspace.com/publicspaceone

Shows at 8pm

Denison Witmer w/Caleb Engstrom, Dec. 5 •
Algernon Cadwallader w/Birth Rites, Dec. 8

Redstone Room

129 Main St., Davenport
www.redstoneroom.com

Pieta Brown w/ special guest: Esme, Dec. 12,
9pm • The Nadas w/Dick Prall, Dec. 13, 9pm •
Polyrhythms 3rd Sun. Jazz feat. 5 After 7 Project,
Dec. 14, 6pm • Tim Stopulos & The Trio w/Kevin
Carton of Minus Six, Dec. 19, 9pm • Speedfinger:
The Nightmare Before X-Mas, Dec. 20, 10pm •
Andrew Landers Christmas Concert, Dec. 27, 8pm •
Family Groove Company and Daphne Willis & Co.,
Dec. 31, 9pm

Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside
www.riversidecasinoandresort.com

Charlie Daniels Band, Dec. 19, 8pm • Casablanca
Orchestra, Dec. 31, 8pm

University of Iowa Department of Music Clapp Recital Hall/Harper Hall/Hancher Auditorium relocated events,

www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa
All events in Iowa City

The Creation by Joseph Haydn, Timothy Stalter,
conductor, Dec. 3, 8pm, IMU Main Lounge • Nicole
Esposito, flute, and Alan Huckleberry, piano; 8pm,
Old Capitol Senate Chamber • Composers Workshop,
Dec. 6, 8pm, Pappajohn Business Administration
Building, Buchanan Auditorium • Philharmonia and
All-University String Orchestra, Dec. 7, 3pm, IMU
Ballroom • Center for New Music, David Gompper,
director, Dec. 7, 8pm, IMU Ballroom • University
Band and Concert Band, Dec. 10, 8pm, IMU Main
Lounge • Collaborative Performance Concert,
Dec. 11-13, 8pm, North Hall, Space Place • Jazz
Combo Festival, Dec. 12, 6:30pm, Trinity Episcopal
Church, Parish Hall • Semi-Annual Last-Chance
Concert, percussion, Dan Moore, director, Dec. 14,
8pm, West High School Auditorium

Uptown Bill’s Small Mall

401 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City
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
Uniphonics w/Fresh Heir, Dec. 5 • Dennis McMurrin
& The Demolition Band, Dec. 6 • Hot Buttered Rum,
Dec. 7 • Pubic Property w/56 Hope Road, Dec. 11
• The Gglitch, Dec. 12 • Heatbox, Dec. 13 • New
Beat Society Reunion Show w/Uniphonics, Dec.

18 • Funkmaster Cracker, Dec. 26 • Red Hot Chili
Peppers Tribute w/Lunatic on Pogostix, Dec. 27 •
Hunab w/Mad Monks and Mint Wad Willy, Dec. 31

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

Out of Bounds, Dec. 20, 8pm

Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City
www.englert.org

The Nutcracker; Dec. 5 & 6, 7:30pm; Dec. 6 & 7,
2pm • A December to Remember; Dec. 12 & 13,
8pm; Dec. 14, 2pm • Santaland Diaries; Dec. 17, 19
& 20, 7:30pm; Dec. 20, 2pm

Flanagan Theater

Grinnell College, Grinnell
www.grinnell.edu/academic/theatre/events

Check website for showtimes

One-Act Theatre Festival, Dec. 3-5 • Dance Troupe
Performance, Dec. 5 & 6

Iowa Theatre Artists Company

The Colony Village Restaurant, Amara
www.iowatheatreartists.org

Check website for showtimes

Smoke on the Mountain, through Dec. 14

Old Creamery Theater

39 38th Ave., Amara
www.oldcreamery.com

Check website for showtimes

Nuncrackers, through Dec. 20, Main Stage • The Elves
and the Shoemaker; Dec. 6, 13 & 20; Theater G

Penguin’s Comedy Club

Clarion Hotel, 525 33rd Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids
www.penguinscomedyclub.com

Check website for showtimes

Mike Toomy w/Ed Zipper, Dec. 5-6 • Dale Jones w/
Vilmos, Dec. 12-13 • JR Brow w/Jack Wilhite, Dec.
19-20 • Claude Stewart w/Andy Woodhull, Dec. 26-
27 • Jim Wand, hypnotist, Dec. 31

Riverside Theatre

213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City
www.riversidetheatre.org

Check website for showtimes

Small Miracles, Dec. 13 & 14

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she feels these works offer a rare opportunity for Iowans to see another side of Palestinian society, one that is not often addressed in the media and politics.

“This art offers to us a truth that is stronger and more vivid than knowledge gained through books and newsprint,” she said. “It is a composite expression of the women’s lives that inspired the artists. Here, through the exhibition the artists and the stories they tell are related to as human beings outside of their labels as Palestinians, as Muslim, as Christian, as male or as female. It is in this way that art provides true clarity.”

Though Bailey said this was not done for a particular reason, it seems fitting that the individual prints in the exhibit do not have titles. Seen separately, they attract the eye; but seen together, they create an undeniable and clear message. The wood block print medium

**Seen separately,
they attract the eye;
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helps create this unification with its distinctive aesthetic—broad color swatches, a nearly palpable texture, and visceral lines. The result is a gripping final product with a clear purpose.

Many women. One woman.

She crouches; her faceless, blocky figure bends with uncomfortable grace. Maroon color shadows her body, dots the surrounding space. Above her: a white sun with maroon spatters hangs in a somber black sky. Beneath her: the ground, also black, swirls, its vegetation arcing in violent lines toward her midsection.

This woman is alone. She feels pain. Rage. Shame. Sadness. But—the background turns abruptly to a white rectangle around her figure, like an open door or window onto her plight. Like a community open to discussion. The woman—she has hope. **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.

Summit Restaurant Comedy Night

10 S. Clinton St, Iowa City

www.thesummitrestaurantandbar.com

Shows start at 9:30pm

Steve Sabo & Josh Goguen, Dec. 3 • Jason James & Bill Squire, Dec. 10 • Claude Stewart & John Burton, Dec. 17

Theatre Cedar Rapids

Grant Wood House, 800 Second Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids

www.theatrecre.org

The Sound of Music, through Dec. 14

The University of Iowa Theater & Dance

www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa

Graduate/Undergraduate Dance Concert, Dec. 4-6, 8pm • MFA Directors One-Act Play Festival, Dec. 5-7, 8pm, Riverside Theatre • UI Dance Forum/Youth Ballet Winter Concert; Dec. 20, 8pm; Dec. 21, 3pm, North Hall, Space Place

U.S. Cellular Center

370 First Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids

www.uscellularcenter.com

Oak Ridge Boys Christmas Special, Dec. 4, 7:30pm

CINEMA**Bijou Theater**

Iowa Memorial Union

www.bijoutheater.org

Check website for showtimes

Girl Cut in Two, Dec. 5-11 • Momma’s Man, Dec. 12-18

Museum of Natural History

14 Macbride Hall, UI Campus

Movies@MNH: “Jewel of the Earth,” Dec. 14, 2pm

WORDS**Barnes & Noble**

Coral Ridge Mall

1451 Coral Ridge Ave., Coralville

All Storytimes begin at 10am unless noted

Let It Snow storytime, Dec. 2 • The Biggest, Best Snowman storytime, Dec. 5 • Michael Harker’s One Room Schoolhouses Author Signing, Dec. 5, 6pm • Scrabble Game Night, Dec. 10, 6:30pm • The Legend of Mistletoe storytime, Dec. 12 • Coffee and Crime Book Group: An Absolute Gentleman by R. Kinder, Dec. 16, 7pm

Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

www.prairielightsbooks.com

All “Live from Prairie Lights” readings at 7pm unless noted

Mark Blumberg, nonfiction, Dec. 2 • Timothy Donnelly and Peter Gizzi, poetry, Dec. 3 • Thomas Dean, nonfiction, Dec. 4 • Richard Deming and Nancy Kuhl, poetry, Dec. 8

UI Museum of Art

Old Capitol Museum, Pentacrest, UI Campus, Iowa City

www.uiowa.edu/uima

“Know the Score” with Joan Kjaer, Dec. 5, 5pm Old Capitol Senate Chamber • University of Iowa Arts Misc. • www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa • Andre Dubus III, fiction, Dec. 5, 8pm, Dey House, Frank Conroy Reading Room

MISC**Amana Colonies**

4310 220th Trail, Amana

www.amanacolonies.org

Tannenbaum Forest, through Dec. 21 • Prelude to Christmas, Dec. 5-7 • Glimpse of Amana’s Christmas Past, Dec. 5-7 • Amana Colonies Christmas Haus Tour; Dec. 6, 10am-4pm; Dec. 7, 4-8pm

Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids

www.brucemore.org

Welcome Home to Brucemore for the Holidays, through Dec. 21 • A Douglas Family Christmas; Dec. 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, & 18; 5-8pm • Holiday Mansion Tours, through Dec. 31, given hourly

CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

www.legionarts.org

Real Help for the Creative Professional, a forum and reception for artists and nonprofit workers, featuring Adam Natale of Fractured Atlas, Dec. 1, 5:30pm • Town Hall on the gay marriage case currently pending before the Iowa Supreme Court, Dec. 10, 6:30-8pm

Heartland Yoga

221 E College St, Suite 213, Iowa City

www.icheartlandyoga.com

Beat the Winter Blues with Yoga Workshop, Dec. 6, 10:30am-12:30pm • Winter Solstice Workshop with Marsha Nieland, Dec. 18 & 19, 6-8pm

Iowa City Senior Center

28 S. Linn St., Iowa City

www.icgov.org/senior

Q&A on current financial market, Dec. 2, 11:30am, Room 208

Old Brick

26 E. Market St., Iowa City

Gala to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Dec. 5, 6-9pm

Curses, Foiled Again

- Barry Cleveland Roberts, 46, was arrested for murder in Norfolk, Va., when he tried to buy a gun. Virginia State Police Sgt. Michelle Cotton said that after Roberts filled out an application at Bob's Guns and Tackle, a background check turned up the outstanding murder warrant. Authorities were waiting for him when he returned to the store to purchase the weapon.
- British police arrested three men who robbed a jewelry store in Maidstone, Kent, because they stopped for a red light less than 200 yards from the scene of the crime, allowing officers to catch up to them.
- Trevor Agnew, 44, pleaded guilty to burglary after British police caught him using stolen bankcards to try to withdraw money from the same ATM in Timperley. The Manchester Evening News reported Agnew returned to the ATM more than 50 times trying to guess the PINs by entering random sets of four numbers. He failed to guess right before arousing suspicion. Police identified him from his many appearances on the ATM camera.

Election Coverage

- The day after the presidential election, the *Sapulpa Daily Herald* reported that the majority of Creek County, Okla., voted for John McCain for president but failed to mention that Barack Obama won the election. "Our main focus is to be a local newspaper," publisher Darren Sumner told Tulsa's KJRH-TV.
- The Defense Department nixed election coverage by the military's Stars and Stripes newspaper. Despite Congressional and military policies guaranteeing the paper's First Amendment freedom, officials barred reporters from doing routine color stories reporting reaction to the voting from public areas of military bases to "avoid engaging in activities that could associate the Department with any partisan election." *The Washington Post* reported that commanders in Japan and South Korea obeyed the order, but commanders in the Middle East and Europe ignored it.

On the Campaign Trail

While running for governor of Bangkok, underdog Chuvit Kamolvisit reacted to questions during a live television interview by punching and kicking host Visarn Dilokwanich. Visarn commented Chuvit "behaved like a thug." Chuvit, who the Thai press dubbed Bangkok's massage parlor king, told reporters, "I admit I did it. I couldn't stand it when he humiliated me."

The Hidden Cost of Speedy Delivery

New York Police Department Deputy Commissioner Paul J. Browne told the New York Times that FedEx, UPS and DHL trucks "are towed collectively on the average of one or two per day." The most common offenses are blocking lanes and parking in bus stops. "They are typically reclaimed in a matter of hours," Browne added, "after paying a tow fee of \$370—twice the \$185 fee for towed autos."

Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time

An attempt in Iran to have the world's largest sandwich recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records* ended before it could be measured. The moment event organizers unveiled the estimated 4,920-foot-long sandwich at a park in Tehran, a gathering crowd rushed forward and ate it. A Reuters correspondent who witnessed the chaos said the giant snack was gone in minutes. Organizer Parvin Shariatim said he hoped Guinness officials would still count the record based on video footage before the feast.



Second-Amendment Follies

Eight-year-old Christopher Bizilj accidentally shot himself in the head with a machine gun at a weapons show in Westfield, Mass. The boy was being supervised by his father at the "Machine Gun Shoot and Firearms Expo" in Westfield, Mass., when he fired the fully loaded 9mm Micro Uzi weapon. The recoil sent the firearm up and back. "The accident was truly a mystery to me," Charles Bizilj told the *Boston Globe*, noting his son had been firing handguns and rifles since he was 5.

Desperation Pays Off

Fannie Mae canceled the mortgage of a 90-year-old woman who shot herself when sheriff's deputies tried to evict her from her foreclosed home in Akron, Ohio. "We're going to forgive whatever outstanding balance she had on the loan and give her the house," Fannie Mae official Brian Faith said after Addie Polk was hospitalized for two gunshot wounds to the upper body. "Given the circumstances, we think it's appropriate."

When Guns Are Outlawed

Accused of attempted homicide, Valentina Grenader, 45, told detectives in Waukesha County, Wis., she hit her husband in the head with a dumbbell. She and Mark Grenader showed up at the New Berlin police station, where he explained she had initiated sex, tied him to the bedposts, blindfolded him and then wrapped his face in plastic wrap. She hit him three or four times with the weight when he started thrashing because he couldn't breathe and yelled for help.

Her story was that she has a gambling problem and waited until she tied him up to tell him she lost \$800 at a casino. She hit him because he was yelling so loud that she couldn't talk to him about her problem. She called her husband a "control freak."

Missing the Point

- Police in San Anselmo, Calif., arrested a 37-year-old man on the day a jury was to decide whether to convict him of auto theft when he drove to court in a stolen Lexus SUV. He was arraigned after being convicted in the original case.
- After police who stopped a 65-year-old Austrian man for drunk driving took away his license and car keys, he went home, got his spare keys and returned to the abandoned car. Then he drove to the police station in Linz to complain about the charge, only to be arrested because officers "detected he was still under the influence of alcohol."

Atomic Fingers

Radioactive elevator buttons in France were traced to contaminated scrap metal at a foundry in western India. Agence France-Presse reported the buttons, containing traces of Cobalt 90, were shipped to France and installed in 500 elevators. Swedish officials also said they found traces of radioactivity in steel products from India. "Exporters have been advised to buy monitors to check their materials before exporting," Satya Pal Agarwal, head of radiological safety at India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, said, urging foundries to also monitor all their materials before smelting.

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

Abandonment issues

Having grown up on Looney Tunes, Tom & Jerry and similar cartoons, I can't tell you how many I've watched involving a baby left on a doorstep. Did people really do this back when these cartoons were made? Was there a rash of baby abandonment somewhere back in the 40s, 50s, and 60s that cartoonists decided to satirize?

—Sarah from WY

Excuse me, Sarah, but I'm not sure I'm getting this. You think infant abandonment is some bizarre phenomenon dreamed up for laughs by the animation industry? You never heard of, say, Romulus and Remus being suckled by the wolf, or Moses found in a reed basket? For that matter, you haven't read anything about the recent wave of kid abandonments (granted, most of those dumped were past infancy) following passage of Nebraska's "safe haven" law? Or maybe you're just wondering if doorsteps were ever the abandonment venue of choice, as opposed to the common method today, where the kid is pitched straight into the trash.

As suggested by the Biblical/mythological examples above, baby abandonment is nothing new. The ancient Spartans systematically weeded out weak or deformed infants by leaving them in a chasm (or maybe tossing them into it—Plutarch doesn't specify). Chronicles and stories from around the world tell of babies and small children set adrift in chests, dropped off in the forest a la Hansel and Gretel, or otherwise exposed—a few to be found and taken in, the rest to die. Homes for foundlings, as children rescued from abandonment were called, were set up as early as the eighth century. Pope Innocent III, aghast at infanticide rates in 11th-century Rome, ordered the installation of foundling wheels—revolving-door contraptions that enabled an infant to be dropped off anonymously at a convent. As of 1790 the Hotel-Dieu in Paris was receiving more than 7,000 abandoned infants a year (even with subsequent care, death rates

ran as high as 75 percent). Records maintained by the New York Foundling Asylum show that 2,457 infants were dropped off there between October 1869 and November 1871.

In plenty of cases a baby really was left in a basket with a note, on a doorsteps or elsewhere. A 1902 report in the *New York Times* tells of a baby left on board a train traveling through the Oklahoma Territory with a bottle of milk and a note saying, "I have no parents; please take me to the next station." (Railroad employees decided to adopt the child.)

Why were—are—kids abandoned? Mostly for the reasons you'd expect—poverty and illegitimacy. In 1830s Paris, for example,

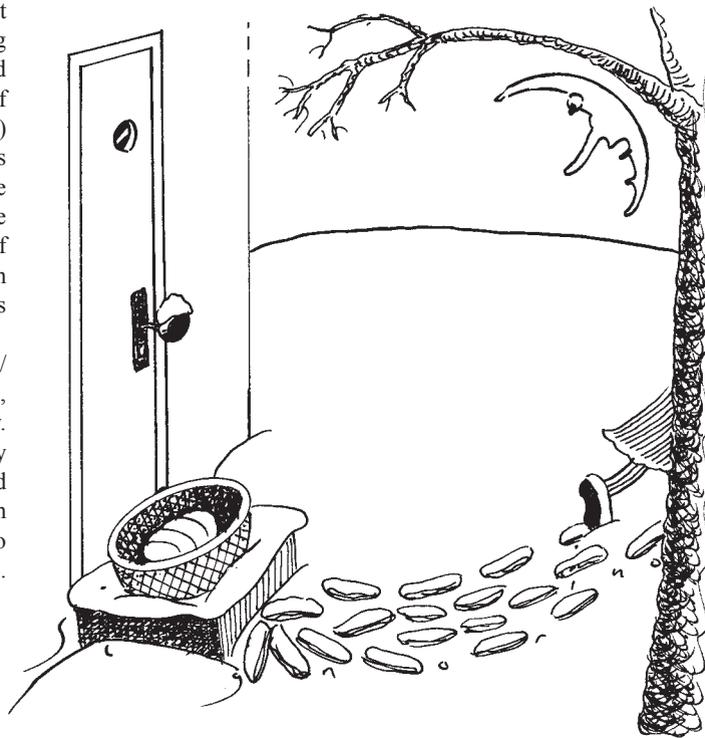
knows exactly how many babies are abandoned nationwide each year, or whether the trend is up or down. The Department of Health and Human Services estimated that nearly 31,000 babies were abandoned in 1998, for instance, but the HHS definition of "abandoned baby" includes drug- or HIV-exposed infants born in hospitals and kept there for safety reasons. The number of babies simply left somewhere in public, which is more what we're talking about, is thought to be in the low hundreds per year. Such guesses, though, are based on accounts in the media—again, nobody keeps official track. But even today babies are still sometimes left in a wicker basket on a porch.

One thing that's changed in recent years is public awareness of abandonment, notwithstanding apparent lingering ignorance in sections of Wyoming. Partly this was spurred by media coverage of several horrifying incidents, such as the case of New Jersey's Melissa Drexler, who in 1997 concealed her pregnancy until the night of her senior prom, gave birth in the restroom, then chucked the baby in the wastebasket and returned to the dance floor. (The child died and Drexler spent three years in prison.) After a string of 13 abandonments in Houston in the late 1990s gained national attention, Texas became the first state to enact a safe haven law, which allows parents to hand over their children to a social service agency without risk of prosecution. Similar laws have now been enacted in all 50 states plus many foreign

countries. Italy has even brought back a high-tech version of the foundling wheel at Casilino Polyclinic hospital in Rome, where mothers can drop off unwanted infants using an ATM-like booth. Not a pleasant thing to contemplate, but it certainly beats the Dumpster.

—CECIL ADAMS

Comments, questions? Take it up with Cecil on the Straight Dope Message Board, straightdope.com, or write him at the Chicago Reader, 11 E. Illinois, Chicago 60611.



where it was illegal to give a child up for adoption, almost half of illegitimate babies were abandoned. Notoriously, in some cultures girls are valued less than boys and are thus especially at risk of being abandoned; in China tens of thousands of baby girls are thrown into garbage dumps or otherwise disposed of annually. In the U.S., studies suggest, the mother of an abandoned infant often is an unmarried teenager in denial about being pregnant.

As far as I can tell, no, there wasn't an unusual surge of babies left on American doorsteps in the mid-20th century. But even now no one

ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR NOVEMBER 2008

For Everyone—Many doors will close; many windows will open. If you have been hoping, or fearing, that some situation in your life would come to an end, the wait is over. It won't be a single thing that ends it. Obstacles will arise across the board. The end will be final and its implications far-reaching, and, ultimately, much for the best. This might leave some of us a little stymied. It shouldn't catch any of us completely by surprise, though. At the same time, many especially promising new possibilities will arise. These emerging possibilities will have great momentum behind them and they promise lasting, wide-ranging benefits. For the vast majority of us, the endings will be welcome and the new possibilities will bring hope.

 **Aries**—Hunker down and work around it. Right now, everything seems to depend on fulfilling obligations and proving that you are capable and worthy of people's respect. The weight and the difficulty of your responsibilities is very great. Gaining the approval and respect of others is also harder than it once seemed. It doesn't seem fair. But your home base, your base of operations, is safe and secure. You can easily work around some big issues without having to solve them completely. Do your best for now without worrying overly much what others think.

 **Taurus**—Serious is the new playful. You have to be careful. What you say is now being taken more seriously. Cast off remarks, things you thought were jokes, could easily get you in hot water. Brief, seemingly casual encounters can now have serious and lasting consequences. Worse, these things can have an effect on your income. It is time to take yourself more seriously, too. Figure out who you really are, how you want people to take you. Fashion a new public persona that won't make slips that can cause trouble later.

 **Gemini**—Focus on home and family. This month, almost everything affects the home, and vice versa. Even small things that affect the home can have surprisingly big consequences. Seemingly small changes in the home will affect your life outside the home, too. Most of the issues revolve around everyday actions that used to be okay but really aren't anymore. Greater thoughtfulness and personal responsibility are now expected in just about every area. Gemini has a special role in getting the delicate message out to others. Tact is required. Mistakes will take a lot of effort to fix.

 **Cancer**—Fight pessimism. This December, those hyperactive Cancerian intuitions will be working overtime. Much of what you are picking up will be worry-making. Cancerians do tend to worry too much, but this time it's more serious. Excessive worry can now undermine everything important in your life. First, don't mistake all the pessimism for your own. Lots of it is coming from others. Second, don't put up with it. Demand that people be calm and realistic around you. Shed responsibilities that don't belong to you. Make sure your own garden is well-tended.

 **Leo**—Total makeover. You have arrived at a major financial turning point. Economic avenues you have been pursuing are now blocked. Every aspect of your financial life is affected. You will likely need to use Leo's famous theatrical ability to fashion a new identity, one that better suits the needs of employers and the expectations of people around you. The planets are also pointing you in the direction of more idealistic and selfless involvement with others. These days, being more sympathetic and idealistic will lead to greater income. Go with what's new.

 **Virgo**—Virgo in charge. Everybody will be looking to Virgo for direction. You will probably be so busy you won't notice how influential you've become or how eagerly people seek your advice. What you have to say might also seem sort of downbeat or stern, a "shape up or ship out" kind of message. However, people already know they need to make some serious "adjustments." They will be focusing on the helpful part of what you say and be grateful for it. For your part, expect significant improvements in all key areas.

 **Libra**—Special access. Librans are especially well situated to witness the turbulence, the urgency and the frustration that is affecting the world around them. You feel it deeply, too. However, Librans also have a special link to the source of change. You understand its meaning. You understand the ideals that are driving reform and sense the direction it must go in, maybe better than the reformers themselves. You can see light through the clouds and sense a way through mounting obstacles. Others will be grateful for your realistic advice.

 **Scorpio**—Higher ideals. The reason you cannot quite see your way through mounting obstacles is that the goals and aspirations that currently inspire you are not high enough. This is one of those rare times when raising your sights, being more openly idealistic, spiritual and humanitarian will bring immediate and practical benefit. It will open a path where none exists right now. Begin at home. You and family members will benefit immediately if you re-think shared goals. Set them on a more openly idealistic level. Inspiration will come with surprising ease and clarity.

 **Sagittarius**
Relief. Sagittarians can all breathe a huge sigh of relief. A very difficult time in your life is now over. The positive, supportive energies you know are there will now come to the fore. It is true that hardship and strain are everywhere. Many around you are facing tough choices. You have probably felt at odds with authority figures, of late, too. But those same authority figures now count on your cooperation as they seek solutions for everyone. Stalled ambitions will begin to move forward soon. Life will be easier.

 **Capricorn**—Shifting gears. Energy levels, especially nervous energy levels, are increasing dramatically. Long stalled projects are finally getting the green light. The gears of power are turning more smoothly. Your personal input is in high demand. There are very hopeful signs on the financial front. At the same time, though, you might notice the ground doesn't feel quite so solid beneath your feet. Profound life changes are in the works. The long and the short of it is, with so much going on, Capricorn had best schedule a lot more downtime.

 **Aquarius**—Time for financial discipline. The planets have turned a corner where your financial life is concerned. A delicate, intricate web of relations ties you to the financial world. Messages are now traveling to you along every subtle thread in this web. These messages will continue to come. It is time to take a long hard look at long-term financial issues, things like pension savings, investments, insurance and mortgages. This month, the planets support gracious communication with people in key financial areas. But don't ignore the underlying tone of urgency.

 **Pisces**—Explore. You presently have a comfortable situation, but in your heart you know it can't last. Pressure is coming from everywhere to strike out, to do something, to establish a more active and viable lifestyle. You also suspect that familiar, comfortable relationships are holding you back. The cost of just hanging on will continue to rise. You can continue to tread water without really meeting the challenge, but the issues won't go away. Career and finances will stagnate. Take advantage of gracious and considerate offers to branch out.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Wed, Dec 3rd:
BASE Meeting
Sat, Dec 6-Sun, Dec 7:
40K Rogue Trader Tourney
Sun, Dec 14:
Polar Express Board Game Day
Sun, Dec 28:
Magic: Legacy

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Mon: Star Wars
Tues: Magic: Draft \$12
War Machine
Wed: Board Game Party Night
Thur: Dungeon Deluxe
Warhammer 40K
Fri: Magic: Standard Free!
Sat: Heroclix
Sun: Open Gaming

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